

PROJECT OF THE YEAR:
RESTORATION/PRESERVATION
\$5 MILLION BUT LESS THAN \$25 MILLION

Washington Bridge Bike Path and Linear Park

Managing Agency: Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Primary Contractor: Cardi Corporation

Primary Consultant: VHB

Nominated By: New England Chapter

Washington Bridge Bike Path and Linear Park, an 1800-foot-long spandrel arch structure over the Seekonk River, initially served as a bustling city bridge with a movable bascule span that was constructed in response to increasing population and industry on both sides of the river. The fifth of seven bridges in the area named for the country's first president, the Washington Bridge replaced bridges that were constructed in 1795, 1810, 1820, and 1885. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989, the bridge was a vital structure needed to improve and expand Rhode Island's roadway infrastructure, serving as an important local example of an open spandrel arch bridge with many granite architectural features.

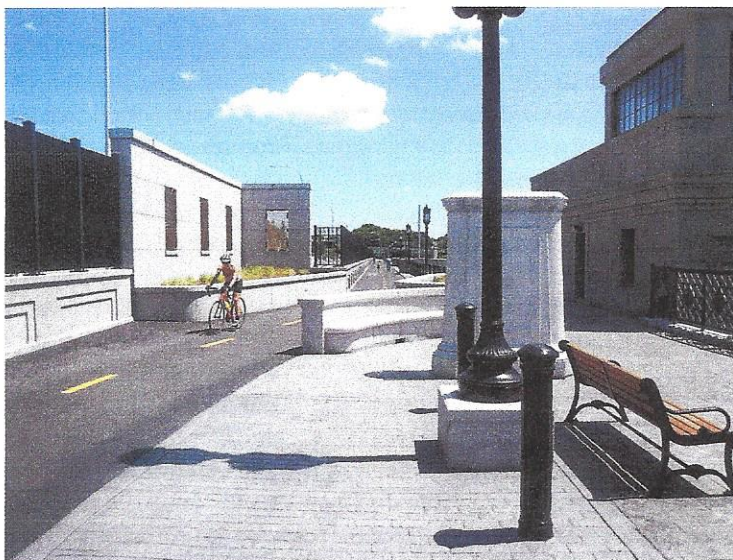
With the nation's evolving transportation needs came the construction of I-195 in the 1970s, which would connect Providence and I-95 to Massachusetts' southern port cities. By the 1990s, wear and deterioration required rehabilitations and, with the completion of recent design, the bridge will serve as a multi-use path and linear park preserving the landmark for future generations. The rehabilitated, repurposed structure is anticipated to attract both recreational users and non-motorized commuters, connecting the Providence and East Providence bike route networks.

Heavy traffic volume necessitated that the eastbound bridge replacement

project be performed without a reduction in the number of highway lanes. To avoid purchasing rights-of-way, the replacement bridge was realigned using a 45-foot-wide, vacant area between Bridge

200 eastbound and Bridge 700 westbound, which allowed phased construction of a completely new eastbound bridge. This process saved time during construction, allowing the Washington Pedestrian Bridge Project to be performed unaffected by traffic and keeping the project completion on track for June 2016.

The new construction required the removal of four of the six arch ribs. Keeping two of the arch ribs fulfilled a historical mitigation agreement. The memorandum of agreement between FHWA, RIDOT and the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Office required the 1930 bridge to be historically documented, and the southerly façade preserved. The project's innovative design preserved and retained two concrete arch ribs to



support an independent bikeway and pedestrian path. The unique project also preserved the operator's rooms/house exterior, and modified the structure to include an overlook plaza span above the navigable channel to feature the operator's rooms/house, and landscape planters incorporating salvaged granite from the demolished portion of the bridge.

An important transportation link for 85 years, the bridge has been modified in response to the evolving transportation needs of the region. Preserved and restored to highlight significant architectural elements, the bridge will provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. The linear park will encourage users to enjoy the classic features and surrounding views for many years to come.