

= Rhode Island Route 4 =

Route 4 , also known as the Colonel Rodman Highway , is a 10 @. @ 37 @- @ mile (16 @. @ 69 km) long numbered state highway located in Washington County and southern Kent County , Rhode Island , United States . The route is a major north ? south freeway in the southern Providence metropolitan area , directly linking Providence with eastern Washington County , the beaches of Narragansett and South Kingstown , and the city of Newport . Route 4 begins as a two @- @ lane divided highway at an intersection with U.S. Route 1 (US 1) in the town of North Kingstown , becoming a limited @- @ access freeway after 1 @. @ 89 miles (3 @. @ 04 km) . The route has four numbered interchanges before terminating in the city of Warwick , where the northbound lanes merge into Interstate 95 (I @- @ 95) .

The origins of Route 4 date back to 1952 , when construction began on a short , unnumbered arterial from US 1 to the modern location of exit 5 at Routes 2 and 102 in Wickford . In 1965 , the Rhode Island Department of Public Works began work on a 5 @. @ 4 @- @ mile (8 @. @ 7 km) freeway from modern exit 6 north to the merge with I @- @ 95 . The freeway , designated as Route 4 , was completed in 1972 . At that time , the Route 4 designation was also applied to the Wickford arterial . In 1988 , the missing link in Route 4 between exits 5 and 6 was completed and opened . The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has long @- @ term plans to upgrade the southernmost portion of Route 4 to freeway status by constructing overpasses at Oak Hill Road and West Allenton Road and a grade separation with US 1 . Although the project was originally scheduled to be completed by 2007 , the \$ 55 million project has been postponed indefinitely .

= = Route description = =

Route 4 begins at a fork in the alignment of U.S. Route 1 in the community of North Kingstown ; the two left lanes of US 1 default onto Route 4 north , with the right @- @ hand lane carrying Tower Hill Road and US 1 north into the village of Wickford . Route 4 heads in a northwestern direction as a four @- @ lane divided highway , crossing West Allenton Road at an at @- @ grade intersection with a traffic signal after approximately 0 @. @ 5 miles (0 @. @ 80 km) . The highway continues on a northwesterly projection , passing to the northeast of Kettle Hole Pond and to the southwest of Secret Lake in a heavily forested region . After Secret Lake , the highway curves to the north , crossing Oak Hill Road at another at @- @ grade intersection .

Shortly after the intersection with Oak Hill Road , Route 4 transitions from a divided arterial highway into a four @- @ lane limited @- @ access freeway . The freeway passes to the west of Belleville Pond and begins to parallel the alignment of Route 102 (Ten Rod Road) near the community of Lafayette . Route 4 passes over Amtrak 's Northeast Corridor railroad before entering the business district of Wickford Junction . The freeway interchanges with Routes 2 and 102 at exit 5 , a partial cloverleaf interchange . After the interchange , Route 4 bends to the northeast , beginning a parallel alignment with Route 2 that continues to its northern terminus . Route 4 crosses into the town of East Greenwich , passing under South Road before interchanging with Route 2 at exit 6 , a partial cloverleaf interchange .

After exit 6 , Route 4 passes the Rhode Island Army National Guard base to the east and to the Hunt River to the west . Route 4 northbound interchanges with Route 403 at exit 7 ; Route 403 , or the Quonset Freeway , is a four @- @ lane , limited access freeway and spur route of Route 4 that serves the Quonset Business Park and the village of Davisville . Heading southbound , exit 7 is split into exit 7B , which serves the Quonset Freeway , and exit 7A , which serves Route 402 (Frenchtown Road) , another spur route connecting the highway to US 1 and Route 2 . After exit 7 , Route 4 continues northward as a six @- @ lane expressway , passing farmlands to the west and entering a suburban region of East Greenwich . The highway crosses under an overpass at Middle Road before interchanging with Route 401 , the freeway 's final spur , at another partial cloverleaf interchange . Exit 8 is also used to access Route 2 and I @- @ 95 south , which has no direct freeway connection with Route 4 north . Shortly after exit 8 , the Route 4 designation ends and the mainline of the highway defaults onto I @- @ 95 north .

= = History = =

In 1950 , the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a \$ 12 million (equivalent to \$ 118 million in 2016) bond issue to fund the construction of a 3 @-@ mile (4 @.@ 8 km) , four @-@ lane divided arterial bypass of U.S. Route 1 in Wickford . Construction on the highway began in 1952 and was completed in 1954 , at which time the roadway opened as an unnumbered state highway leading from US 1 to Routes 2 and 102 in Wickford .

