



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Feasibility Study for Multimodal Access Across Rhode Island's Pell and Verrazzano Bridges

#### Overview:

Expanding multimodal access across Rhode Island's Pell and Verrazzano Bridges has the potential to offer the opportunity to diversify local and regional transportation options, connect people, enhance maintenance, and strengthen tourism and local economies. Bike Newport is leading a planning level feasibility study to explore how these bridges can better serve Rhode Island (RI) residents and visitors through safe, sustainable, and accessible mobility options.

The study will assess the conceptual technical, safety, and financial feasibility of providing bicycle and pedestrian access on the Pell and Verrazzano Bridges and safe connections on all sides.

The study will also investigate the potential impacts to maintenance, emergency operations, suicide prevention, tourism, and local economies.

This study does not constitute final engineering design, construction documents, or a commitment to construct any improvements. These bridges are owned and operated by the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA). To support this effort, Bike Newport has been awarded \$1,480,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funds, secured by RI US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. The funds are managed by the RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT). Bike Newport will manage selection of the Consultant/Consultant Team (Consultant) and oversee the study process. RIDOT and RITBA retain authority over access to records, standards, approvals, and any future implementation decisions.

The selected Consultant will:

- Review all existing studies and available engineering plans (see Pages 8-9).
- Evaluate planning level technical, structural, safety, and financial feasibility for bicycle, pedestrian, and maintenance access on and between both bridges, while identifying opportunities to enhance safety, tourism, and local economic benefits.
- Conduct financial and economic analyses, including cost estimates, maintenance implications, and potential revenue sources.
- Conduct community and stakeholder engagement.

- Assess permitting requirements and conceptual construction timelines.
- What about projected costs?

### Proposal Timeline:

April 1, 2026:	RFP posted
April 13, 2026:	Written questions due via <a href="#">this form</a>
April 14, 2026:	Virtual bidders conference (Q&A session) - <a href="#">register here</a>
April 22, 2026:	Answers posted
May 15, 2026:	Proposals due

See page 14 for estimated project timeline.

Proposal Submissions: Responses shall be submitted electronically through OpenWater.

- Bike Newport OpenWater [home page](#)
- RFP [information page](#)
- RFP [Submission form](#)

Electronic submission via OpenWater is mandatory.

Questions, if any, and responses will be posted on OpenWater as an addendum by April 22nd. Respondents are responsible for checking OpenWater for posted addenda. Information will also be available on the Bike Newport website at [www.bikenewportri.org/opportunities](http://www.bikenewportri.org/opportunities).

If assistance is needed accessing the RFP or OpenWater portal, please contact Eliza Lawson at [eliza.lawson@bikenewportri.org](mailto:eliza.lawson@bikenewportri.org).

## NOTICE TO RESPONDENTS

### 1. Terms:

- A. Bike Newport reserves the right to:
  - i. Reject any and all responses;
  - ii. Waive any minor deviations or informalities in the responses received;
  - iii. Proceed with any or all work in the scope of work; and
  - iv. Rescind award for non-compliance with any requirements.
- B. Awards are anticipated to be made within ninety (90) days of the date responses are due.
- C. All costs related to the preparation of a response will be the sole responsibility of the respondent.

### 2. Proposal Preparation and Delivery:

- A. [Required]: Electronic submittal: upload one (1) pdf document to electronic bid [Submission form](#) in OpenWater.
- B. Refer to *Table 1* for required submittals. Information shall be presented in the order listed and combined into one pdf document.

**3. Required Submittals and Information:**

Respondents must include the following information. Inability to provide the outlined items will result in disqualification.

