



RIPTA Public Hearing – Proposed Service Changes
Providence Foundation, 30 Exchange Terrace, Providence, RI
Monday, August 4, 2025
12 PM – 1:30 PM

RIPTA staff in attendance: Christopher Durand, Edward Brown, Cristy Raposo Perry, Joelle Kanter, Greg Harris, Joe Philbin, Ken Vinacco, John Chadwick, Nate Hannon, Jim Vincent, Sara Furbush, Lori Adamo, CJ Headley, Christel Chavez, Nicky Mudryy, Jane Williams, Carlos Gigliore and Tim McKenna

Board members in attendance: Patrick Crowley and Bernard Georges

On Monday, August 4, 2025, one hundred (100) members of the public attended. Thirty-seven (37) made oral comments. Seven (7) provided written comments.

Chief Executive Officer Christopher Durand opened the hearing by giving an overview of RIPTA's financial situation and budget deficit. Executive Director of Service Planning and Scheduling Edward Brown followed with an overview of proposed service changes.

Oral comments were provided as follows:

Chelsea Jimmis, lives on the East Greenwich/Warwick town line and rides Route 14. Since Route 14 already stops running before she finishes work, she must rely on Route 16 on Sundays. If that service is eliminated, she will be forced to take Uber, which typically costs around \$15 one way; this is an added financial burden. She expressed strong opposition to cuts on routes she regularly uses, including Routes 21 and 22 for medical appointments, and the 1, 78, and R-line to attend Rhode Island FC games.

She also voiced concern for others who would be affected by service reductions, such as homeless individuals staying at Harrington Hall and seniors in Westerly who depend on the Route 301 bus to reach essential services like Stop & Shop in Richmond. She emphasized that buses like the 13, 14, 16, and 23 were rarely empty, even on weekends. Concluding her remarks, she urged legislators to remember that "frequency is freedom."

Kenny Uong, a Providence resident and frequent rider of the R-Line and Route 1, emphasized that the proposed cuts would be devastating for riders. URI students, who depend on Routes 14, 64, and 69, will struggle to get to school and run errands without reliable service. In the Blackstone Valley, people depend on Routes 75, 76, and 80. In Warwick, weekend service will be eliminated, leaving many RIPTA riders without access to employment, healthcare, and education.

Kenny criticized Governor McKee, saying these cuts wouldn't even be considered if the governor had not failed to act, accusing him of "throwing riders under the bus." With only three days remaining before the RIPTA board meeting, he urged everyone to contact the governor and other officials to demand full funding for public transit.

Daria Phoebe Brashear, a resident of Edgewood in Cranston, is against the proposed transit cuts, highlighting the contrast between Rhode Island's approach to public transportation and that of other cities. On the very day the RIPTA board met to discuss service reductions, she was 800 miles away visiting another metro area, comparable in size to Providence, that had recently expanded its bus system and was planning 24-hour service.

In contrast, back home, she found herself in a room begging not to lose weekend service, while also worrying about already limited weekday service in her neighborhood. She expressed frustration that the decision-makers who control the funding were not present to hear these concerns.

Daria criticized the state's misplaced priorities, pointing out how money is spent on flashy airport signs and efforts to lure sports teams, while basic public transit needs go unmet. She emphasized that major employers are leaving because they want robust transit, not just cheap downtown land. She urged Rhode Island to stop positioning itself as a mere bedroom community to larger neighbors and to invest in infrastructure that signals a serious commitment to being a growing, independent city.

"These proposed cuts," she said, "make clear that we are not serious. Leadership that does not act is leadership in name only."

Greg Gerritt, a Providence resident, spoke out against the proposed service cuts, emphasizing RIPTA is not to blame. RIPTA underwent a study that shows the agency is running efficiently. He stressed that the blame for the crisis belongs to the state legislature and the governor, not with the transit agency.

As a climate justice advocate, Gerritt stated that slashing public transit is one of the most shortsighted actions a state can take if it claims to care about climate or economic justice. Robust public transit is essential for an equitable economy. "We know who rides the bus—lots of people, mostly those who don't drive cars. You cut service, and you're cutting their ability to participate in the economy."

