

Dear Chair DiPalma and Committee members,

My name is Cedric Ye, I am a student and daily RIPTA rider from Providence, and I am writing in support of Senator Vargas' Transit Master Plan Bond Bill S2813.

Rhode Island has some of the lowest public transit funding among peer states. **While Rhode Island allocates just 17.5% of transportation funding to public transit, Massachusetts' proposed FY2027 budget directs over 70% of state transportation funding to public transit. Connecticut DOT's FY2026 transportation budget directs 57% of capital spending to public transit.** If the proposed \$100M Transit Master Plan Bond was spent over the 14 year timeline before 2040, **it would increase Rhode Island's transportation funding split to 19%** for public transit. The TMP bond is not an unreasonable increase in transit funding; in fact, most other states would consider it a trivial increase. However, the bond would finally make progress towards implementation of the visionary Transit Master Plan (TMP) adopted by the state in 2020 and help build a more convenient, accessible, safe, and reliable public transit system in Rhode Island.

As it stands today, most RIPTA trips are not competitive with driving because the bus is stuck in traffic and has to make many stops. This bond would fund the construction of rapid bus routes across the state identified in the TMP, like the planned Metro Connector project, that would drastically speed up transit travel times for transit riders. This would attract new ridership and meet our Act on Climate goals by funding the infrastructure needed to improve our public transportation system here in Rhode Island.

This bond would also provide direct funding for desperately needed improvements for current RIPTA riders. This includes improvements to bus stops and shelters; safer pedestrian access to bus stops including crosswalks, sidewalks, and curb ramps; and better passenger facilities at current bus hubs including bathrooms, sheltered and secured bike racks, and indoor waiting areas.

I urge you to support S2813, to give public transit in Rhode Island the generational investment it needs to become a high-quality, 21st Century system that current and future residents and visitors can rely on.

Sincerely,

Cedric Ye  
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