*Table 1: Required Submittals*

Item	Description
1	<p>Cover Letter &amp; Forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide a cover letter signed by an authorized officer of the Respondent that binds the Respondent to the information and commitments submitted</li> <li>B. Complete and provide the following forms: <a href="#">Required Forms - Federal Funded</a></li> <li>C. W9</li> <li>D. Certificates of Insurance – policies &amp; limits of insurance similar to current industry standards:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Required: General Liability, Professional Liability (E&amp;O), Workers’ Comp, Automobile Liability</li> <li>b. Optional: Umbrella/Excess Liability and Cyber</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide for both the Respondent and any Subconsultants:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Firm qualifications</li> <li>ii. Profiles of past projects</li> <li>iii. Resumes for key personnel on the project team</li> <li>iv. Copies of Certificates, Registrations &amp; Licenses</li> </ul> </li> <li>B. Information shall relate to the Areas of Expertise outlined in the Scope of Services</li> </ul>
3	<p>Project Understanding (5 pages maximum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide a narrative that demonstrates an understanding of the project and how the firm is qualified to work on the project</li> <li>B. Describe the project objectives and goals</li> <li>C. Demonstrate an understanding of Bike Newport’s operations and the role of this project in achieving its mission</li> <li>D. Demonstrate an understanding of how this project relates to state transportation, economic development, health, and climate goals</li> </ul>
4	<p>Scope of Work (10 pages maximum):</p>

	<p>A. Provide a scope of work that outlines the specific tasks &amp; deliverables for the project</p> <p>B. Highlight elements of the proposed approach that may be unique, strategic, or innovative to complete the project</p> <p>C. Describe any assumptions</p>
5	<p>Schedule/Timeline:</p> <p>A. Provide an estimated project schedule broken down by task, guided by the anticipated timeline on page 14</p>
6	<p>References:</p> <p>A. Provide three (3) references <i>who have worked directly with the Respondent on a project</i>. Include the respective project profile in the qualification section</p> <p>B. Include the name, title, email address, and phone number for each reference</p>

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria:

Bike Newport will award a contract based on the overall competitiveness of proposals. Bike Newport will evaluate packages according to the table below and score up to the maximum number of points indicated.

*Table 2: Evaluation Criteria*

Item	Description	Maximum Points (100)
1	<p>Cover Letter, Required Forms &amp; Quality of Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Completeness, accuracy, and professionalism of the submission</li> <li>● Inclusion of all required forms, signatures, and attachments</li> <li>● Clarity, organization, and readability of the overall proposal package</li> </ul>	10
2	<p>Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Depth and relevance of experience for the Respondent and subconsultants, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bridge engineering and structural analysis</li> <li>○ Retrofitting existing structures</li> <li>○ Bicycle and pedestrian facility design</li> <li>○ Intentional and unintentional injury prevention design</li> <li>○ Economic and financial benefit analysis</li> <li>○ Community and stakeholder engagement, including working with diverse populations</li> <li>○ Communications and public relations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demonstrated expertise translating complex engineering concepts into clear, accessible language</li> </ul>	
3	<p>Project Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding of the project's purpose, goals, and regional significance</li> <li>● Awareness of project constraints, risks, and political/technical sensitivities</li> <li>● Recognition of the interests and roles of Bike Newport, RITBA, RIDOT, municipal partners, and others</li> <li>● Depth of understanding of local context: transportation systems, regional mobility, economics, community issues, stakeholder dynamics</li> <li>● Ability to anticipate challenges and articulate strategies to address them</li> </ul>	25
4	<p>Project Approach (Response to Scope of Services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clarity and logic of the proposed methodology</li> <li>● Appropriateness of roles and responsibilities for team members</li> <li>● Demonstrated understanding of RIDOT/RITBA/municipal processes for plans, permits, reviews, and data access</li> <li>● Approach to data gathering, analyses, feasibility assessments,</li> <li>● Approach to inclusive community engagement</li> <li>● Ability to adapt the scope if full bike/ped access is not feasible (per Task 4 requirements)</li> <li>● Alignment of approach with the project's vision, goals, and required deliverables</li> </ul>	25
5	<p>References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Demonstrated relevant experience of at least three (3) reference projects</li> <li>● Demonstrated record of delivering high-quality work</li> <li>● Demonstrated record of on-time, high-quality work for similar infrastructure or feasibility projects</li> <li>● Evidence from references that the firm communicates effectively, manages complex stakeholders, and delivers successful outcomes</li> </ul>	15

Bike Newport reserves the right to conduct interviews with the highest-ranked Respondents. A minimum written proposal score of 80 out of 100 points is required to qualify for an interview. Interviews, if conducted, will be scored and may contribute up to 20 additional points to the final evaluation score.