Though he lives in a household with a car, Gerritt prefers to walk or use transit. He called out the state's failure to prioritize a basic public good, noting that Rhode Island is facing just a \$10 million shortfall in a multibillion-dollar budget. "If the governor rode the bus, if legislative leadership rode the bus, things might look different," he said, recalling how even millionaires used public transit where he grew up. "If our elected officials can't make transit work in Rhode Island, we're in more trouble than we thought."

Jane Arnold, a 75-year-old Pawtucket resident, shared her lifelong connection to public transit, having lived in eight states and 14 communities. Ever since high school, she has relied on buses to get to school, to graduate school, for entertainment, and now for a volunteer job. “If transit is available, I use it,” she said. “Partly because I like it—I hate driving, I hate potholes, I hate circling for parking, I hate paying for it. I like buses. I like the people on them.”

She described Route 35 to the public hearing and admired the skill of the driver maneuvering through narrow streets, something she wouldn't attempt herself even in her own car.

Addressing the worsening climate crisis, Jane noted that she tries to bike when she can, but riding in 90-degree heat at her age is neither safe nor sustainable. She warned that the current approach is leading to a “slow strangulation of RIPTA,” where service cuts result in fewer riders, which justifies further cuts in a vicious cycle.

Jane pushed back on the idea that raising fares would drive people away, arguing that most riders would rather pay a little more than be forced to rely on expensive alternatives like Uber. “This isn’t going to be a world-class city with a crummy transit system,” she said. “And this—Rhode Island—is the only place I’ve ever *chosen* to live. We all deserve to live in a world-class city.”

Angelina Stabile, an East Providence resident and representative of the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island, is strongly opposed to the proposed service cuts. Speaking both on behalf of the Federation and as an individual rider, she described the cuts as “devastating” and “crippling,” warning that they would destroy the freedom and independence of blind, disabled, and transit-dependent people across the state.

“These cuts are a disgrace,” she said. “They are destroying people’s lives.” Stabile emphasized that the blame does not lie with RIPTA, but with Governor McKee and the General Assembly. She criticized the governor’s proposal to roll back the two-cent gas tax, questioning how RIPTA is expected to cover rising operational costs when it’s already struggling to close a \$10 million budget gap.

As someone who uses paratransit services, she voiced deep concern about how RIPTA will be able to sustain service amid growing demand and shrinking resources. Directly addressing legislators, she urged them to do what is right: “We are your people. We voted for you. Do what’s right for *us*.”

William Moitoso, a resident of East Providence and longtime rider, spoke against the proposed RIPTA service cuts, particularly those affecting Route 60. Having ridden the bus for over 40 years, he emphasized that the current issues are not RIPTA’s fault but the result of inadequate support from the governor and state leadership.

Moitoso lives in an area with access to six bus routes, but expressed concern for his son, who lives in Bristol and relies heavily on the 60. He explained that Route 60 is a “split” line—once it reaches the island, it divides into east and west branches, effectively doubling travel time. Because of this structure, reducing service frequency to hourly intervals in the evenings functionally becomes a two-hour wait for many riders.

He described how on weekends, Route 60 routinely runs at standing-room-only capacity. “I rode it four times on a Saturday,” he said, “and every time it was packed.” Even Route 63 was crowded due to local events, with no alternative transportation options available. He pointed out that buses were so full they were forced to pass by waiting riders and cyclists, with bike racks also being maxed out.

“Do not cut the 60. It doesn’t need fewer buses—it needs *more*.”

Hannah Galan, an East Providence resident and small business owner, spoke out against the proposed RIPTA cuts, emphasizing their devastating impact on her community and livelihood. She took the 33 bus to attend the meeting and noted that her business, Pothos Plant Shop in Fox Point, sits along the heavily used 92 route, which is slated for major cuts. The bus stop is consistently busy and has brought valuable visibility to their shop. She and her husband maintain the stop by keeping it clean, providing seating, and ensuring it remains well-lit and safe. Hannah sees firsthand how vital RIPTA is to the neighborhood.

She shared concerns she’s heard directly from neighbors who can no longer drive, families without cars, and people with disabilities—all of whom rely on transit. One elderly neighbor told her he depends on weekend service to reach his part-time job and fears losing that income if service is cut.

