

PROVIDENCE BICYCLE COALITION

Mr. Jerome Williams
Director
RIDOT
Two Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

November 1, 2007

Dear Mr. Williams

The Providence Bicycle Coalition is a group of like minded cyclists who have come together from a variety of other groups to advocate bicycling for Providence and Rhode Island. We share a common appreciation of the powerful benefits bicycling offers for health, economy, and environment, and a common frustration at the minimal priority afforded to bicycles, pedestrians, and alternatives to automobiles by our state and municipal agencies. Our goals are to ensure that bicycling is treated as a serious transportation mode and is supported as an essential component of Rhode Island's transportation network within a broader overall policy of promoting transit options within the state.

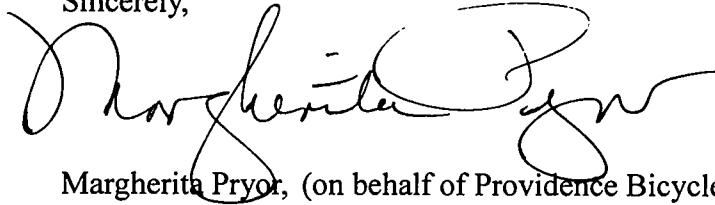
In that light, we urge you to transform RIDOT's mission from moving vehicles to enabling mobility. This is already the Department's stated goal, but the key to implementing this strategy successfully will be strong vision and leadership from within the department. The search for a new Chief Engineer is your opportunity to engage a bold, imaginative partner in the effort, someone who will embrace the goal of promoting and implementing a comprehensive portfolio of transportation modes that gives new priority to transit, pedestrian access, and bicycle integration.

Building more roads is not the way to cure the harmful environmental and economic impacts of our massive reliance on single-user automobiles. As part of its "fix it first" agenda, RIDOT has committed to the maximum utilization of existing infrastructure to avoid construction of new highways and rail lines. We remind RIDOT that infrastructure includes bicycling. State law (§ 31-18-21) requires accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic in road planning, design, construction and reconstruction, as well as consideration in any resurfacing and striping project undertaken by the department.

We fully applaud RIDOT's expressed philosophy to "fix it first," but we believe alternatives, starting with bicycling, must also be planned and implemented now. The documented benefits of a substantial bicycle program are many: improved air quality and lowered greenhouse gas emissions through reduced numbers of cars on the road; extended life of existing pavements and roadways from reduced wear and tear; safe, accessible mobility for students going to school, for those without cars, and for making short trips; better public health; and preserved community character by lessening the intrusions of highways and traffic in neighborhoods. These are a few of the immediate positive impacts. In addition, cycling paths and networks can be catalysts for a strong geo-tourism sector by enabling close-up experiences of Rhode Island's historic urban areas and beautiful scenic landscapes. In short, vigorously promoting bicycle use has no downside while providing exceptional economic and environmental advantages.

We are anxious to work with you and other stakeholders to create a new RIDOT. Please see our organization as your ally in promoting a transportation strategy for the 21st century. For more information about the Coalition, you may visit our website: <http://www.bikeprovidence.org>. Please direct your response or queries to info@bikeprovidence.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margherita Pryor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Margherita Pryor, (on behalf of Providence Bicycle Coalition)

cc: Ralph J. Rizzo, Federal Highway Administration