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Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

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April 2, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
VIA EMAIL - HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: Support for S-2813 (2026 Bond Referenda – Transit Master Plan)

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I write in full support for S-2813, a proposed \$100 million Bond Referenda to implement elements of Rhode Island's state-approved Transit Master Plan known as *Transit Forward RI 2040*. We thank Senator Vargas for introducing this legislation.

Grow Smart RI is Rhode Island's statewide smart growth advocacy organization. We represent a big-tent coalition of business and civic leaders along with community stakeholders committed to strengthening and growing Rhode Island's economy in a sustainable and equitable way. We work with community partners across the state to integrate smart land use, transportation and housing policies in a way that uses resources most efficiently and that creates vibrant and opportunity rich places for all to thrive.

Across the country, cities and states are investing in better transit and walkable communities as leaders position their cities and states to compete for young talent in a rapidly changing economy. In 2024, [51 cities or metro regions passed ballot measures](#) to improve their public transit systems. And here at home, our state is losing Hasbro which, which according to its CEO has prioritized a location with 'convenient access to public transit' to help them attract and retain talent.

This we know: Quality public transit systems boost economic development, help to accelerate location-efficient housing production, ease traffic congestion, climate pollution, and improve public health, all while reducing the cost of living for residents by saving them money on the second-highest household expense - Transportation.

The package of bills before you this evening would put Rhode Island on a path that many other states and metro regions have chosen – to invest in achieving the benefits of a data-driven and state-adopted blueprint for improving transit - increased ridership, affordability, more transit-oriented housing development, economic growth and progress in meeting the state's Act on Climate requirements.

We urge your approval of this measure.

Thank you,

John Flaherty
Senior Advisor and Special Projects