

September 13, 2021



Dear Governor McKee:

RI Transit Riders has publicly opposed the multi-hub plan for moving buses out of Kennedy Plaza ever since it was first publicized last summer. With the support of bus riders and other groups throughout the city and state, we mounted a campaign to stop flawed plan. We commend you for listening.

We have held two well-attended informational sessions presenting various plans that have been suggested for replacing the current Kennedy Plaza bus hub, and hundreds of riders have been surveyed. Overwhelmingly, passengers prefer leaving the hub where it is, using a portion of the transit bond money for upgrades in traffic signal patterns, terminal improvements, and the like in the Kennedy Plaza area, and then spending the remainder of the funds on improving bus hubs elsewhere in the State (outside of Downtown Providence).

This is RI Transit Riders' first choice as well. This option fulfills the mandate given by voters in 2014. We believe it is fully possible to use these funds to make Kennedy Plaza work better for public transportation and address security concerns as well.

However, RI Transit Riders believes a new bus hub on Dorrance near the Garrahy Courthouse, if done right, can work well. But we could not sign the letter originating from the Providence Foundation giving support to this alternative as written because the project, in such a preliminary stage and developed without public outreach and participation, has too many unanswered questions leading to concerns that need to be addressed before we can give the project our approval. These include:

- There must be assurance that the primary stakeholders, bus riders, have ample opportunity for input as the project develops.
- As RIDOT has no mechanism for such input and no experience designing or operating a bus hub, project responsibility and ownership of the hub facility should be: assigned to RIPTA, which does have such expertise and a long history of communication with bus passengers.
- With only \$20.55 million in bond funding identified for this project in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the cost of the Dorrance hub likely to be around \$60 million, funding for the project should be identified so that the amenities passengers need (indoor shelter, security, lighting, bathrooms, information...) are not removed later as cost-cutting measures. as happened to amenities at the planned bus hub in Pawtucket next to the new train station.
- Bus stops in Kennedy Plaza must not be dismantled until this new hub is completed. If riders are pushed out of the Plaza, it leads to inconvenience, confusion, and, with the closure of the terminal building, lack of access to bathrooms and shelter, as has happened in the past.

- Since many passengers need to get to the area near Kennedy Plaza as their ultimate destination, all bus lines should make a stop in Kennedy Plaza/Burnside Park.
- Sufficient support should be given to senior and disabled transit riders if/when their routes change.

We sincerely believe the above steps are necessary to make the project the success we know you want it to be.

Thank you again for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Patricia Raub and Chris Sarli
Co-Chairs, RI Transit Riders