

Chris O'Brien

From: barry schiller <bschillert358@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 12:41 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: opposed to H6122 Article 1 Section 18

This is Barry Schiller, writing to oppose H6122 Article 1 Section 18 being heard on 4/7/2021 which I think needs to be amended.

I'm a lifelong transit user, advocate, and RIPTA Board of Directors member 1995-1999. I support a proposed amendment to prohibit the use of the 2014 transit bond from being used to break up the Kennedy Plaza transit hub.

The RIDOT plan to break up the hub would make the system more confusing - now everyone know all Providence buses go to KP and if you need another bus it goes there too - and less convenient since many passengers would be sent away from KP, close to City Hall, URI, banks, hotels, the library, post office, Providence Place... This is contrary to the 2014 bond which voters were told was to "fund enhancement and renovations to mass transit hub infrastructure throughout the state..."

RIDOT may do a good job of fixing roads and bridges but they have no experience or expertise planning a bus system. Their decision to make this major change to our transit system was made without any public process, without project approval from state planning, without consulting riders, not a single public hearing. They held discussions only after the decision was made. So far RIDOT has ignored widespread opposition including from RI Transit Riders, Grow-Smart RI, the local American Planning Association, the Providence City Council, the Environment Council of RI, and community groups.

For reasons of environment and economy we have a societal interest in improving and promoting our public transit. The RIDOT plans for the bond will squander millions making transit worse, not better. But the legislature has this chance to stop this from happening.

Kennedy Plaza could use improvements and those opposing the RIDOT plan do advocate a robust stakeholder process (including RIPTA, RIDOT, Statewide Planning, the city of Providence, riders, the business, environment and civil rights communities, neighborhood groups) to work out how to do this. Indeed Providence had undertaken such a process that developed a broad consensus on KP before RIDOT short-circuited this effort by trying to impose their plan.

Please adopt the suggested amendment and help save transit. I thank the House Finance Committee for their attention to this matter.

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