With the recent closure of Eastside Marketplace, Fox Point has become a food desert, forcing residents to travel as far as Seekonk, Massachusetts, just to afford groceries. Cuts to Route 92 would make that even harder.

Weekend service reductions will directly harm small businesses like hers. “Weekends are our busiest time,” she said. “Many of our customers arrive by bus. This will drastically reduce foot traffic—not just to my store, but throughout the neighborhood.”

John Sagar, a Providence resident relies on the bus to get to work and his doctor’s office in East Providence. He frequently uses Routes 33 and 54 and expressed concern that service cuts will make him late for work. He urged change from the governor, emphasizing the importance of maintaining these essential routes.

Wendy Thomas, a Providence resident, rides Route 92 daily and volunteers with seniors, homeless individuals, and low-income residents. She emphasized that if bus service is cut, her ability to provide that support will be lost. Citing a recent ride where five people were waiting

at a single stop early in the day, she rejected the notion that weekend ridership is low, stressing that many people rely on the service every day.

Pat Souza, a Providence resident, emphasized the importance of Route 92, which serves two senior housing communities, Governor Apartments and Fox Point Manor. She highlighted that weekend service is essential, as she relies on the bus to attend church on Sundays and enjoy local events like WaterFire on Saturdays. Pat also shared a personal story about her son, who rides the 58 bus and struggles because reduced service prevents him from visiting her for Sunday dinner. She stressed the need for the 58 route to continue. Without Eastside Market, she has limited grocery options and now depends on Trader Joe's. Route 92 is crucial for her community.

Jack Jones, a resident of Oakland Beach in Warwick and retired pastor at Mathewson Street Church, volunteers regularly and relies on Route 3. He was surprised to see how full the bus is on Sundays, mostly with low-income people heading to church. Jack emphasized that community connection is vital for many, helping combat depression, suicide, and overdoses. Cutting Sunday service on Route 3 will be devastating for those who depend on it to maintain their social and emotional support.

Amber Blaylock, a new Providence resident, shared her experience relying on public transit due to neurological reasons that prevent her from driving. Coming from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a city she described as having poor transit, she appreciates Providence's walkability and better bus service, which she uses constantly to visit her parents, go to restaurants, Strong Towns Providence meetings, businesses, the beach, and events like WaterFire. Her parents, who have a car, also regularly take the bus because it's convenient. Amber worries that proposed transit cuts will trigger a downward spiral like in Harrisburg, reducing service and pushing more people into cars, which will worsen traffic and limit parking. She emphasized that good transit benefits everyone, including drivers, and questioned why transit is expected to make a profit when highways are not.

Jessica Null, representing Thundermist Health Center, emphasized that proposed RIPTA cuts will severely impact all the communities they serve statewide. Acknowledging the current budget deficit and the center's own financial struggles, she stressed that these cuts will create significant transportation barriers for patients accessing primary and specialty care. Thundermist has had to reduce its transportation expenses, forcing patients to rely more heavily on public transit to access appointments, as alternatives like MTM (Medical Transportation Management) require advance scheduling and are not available to all. Currently, patients and staff already spend over an hour traveling via multiple bus routes. The cuts will increase travel times and make it impossible for some employees to get to weekend shifts. These reductions will add to daily commuting burdens and reduce access to essential care and work.

George Corrente, a Providence resident, expressed concern that cuts to Route 55 will leave doctors and nurses at Fatima Hospital without reliable service, as well as students at Providence

College. He urged adding more service to Route 57. He stressed the importance of restoring Route 58, heavily relied upon by workers and shoppers. He criticized increasing the wait time on Route 51, the only bus serving Charles Street, calling the change unacceptable. He asked decision-makers to consider these changes carefully.

Jules Wang, a resident of Quincy, MA, strongly urged the board to vote against proposed service cuts. He emphasized that this crisis is the responsibility of Governor McKee, and state officials like Senate President Valerie Lawson and it is their problem to solve. Jules described the situation as a "death by a thousand cuts," where repeated service reductions over the years have led to declining ridership. If there was sufficient funding to restore bus frequencies to acceptable levels, more people would choose public transit over driving.

He highlighted a recent study showing that the system is using existing funds efficiently but stressed the need for greater investment, including in trains and rapid bus services. Jules has been awaiting the development of a rapid bus plan, which he believes could transform the transit network.