If interviews are conducted:

- The written proposal score (maximum 100 points) will be combined with the interview score (maximum 20 points), for a total possible score of 120 points.
- The Respondent with the highest combined score will be ranked first for contract negotiation.

Bike Newport reserves the right to make an award based solely on written proposals without conducting interviews.

Evaluation and decisions will be based on demonstrated experience on comparable bridge or transportation feasibility studies based on methodology, not advocacy positions.

#### 5. Project Fee:

A project fee will be negotiated with the highest-ranked vendor. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations will move to the next highest-ranked vendor.

Bike Newport welcomes, but does not require, voluntary cost-share contributions in the form of documented in-kind services, such as staff time, design and printing costs, incentives for public engagement, meeting space, or other.

Cost-share will not be evaluated as part of the technical scoring criteria. And should not be included in the technical proposal. Any voluntary cost-share may be considered during contract negotiations with the highest-ranked Respondent.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND

### Introduction:

Expanding multimodal access on Rhode Island's Pell and Verrazzano bridges offers a rare chance to reshape how people move across and experience Narragansett Bay. Opening Rhode Island's most iconic bridges for active transportation and public observation can create a unique, world-class visitor experience and extend tourism activity beyond the summer season — while at the same time strengthening regional connectivity and supporting job access. Newport and the surrounding communities are racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse, and the bridges serve people for many different reasons: daily commuting, accessing jobs, recreation, tourism, visiting family, and critical necessities such as healthcare, groceries, and pharmacies. These bridges are already essential economic corridors. Improving connections can unlock even greater value for the region by attracting new businesses, supporting workforce mobility between Washington County and Newport County, bringing new residents to the region, and enhancing quality-of-life for current residents.

Bike Newport is leading a feasibility study to explore how the Pell and Verrazzano Bridges can better serve Rhode Islanders and visitors through safe and accessible mobility options. This work is supported through \$1,480,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending secured by RI US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, with funds managed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) owns and operates both bridges, and RIDOT owns many of the proximal bridge connections. Both agencies are key partners in this effort.

This study will examine the technical, safety, and financial feasibility of bicycle and pedestrian access, the operational benefits such access could provide for maintenance, emergency response, and traffic management, the necessity to improve safety from intentional and unintentional injuries and fatalities, and the potential economic impacts of expanding access to cyclists and pedestrians. The project aims to support a more resilient, connected, and vibrant region where residents can reach more jobs without needing a car, businesses can attract and retain talent, visitors can experience the Bay in new ways, and the state can maintain its transportation assets more easily.

The vision of adding public access to the bridges provides an opportunity for a renewed focus on preventing jumps or falls via the inclusion of safety barriers to both sides of both bridges. According to RITBA, at least 29 individuals have taken their own lives by jumping off the bridges since 2011.

The feasibility study will provide an objective, fact-based, data-driven roadmap for improving bridge safety, accessibility, and connectivity. By integrating new data with findings from previous studies, this study will guide future planning, investment decisions, partnership development, and long-term strategies to strengthen Rhode Island's transportation network, economy, and quality of life.

### Project Goals

The goals of this study are to:

1. **Assess Feasibility:** Determine the technical, structural, safety, operational, and financial feasibility of providing bicycle and pedestrian access across the Pell and Verrazzano Bridges. This includes safe entry and exit from and between all bridge access points.
2. **Improve Safety:** Determine ways to improve safety and reduce intentional and unintentional injuries and fatalities.
3. **Strengthen Regional Connectivity:** Identify opportunities to expand multimodal access and improve cross-Bay mobility for residents, workers, and visitors.
4. **Support Economic and Tourism Growth:** Evaluate how enhanced bridge access can support job accessibility, attract businesses, expand tourism, and vitalize the region.
5. **Improve Operations and Maintenance:** Analyze ways improved access can impact maintenance, emergency response, and traffic management.
6. **Guide Future Decision-Making:** Provide clear, actionable recommendations that reflect technical and economic analyses, as well as robust stakeholder and community input, to inform long-term strategies and investments by state, regional, and local partners.

