



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

June 2, 2021

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chair, House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Honorable Chair Solomon and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 6373, which would increase the number of members of the transit authority from eight to nine and would make the mayor of Providence or designee an ex officio member with voting privileges.

Representation from the City of Providence on the RIPTA Board would be a clear win for Rhode Island riders and provides an opportunity to greatly improve transit in both the City and the state. The City is a major supporter and contributor to RIPTA. The majority of RIPTA services and investments are located in Providence, including the Downtown Transit Connector, the Kennedy Plaza hub, school bus passes, RIPTA's Administration and Maintenance facility on Elmwood.

As RIPTA pursues expanded investment in transit services, coordination with the City is critical. From transit priorities such as bus stop improvements to the future of Kennedy Plaza, the City is intricately involved in shaping RIPTA's future.

Furthermore, the recently completed RI Transit Master Plan sets a bold vision for the future of transit in the state, including many future transit investments that involve close coordination between the City and RIPTA staff. Though the City and RIPTA have a long history of collaboration at the staff level, including shared resources and expertise, but there is more opportunity to collaborate in this space.

Overall, City representation on the RIPTA Board would establish a clear relationship between the City and its transit system, and create consistency with city policies and investments that could improve transit operations and services. With Providence serving a more direct role in transit policy, both the City and RIPTA can better support the Rhode Islanders who depend on the state's transit system in their daily lives.

I strongly encourage you to support this bill and the opportunity to significantly strengthen the state's transit policies and system. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Elorza".

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza
City of Providence