He also pointed out that the transportation challenges extend beyond just RIPTA buses to the roads and infrastructure they use, such as the Washington Bridge. Although he is not a direct voter in Rhode Island, he is invested in the outcome and wants to see progress on the transportation crisis. He urged Rhode Islanders to consider gubernatorial candidates' differing visions for transportation in the state and said, "we're all in it together."

Barry Schiller, a North Providence resident and former RIPTA board member in the 1990s, spoke out against the proposed service cuts, calling them painful and avoidable. He emphasized that while RIPTA must maintain a balanced budget, the real solution lies with Governor McKee, especially since the legislature is not currently in session.

Schiller pointed out that Governor McKee recently claimed he had \$15 million in unallocated funds, arguing that \$10 million could be used right now to stop the cuts—without needing to raise the gas tax. He cited past examples like the Washington Bridge ferry and the two-way east-bound Washington Bridge redesign, which weren't budgeted but were funded anyway, showing that the administration can find money when it wants to.

He urged the public to make sure the Governor understands how painful and harmful these cuts would be for transit-dependent people. Schiller expressed disbelief that McKee would allow transit to deteriorate, especially given its importance in fighting climate change, reducing traffic congestion, and keeping money from flowing to out-of-state oil interests. He concluded by questioning whether McKee is so aligned with the oil industry that he would abandon investment in public transit altogether.

Hannah Ortiz, a Providence resident, expressed deep concern about how RIPTA service cuts would disproportionately harm low-income individuals and those who cannot drive due to age, physical, or neurological conditions.

She questioned why such individuals should have reduced access to essential destinations like work, school, church, grocery stores, and other community activities. These cuts send a dangerous message: that people without cars or financial means are less deserving of mobility and dignity.

She emphasized that setting this precedent undermines the humanity of transit riders and entrenches inequality in Rhode Island. Hannah described her own experience riding overcrowded routes like the 51 and 72, where buses were standing room only and often left passengers behind.

She closed by urging Governor McKee and state leaders to reflect on why they continue to limit opportunities for disenfranchised residents, and to reconsider the harmful impact of the proposed cuts.

Randall Rose, a Providence resident and member of the Kennedy Plaza Resilience Coalition, emphasized that the proposed RIPTA service cuts were not the agency's choice but were the result of insufficient funding from the state. He explained that RIPTA had requested additional financial support this year but received \$10 million less than needed. Without that funding there is no way RIPTA can maintain current service levels.

Randall stressed that directing frustration solely at RIPTA would be ineffective. He urged residents to contact the state-level politicians who control the budget—specifically the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate President. He had been distributing flyers with contact information and encouraged others to make calls and ask their state representatives and senators to push leadership for adequate transit funding.

He pointed out that this issue lies at the state level, not with city or federal officials, and discouraged contacting federal politicians like Whitehouse or Reed on this matter. Rose noted that the General Assembly had already rejected a proposal to add \$10 million in funding during the last session. He named several local senators who voted against it, including Senator Bissaillon, Senators Lawson, Gallo, DiMario, de la Cruz, and Paolino.

Randall encouraged people to join local advocacy groups like Rhode Island Transit Riders and the Save RIPTA coalition. He concluded by emphasizing that elected officials need to feel public pressure and understand there will be electoral consequences if they fail to support essential public transportation funding.

Ben Jones, a Providence resident, is opposed to the proposed service cuts. He described the frustration many riders experience when a bus expected in 20 minutes ends up taking an hour or worse, when someone realizes they're completely outside the service area. Ben emphasized that these cuts would not magically give everyone access to a car or the financial means to use services like Uber. For many, public transit is the only option.

He warned of a domino effect: when people can't get from one place to another — to work, school, or local businesses — the entire economy suffers. Jones urged decision-makers to give the issue more thoughtful consideration, reminding them that transit access is a matter of equity and economic stability.

Denise DuFresne, a North Smithfield resident, has been riding RIPTA since 1979, when she started college. Although she owns a car and could drive and pay for parking daily, she chooses the bus, specifically Route 95x, because it's practical and environmentally responsible.

Denise emphasized that Governor McKee holds the power to prevent the proposed service cuts. She has reached out to numerous elected officials and recently spoke with Speaker Shekarchi, who is also trying to influence the Governor. She urged others to contact their state representatives and senators as well.

