Rebuilding RIDOT, Rebuilding Rhode Island

Rhode Island Department of Transportation begins a sweeping reorganization to improve results for Rhode Island taxpayers and build a world-class transportation system

"We need to make government operate at the speed of business, and improving results at the Department of Transportation is a top priority. With these important changes, RIDOT will be much better positioned to deliver high-quality results, on time and on budget. Rhode Island families deserve a government that works – and roads and bridges that are safe and reliable."
-- Governor Gina M. Raimondo

Overview: We need to stop managing a decline

For far too long, RIDOT has been managing a decline:

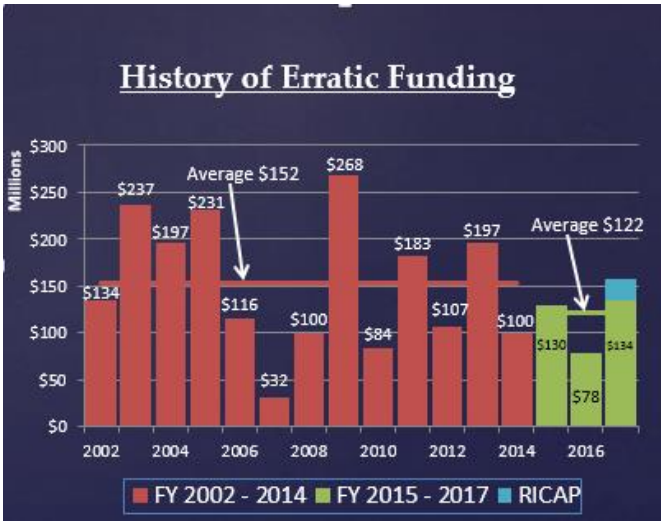
- We have the worst bridges in the country, they're ranked 50th out of 50 states: 1 out of 5 Rhode Island bridges is structurally deficient.
- The condition of our roads ranks 2nd worst nationwide.
- Our stormwater drainage systems are not maintained, and do not meet state and federal regulations.
- We are facing several unresolved legal issues stemming from prior management of ongoing projects and agreements.

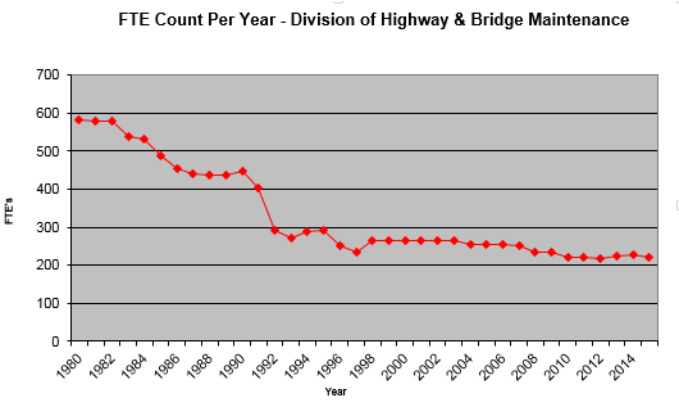
How We Got Here: A history of underperformance

- **Unpredictable, unreliable funding**:
  - Without a predictable source of funding, Rhode Island is vulnerable to erratic federal funding levels, making it difficult to prioritize and plan. Rhode Island is tied with Montana as the state with the greatest dependence on federal funds.

- **Lack of accountability:**
  - Projects often had no budgets, no schedules, no month-over-month tracking, and no one responsible.

- **Poor planning and underinvesting in maintenance has led to out of control costs:**
  - Poor planning has led to bad project prioritization: projects often designed but never funded, projects often moving forward without detailed schedules, and projects often going into construction without detailed budgets.
  - At the same time, RIDOT has cut maintenance staff, making it harder and harder to keep roads and bridges from falling into disrepair. The number of maintenance employees has dropped from 600 men and women in the 1980s, to about 200 today.





This combination has led to out-of-control costs – it's 4x more expensive to reconstruct a bridge than to prioritize and plan for bridge preservation.

"PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE IS CRITICAL TO KEEP OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES IN GOOD CONDITION AND EXTENDING THEIR SERVICE LIFE. NONE OF US WOULD BUY A NEW CAR, NEVER MAINTAIN IT, AND EXPECT IT TO RUN FOR A LONG TIME WITHOUT BREAKING DOWN. IT'S JUST COMMON SENSE."

– RIDOT DIRECTOR PETER ALVITI

How We Move Forward: The Solutions

RIDOT is implementing changes after a 6-month detailed review of operations, and on the heels of legislation signed into law this June to enable a significant reorganization of RIDOT.

- **Develop a 10-year plan with project prioritization based on asset protection:**
  - RIDOT produced a 10-year plan earlier this year – this plan includes the reconstruction of 150 structurally deficient bridges, and would also prevent another 500 from falling into disrepair.
  - RIDOT will submit the plan as Rhode Island's Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan to the State Planning Council this fall. The 10-year plan should be updated every year.
  - A long-term plan will help reduce unnecessary design costs, focus more funding on construction, and save taxpayers money by prioritizing maintenance and infrastructure renewal.

- **Build a culture of accountability**
  - Project Managers for every project.
  - Budgets and schedules for every project.
  - Performance Assessments for Management.
  - These changes will increase accountability and improve project delivery.

- **Adopt industry best practices**
  - Implement cash flow management – these practices have already enabled RIDOT to put out $40 million in additional projects for bid this year alone, a 30 percent increase.
  - Increase in-house maintenance levels to prevent infrastructure from falling into disrepair – in fact, 40 new maintenance jobs are already being created by eliminating funded, but vacant, administrative positions.
  - Improve procurement process – no projects will go out to design that are not funded.
  - These changes will reduce unnecessary administrative costs, make more money available for construction projects, and accelerate project delivery.

- **Create a predictable, reliable source of funding**
  - With RhodeWorks, we can invest an additional $1 billion and bring our bridges to 90% sufficiency in 10 years.

"WHILE WE'RE WORKING HARD TO SUPPORT THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR ROADS AND BRIDGES, A PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ALSO HAS BEEN TO MOVE QUICKLY TO GET OUR HOUSE IN ORDER AND PUT THE DEPARTMENT IN THE BEST POSITION FOR SUCCESS. THESE CHANGES TO ADOPT INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES WILL ENSURE THAT THE TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS ARE PROTECTED AS WE BUILD A WORLD-CLASS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND A STRONGER RHODE ISLAND."

– RIDOT Director Peter Alviti