### Relevant Completed Work:

- **2024-2025 Safety Barrier Studies:** Following legislation from the Rhode Island General Assembly, RITBA commissioned an engineering firm to undertake conceptual feasibility assessments of enhanced safety measures across key bridges, including the Pell and Verrazzano. These studies aimed to address risks including structural resilience and suicide prevention. The Pell study ([Part 1](#), [Part 2](#)) focused on structural and protection upgrades. *The findings indicated that while the existing structure is fundamentally*

*sound, the facility does not have the capacity to add a structural deterrent vertical safety barrier.* The [Verrazanno study](#) similarly evaluated what safety enhancements could be feasibly added. *The bridge was found to be able to accept only certain targeted upgrades under existing load conditions.* The report presents cost estimates, phased implementation options, and barrier alternatives for prioritized risk mitigation.

- 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan - [Moving Forward RI 2050](#)
- [State Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2035](#)
- 2024 Jamestown Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (accessible [here](#) under “Bike Path Committee”).
- 2023 [Ride Island Bike Plan](#).
- 2023 Keep Newport Moving [Transportation Master Plan](#).
- 2020-2022 RI School of Design & Bike Newport Crossing the Pell Project: [Crossing the Pell](#) explored what a pedestrian- and bike-friendly future could look like on the Pell Bridge. Led by [RISD’s Interior Architecture department](#) in partnership with Bike Newport, students developed bold concepts to make the landmark accessible to people walking and biking and to reconnect the City of Newport’s North End. Backed by federal and local leaders, the team used virtual and augmented reality to bring four design visions to life. In December 2022, more than 450 community members experienced these immersive concepts at a public exhibition, virtually walking and riding the 2.1-mile span and helping spark new possibilities for the bridge’s next chapter.
- 2020 Rhode Island Moving Forward Statewide [Bicycle Mobility Plan](#).
- 2018-2019 RITBA Bike/Ped Program Management Procurement Process: In 2019, RITBA released a Letter of Interest (LOI) for on-call project management services. The purpose of the LOI was to secure one or more existing engineering services providers for a program management services role for the potential installation of a pedestrian/bike path system across all of the RITBA assets as well as revenue generation enhancements at the RITBA facilities. Four proposals were received, and one was selected. However, due to lack of funding, the project has not been executed.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

### Project Oversight:

The selected Consultant will contract directly with Bike Newport, who will manage and administer the project. Funds will be administered by RIDOT. RITBA and RIDOT are the property owners. No Consultant work product shall be deemed approved or relied upon for implementation without express written concurrence from RIDOT and/or RITBA, as applicable. Other stakeholders include the City of Newport, the Town of Jamestown, the Town of North Kingstown, the Division of Statewide Planning, the mental health community, tourism and business community, and residents of the region.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee, consisting of Bike Newport staff and representatives from some or all of the above stakeholder groups, will review and comment on draft and final project deliverables. Advisory Committee input is non-binding. Final acceptance of deliverables shall rest with Bike Newport in consultation with RIDOT.

#### Areas of Expertise:

- Project Management
- Bridge Design & Engineering
  - Structural Engineering
  - Maintenance Access
  - Windloads and Weather Exposure
  - Composite Materials
  - Public Observation Opportunities
  - Safety Barriers
- Roadway & Multi-Use Path Design
- Tourism, Revenue Generation
- Cost Estimating and Economic Impact Analysis
- Local, State, and Federal Permitting
- RIDOT/RITBA Standards & Requirements
- Stakeholder and Community Outreach, Public Relations, and Strategic Communications

#### Project Scope:

Bike Newport has developed this RFP in consultation with RIDOT and will manage Consultant selection, and oversee the feasibility study process. All analyses shall be conducted at a planning or feasibility level. The Consultant shall not perform final engineering design, issue stamped engineering plans, certify structural capacity, or represent that proposed concepts are constructible without further detailed engineering and agency approvals.