Rather than eliminating routes, Denise proposed more measured alternatives, such as reducing service frequency or adjusting park-and-ride fares, noting that many commuter riders like herself would accept fare increases. However, she stressed that fares should not be raised on those who rely on the bus and can least afford it.

Drawing from her experience working at a major bank, she suggested that cost-saving efforts should examine all levels of the organization, not just cuts at the bottom. She called for more efficient management of the service, not just service reductions that burden riders.

Denise Boulet, a Wakefield resident and park-and-ride commuter, voiced her support for preserving RIPTA service and thanked fellow speakers for sharing their stories. She emphasized that service cuts and route eliminations impact not only individuals but entire communities and the state as a whole.

Denise commutes by bus from South Kingstown and said the experience makes her feel good, knowing she's contributing to sustainability, while also saving on parking, gas, and wear and tear on her car. She acknowledged that while she has the option to drive, many others do not, especially those with childcare responsibilities or lower incomes.

She implored RIPTA to reconsider full route eliminations, particularly on weekends, which provide important opportunities for community connection, such as visiting family. Eliminating transit in corners of the state, she warned, would be a significant loss, especially for a place as small as Rhode Island. She urged decision-makers to take the concerns beyond the hearing room and into the halls of power, where real funding decisions are made.

Tomasina S., a North Providence resident, shared how the proposed service cuts will directly affect her ability to access essential services. She relies on Route 27 to get to Stop & Shop and the pharmacy, and said that without it, she might be forced to change both her pharmacy and grocery store. Non-emergency medical transportation will not cover basic errands like picking up prescriptions, leaving her with limited options. Tomasina expressed frustration that the

situation felt so dire it would take a miracle to fix, criticizing the Governor for withholding available funds “like Ebenezer Scrooge.”

Yvonne Wingard, a Providence resident, expressed frustration for once again facing proposed RIPTA service cuts, recalling that she received a "Save RIPTA" shirt during a similar crisis the previous year. She criticized state leaders for attempting to balance the budget by targeting essential services while sparing cuts to the salaries and pensions of wealthier individuals.

Yvonne relies heavily on Routes 1, 3, 4, the R-Line, and 66 to attend school. She explained that reduced service would mean waking up two to three hours earlier, risking being late or missing classes, and potentially having to pay for Ubers she cannot afford. The proposed cuts would not help Rhode Islanders, especially given the state's crumbling infrastructure, including the Washington Bridge. At a time when Rhode Island should be promoting public transit, leaders are instead threatening to make it less reliable and less accessible. These cuts could cost people their jobs, education, and livelihoods, and said it was unacceptable for the smallest state in the country to have some of the worst transit accessibility. She also mentioned the agency's audacity to consider a fare increase while reducing service. She implored Governor McKee, RIPTA leadership, and the General Assembly to reconsider, and to find a better solution than cutting lifeline services for working Rhode Islanders.

Hector Perez-Aponte, a Providence resident and policy analyst at the Economic Progress Institute, spoke about the serious impact that service cuts will have on riders who rely on public transit. He emphasized that RIPTA's budget deficit was not caused by inefficiency; multiple studies show that RIPTA operates more trips per capita and at a lower cost per trip than similar transit agencies nationwide.

Hector highlighted the rising costs of car ownership, noting that the price of buying a new car increased by 30% and a used car by 40% since 2019. According to national data, public transit users save \$13,000 annually more than drivers, making RIPTA an important economic lifeline.

Drawing from his own experience moving to Rhode Island six years ago from Oklahoma, where public transit is minimal, Hector shared how RIPTA was his only way to access work, medical appointments, and the city. He praised the system's reliability and the kindness of its drivers, reinforcing that public transit is not just a service but a vital necessity.

He concluded by urging Governor McKee and state leaders to fully fund RIPTA to avoid hardship for riders and ensure continued efficient service.

Ayşe “Aisha” Sanli, a Providence resident and Brown University graduate student, spoke about her reliance on RIPTA as she cannot afford a car in addition to her rent. She criticized the decision-making behind proposed RIPTA cuts, calling it a budget-driven cost-cutting measure rather than a genuine efficiency study. These cuts will lead to further route eliminations as ridership declines.

