

Statement Regarding [RIDOT Response to Title VI Civil Rights Complaint](#) Regarding Break-up of Central Transit Hub in Downtown Providence

April 14, 2021 - The RIDOT plan to break up the central transit hub at Kennedy Plaza and scatter the bus stops and transfer points across downtown will mean more hassle and confusion for transit riders, longer travel times, more transferring and more waiting for buses without access to basic amenities such as public bathrooms. With less than 5 months to planned construction, RIDOT has not proposed an alternative where all transfers can take place in a single convenient location with access to amenities.

The written response to the complaint is superficial and flimsy and disregards the significant, disproportionate and negative impacts that RIDOT's plan will impose on people of color, disabled and low-income populations across Rhode Island. RIDOT's trivial response took 85 days, 25 days longer than the department's own Title VI response [guidelines](#) (p. 8).

The conclusions in the 5-point response are bewildering. For example, it states that "a final plan has not been identified for this project" and "therefore there is presently no Title VI violation".

However, according to RIDOT's own [RFP](#) for design-bid-build services, a Construction Contract Advertisement Date is scheduled for June 11, 2021 with "shovels in the ground" by August 27, 2021. And last November 5th, RIDOT participated in a [press event](#) stating that the multi-hub project was moving forward.

The response by RIDOT is an affront to all those who will be negatively impacted by this deeply flawed plan and is wholly inconsistent with President Biden's [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities](#).

It's approaching 7 years since voters approved a \$35M transit improvement bond with nothing to show for it but \$2.1M spent on bond issuing costs, legal and consultant fees. RIDOT's inability to move this bond project forward is outlined in this [3-min presentation](#) by House fiscal staff to the House Finance Committee on April 7, 2021.

We call on Governor McKee to turn the project over to RIPTA. RIPTA has the requisite expertise to skillfully develop an alternative plan with transit riders at the table so that we can finally get on with making needed improvements to the public space in Kennedy Plaza while also improving vital transit connections through Downtown Providence. And at the same time, let's get on with implementing the broader [Transit Master Plan](#) that RIPTA developed, with significant public input, to get more Rhode Islanders where they're going, quickly, efficiently and affordably.

For more background and media coverage about this controversy, click [here](#).



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