The selected Consultant team will:

- Evaluate technical, structural, safety, and financial feasibility for bicycle, pedestrian, and maintenance access on both bridges, while identifying opportunities to enhance tourism and local economic benefits, and prevent suicides.
- Conduct financial and economic analyses, including cost estimates, maintenance implications, and potential revenue sources.
- Conduct community and stakeholder engagement.
- Assess permitting requirements and potential construction timelines.

#### Task 1 – Project Management and Meetings

- The Consultant shall designate a qualified project manager who will serve as the primary contact for Bike Newport and oversee all project management activities.

- The Consultant shall prepare and lead a kick-off meeting with Bike Newport, followed by bi-weekly status meetings.
- The Consultant shall prepare monthly update reports.
- The Consultant shall prepare and lead stakeholder meetings as needed.
- For all meetings, the Consultant shall prepare agendas, necessary materials, and summary notes.
- The Consultant shall provide monthly invoices, together with all required backup documentation, no later than the 15th of the month after the services were performed.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Bi-weekly internal team meeting agendas and summary notes.
- Stakeholder meeting agendas and summary notes.
- Monthly update reports and invoices.

**Task 2 – Discovery and Document Review**

- The Consultant shall review all relevant completed planning work outlined on pages 8-9.
- The Consultant shall submit requests to RITBA and RIDOT to obtain and review relevant bridge and roadway information, including structural drawings, as-built plans, specifications, design manuals, construction records, inspection reports, management systems data, and traffic counts.
- If needed, the Consultant shall perform site visit(s) on the bridges to gather information, collect data, and perform measurements.

Task 2 Deliverables:

- A summary memo of findings from completed planning work, existing bridge plans and information, and site visits.

**Task 3 – Stakeholder Engagement and Public Input**

- The Consultant shall develop and execute a Stakeholder Engagement & Public Input Plan for the project that meaningfully and effectively engages the following groups throughout the study development:
  - Bridge and roadway owners (RITBA, RIDOT, municipalities)
  - Elected officials
  - Stakeholder Advisory Committee comprised of government partners, tourism and business leaders, and local community groups
  - Residents of diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds
  - People who rely on walking, biking, or transit for transportation
  - Potential bridge users for commuting, recreation, tourism, and access to jobs and services.
- The Consultant shall use inclusive and accessible engagement methods that meaningfully gather input. This includes setting meetings at accessible locations, clearly

communicating constraints and tradeoffs, actively listening to concerns and ideas, ensuring that all public outreach is in English and Spanish, and demonstrating how community input influences analysis, alternatives, and recommendations.

- Particular attention should be given to engaging historically underrepresented populations and people who may face barriers to participation, including lower-income residents, people of color, people with disabilities, older adults, youth, and those who rely on walking, biking, or transit for transportation. Engagement should also intentionally reach potential bridge users with different needs and motivations, including commuters, recreational users, visitors, and workers traveling between Washington County and Newport County.
- The Consultant shall demonstrate how stakeholder and public input will inform final recommendations, including where community priorities align with or diverge from technical constraints.
- The Consultant shall develop communications materials to support stakeholder and public engagement including slides, graphics, surveys, reports, press releases, photographs, and videos.

#### Task 3 Deliverables:

- Draft Stakeholder Engagement & Public Input Plan.
- Final Stakeholder Engagement & Public Input Plan.
- Memo summarizing stakeholder engagement & public input activities and results.
- Communications and outreach materials.