Aisha urged officials to conduct thorough research involving community feedback from low-income riders, students, people with disabilities, and communities of color to improve transit efficiency. She stressed that people use RIPTA for essential needs like school, work, healthcare, and leisure.

Expressing disappointment that Rhode Island, the smallest state, could not maintain an efficient public transit system, she called the cuts a “lazy decision” and emphasized that public transportation is about people’s rights to mobility and quality of life. Aisha concluded by urging the state to prioritize people’s needs over profits, insisting that enough is enough.

Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary for the Governor’s Commission on Disabilities, testified during the legislative session in support of full funding for RIPTA but noted that the funding cuts were still enacted. She emphasized that many in government misunderstood public transit, viewing it as a luxury rather than a necessary public good.

Elisabeth advocated especially for the statewide paratransit program but highlighted that many people with disabilities rely on regular RIPTA services, which provide independence, dignity, and self-sufficiency. She shared stories of individuals who moved to access transit routes now being cut, and stressed that public transit supports jobs, social connections, and access to shopping and services.

Cutting RIPTA funding will hurt the economy, as employers would struggle to fill positions and small businesses would suffer, potentially driving people to online shopping. She criticized the cycle of defunding and service cuts that reduce ridership, urging that ridership is currently rebounding and that RIPTA operates efficiently with low administrative costs.

She called on the governor and legislature to release available funds to close RIPTA’s budget gap, stressing that investing in public transit benefits the economy and communities and that cutting funds will have devastating consequences.

Tyrell Littlejohn, a Providence resident and lifelong RIPTA rider, is opposed to the proposed service cuts. He uses Routes 27 and 92 regularly to get to and from work and warned that reduced frequency would make it harder for riders to maintain employment. He highlighted the hardship for those whose routes might be completely cut, questioning how they would get to work, school, family events, or medical appointments.

Tyrell expressed worry about the financial burden on riders forced to pay for expensive alternatives like rideshares, which could leave them with little money left over. He also pointed out the overcrowding risks for students on fewer buses. He emphasized that these cuts will not just impact individual riders but would have negative effects on the entire city.

Nicholas Rutter, a Smithfield resident who grew up in Rhode Island and graduated from Cumberland High School and URI, commended RIPTA’s handling of severe challenges amid what he described as the worst transit conditions in the state’s history since the removal of

streetcars. He called the current system a "ghost" of the former streetcar network and stressed the need to prioritize transit in urban core areas like Providence to ensure social equity.

Nicholas highlighted that Providence bears the burden of transit needs both for city residents and suburban commuters. He appreciated advocacy against park-and-ride route cuts and emphasized the importance of routes like the 58 that serve hospitals, shopping centers, seniors, and workers. Cutting routes will shift more people to cars, pedestrians, and cyclists, groups vulnerable on streets lacking proper infrastructure, leading to more traffic congestion and danger.

He pointed to decreased ridership caused by service cuts, fare hikes, and less frequent buses, making transit less attractive and increasing stress on drivers facing furloughs and job insecurity. Nicholas also mentioned the densely populated and economically challenged neighborhoods of Olneyville, Federal Hill, and Silver Lake, which suffer from increased traffic and poor health outcomes tied to congestion.

He stated that the cost savings from cutting \$10 million in transit funding do not justify the resulting increase in car traffic, infrastructure damage, and impacts to quality of life. He urged the state to invest more in transit improvements, such as reducing bus wait times and increasing reliability, citing RIPTA's efficiency and community value.

Nicholas concluded by calling on local and state leaders, including the governor and legislators, to reconsider transit funding decisions, highlighting RIPTA's role in providing skilled jobs, stable fuel costs, and democratic engagement with riders, which alternatives like rideshares cannot match.

Grace Pires, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island, expressed appreciation that the statewide paratransit program will continue but raised serious concerns about the impact of cuts to fixed-route service. She emphasized that many blind individuals rely on these routes for daily life and independence. With route eliminations, they will be forced to use paratransit, which in the long run will be more expensive for RIPTA to operate. Grace urged that, if funding is available, it should be used to bridge this gap and protect vital transportation access for the blind community.

Mona Hussein, a Providence resident, having lived in various states across the country, emphasized the importance of accessible and reliable public transportation. She stated that people are more likely to use transit when it effectively takes them where they want to go, when they need to go. Mona urged Rhode Island to expand its public transit offerings rather than reduce them.

Liza Burkin, Board President of the PVD Streets Coalition, delivered an urgent plea against proposed cuts to Rhode Island's public transit services. She expressed frustration and disbelief that advocates had to gather once again to defend essential transit routes and services.

Liza criticized Governor McKee for failing to understand or acknowledge the wide-ranging and harmful impacts these transit cuts would have. She emphasized that these cuts threaten the daily lives of Rhode Islanders by limiting access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other critical opportunities, particularly for transit-dependent residents who do not have access to cars. She called the situation "unspeakable" and accused state leadership of being out of touch with the lived realities of transit riders.

She also condemned the timing of the RIPTA Board meeting, noting that a final public hearing was scheduled for Wednesday night, with the board set to vote on the cuts less than 12 hours later on Thursday morning. Liza questioned the integrity of a process that claims to consider public feedback but appears to have already reached a decision. She urged people to attend a rally at Kennedy Plaza at 5 PM on Wednesday and to show up at the RIPTA Board meeting to voice their opposition directly.

Liza called on the public to contact the governor's office and hold elected officials accountable. She encouraged people to "threaten them with your vote" and reminded the public of the collective power they hold. The proposed transit cuts are not just a transportation issue; they are a threat to economic equity, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Only organized, vocal, and persistent public resistance can prevent them from going through.

Walter Melillo, ATU Local 618 President/Business Agent, a longtime RIPTA employee with 28 years of service as both a bus driver and supervisor, advocated against the proposed public transit cuts. He began by applauding his fellow transit workers, calling them hardworking and dedicated individuals who consistently go above and beyond to serve riders across the state. Walter emphasized that he has witnessed firsthand the vital role public transit plays in the lives of countless Rhode Islanders. He shared that over nearly three decades, he has heard personal stories and seen the struggles of those who rely on these services daily. To him, eliminating such an essential service is deeply personal and painful.

He called the proposed cuts shameful and urged the public to take action by contacting their elected officials, including the governor, to make their voices heard. He stressed that maintaining existing transit services is not just about jobs or routes; it's about preserving a lifeline for many in the community. Rhode Island must protect public transit and the people who depend on it.

Howard Kaufman, a Providence resident, shared a personal account illustrating the serious impact of proposed public transit cuts. He explained that, because the Johnston bus will no longer stop near Atwood Avenue, he may be unable to attend a dental appointment in September to address a significant health issue.

Kristina Clairborne, a Providence resident, spoke passionately about the importance of accessible public transit in Rhode Island. She pointed out the irony of living in the "Ocean State," a place that celebrates its natural beauty, yet may soon become inaccessible to many

due to transit cuts. As the smallest state in the nation, it is especially disheartening that residents could be unable to travel from one side to the other.

Originally from New York City, Kristina expressed surprise at how difficult it can be to get around Rhode Island without a car. After spending 20 years in South County, she now lives in Providence, and for the first time, she is not in a position to drive. She initially appreciated the city's central location and transit connectivity, but with the proposed cuts, she now feels isolated once again. She believes all Rhode Islanders should have the ability to travel freely and enjoy the entire state, regardless of physical or financial limitations.

Laurent Martinez, a Providence resident living in Elmwood, is opposed to the proposed public transit cuts. As a student and someone with a mobile job, Martinez relies heavily on the transit system to get to school, work, and daily necessities. He emphasized the harsh reality of long waits at unsheltered bus stops, questioning whether Governor McKee has ever had to endure standing for 50 minutes in the sun, cold, or rain—conditions many riders face regularly.

Laurent criticized the proposed cuts, stressing that they will harm a wide range of people, including students, the elderly, the disabled, and workers. Transit is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Reducing service undermines the wellbeing and mobility of the entire community.

Matthew Blanchette, a North Providence resident, is opposed to the service cuts; he rides Routes 50, 55, 58, 21, 66, and 69. He highlighted the importance of these routes for everyday activities such as shopping locally and attending medical appointments, noting that some routes, like the 21, are consistently busy and crowded.

With no further comments, the hearing ended at 2:10 PM.

COMMENT SHEET

Providence
8/4/25
12:00 PM



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: Natalia Almeida Kendrick

Address: [REDACTED]

North Kingstown RI 02852

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

I have been talking Busses from age 16/
and I am now 65 years old (Central High
I am on Bus 14 and I was the one school
who was fighting for Bus 14 on Sunday
~~AND~~ I got it, I would like it to
Keep Run, 14 Please, they can call
my phone and tell me - if it
stay's, I have decable pass
and my children - come and visit me
thank you

Natalia A Kendrick

COMMENT SHEET

Providence
August 4, 2025
12:00PM



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name:

Sam E. Kuteris

Address:



Prov. 02904

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

When are the proposed changes meant to take effect? → Sept. 13th ~~Providence~~

I use the 14 to get to & from work everyday. Lane's weekend service will cost me approx. \$100 per week in Uber/Lyft fees. That is nearly 50% of my weekly income.

I need the RIPTA to work.

We all need the RIPTA.

Well funded public transportation is essential for quality of life for countless people.

I quite literally not be able to make rent if the buses are not funded.

COMMENT SHEET

Providence
August 4, 2025
12:00 PM



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: Sedn Sierra-Patel

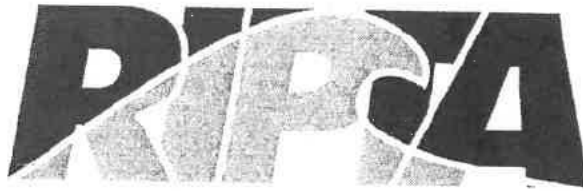
Address: [REDACTED] Cranston RI 02910

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

I rely on RIPTA to get to and from work, to bring my child to school, to do food security outreach on weekends and to attend appointments and events. I live where I live specifically for the access to the 21 and 2b. My primary concern is school drop off. Providence schools have very strict tardiness cutoffs and as it is, my child and the many other students who ride the 2b with us each morning barely make the 9:00 bell at the met and other nearby schools. I'm worried the new schedule will deliver us too late for the bell, and the new headways will mean having to arrive nearly an hour early for school which presents a slew of challenges. Weekend service cuts will hurt my volunteer work, and my work schedule will be impacted negatively. I am an essential employee in the state labs and these changes will cascade to make it much harder to get to work and get my child to school.

COMMENT SHEET

PROVIDENCE
August 9, 2025
12:00 PM



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: Carol Forrest

Address: [REDACTED]

providence R.I. 02908

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

(I use Ripta a lot and it would be a disadvantage to me I use it for food shopping laundry, some appointments.)

(do not stop route 23)
A lot of people up there need it. A lot of people from Cranston were happy to have route 23 up there. now its going to be gone.

Marketing @ripta.com

COMMENT SHEET

Providence
12:00 PM
August 4, 2025



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: Tyrell Littlejohn

Address:



Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

I hope that whatever they decide that the whole city will feel it.

COMMENT SHEET

PROVIDENCE

12:00 PM

August 4, 2025



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: JOHN H WELCH BS EMP & RV

Address



PINETUCKET, RI 02860

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

NO ONE SPOKE ABOUT INCREASING
REVENUE FROM EXISTING RIPTA
RIDER BASE. I HAVE WITNESSED
INOPERABLE METERS ON R-LINE
BUSES ABOUT (10%) TEN PERCENT
OF TOTAL RIDE I EXPERIENCED!

MY STRONG SUGGESTION IS TO HAVE
METER TECHNICIAN WORKING A EVENING
(NIGHT SHIFT TO FIX BROKEN METERS
FOR WAKE GRABY INVOICE IF HAVE
BSAP. THE BUSES ARE NOT BUSY
SERVING PUBLIC DURING NIGHTS
THIS IS NOT THE LOGIC OF A GENIUS!
Thanks You Sincerely Jones

Marketing @ripta.com

COMMENT SHEET

Providence
August 4, 2025
12:00 PM



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Name: Francis Stach

Address: [REDACTED]

North Providence 02904

Thank you for attending RIPTA's public hearing. Please use this sheet for any comments or questions you may have. Thank you.

Congratulations This is the
Birth of Gypsy Vans!

Blank lined area for additional comments.