During the late 1950s , a few years after the completion of the arterial , the Rhode Island Department of Public Works (RIDPW) proposed a relocation of Route 2 , which , at the time , was the major thoroughfare in the area . No action was taken until 1964 , when the RIDPW introduced a study for the " Relocated Route 2 " proposal . During the study , drivers who used the Colonel Rodman Highway arterial and were bound for the state capital of Providence were redirected onto Route 2 , an accident @-@ prone , four @-@ lane undivided highway near the modern exit 5 . In 1965 , the planned Route 2 freeway was given the new number of Route 4 , leaving Route 2 on its existing alignment . A public hearing was held by the state of Rhode Island on the proposed freeway , which was to be four lanes and have a divided , grassy median . This proposal was later accepted , and construction began two years later .

Construction of a 5 @.@ 4 @-@ mile (8 @.@ 7 km) long section of Route 4 from what is now exit 6 in East Greenwich to I @-@ 95 in Warwick began in 1967 and was completed in 1972 . That year , the 3 @-@ mile (4 @.@ 8 km) arterial south of the modern exit 5 was also designated as part of Route 4 . The divided highway remains largely intact to this date as the stretch of Route 4 from US 1 to Routes 2 and 102 at exit 5 ; the only piece of the arterial that has been significantly altered is the construction of a bridge over Amtrak 's Northeast Corridor line . By the early 1970s , Route 4 was complete north of exit 6 and south of what would become exit 5 , but there was a still a missing piece in the highway between the two exits . In the 1970s , the state of Rhode Island faced several budget problems and environmental concerns , both of which delayed the construction of the missing link for nearly eleven years . Environmental studies on the missing link began in 1977 , and the state estimated that the 1 @.@ 5 @-@ mile (2 @.@ 4 km) long section of freeway would cost \$ 15 ? 21 million (equivalent to \$ 59 ? 82 million in 2016) to construct .

In 1983 , the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) began construction of the new segment of Route 4 between exits 5 and 6 . The project , which ultimately went over budget at \$ 24 million (equivalent to \$ 52 million in 2016) , was financed from a \$ 63 million federal grant . In 1986 , during excavation for the new right @-@ of @-@ way , the Department of Transportation found archeological items from the Narragansett Indians dating from about 2 @,@ 000 to 4 @,@ 500 years prior . Although the findings were not centralized in the area , this caused delays for the extension of the freeway . On August 6 , 1988 , RIODT completed construction and performed a ribbon @-@ cutting ceremony for the new highway .

In January 1990 , two police cruisers were severely damaged during a chase on Route 4 . A driver was speeding in the southbound lanes of Route 4 near exit 7 ; when the driver exited at Route 402 (Frenchtown Road) , two police officers got into serious accidents in their attempts to pursue the vehicle . After the crashes , the American Civil Liberties Union restarted efforts to amend police chase policy and avoid further crash @-@ related injuries for officers in the line of duty .

In 2000 , construction began on the Quonset Freeway , a relocated Route 403 that serves the Quonset Business Park from Route 4 . The project included the reconstruction and reworking of exit 7 off Route 4 , which was a southbound @-@ only exit serving both Route 403 and Route 402 when constructed . The exit was converted into a trumpet interchange with new ramps between Route 4 , Route 403 and Route 402 and was completed in December 2008 , one year ahead of schedule . The project included the construction of a new northbound exit 7 serving Route 403 east .

= = Future = =

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has laid out long @-@ term plans for

improvements to both the southern and northern termini of Route 4 . During the 1980s and 1990s , RIDOT announced plans to eliminate the three traffic lights along the southern end of the highway . The department planned to replace the existing signalized US 1 and Route 4 merge , converting it into a grade @-@ separated interchange with an extensive overpass . This would cut @-@ off access to three local roads that intersect US 1 near the signal . The plan also included the replacement of the two other signaled intersections at West Allenton Road and Oak Hill Road with overpasses ; the overpass for West Allenton Road is planned to be constructed as a new exit 4 . In the 1990s , the state purchased and demolished several houses in the region to allow for an expanded Route 4 right @-@ of @-@ way in the vicinity of West Allenton Road .

The upgrade proposal proved to be very unpopular with North Kingstown residents who lived on the affected local roads . Additionally , RIDOT laid the highway out so that Route 4 would cross through wetlands in the area . This sparked environmental concerns , as one of the large wetlands that would be affected , Froberg 's Marsh , was deemed to be of high value by Rhode Island environmentalists . Despite local and environmental concerns , RIDOT still considers the Route 4 upgrade to be the safest way to improve traffic flow in the region . While the Department of Transportation considered upgrading nearby Route 2 to freeway standards as a potential alternative , this plan was ultimately rejected because of its effects on wells in the area . Although the project was originally scheduled to be completed by 2007 , the \$ 55 million project has been postponed indefinitely .

RIDOT also has long @-@ range plans to construct direct freeway connections linking Route 4 north with I @-@ 95 south and I @-@ 95 north with Route 4 south . As of November 2010 , environmental studies are being prepared for a reconfiguration of the interchange .

= = Exit list = =

Italics denote future exit numbers .