#### Task 4 – Feasibility Study

The Consultant shall conduct a planning level Feasibility Study for Access Improvements on the Pell and Verrazzano Bridges while executing the agreed-upon Stakeholder Engagement & Public Input Plan in Task 3. The study shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The final memos in Task 2 and Task 3.
- A review of bridges from around the world that have been retrofitted/rebuilt for active mobility access, public observation, suicide prevention, and/or maintenance worker access — including costs, design descriptions, and community impact.
- A traffic analysis for both bridges and Rt. 138 with current and future projected volumes, speeds, and travel times. This should include an analysis of current and future traffic congestion, modeling how the number of estimated daily users of the bridge paths could impact travel times for drivers, especially in peak tourism season.
- A latent demand analysis projecting the potential usership of the proposed infrastructure improvements, aligning with relevant completed planning work and funded infrastructure implementation in the project area.
- Assessment of the opportunities to implement pilot projects in the study area, demonstrating multimodal access feasibility with temporary materials.

- Complementary structural analysis of both bridges (referring to RITBA's recently completed Safety Barrier Studies described on page 8-9) including load rating (dead, wind, and live loads), cable forces, vibration properties of the superstructure; wind climate; environmental effects including snow and ice load; and connection details. If preliminary analysis indicates that certain access concepts are infeasible, the Consultant shall notify Bike Newport in writing.
- These assessments shall be used to analyze the structural and safety feasibility for:
  - Shared use paths on and connecting both bridges, including suicide prevention barriers and maintenance worker access. This should include a thorough review of what kinds of materials are available to construct this infrastructure, and their varying weights and maintenance requirements.
  - A public elevator and/or public observation opportunities on the Pell Bridge.
  - The aerodynamic stability, aesthetic, material, and historic preservation impacts of the proposed safety and access solutions.
  - In the event that no additional access can be feasibly added to one or both bridges due to structural constraints, the Consultant will work with Bike Newport to restructure the scope of the subsequent tasks.
- A financial feasibility analysis for the proposed access improvements, including but not limited to:
  - Up-front capital costs and ongoing maintenance costs.
  - Impact on general bridge maintenance costs.
  - Potential revenue streams (e.g. charging an entrance fee/toll to the paths and/or observation areas).
  - Short- and long-term economic impact — including construction job creation as well as impacts on commute times, tourism, real estate values, and other economic development opportunities in the region.
- A political / community feasibility analysis potentially including interviews with key elected officials, phone polling, focus groups, community discussions, and other feedback tools.
- An Implementation Roadmap with:
  - A summary of all local, state, and federal permitting work necessary to advance future phases of work.
  - A summary of all local, state, and federal funding sources that could be used to advance future phases of work.
  - Possible construction timelines for future phases of work.
  - Milestones towards completion.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Draft Feasibility Study for Multimodal Access Across the Verrazzano and Pell Bridges.
- Final Feasibility Study for Multimodal Access Across the Verrazzano and Pell Bridges.

### Task 5 — Visual Concepts

Based on the findings and results of Task 4, the Consultant shall prepare conceptual drawings — representing approximately 10% design — and graphics. Visual concepts shall be illustrative and conceptual only and shall not be construed as engineering plans, construction-ready designs, or agency-approved alternatives.

These visuals shall include:

- Typical cross-section alternatives on both bridges.
- Typical cross-section alternatives on Rt. 138 and/or alternative route between the bridges (on Jamestown local roads).
- Aerial plan-view conceptual alternatives for the entire project area, including the entrance/exit access points to the path in North Kingstown, Jamestown, and Newport.
- Visual concepts for feasible public observation opportunities.

#### Task 5 Deliverables:

- Draft Visual Concepts.
- Final Visual Concepts.
- Final slide deck for public presentations, combining results of Task 4 and Task 5.

### General Conditions

Nothing in this RFP or any resulting contract shall obligate Bike Newport, RIDOT, RITBA, or any municipality to fund, approve, or construct any improvements. All future phases are subject to separate approvals, funding, environmental review, and procurement processes.

### Anticipated Project Timeline and Deliverable Deadlines:

