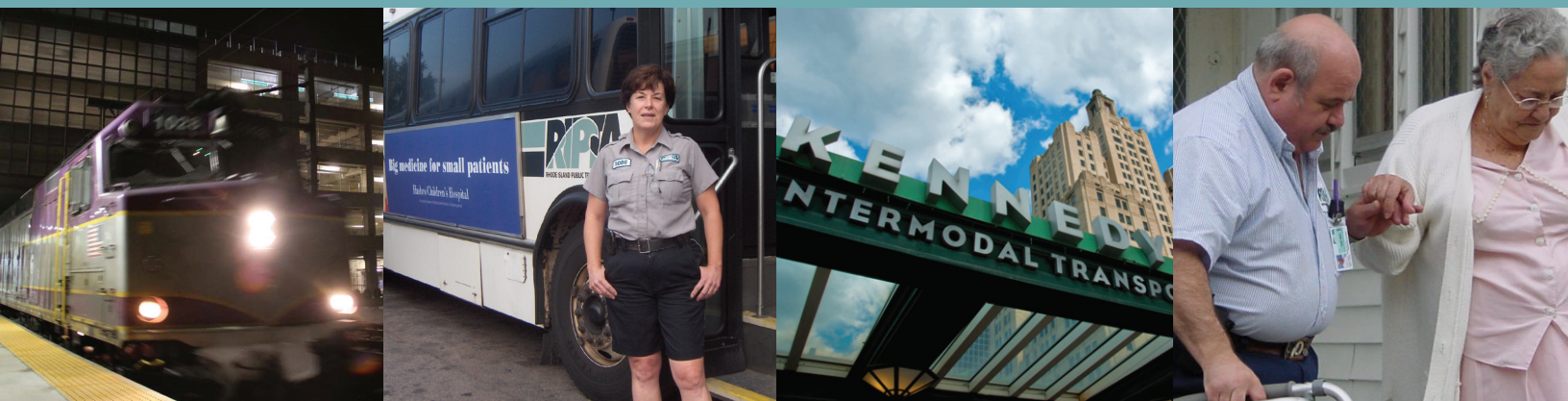


# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TRANSIT IN RHODE ISLAND

*RIPTA's Five Year Strategic Plan to Keep Rhode Island Moving*



*RIPTA's Strategic Planning Subcommittee, a partnership of RIPTA's Board of Directors and representatives from the Governor's office, various state agencies and non-profit rail and transit advocacy groups led the development of this plan. In particular, our partners at the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the Statewide Planning Program, the Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC), and the Transit 2020 coalition have been instrumental in supporting RIPTA's current initiatives, as well as the advancement of the strategies and proposals in this plan.*

*In the fall of 2010, RIPTA released a draft version of this document to the public and presented our "Vision for the Future of Transit in Rhode Island" at four community meetings in Woonsocket, Providence, Wakefield and Middletown. We would like to acknowledge those who attended these meetings and offered support for the strategic initiatives proposed. This final document includes the comments made by our customers, local planners, business leaders, elected officials and other individuals during this public review.*

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## ***Moving Forward With a New Vision for RIPTA***

*Imagine a future in which a wide range of multi-modal, convenient, and attractive transportation choices help promote growth, and support thriving, livable communities throughout Rhode Island.*

*As the state's Mobility Manager, we aim to achieve this vision in a fiscally responsible manner, working with federal, state, local and private partners to realize the benefits a modern transit system can provide and to improve the overall quality of life in Rhode Island.*

## GOAL 1

### OBJECTIVES

1. Provide Public Transit Services in Rhode Island
2. Improve Intermodal Connections
3. Support Regional Mobility and Interstate Travel
4. Address the Mobility Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Rhode Island's Growing Senior Population
5. Be the Definitive Transportation Resource for Rhode Island

### Serve as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager

*As Mobility Manager, RIPTA will integrate and coordinate all public transportation services in Rhode Island and will serve as the definitive resource for information on all travel options – including bus, rail auto, water and bike. We will capitalize upon the multi-modal opportunities presented by the growing presence of rail services in our state, will lead efforts to make more regional connections, and will support the mobility needs of all individuals.*



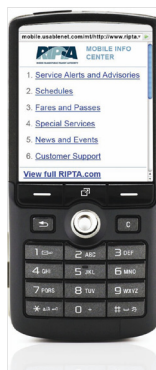
## GOAL 2

### OBJECTIVES

1. Initiate a Bus Stop Improvement Program
2. Make Route Information, Schedules and Fare Products Easily Accessible
3. Use Technology to Better Support the Customer
4. Make Transit Faster and More Competitive with Automobile Travel
5. Ensure the Safety and Security of Our Passengers and Employees
6. Put a Renewed Emphasis on Customer Service
7. Better Market our Services and the Benefits Transit Brings to Our State

### Increase Ridership by Making Transit More Convenient, Attractive and Easy to Use

*RIPTA aims to change the image of transit in Rhode Island, improving the passenger experience for existing customers and attracting new riders. New vehicles and the placement of customer amenities at bus stops will make each transit trip more comfortable. Available technologies will be used to provide real time bus arrival information and to help keep buses on schedule. Route and schedule information will be easy to find and understand. We will promote a consistent, positive image and make transit in Rhode Island more predictable, convenient and attractive to our customers.*





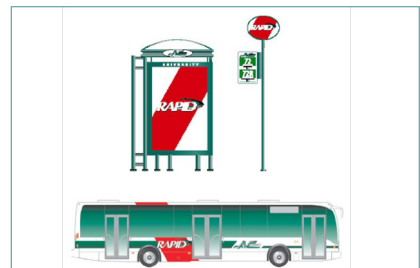
## GOAL 3

### OBJECTIVES

1. Better Coordinate and Communicate the Process for Advancing Transit Projects in Rhode Island
2. Provide Additional Bus and Flex Services to Meet Demand
3. Introduce Rapid Bus in High Ridership Corridors
4. Strengthen and Expand Downtown Transit Hubs
5. Enhance Flex Services and Focus Rural Transit in Key Activity Centers
6. Build a Streetcar or Other Transit Service to Better Connect and Grow Downtown Providence

### Grow our Transit Network to Expand Mobility and Support Economic Growth

*Few new roads are being built in Rhode Island today. Our transit system provides the most practical and sustainable means of accommodating future growth and mobility needs. While we seek to maintain our existing infrastructure and service levels, we must also advance plans to expand and improve the system to meet the challenges and needs of the 21st century. RIPTA will work to identify and advance investments that best meet passenger demand and address critical mobility needs throughout our state.*





## GOAL 4

### OBJECTIVES

1. Support Policies that Enhance the Efficiency of Transit and Create Incentives to Encourage Transit Use
2. Develop “Win-Win” Relationships with Private Businesses and Local Institutions
3. Be a Full Partner in Achieving Local Sustainability Goals

### Realize the Environmental, Economic and Quality of Life Benefits of Transit

*Transit plays an integral role in making Rhode Island a more livable place and in supporting the state’s economic well-being and environmental health. As a catalyst to development and a means of job access, it supports local businesses and economic growth. As an alternative to single-occupancy auto use, it reduces pollutants in the air, promotes walking and improves overall public health. RIPTA is committed to working with the state, municipalities and private businesses to capitalize on these benefits, and to move Rhode Island towards a sustainable future.*



## GOAL 5

### OBJECTIVES

1. Integrate RIPTA's Strategic Planning, Budgeting, and Management Processes
2. Achieve Greater Levels of Operational Efficiency and Demonstrate Fiscal Responsibility
3. Work Proactively with the General Assembly, our Advocates and Other Partners to Identify Sustainable Funding Streams for Transit

### Identify a Sustainable Funding Strategy

*A robust transit system is a vital component of Rhode Island's public infrastructure and, like other parts of the transportation network (e.g. roads, bridges, and rail), transit requires public support. RIPTA recognizes that we serve the taxpayer, and must demonstrate fiscal responsibility before advancing new initiatives. Today, we can point to many recent efforts to bring greater levels of efficiency to our operations and to those of other state agencies. We have secured new revenue sources from municipal, institutional and private business partners to help us leverage federal funds. We will continue to aggressively pursue operational efficiencies, innovative revenue sources and a sustainable funding mechanism, positioning our agency to take advantage of future growth opportunities.*



## INTRODUCTION

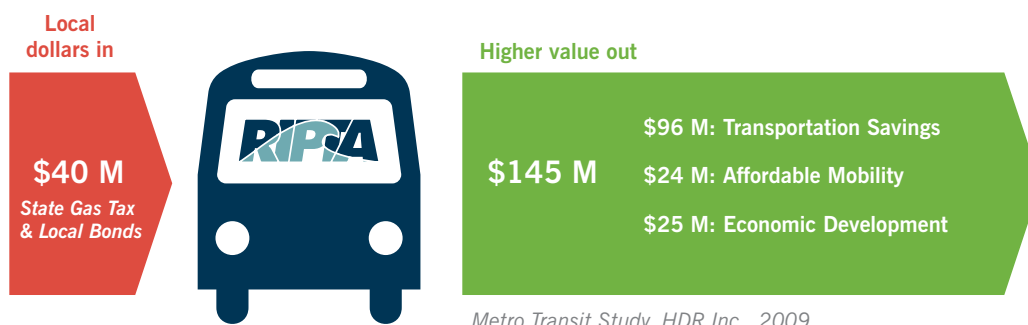
Rhode Island's compact size and historical development patterns offer a unique advantage in providing our state with cost-effective public transportation, a necessary component to help build sustainable communities for the 21st century. At the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), we strive to capitalize on these assets and are committed to offering and promoting a range of transportation choices to support mobility throughout our state and region.

This “*Vision for the Future of Transit in RI*,” represents RIPTA's first strategic planning document in our 45 year history. It presents a new strategic direction and five specific goals to guide our role as Mobility Manager for the state and to transform our agency into an active partner working to achieve growth and sustainability in Rhode Island.

### Why is RIPTA Important to Rhode Island?

RIPTA moves more than 18 million passengers each year, bringing commuters to work, students to school and families to medical care. We provide over four million rides to our state's senior citizens, low income residents and individuals with disabilities each year. We bring people to shopping, restaurants, theaters and other local businesses. We support the state's tourism industry, by offering visitors easy access to key destinations and attractions. Finally, we provide technical expertise to other state agencies, introducing new ways of managing their transportation which have resulted in millions of dollars of savings for the state as a whole.

The benefits of our investments have far reaching affects on Rhode Island's ability to foster economic growth, maintain vibrant urban centers, and contain sprawl. In addition to transporting people, the availability of our services helps to: 1) reduce traffic congestion and the cost of highway travel and maintenance, while improving travel safety and improving air quality; 2) support more walkable communities leading to better public health and lower health care costs; and, 3) reduce overall household transportation expenses. The value of these benefits is estimated to be \$145 million annually, far exceeding the level of local funds (gas tax revenues and bond funds) contributed to RIPTA operations each year.



*“...expanded, modern transit systems are absolutely essential to job creation and the long-term health and prosperity of our nation's cities.”*

— U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood

## A Financial Crossroads: Which Path Should We Follow?

Our annual budget is largely supported through a portion of the state gas tax proceeds, a revenue base which has declined by nine percent over the last six years. People are driving less, and many are choosing transit instead. While this is good news for RIPTA and the state as a whole, it highlights a shortcoming in our annual financing mechanism. Fuel consumption, and therefore the state gas tax yield, has been declining due to rising fuel prices, the introduction of more fuel efficient cars and a growing environmental awareness. As a result, the state gas tax yield has declined and there is less local funding directed to transit, forcing us to do more with less. RIPTA has been struggling to maintain existing services in the face of escalating fuel, labor and health care costs.

Today, we have the choice of following one of two paths. Without a more predictable long-term revenue source, RIPTA will continue to face annual budget shortfalls, continuously weighing the adverse impacts of potential fare increases or service reductions. The second choice involves transforming RIPTA into a stable transit agency, able to maintain today's service through a dedicated and predictable funding source, and advance our strategic vision. Keep in mind that virtually every transit system in the US receives outside support to support operations, much like our roads, bridges and schools. Our vision involves securing more sustainable funding, taking clear action to grow our ridership, and helping our communities realize the environmental, economic and community benefits that a modern transit system can provide.

Which path should we follow?

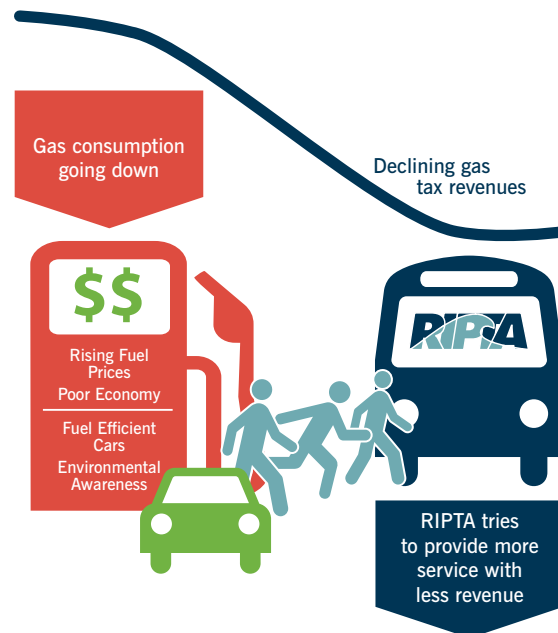
*Our company “was attracted to downtown Providence by its arts community, proximity to talented students and easy access to public transportation.”*

— 38 Studios CEO Jen MacLean

## Why Develop a Strategic Plan Today?

Despite the difficult economic times facing Rhode Island today, it is critical that we have a plan to maintain our existing services while preparing to enhance mobility and expand our system to support future economic growth. Over the last several years, independent audits of RIPTA's system have consistently concluded that there should be more, not less, investment in our transit network, allowing Rhode Island to accrue the mobility, economic and environmental benefits that a robust transit system provides. These conclusions are supported by an enthusiastic call for increased transit from nearly every corner of our state and are echoed in virtually every state and local planning document released in Rhode Island over the last decade.

## RIPTA Has Been Doing More with Less



Graphic by: Jeff Nickerson



We are well positioned to successfully transform our agency and enact real change by improving our transit system in Rhode Island. Our ability to successfully realize change is supported by a convergence of recent RIPTA accomplishments and positive external factors:

- Our ability to accommodate significant increases in transit ridership over the past decade.
- Recent support by the General Assembly, including designation as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager and positive actions taken to consider potential sustainable funding sources for RIPTA.
- Strong partnerships with the RI Department of Transportation, the RI Division of Statewide Planning, RI Housing, the City of Providence and others working to plan for the future of our state.
- Our success in introducing efficiencies into the transportation related budgets of other state agencies, namely the Departments of Human Services, Transportation, and Education.
- Commuter rail expansion in Rhode Island, which provides the opportunity to build a more regional, multi-modal transportation system.
- A growing advocacy for improved transit in Rhode Island, led by the Coalition for Transportation Choice (CTC), the Transit 2020 Action Group, the RIPTA Riders Committee, and other voices.
- Renewed federal support for transit, including additional competitive funding opportunities to support projects in Rhode Island.
- Public support voiced by virtually all individuals who attended public presentations on this plan in the fall of 2010, recognizing and applauding RIPTA's desire to participate as a more active steward of our state's environmental, community and development goals.



*Today is the ideal time to begin RIPTA's transformation.*

#### What is Included In Our Strategic Plan?

This “*Vision for the Future of Transit in RI*” represents the first step in transforming RIPTA into a more modern, 21st century transit system, serving Rhode Island with a range of seamless, efficient and appealing transportation choices. Our new vision statement indicates our willingness to evolve from a struggling bus agency to a strong partner supporting Rhode Island's need for enhanced mobility and economic growth, based on five basic principles identified by RIPTA's Strategic Planning Subcommittee.

**Be Multi-Modal  
and Regional**

**Attract More  
Riders**

**Grow our  
Transit  
Network**

**Support  
Livable  
Communities**

**Identify  
Sustainable  
Funding**

Five strategic goals have been identified based upon these ideals, as well as our review of statewide policy statements, the findings of recent local area transit enhancement studies, and the review of public comments expressed through other related planning efforts and public meetings.

### Five Strategic Goals

1. Serve as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager
2. Increase Ridership by Making Transit Convenient, Attractive and Easy to Use
3. Grow our Transit Network to Expand Mobility and Support Economic Growth
4. Realize the Environmental, Economic and Quality of Life Benefits of Transit
5. Identify a Sustainable Funding Strategy

Each goal includes a range of objectives, representing a definitive policy shift and a clear plan of action to guide RIPTA planning and operations over the next five years. By fully implementing this plan, we believe we can **increase our ridership by more than 10% over a five year period**, and expand the range of mobility, economic and environmental benefits our services already bring to Rhode Island.

We are actively working with state decision-makers and other partners to seek sustainable funding mechanisms for both the maintenance and enhancement of Rhode Island's statewide transit system. **Yet, we cannot wait for increased funding levels to be in place before advancing a vision for growth.** Public audiences presented with this plan in the fall of 2010 stressed the need for RIPTA's Board and other state leaders to advocate for implementation of the actions and vision contained herein. We must be prepared to take advantage of all potential funding opportunities – positioning ourselves to maximize federal support, developing partnerships with private, non-profit and local organizations, and identifying better and smarter ways of doing business.

It is time to move forward with specific, practical and achievable measures for developing and maintaining a first-class multi-modal transit system in Rhode Island. In 2016, we will celebrate RIPTA's 50th birthday, and the transformation of our agency from a bus transit operator to the manager of a sustainable, regional transit system that provides transportation choice, mobility and clear benefit to all Rhode Islanders.



## BACKGROUND

### RIPTA History

Established in 1966, RIPTA is a quasi-public, independent authority authorized to operate public transit services throughout the State of Rhode Island. For more than a decade, RIPTA has also served as the statewide coordinator for the RIde Program and is the largest provider of paratransit services in the state.

In our early years, RIPTA focused on stabilizing our business, increasing the number of bus routes and the frequency of services provided, and extending service into new parts of the state. Today, RIPTA provides fixed-route service to 34 out of 39 communities, and provides Flex service in 11 communities. Last year, more than 18 million passengers used these services.

During the 1990's, RIPTA experienced a period of growth and expansion. LINK trolley services were introduced, tailored to the cities of Providence and Newport, and Flex service began, a reservation-based flexible transit model designed for lower-density communities and now operating in eight zones around the state. Towards the end of the decade RIPTA partnered with RIDOT to introduce Commuter Resources Rhode Island (CRRI), a commuter support program which provides information and incentives to increase mobility throughout the state. RIPTA also initiated the Providence-Newport passenger ferry service, which operated for nine years until ending service in 2009.

Although expansion of the system has slowed over the last decade (2000-2010) due to funding constraints, continued ridership growth can be attributed to our high standards for service reliability and the numerous improvements made over the past ten years to better serve our customers. RIPTA has been working diligently to maintain our capital assets and to make strategic upgrades to enhance customer service, introduce cost efficiencies and take advantage of new technologies. Two new maintenance facilities have been constructed to replace the old trolley barn facilities in South Providence, RIPTA's flagship hub at Kennedy Plaza was redesigned, and new computer, communications and fare collection technologies have been introduced. Our commitment to business partnerships has led most colleges and universities in the state to enlist in our UPASS program, and our Eco-Pass program is growing rapidly.

### Recent RIPTA Accomplishments

**Construction of a new \$41 million Paratransit Maintenance & Operations Center in Providence.**

**Completion of the Metro Providence Transit Enhancement Study, winning URI's Transportation Excellence award for its ten recommendations to improve mobility in and around our capital city.**

**Introduction of TransArt and the installation of new locally-designed shelters in Central Falls, Newport, Burrillville and Providence.**

**Coordination with the RI Department of Education to achieve over \$2 million in annual savings for school transportation.**

**Successful mitigation of the I-195 relocation project, working with RIDOT to carry nearly 3,000 riders a day as part of our joint "Keep Eddy Moving" project.**

**Coordination with the Department of Human Services to achieve about \$3.0 million in annual savings by reviewing client transportation services.**

**Provided about 1.5 million student and faculty rides via UPASS in 2010 and introduced Eco-Pass to encourage transit use by commuters.**



In 2008, a Special Legislative Commission to Study Transit Services was charged with identifying ways to optimize the functionality of the transit system. The Commission concluded that simply maintaining the existing transit system would not be adequate to meet future transportation needs. Members recommended increasing RIPTA's role in managing and providing public transportation in the state. As a result, the General Assembly designated RIPTA as Mobility Manager for Rhode Island and assigned the following specific responsibilities:

- Provide public transit services that meet mobility needs of the people of the state, including the elderly and disabled;
- Increase access to employment opportunities;
- Connect different modes of public transportation, including rail, air and water services;
- Promote community design that features public transit services as defining elements of a community;
- Facilitate energy conservation and efficient energy use in the transportation sector by providing public transit services; and
- Mitigate traffic congestion and enhance air quality.

### Current RIPTA Services and Programs

RIPTA operates fixed-route and Flex services throughout Rhode Island and provided more than 18 million passenger trips in FY2010. A map of current RIPTA services is shown in **Figure 1**. RIPTA also administers the RIdE Program, Rhode Island's statewide paratransit program and other transportation programs. A snapshot of RIPTA services and programs is provided below:

#### Fixed-route Bus Transportation

- Operates 7 days a week in 34 communities on 56 bus routes.
- Carries more than 18 million passengers each year with a fleet of more than 200 vehicles.
- Brings about 1.5 million students and faculty members to local colleges and universities.
- Provides over 4.3 million discounted passenger trips each year to individuals with disabilities and those over the age of 60.
- Serves 37 Park and Ride lots throughout Rhode Island.

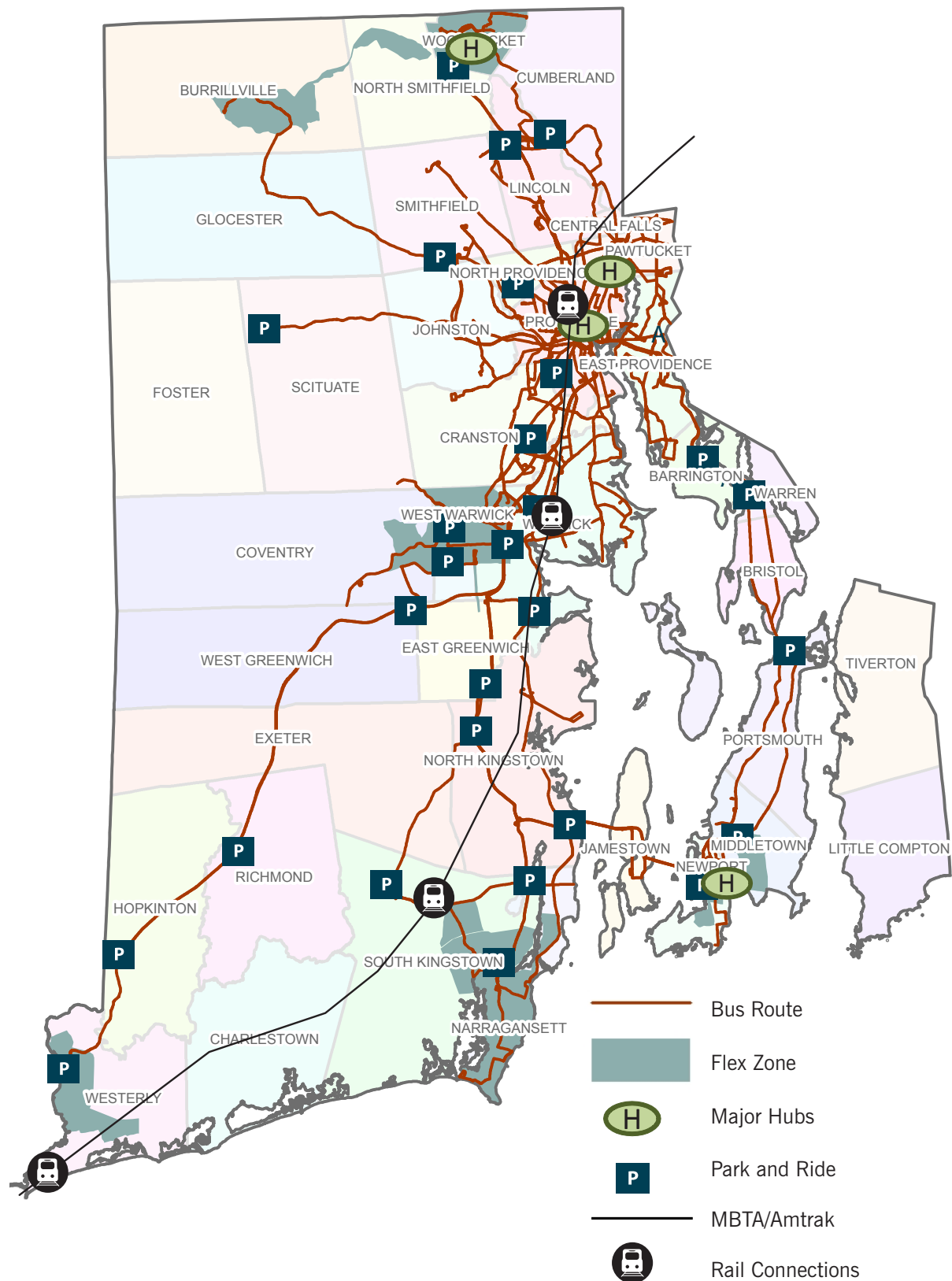


#### Flex Services

- Operates 8 Flex service zones serving 11 Rhode Island communities with a fleet of 19 smaller transit vehicles.
- Provides fully accessible, reservation-based services helping to meet the mobility needs in less developed parts of the state.



Figure 1: Existing RIPTA Service Map



## The RIde Program

- Provides paratransit services for several statewide human service programs, transporting seniors and people with disabilities;
- Provides paratransit services, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), funded by RIPTA and offered to eligible individuals living within 3/4-mile of any fixed bus route.
- Handles administration, billing and scheduling for all state agencies participating in the RIde program.
- Maintains the 154 vehicle fleet for the state.



## Commuter Resources Rhode Island (CRRI)

- Manages a range of programs to benefit all commuters in Rhode Island.
- Provides free transit service on Air Quality Alert Days.
- Cooperates with 12 of 13 colleges and universities to meet their needs through the UPASS program.
- Administers the Eco-Pass fare program, which was introduced in 2009 and encourages employers to fund transit trips. The program provides more than 100,000 rides per year and has new employers enrolling each month, diverting greater numbers of commuters from their autos to transit.



## Other Public Transportation Services in Rhode Island

Amtrak operates regional intercity service along the Northeast Corridor line, serving Providence, Kingston and Westerly stations. In its recently released “*Northeast Corridor Master Plan*” (June 2010), Amtrak states its intention to modestly increase service on this line by 2030. In a second document, “*A Vision for High Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor*” (Sept. 2010), Amtrak sets forth its concept for “Next-Gen-High-Speed-Rail” which would follow a combination of highway, rail and overland routes, potentially passing through Woonsocket.

## Current RIPTA Initiatives

Introducing new diesel-electric hybrid vehicles, a more environmentally-friendly and fuel efficient vehicle technology.

Advancing Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies to keep buses on schedule and provide customers with real time bus arrival information.

Participating in the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study to identify desired local transit improvements.

Using \$4M in federal transit funds to bring coordinated “radio interoperability” capability to our statewide emergency services network

Coordinating with the RI Division of Planning and the RI Department of Transportation to update a State Rail Plan and a State Waterborne Transportation Plan.

Maintaining RIDOT vehicles at RIPTA.

Performing a South County local transit enhancement study with the Washington County Council of Governments.

Leveraging federal funds to introduce wheelchair-accessible taxicabs to Rhode Island, enhancing mobility for residents and visitors to our state.

Coordinating with RIDOT and the MBTA to construct a direct connection from Pawtucket to the South Attleboro MBTA station.

Coordinating with the City of Providence on a US Housing & Urban Development Community Challenge Grant in key travel corridors.

Evaluating the costs and benefits of building a potential streetcar to better connect and grow downtown Providence.

Collaborating with state and community partners through the “Keep Space” initiative to coordinate state investments and to create healthy, vibrant communities.

Commuter rail services operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) also utilize the Northeast Corridor and currently serve Providence and the Warwick Interlink at T.F. Green airport. RIDOT is currently constructing an additional rail station in Wickford, anticipated to open for service at the end of 2011, and is working with the RI Division of Statewide Planning and RIPTA on a new *State Rail Plan* which will consider service to other communities.

RIDOT also coordinates the planning and construction of facilities to support bicycle mobility throughout the state and takes a leading role in developing and enhancing water transportation. The current *State Guide Plan for Waterborne Passenger Transportation (1998)* indicates water transportation services should be operated by the private sector, and calls upon RIDOT and RIPTA to support any such initiatives. RIPTA is currently working with RIDOT and Statewide Planning to update this water transportation plan.



We also strive to make connections to private transportation options, connecting with private motor coach services at Kennedy Plaza in Providence, with the Block Island ferry in Galilee, and with private airline services at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick.

### RIPTA's Role in Supporting State Goals for Land Use and Economic Growth

RIPTA has a tremendous impact when it comes to helping Rhode Island promote economic growth, provide job access, support public health, and maintain vibrant urban centers. We are mindful of the critical role we play in meeting statewide development objectives and have fostered close working relationships with the RI Division of Statewide Planning and the RI Department of Transportation. We have similarly cultivated relationships with major universities, hospitals, private businesses and other organizations to meet the specific mobility needs of their employees, clients and students and to support private business and statewide economic activity.

*"Land Use 2025"*<sup>1</sup> is an element of Rhode Island's State Guide Plan that establishes goals, policies, objectives, and strategies to guide future land use, conservation, and development. In addition to specific goals in which transit plays an important role, the document establishes a policy to "prioritize state investments to support growth within the designated Urban Services Boundary and in state approved growth centers."

RIPTA's existing transit system fits largely within the Urban Services Boundary (**see Figure 2**) and is focused on currently developed areas and on activity centers designated for future growth. We are committed to focusing our investments in these areas to support a compact development patterns and the effective and efficient provision of transit services. Many in the transit industry now call this "Development-Oriented Transit,"

### **"Land Use 2025" goals in which transit plays an important role:**

- Maintain existing and planned roadways, alleviate congestion, promote safety, and reduce the need for new highways.
- Integrate appropriate transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other modal choices to lessen dependence on the automobile where feasible.
- Preserve a distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, an abundance of natural resources, and a vibrant sustainable economy.
- Promote infill and redevelopment within existing neighborhoods.
- Provide a diverse, affordable housing stock.
- Direct public and private investment towards existing major employment centers.
- Support an effective, efficient intermodal transportation system connecting centers.

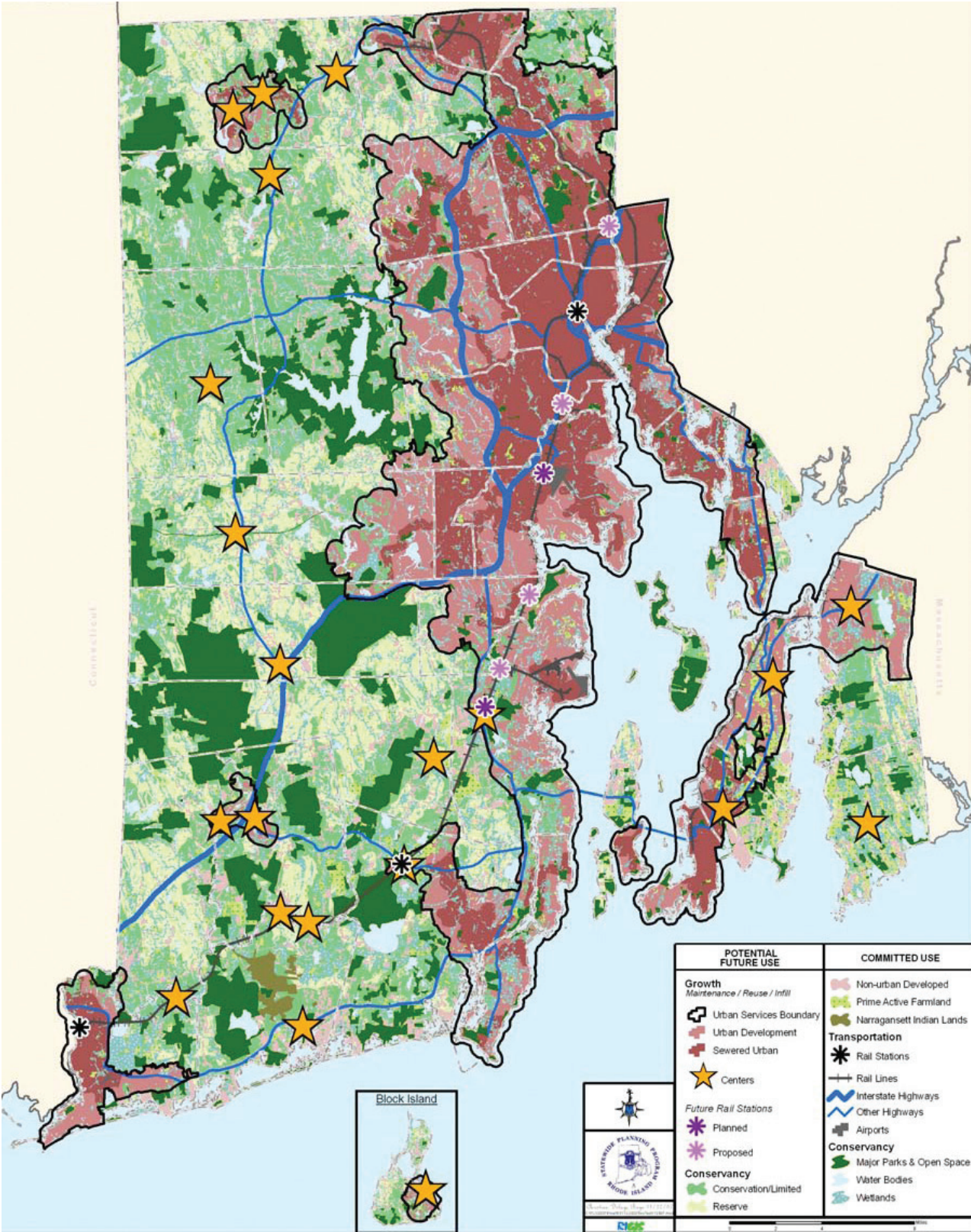
<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Division of Planning. 2006. *Land Use 2025: Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan Executive Summary*. M. Allard Cox (ed.)

whereby higher densities are encouraged in order to provide for the efficient delivery of transit services. RIPTA also looks to support the development of site specific “Transit Oriented Development,” or developments advanced by private entities or local communities that specifically seek to make transit an active component of their design.

The State must continue to lead efforts to make informed decisions about land use and to consider the long term impact of such decisions on the costs of all public services. The location of public facilities and services (e.g. nursing homes, schools, libraries, state offices, etc.) in less developed areas that cannot effectively be served by transit, may be cost-effective in terms of facility development, but may have long term cost implications related to the delivery of other services. By following the State Guide Plan and continuing to focus development and public facilities within the Urban Services Boundary, and in locations where transit can be used to serve these sites, RIPTA and other public entities will be more effective in meeting their individual missions.



Figure 2: Rhode Island Urban Services Boundary and Activity Centers



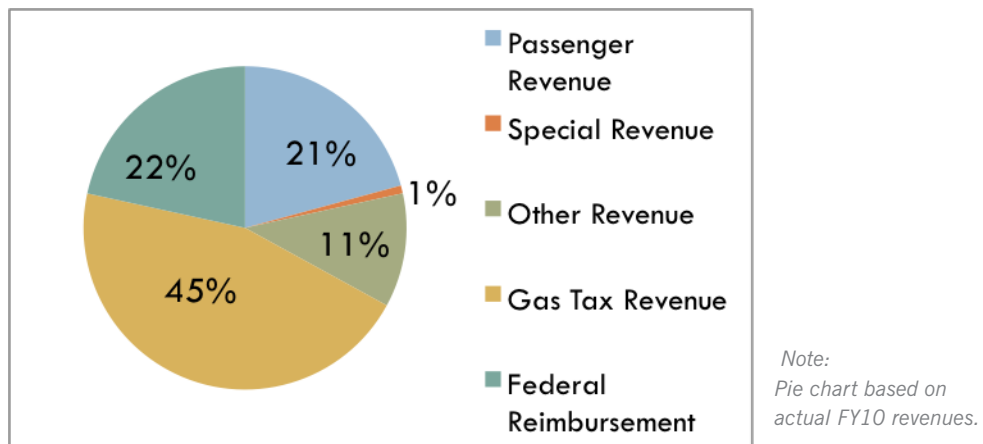
"Land Use 2025", RI Statewide Division of Planning

## RIPTA FUNDING

### Annual Operating Budget

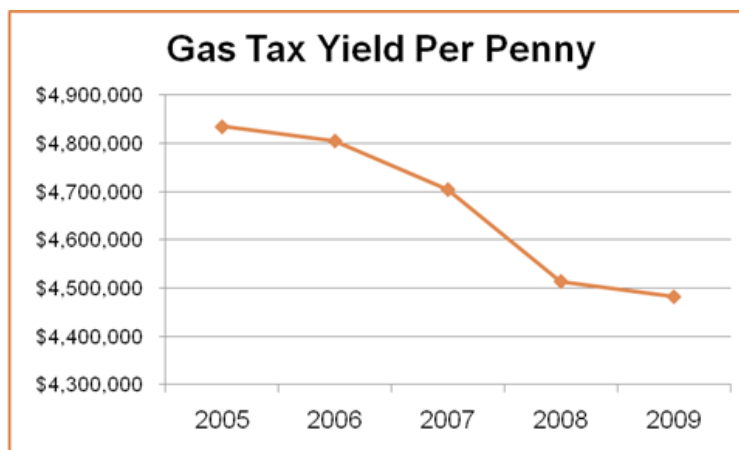
RIPTA's approved annual Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) is \$100.3 million. This annual budget is supported primarily through RIPTA's share of the state motor fuel gas tax receipts. RIPTA receives 9.75 cents of the 33 cent tax paid on each gallon of gas sold in Rhode Island, and uses these revenues to support transit operations and programs. Additional sources of revenue include federal reimbursements, fare box receipts and special revenues (such as advertising, interest income, etc.).

**Figure 3: RIPTA Revenue Sources**



High fuel prices, a growing environmental awareness, and a stagnant economy mean people are driving less and our primary revenue source - gas tax receipts - are steadily declining (see **Figure 4**), even as ridership demands increase. RIPTA has struggled to maintain existing services and programs as our primary revenue source steadily declines.

**Figure 4: Recent Decline in State Gas Tax Yield**





## Capital Budget

RIPTA's five-year Capital Budget for FY12-FY16 includes about \$61.8 million in capital investment. The program is focused on the ongoing replacement and upgrade of RIPTA's vehicle fleet, the introduction of Rapid Bus Service between Cranston and Pawtucket and several other small security and bus stop improvements. These investments are largely supported through federal programs, which are typically granted based on a 80% federal/20% local basis. In other words, RIPTA is able to support a five-year \$61.8 million capital program through the dedication of only about \$2.5 million (or 20%) in local funds each year.

Local matching contributions are provided in a variety of ways. Each year, RIPTA makes a Capital Budget request to the Governor and General Assembly, requesting state assistance in advancing their capital program. The General Assembly may elect to provide certain matching funds through the RI Capital Assistance Program (RICAP), a general fund used to support capital projects, or to authorize voter referenda for the issuance of general obligation bonds. RIPTA is responsible for paying interest on these bonds, an expense in the annual Operating Budget.

Other sources of local monies used to match federal grants include a share of RIPTA's gas tax receipts, and project-based contributions from local municipalities or other RIPTA partners. For example, local communities and private partners have provided the local match to build artist-designed TransArt shelters at stops around the state.

With limited access to RICAP funds and a declining gas tax yield, RIPTA relies heavily on general obligation bonds to match federal dollars. Debt service costs must be repaid out of RIPTA's Operating Budget which is becoming more of a challenge as the gas tax yield fails to keep up with inflation. As shown in **Figure 5**, there is a need to identify new sources of local match not only to support existing operations, but to leverage available federal dollars and realize a myriad of related benefits for our state.

## A Commitment to Fiscal Responsibility

Growing financial pressure triggered intensive State and local scrutiny of RIPTA finances, mission and operating structure over the past decade. Several independent audits have been commissioned by state leaders with the objective of "reining in" operations and introducing new cost efficiencies. Yet, these audits have consistently concluded that RIPTA is a well-managed system that has done much to control budget expenses over the past decade and that operates cost-effectively when compared to peer agencies around the country.

Despite these positive findings, RIPTA is constantly challenged by the lack of a long term sustainable funding strategy. Many other transit agencies around the country are in similar situations, struggling to fund daily operations and unable to meet growing demands for more public transit services.

## Financial Peer Review

**A recent management audit compared RIPTA's performance to nine other transit agencies of similar size. This review found RIPTA:**

- **Ranked highest in overall operating revenue**
- **Covers about 25% of the cost of service with fare revenue, which is better than most peer agencies**
- **Ranked second highest in ridership, or 24.6% higher than the peer group average**
- **Outperformed our peers in containing the cost per passenger to provide service**

*RI State Budget Office, 2007*

Figure 5: Operating Budgets are Constrained, Yet Capital Investment is Possible



Graphic by: Jeff Nickerson

RIPTA has taken action to minimize expenses through staff attrition, service reductions, and energy conservation. At the same time, we have persistently pursued discretionary federal program support and the development of institutional partnerships, bringing in new revenues to offset operating costs. New technologies, such as scheduling software, automated fare collection systems, vehicle location systems and communication upgrades, have been put in place to make operations more efficient. These initiatives must continue to be advanced.

Rhode Island must take a broader perspective and consider how to fund, operate and maintain its growing multi-modal transportation system. This perspective must consider all modes – bus, rail, water, auto, bike – and must consider transportation as part of a broader strategy for statewide economic growth, the mitigation of traffic and environmental impacts, and responsible land use.

We are committed to continuing to work with state leaders and partners to identify the appropriate level of long term, sustainable funding to maintain and enhance Rhode Island's multi-modal transportation system.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING RIPTA TODAY

Despite recent achievements, RIPTA faces many challenges today. There is a growing demand to expand services, introduce new modes and better meet the mobility needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. These demands must be addressed within a difficult economic climate and within the confines of a declining revenue stream.

More positively, on both the federal and local level, there is growing awareness of the role transit plays in supporting livable, environmentally friendly communities and in facilitating economic growth and urban vitality. A growing local constituency is calling for state leaders to identify long term, sustainable revenue streams for RIPTA and facilitate greater levels of transit investment. Support for RIPTA and our services is at unprecedented levels, making this an opportune time to advance Rhode Island's transit system to the next level.

### **CHALLENGE: Maintaining Existing Service Levels with Fewer Resources**

Over the past decade, RIPTA has experienced significant ridership growth, with estimated annual ridership increasing nearly 20 percent over the ten-year period ending in 2008. RIPTA now carries about 18 million passengers per year. Local growth in transit ridership is consistent with national trends. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that public transit ridership has grown at a rate nearly three-times that of US population growth over the last decade, and nearly twice that of highway usage.<sup>2</sup>

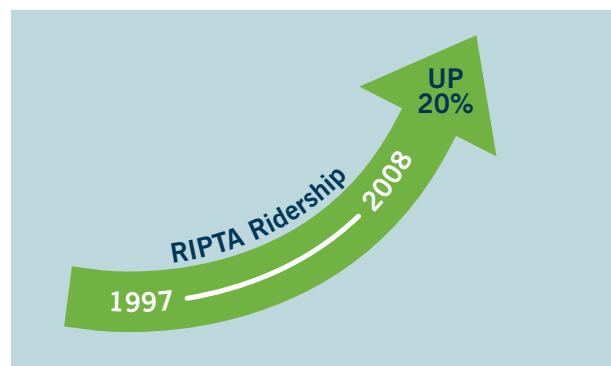
While higher ridership is a function of success, it also means many of our bus routes are overcrowded and in need of more service. Today, we estimate that over one-fourth of our bus routes experience some overcrowding on a daily basis. Adding more service involves hiring more drivers and mechanics, purchasing additional buses and finding the resources necessary to fund these expenditures.

However, rather than expanding service to meet this demand, the lack of sufficient funding has necessitated numerous service reductions and two fare increases over the past three years. With increasing financial pressures and budget constraints, RIPTA is faced with making short-term decisions that have long term impact, such as using twenty-year bonds to pay for buses with twelve-year life spans. This situation is likely to continue into the near future, as we work with our partners to address long term funding.

### **CHALLENGE: Growing Demand for New Modes and Enhanced Transit Services**

RIPTA strives to meet the growing and evolving mobility needs of Rhode Islanders, expanding our scope of services and introducing new modes of travel to better meet customer demand. Yet new demands for expanded transit services and new modes – other than traditional bus service – are being voiced from all parts of the state:

- Our recently completed Metropolitan Providence Transit Enhancement Study identified a series of actions to enhance and expand transit services, including the introduction of Rapid Bus and a possible streetcar system.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/ptbenefits/Pages/default.aspx>

- Aquidneck Island has recently concluded a comprehensive transportation study and highlighted several key transit improvements, including Rapid Bus on West Main Road and stronger intermodal hubs.
- RIDOT has worked to extend commuter rail services south of Providence to T.F. Green Airport, with service to Wickford anticipated to begin in the near future.
- The Blackstone Valley area is calling for new transit investment, including the potential development of commuter rail service connecting Woonsocket and Pawtucket to T.F. Green Airport. In South County, recent population growth has increased transit demand and created new mobility needs. RIPTA is cooperating with both the Blackstone Valley Partnership and the Washington County Council of Governments to begin to evaluate transit needs in these areas.
- RIDOT, the RI Division of Statewide Planning and RIPTA are collaborating on a *State Rail Plan* to consider the feasibility and effectiveness of introducing passenger rail in other RI communities. Amtrak has made long term proposals to bring intercity rail through the northwestern part of our state.
- Others are calling upon RIPTA and the state to restore passenger ferry service to Newport and to introduce ferries to upper Narragansett Bay. Statewide Planning, RIDOT and RIPTA are collaborating to update the *State Waterborne Passenger Transportation Plan* to assess the feasibility of passenger service on the bay.



There are not sufficient resources to implement all these desired transit improvements. In order to create the most effective multi-modal system, there must be an objective, coordinated process to identify the initiatives that best meet identified needs and provide the greatest benefits to our state. This process must consider the initial implementation costs of each potential investment, as well as long-term operational and management needs, ensuring that new services are introduced only if and when sustainable.

### **CHALLENGE: Changing Demographics are Creating a Greater Need for Accessible, On-Demand Transportation**

Older adults, individuals with low income and persons with disabilities rely on public transit to access health care, jobs and social services, and to meet other basic needs. Compared to other states, Rhode Island has relatively large populations in each of these demographic categories. Meeting their needs requires transit services that generally have unique challenges and a higher cost of delivery. A recent study by RIPTA and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services has found that Rhode Island spends about as much on the delivery of human service transportation, as it does on all general public transportation.

The population of seniors and individuals with disabilities is projected to grow over the next 10-20 years, challenging the state's ability to deliver frequent, convenient and flexible transportation options in a cost-effective manner. Furthermore, Rhode Island is moving forward with plans to expand community based services (i.e. "Aging in Place"), a decision that



may save the state in one arena, but that will increase costs in another. More individuals will need higher, more costly levels of transportation services due to dispersed population densities. Finally, many are calling for the state to expand eligibility for the RIde Program, allowing seniors to make “quality of life” trips (e.g. social visits and errands), and supporting individuals with disabilities regardless of whether they live near a RIPTA bus line.

Evolving federal program guidelines, combined with growing demand, will require higher degrees of system efficiency and increased coordination with our partners at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to manage and deliver paratransit services effectively. Other state agencies and communities must be called upon to consider the impact of land use and the location of services on transportation cost, allowing for the more efficient delivery of transportation services.

*“... RIPTA is thinking about livable communities broadly ... and does a good job demonstrating transit’s central role in achieving such goals.*

— Jana Lynott, AICP | Senior Strategic Policy Advisor - Transportation and Livable Communities | AARP National

### **CHALLENGE: We must Overcome Persistent Negative Perceptions Regarding Public Transportation**

RIPTA's ridership rose to record levels over the past decade, reflecting a national increase in transit ridership. Gas prices and concerns about climate change increased, the costs of auto ownership took a larger share of household income, and more individuals recognized the benefits that transit could provide. Yet it is estimated that only about 60,000 individuals utilize RIPTA fixed-route and Flex services on a regular basis (or about 8% of residents over the age of 18).

Why aren't more people using transit? Perhaps, RIPTA services do not fully meet their transportation needs, or they live and work in areas without bus services. For others, the convenience, flexibility and freedom of automobiles are the preferred choice. Many may have a negative perception surrounding transit – that buses are not clean or safe, or that they are for individuals without cars. On the contrary, our last customer survey found that our riders do believe our buses are both clean and safe.

RIPTA needs to do a better job addressing these concerns, changing perceptions of transit and presenting a range of transportation choices that are clean, attractive, safe and convenient for a broader range of the state's population. And, these transportation options must be integrated into a seamless network, making it easy to access and travel by public transportation.



In a 2010 survey of current students at 11 universities and colleges in RI, approximately 42% identified public transportation as “very important” or “extremely important” as a factor in determining where they’ll live after graduation. But more than 20% of these students rated RI’s existing public transportation system as “poor” or “not good.” The same question was asked of recent graduates still living in the state, with more than 30% of these students rating the system poorly.



## **OPPORTUNITY: RIPTA Has Been Designated to Serve as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager**

We are Rhode Island's designated Mobility Manager. This role provides us with the opportunity to create a vision for coordinated transit and transportation services in Rhode Island, as well as the structural and implementing authority needed to achieve this vision.

The time and opportunity to assert our Mobility Manager role is now, as Rhode Island moves into a new era with expanded transportation choice including commuter rail, Rapid Bus and other new modes. We must work with our partners at the RI Department of Transportation and Statewide Planning to fully integrate these new modes into a seamless, coordinated transportation network.

## **OPPORTUNITY: Transit Plays an Important Role in Supporting Economic Development, Smart Growth and the Livability of our Communities**

There has been increasing recognition that transit is a critical component of the state's infrastructure. Public transportation plays a significant role in solving the economic, environmental, and energy challenges that face our country today. In addition to offering increased mobility, transit can provide employment, a cleaner environment, energy independence, and a better quality of life. We must communicate the benefits of transit and work with state partners to enact transit supportive policies and to coordinate planning decisions that will realize the greatest degree of benefit from transit investments. Transit is recognized within state policy documents as playing an essential role in helping promote economic growth, provide access to jobs, support public health, and maintain vibrant urban centers.

"Transportation 2030," the state's Long Range Transportation Plan, specifically recognizes that RIPTA is "crucial to the economy, contributes to the fabric and strength of urban areas, improves the environment, and conserves energy." As a policy objective, "Transportation 2030" recommends that the overall level of RIPTA service be enhanced, with a particular emphasis on intermodal connections.

As discussed earlier, "*Land Use 2025*" envisions a constellation of community centers connected by infrastructure corridors and framed by greenspace. Transit and intermodal centers are called upon to help meet these goals, and RIPTA's existing services and proposed enhancements align well with these policies. Furthermore, existing law (RIGL §37.6.2) directs the state to give preference to sites in enterprise zones, blighted areas or existing downtown commercial areas when locating state facilities or offices. Consideration must also be given to ensure adequate access via public transportation.



## **Public Health Benefits of Transit**

**A recent study found that using transit for commuting is associated with reductions in body mass index over time. Specifically, transit users are 81% less likely to become obese over time.**

*American Journal of Preventive Medicine, August 2010.*

## **Federal Livability Principles**

- **Provide More Transportation Choices**
- **Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing**
- **Enhance Economic Competitiveness**
- **Support Existing Communities**
- **Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investment**
- **Value Communities and Neighborhoods**



According to “*Land Use 2025*”, 75% of Rhode Island residents live within the Urban Services Boundary. By focusing our services on the most densely developed corridors of our state, we are able to provide service to the vast majority of its residents. This demonstrates the benefits a compact development pattern provides in terms of efficient delivery of services. We must continually re-examine our system as development patterns evolve and call upon those responsible for land use and economic development decisions to keep the focus of state investments within the Urban Services Boundary.

Finally, the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, (a coalition of the US Dept. of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development), has put forth six livability principles which are being prioritized in federal programs. Transit is integral to achieving these goals and communities that work to address these principles will be able to capture new opportunities for federal funding. For example, we have successfully demonstrated our commitment to new federal policy goals and competed to bring an additional eight million dollars in federal grants to Rhode Island over the past two years.

RIPTA will continue to monitor federal funding options, positioning ourselves to take advantage of greater investment opportunities for Rhode Island.

### **OPPORTUNITY: A Growing Advocacy Movement to Develop a Long Term Sustainable Transportation Funding Strategy**

As a result of the work performed by the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation in 2008 and the findings of the Special Legislative Commission on Transit in 2007, there is a broader understanding of the need to identify new long term sustainable financing to support RIPTA operations and growth.

More than two-thirds of the emerging “Generation Y” population (ages 18 to 32) say that living in walkable environments is important to them. More than 18% cited a willingness to pay more for housing that is accessible to transit.

*RCLCO Consumer Research 2010*

A growing coalition of RIPTA partners and transit advocates are working to support RIPTA and are encouraging the General Assembly to identify new revenues sources. The \$145 million in annual benefits RIPTA provides to Rhode Island should be clearly articulated to state leaders and taxpayers as they consider financing alternatives. We must also support these efforts by providing a vision for the future and a carefully constructed estimate of the financial resources necessary to achieve that vision.

RIPTA's current fiscal constraints are not unique. Annual budget shortfalls and the lack of a reliable funding stream affect other Rhode Island transportation agencies as well. The Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation proposed a range of potential future funding sources and mechanisms for meeting all of the state’s transportation needs. Local advocacy groups, such as the Coalition for Transportation Choices, have recommended potential new revenue sources to support RIPTA operations and growth.

Since the Blue Ribbon Report was issued, the Governor and the General Assembly have increased the state gas tax by two cents and directed the receipts to RIPTA. This positive step benefitted RIPTA and our customers for the short-term. The General Assembly has now commissioned a study to evaluate the potential for a range of options, including a potential vehicle-miles-travelled (VMT) tax to generate revenues for reinvestment in Rhode Island’s entire transportation network – bridges, roads and transit.

This is a critical time for RIPTA to outline the actions and resources needed to develop and maintain a first-class statewide transit system that helps the state achieve mobility as well as land use, economic development and sustainability goals.

## A PLAN FOR ACTION

Each of the five strategic goals presented in this document is intended to advance our vision for a multi-modal, convenient and attractive transportation system that supports mobility and thriving livable communities. These goals are designed to follow the five basic principles established by RIPTA's Strategic Planning Subcommittee.



A specific set of action steps has been identified for each of the five goals, intended to guide us towards achieving our vision and to measure our progress over the next five years. These action steps are detailed on the following pages, followed by a summary of new initiatives shown in **Figure 6**.

Through implementation of this plan we aim to increase ridership by at least ten percent over the five years. Attracting more customers – whether commuters, bicyclists, tourists, or others – will allow Rhode Island to realize greater levels of mobility, economic, environmental and health benefits. Plus, increased ridership will have the added benefit of increasing our fare box revenues, lowering the cost to provide service to each passenger and making our system more efficient. The additional capital and operating needs required to advance these initiatives are described at the end of this document.

**Table 1: Goal #1 Action Steps – Serve as Rhode Island’s Mobility Manager**

| OBJECTIVES   | PURPOSE/INTENT   | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION   |
|--|--|---|
| <u>Objective 1:</u><br>Provide Public Transit Services in Rhode Island   | <i>Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transit that is responsive to our customers and the environment.</i>  | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Provide fixed-route bus service throughout Rhode Island to best meet customer demand.<br>b. Provide Flex services to help meet transit needs in less developed parts of the state.   |
| <u>Objective 2:</u><br>Improve Intermodal Connections  | <i>Commuter rail service in Rhode Island presents an opportunity to enhance the state’s overall transit system. RIPTA will build upon these benefits by providing direct bus connections to all RI rail stations, and making connections with other modes (bicycle, auto, private bus, ferry, etc.).</i> | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Provide wayfinding signage to reinforce connections between rail and bus at intermodal stations.<br>b. Incorporate bike lockers and bike sharing programs into the design of new transit hubs.<br>c. Support RIDOT and Statewide Planning in their efforts to update the <i>State Rail Plan</i> and <i>State Waterborne Passenger Transportation Plan</i> , developing future work plans for these modes.<br>d. Identify existing surface lots that could be converted to Park-Ride use for transit passengers.<br><br><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>e. Upgrade to bigger bike racks on buses, accommodating three bikes at a time instead of two.<br>f. Provide feeder bus service to all commuter rail stations and water transportation terminals.<br>g. Coordinate with RIDOT to identify, design and construct new Park-Ride lots that are well served by transit. |
| <u>Objective 3:</u><br>Support Regional Mobility and Interstate Travel   | <i>Our regional economy is closely entwined with our other New England neighbors. We must offer access to regional rail services and work to remove federal restrictions preventing RIPTA from crossing state borders to enhance our regional competitiveness.</i>                                       | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Provide bus service to all Amtrak intercity/regional rail stations, and to T.F. Green Airport.<br>b. Meet with neighboring transit authorities in MA and CT to coordinate schedules fares, stop locations, etc.<br>c. Coordinate with RIDOT and the MBTA on current rail operations and develop RIPTA's capacity for planning and managing rail.<br><br><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>d. Take a leadership role within the national transportation industry, working to remove federal barriers preventing regional transit buses from crossing state borders.  |
| <u>Objective 4:</u><br>Meet the Mobility Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and RI’s Growing Senior Population | <i>As a provider of paratransit services under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as administrator of the RIde Program, RIPTA will expand our efforts to improve the quality of paratransit services while implementing efficiencies to help meet increasing demands.</i>                      | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Support training programs to encourage able individuals to use RIPTA buses, rather than the RIde.<br>b. Help introduce accessible taxicabs to RI and utilize these vehicles as part of the RIde Program.<br>c. Coordinate w/ RIDOT’s ADA program to remove physical barriers preventing access to transit (e.g. curbs).<br><br><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>d. Expand interagency coordination to improve the quality of RIde paratransit services, optimize trip scheduling, reduce program costs, and meet growing demand.<br>e. Evaluate new service models to expand mobility in less developed parts of the state (see also Goal 3.5).  |
| <u>Objective 5:</u><br>Be the Definitive Transportation Resource for Rhode Island                                  | <i>RIPTA will continue to share transportation expertise with other state agencies and will expand Commuter Resources RI initiatives to better support all commuters and travelers, regardless of mode, destination, or mobility.</i>  | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Serve as a resource to other state agencies in need of transportation planning and/or operational expertise, and help identify efficiencies that benefit the state overall.<br>b. Develop and support new Commuter Resources RI programs (car & bike sharing, carpool incentives, etc.).<br><br><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>c. Modernize our website to accommodate real time information and to be more a user-friendly resource.<br>d. Help Newport manage motor-coach operations and parking during summer months.   |

**Table 2: Goal #2 Action Steps - Increase Ridership by Making Transit More Convenient, Attractive & Easy to Use**

| OBJECTIVES   | PURPOSE/INTENT  | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><u>Objective 1:</u><br/>Initiate a Bus Stop Improvement Program</p>                               | <p><i>Bus stops are “the face” of RIPTA and should be clean, attractive and accessible. Each should provide useful information and appropriate amenities for waiting passengers. RIPTA will provide such amenities based on the level of usage at each stop and through partnership with local communities.</i></p> | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to work with local communities and artists to build more TransArt shelters around the state.</li> <li>b. Develop standards for bus stop location (e.g. stops should be conveniently located near key services, have safe access for pedestrians and bikes, and be reasonably spaced..)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Initiate a Bus Stop Improvement Program. Inventory stops throughout the state.</li> <li>d. Develop standard bus stop designs, with customer amenities based on daily usage levels.</li> <li>e. Install passenger amenities (e.g. shelters, benches, route information, etc.) at high ridership stops.</li> <li>f. Partner with local towns and/or businesses to maintain bus stops. Initiate an “Adopt a Stop” program (for removal of snow, trash, etc.).</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Objective 2:</u><br/>Make Route Information, Schedules and Fare Products Easily Accessible</p> | <p><i>There are many barriers to utilizing public transit and RIPTA is not always approachable and predicable to the rider. RIPTA aims to attract new riders and overcome negative perceptions by better distinguishing services, and making schedules and fare products easier to find.</i></p>                    | <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update our system map on an annual basis for display at hubs and other key locations. Provide user-friendly schedules in a consistent format whether printed or accessed on-line.</li> <li>b. Issue information in Spanish and other formats to ensure outreach to a diverse population.</li> <li>c. Make RIPTA fare products available in more locations (e.g. retail outlets, lottery outlets, RIPTA’s website, and/or ticket vending machines).</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Objective 3:</u><br/>Use Technology to Better Support the Customer</p>                         | <p><i>National trends show more transit agencies relying on technology to attract riders and improve the reliability of transit. RIPTA is introducing new technologies to provide the customer with better information on bus schedules, routes and trip planning.</i></p>  | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop transit tools for web and mobile devices, allowing customers to access real time bus arrival information.</li> <li>b. Provide web-based, real-time bus arrival information at Kennedy Plaza and other key locations.</li> <li>c. Provide clear and consistent automated stop announcements and on-board stop displays to assist the hearing and visually-impaired.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Improve client interface tools for the Flex &amp; Ride programs (e.g. web-based trip planning &amp; confirmation).</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Objective 4:</u><br/>Make Transit Faster and More Competitive with Automobile Travel</p>       | <p><i>RIPTA supports the use of technology and other tools to manage auto and bus traffic on our highways. As a member of RI’s Congestion Management Task Force, we hope to alleviate congestion and improve the overall speed and competitiveness of bus travel.</i></p>   | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) to keep buses on schedule and monitor on-time performance.</li> <li>b. Identify bus routes impacted by congestion and determine the impact on RIPTA and our customers (minutes of delay, cost per trip, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Coordinate with RIDOT and local officials on improvements to speed bus travel in critical locations (e.g. remove bridge limits, construct bus lanes, implement signal priority, etc.).</li> <li>d. Speed passenger boarding by minimizing on-board cash transactions (e.g. placing ticket kiosks where boarding is slow, and/or allowing the use of debit/credit cards for fare payment).</li> </ul>  |

**Table 2: Goal #2 Action Steps (continued)**

| OBJECTIVES  | PURPOSE/INTENT  | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION  |
|---|---|--|
| <u>Objective 5</u><br>Ensure the Safety and Security of Our Passengers and Employees          | <i>Safety is the foremost priority at RIPTA. Our Driver Safety Program sets a strict safety protocol for daily operations. We will expand training to standardize best maintenance practices and will develop a Security Program to meet evolving federal and state security practices.</i>                             | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Conduct periodic safety and security assessments at RIPTA facilities; implement improvements as identified.   |
|   |   | <b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>b. Develop a Security Program that is consistent with the guidelines and objectives of US Homeland Security, the Federal Transit Administration and the RI Emergency Management Agency.<br>c. Implement a standard vehicle maintenance training program to cover new technologies, environmental safety and other best practices  |
| <u>Objective 6</u><br>Put a Renewed Emphasis on Customer Service                              | <i>Employee attitudes and interactions with the customer have a tremendous impact on overall satisfaction with RIPTA services. We will place a new emphasis on customer sensitivity within employee training and will establish more direct relationship with our customers.</i>  | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Improve passenger outreach by appointing a Passenger Liaison to develop supportive relationships with customer groups (e.g. students, seniors, individuals with disabilities, etc.).<br>b. Establish a Passenger Advisory committee, using passengers to obtain feedback and gain input on proposed changes to service.<br>c. Improve coordination between our Customer Service, Marketing and Commuter Resources RI departments to integrate communications, publicity and customer service. |
|   |   | <b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>d. Implement a new Customer Service Agent training program; include use of real time information tools.<br>e. Update RIPTA's Driver Safety Training Program to include a greater focus on customer service.<br>f. Implement an incentives based program to reward RIPTA employees for excellent customer service.   |
| <u>Objective 7</u><br>Better Market our Services and the Benefits Transit Brings to our State | <i>Many are not aware of RIPTA services and programs, the differences between Flex and Ride, or how to access and use transit. We must actively market our services, reaching out creatively to a broad spectrum of potential riders, and work proactively to promote a positive image of transit within our state.</i> | <b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b><br>a. Publicize the economy and convenience of RIPTA travel, as well as the secondary benefits to our economy, public health and environment.<br>b. Actively engage in public relations, issuing press releases and using other approaches to inform the public, government leaders, the media and others about RIPTA accomplishments.<br>c. Use and monitor social media to deliver service updates and to monitor/respond to on-line comments, complaints and suggestions.                        |
|   |   | <b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b><br>d. Expand marketing to better promote RIPTA services, highlighting service to key destinations and informing the public about new initiatives.  |

**Table 3: Goal #3 Action Steps – Grow Our Transit Network to Expand Mobility and Support Economic Growth**

| OBJECTIVES   | PURPOSE/INTENT   | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><u>Objective 1</u><br/>Better Coordinate and Communicate the Process for Advancing Transit Projects in Rhode Island</p> | <p><i>With growing demand for new transit services and modes, the need exists to better integrate transit planning in RI. RIPTA will support Statewide Planning in the development of an ongoing and objective process to evaluate and compare potential transit improvements across different modes: bus, rail, and water.</i></p>                    | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish and maintain service standards for all RIPTA modes (Fixed-route, Flex, Rlde, Rapid Bus).</li> <li>b. Make RIPTA's ongoing Service Planning process more transparent to the public, providing an avenue for the suggestion of potential route modifications and communicating results.</li> <li>c. Work with Statewide Planning to develop goals and evaluation metrics to objectively compare potential transit improvements on a statewide basis.</li> <li>d. Assist Statewide Planning in the development of a State Rail Plan and a State Waterborne Transportation Plan, developing policy and guidance regarding the future development of these modes.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Support the further development of Statewide Planning's travel demand model to obtain the capability to forecast and objectively compare future ridership for all transit modes.</li> <li>f. Conduct a comprehensive statewide operations analysis of all RIPTA services every five years, identifying changes for more effectively meeting demand throughout the state.</li> <li>g. Conduct local transit needs assessments in different regions of Rhode Island every two years (e.g. Aquidneck, South County, Blackstone Valley, East Bay, etc.).</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Objective 2</u><br/>Provide Additional Bus and Flex Services to Meet Demand</p>                                      | <p><i>There are many areas of RI where more service is warranted. Certain routes would benefit from more frequent service or longer hours, and some activity centers are not yet served. The Statewide Transit Planning process (Goal 3.1) will identify where service is most needed, preparing RIPTA to implement changes as funding allows.</i></p> | <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase service frequency on key routes, add new routes and make other adjustments based on ridership demand and mobility needs.</li> <li>b. Reorient Kent County service to better serve local destinations, including the commuter rail station at T.F. Green Airport.</li> <li>c. Provide feeder bus service to the new Wickford rail station.</li> <li>d. Provide service between downtown Newport and hotels and beaches in Middletown.</li> <li>e. Extend more buses through Kennedy Plaza to serve new peripheral downtown hubs ("through-routing")</li> <li>f. Enhance service within existing Flex zones; Add new zones where they would be most effective.</li> <li>g. Provide bus service to new park-and-ride lots as they constructed throughout the state, implementing premium or express service where feasible and appropriate.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Objective 3</u><br/>Introduce Rapid Bus in High Ridership Corridors</p>  | <p><i>Rapid Bus will provide faster and more reliable bus service in selected high ridership corridors. This new service will first be introduced along Broad and North Main Streets, running from Cranston to Pawtucket, and can be expanded to other corridors in the future.</i></p>  | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop and implement a recognizable "brand" for new Rapid Bus vehicles, stops and signage.</li> <li>b. Implement green-light extension capabilities, construct enhanced bus stops, and make other improvements to implement the first Rapid Bus route along the Broad-North Main corridor in Providence.</li> <li>c. Work with the City of Providence to plan for Rapid Bus improvements (and local land use policies to support Rapid Bus) in other high ridership corridors.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Design improvements needed to introduce Rapid Bus in other key corridors (e.g. West Main Rd. on Aquidneck Island and certain Providence routes.). Implement as funding allows.</li> </ul>  |



**Table 3: Goal #3 Action Steps (continued)**

| OBJECTIVES  | PURPOSE/INTENT  | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><u>Objective 4</u><br/>Strengthen and Expand Downtown Transit Hubs</p>   | <p><i>Downtown transit hubs in Providence, Newport, Woonsocket and Pawtucket help heighten the visibility, convenience and attractiveness of transit service. We aim to create new hubs in Providence, relieving Kennedy Plaza and providing the opportunity for redesign. We also plan to strengthen and upgrade hub locations in other urban areas.</i></p> | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with the City of Providence and the Greater Kennedy Plaza Working Group to reconfigure bus berths around Kennedy Plaza, in order to improve passenger flow and enhance the vitality of this area.</li> <li>b. Create new downtown hubs at the Providence Amtrak station and on Cahir Street, by installing passenger amenities, real time info displays, and/or other enhancements.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Develop new downtown hubs at RI Hospital and on College Hill.</li> <li>d. Make further enhancements to the central bus hub at Kennedy Plaza (e.g. shelters, benches, planters, etc.) to support the Greater Kennedy Plaza Working Group's redesign of the area.</li> <li>e. Strengthen other key downtown bus hubs in Newport, Woonsocket and Pawtucket.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Objective 5</u><br/>Enhance Flex Service and Focus Rural Transit in Key Activity Centers</p>                      | <p><i>We will follow the State Guide Plan for Land Use, focusing our investments within the Urban Services Boundary and in key rural activity centers. We will work to tailor Flex and other services to most effectively meet transit needs in less developed areas.</i></p>   | <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reduce Flex scheduling requirements from 48 hours to 24 hours.</li> <li>b. Develop small transit hubs to connect suburban and rural activity centers (e.g. South County to Warwick).</li> <li>c. Evaluate new service models to expand mobility in less developed parts of the state (same as 1.3e). For example, evaluate the feasibility of utilizing available capacity on Ride vans to accept general passengers where practical and effective.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Objective 6</u><br/>Build a Streetcar or Other Transit Service to Better Connect and Grow Downtown Providence</p> | <p><i>RIPTA has partnered with the City of Providence to evaluate the costs and benefits of constructing a streetcar or enhanced bus line to connect key downtown locations and meet local goals.</i></p>   | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complete the Providence Core Community Connector Study to identify the benefits and impacts of an urban circulator alternative (streetcar, enhanced bus or other option); develop a Financing Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Advance the locally preferred alternative into project development and preliminary engineering.</li> <li>c. Secure financing, construct locally preferred alternative, and initiate operations.</li> </ul>   |



**Table 4: Goal #4 Action Steps – Realize the Environmental, Economic and Quality of Life Benefits of Transit**

| OBJECTIVES   | PURPOSE/INTENT   | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><u>Objective 1</u><br/>Support Policies that Enhance the Efficiency of Transit and Create Incentives to Encourage Transit Use</p> | <p><i>Rather than simply respond to land development patterns and other policies that discourage transit use, we will actively advocate for policies that do just the opposite – encourage and support transit use. We will work closely with state and municipal planners to promote community design that features transit as a defining element and to achieve mutual goals in the most efficient manner.</i></p> | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Give priority to transit investments and services within the State's designated Urban Services Boundary.</li> <li>b. Advocate for enforcement of Rhode Island's existing Parking Cash-Out law.</li> <li>c. Provide input to the state and municipalities when locating services (e.g. housing, schools) so these facilities can be efficiently served and accessed transit.</li> <li>c. Support Transit Oriented Development in desired locations by encouraging transit friendly design (sidewalks, bike access, bus pull-outs, higher density zoning, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Work with municipalities to ensure RIPTA plans are consistent with local comprehensive plans and help target growth in desired areas.</li> <li>e. Work with the General Assembly, local governments, advocacy groups and businesses to provide more incentives for transit use and disincentives for personal auto use.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Objective 2</u><br/>Develop "Win-Win" Relationships with Private Businesses and Local Institutions</p>                         | <p><i>Private industry has a large stake in the economic well-being, health and vitality of our state. RIPTA commits to supporting private sector investments and plans for growth, while helping these entities pursue "greener" business practices and reduce their expenses related to employee parking.</i></p>  | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Generate increased support for Eco-Pass and help companies to reduce parking costs and achieve corporate goals for "green" operations.</li> <li>b. Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships, where businesses contribute capital funds or operating support to support desired transit improvements (e.g. bus shelter construction or maintenance, installation of real time information displays, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Coordinate with individual employers and industries (e.g. hospitals, hotels, banks, the airport, large retail, the Navy Base) to identify the specific transit needs (e.g. shifts) of their employees.</li> <li>d. Work with RI Economic Development Corporation, the Quonset Development Corporation, and local municipalities to target transit investments to support growth consistent with the State Guide Plan.</li> <li>e. Support private efforts to advance Transit Oriented Development, if and when these developments are consistent with state and local land use policies.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Objective 3</u><br/>Be a Full Partner in Achieving Local Sustainability Goals</p>  | <p><i>Transit is inherently "green" and supports the environment, public health and livability of our communities. We will advance projects that go beyond meeting mobility goals to achieve these other benefits. Also, as a major employer and the operator of a large vehicle fleet, we will take responsibility to reduce our own carbon footprint.</i></p>  | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Transition RIPTA's fleet to more energy-efficient vehicles. Install more efficient lighting in all facilities.</li> <li>b. Consider other community goals when planning RIPTA initiatives (access to housing, walkability, economic development, etc.) and pursue new federal funding initiatives related to livable communities.</li> <li>c. Actively engage with local organizations interested in using transit to achieve local sustainability goals (e.g. Keep Space RI, local jobs programs, local youth programs, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Identify ways to make our facilities more energy efficient and initiate other sustainable business practices.</li> </ul>  |

**Table 5: Goal #5 Action Steps - Identify a Sustainable Funding Strategy**

| OBJECTIVES   | PURPOSE/INTENT   | ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Objective 1</b><br>Integrate RIPTA's Strategic Planning, Budgeting and Management Processes   | <i>This Strategic Plan states our vision for transit service enhancements and initiatives over the next five years. RIPTA will correlate future budget requests to this vision, and develop a Strategic Management Plan to advance implementation within the boundaries of approved budgets.</i>                       | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare a multi-year operating budget projection based on: 1) the funding necessary to maintain existing services; and, 2) implementation of new services; taking into account cost-saving efficiencies and new revenues.</li> <li>b. Prioritize specific capital investments over a long term planning horizon.</li> <li>c. Prepare an annual Management Plan to assign resources and staff responsibilities, aligning approved budgets with desired strategic goals.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Update RIPTA's Strategic Plan every five years.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Objective 2</b><br>Achieve Greater Levels of Operational Efficiency and Demonstrate Fiscal Responsibility   | <i>We will make sure our existing assets are maintained in a good repair, extending the life of critical assets and minimizing replacement costs. We will further focus on efficiency through the use technology, qualified staff, and efforts to introduce new revenue sources to support our mission and vision.</i> | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Maintain an ongoing fleet replacement program to keep RIPTA's vehicles in a good repair.</li> <li>b. Aggressively pursue opportunities to maintain existing services within current budget, whether through administrative or operational initiatives (e.g. reduce driver overtime, insurance claims, etc.).</li> <li>c. Consider premium fares for express bus service and periodically review overall fare structure for equity, efficiency and practicality.</li> <li>d. Weight the potential costs and benefits to be realized by opening a new bus garage in So. County, to help minimize the higher cost of service delivery in the southern part of the state.</li> <li>e. Pursue new revenue sources and identify innovative sources of local match to support RIPTA programs, and to maximize the level of federal funding leveraged by RIPTA each year.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Develop an ongoing replacement plan for other RIPTA assets (facilities, equipment, etc) and prioritize funding to keep the existing system in good repair.</li> <li>g. Pursue and implement technologies that provide a clear return on investment and achieve greater operating efficiencies (e.g. new driver scheduling software, fare equipment upgrades, etc.).</li> <li>h. Support the development of our professional staff and plan for promotion from within by supporting participation in educational and training programs.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Objective 3</b><br>Work Proactively with the General Assembly, our Advocates and other Partners to Identify Sustainable Funding Streams for Transit | <i>The General Assembly is reviewing potential new sources of funding for transportation. RIPTA fully supports these efforts and understands that service enhancement and expansion activities will be implemented only as funding becomes available.</i>  | <p><b><u>In Motion Today:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support legislative action to secure sustainable revenue sources to maintain existing services and to advance system enhancement and expansion initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Unfunded Actions:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Quantify the demonstrated benefits and returns to be realized from transit investments, and communicate these findings to RI taxpayers.</li> <li>c. Maintain good working relationships with our federal delegation in Washington, DC and engage in national transit policy discussions.</li> </ul>   |

**Figure 6: Overview of New Initiatives Proposed in Our Strategic Plan**

**Upgrade Existing Transit Hubs**  
in Providence, Newport,  
Pawtucket and Woonsocket.



**Add More Bus Service** where needed.



**A Providence Streetcar** is being studied to help our capital city connect, grow and thrive.

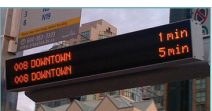
**Accommodate More Bikes** on buses and at new transit hubs.



**More Attractive Bus Stops** with information and amenities for waiting customers.



**Better Customer Information** such as real time bus arrival at key stops



**Better Ride Program** coordination to help improve service and meet rapidly growing needs.

**Rapid Bus** will bring faster service and passenger amenities to high ridership corridors



**Mini-hubs and new Flex Services** will meet needs in less developed areas.



## FUNDING THE PLAN

Our “*Vision for the Future of Transit in RI*” presents an ambitious set of goals, objectives and action steps to support a robust, multi-modal public transportation system in Rhode Island. We cannot afford to ignore our state’s transit needs and must clearly define the level of resources needed to realize this vision. However, with limited funds available to support and maintain today’s system, funding future growth represents a formidable challenge for RIPTA and the State of Rhode Island.

### Maintaining Existing Services

RIPTA’s Operating Budget for FY11 is \$100.3 M. As described earlier in this plan, this budget is highly constrained and we carefully monitor current year expenses and revenues to maintain a balanced budget. Our primary source of operating revenue, a share of the state gas tax yield, has declined over 9% since 2005. Without a dedicated long-term funding source that keeps pace with inflationary pressures and other external cost factors, service reductions or fare increases may need to be considered over the short term. **We need a revenue source that allows for growth and does not penalize RIPTA when more people shift to transit.**

Maintaining our existing operations and demonstrating continued fiscal responsibility are our foremost priorities. We are committed to pursuing the goals and objectives identified within this document to implement cost-savings initiatives (administrative, operational and energy-efficiency), and to consider new technologies that would introduce additional savings and offer a clear return on investment. This plan also includes specific actions and staff resources intended to identify and pursue new revenue sources and business partnerships to support our operations. Each of these has the potential to reduce the magnitude of inflationary pressure on our annual Operating Budget, particularly in outer years once programs are implemented. **Scenario 1 of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel for Transportation Funding in 2008 proposed a range of new funding sources to address ongoing short-falls in RIPTA’s budget, providing an additional \$8 to \$18 million in operating funds over the course of 10 years. RIPTA believes we can close our budget gap with the additional revenues proposed within the first five years of the panel’s more conservative scenario.**

### Expanding our Transit Network with New Services and Programs

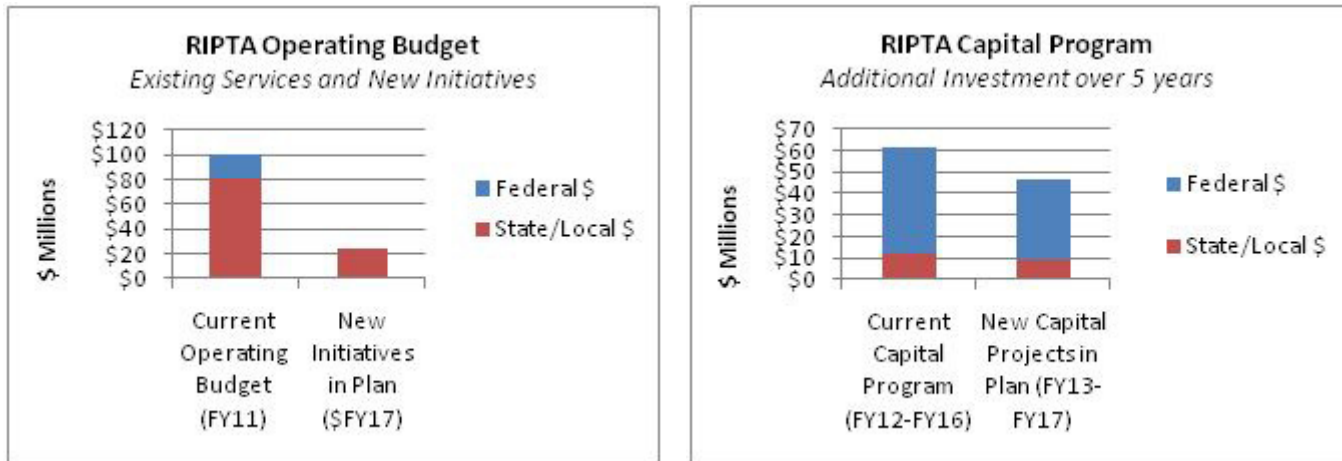
Despite the challenges we face in terms of maintaining existing service levels today, our vision includes new bus and Flex services, new modes and other transit enhancements that could be initiated if today’s budget gap can be successfully addressed and additional local revenues can be identified. It is critical that we continue to plan to meet the evolving needs of our state – adding buses to overcrowded routes, serving new employment centers and integrating commuter rail services into our state’s transit network.

The total estimated value of new initiatives in this plan totals about \$65 million (in \$FY2011). These improvements and investments would be phased in over time depending on priority and the availability of funding, and include:

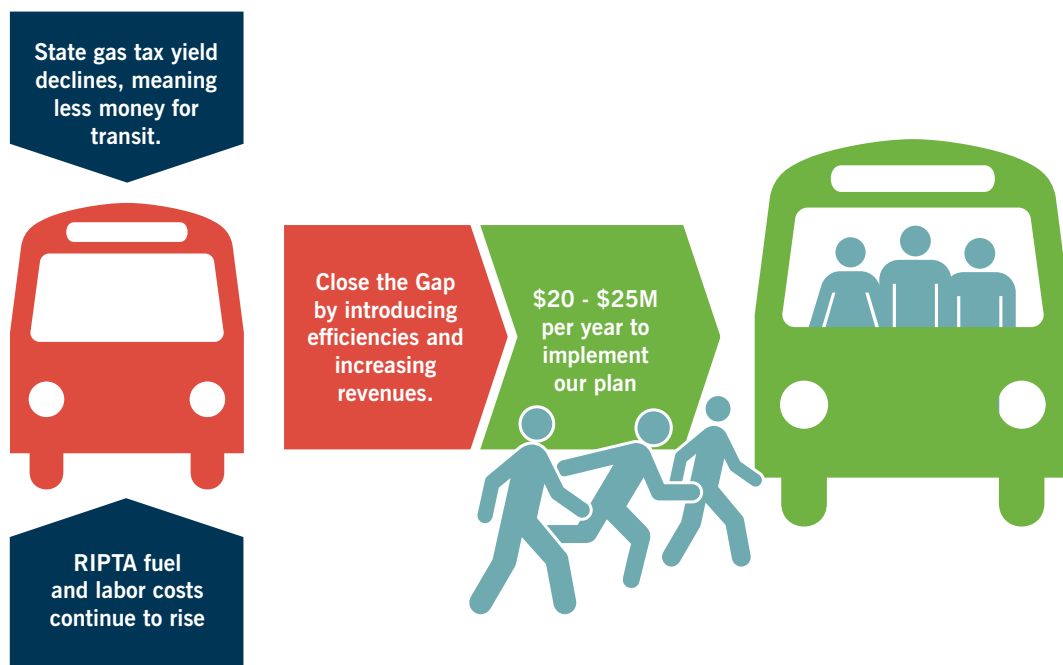
- About \$19.5 million (\$FY2011) in new services to be added incrementally over a five year period, resulting in a \$23.3 million (\$FY2017) increase in operations by the end of five years.
- About \$46 million (\$FY2011) in additional capital investment. Based on current trends, it is reasonable to assume that RIPTA could secure federal funds to support 80% of the cost of these new capital initiatives. In other words, an additional \$37 million in federal investment could be leveraged with a local contribution of only about \$2.0 million per year over a five year period.

The relative values of additional services and capital investments proposed in this Strategic Plan are shown in **Figure 7**. This plan for growth is consistent with the growth scenario (Scenario 2) proposed for RIPTA by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel for Transportation over the five year period between FY2013 to FY2017.

**Figure 7 – Comparison of Current Budgets to Proposed New Initiatives**



Together, these new initiatives represent an estimated average investment of \$13 to \$16 million per year, over the course of five years, depending on the pace of implementation. When combined with the need to close our budget gap and maintain today's services, **it is estimated that full implementation of this plan would require an average increase of \$20 to \$25 million per year in new revenues over the span of five years.**





## Moving Forward Together

Our vision establishes a new direction for transit in Rhode Island and proposes a detailed blueprint to enact change over the next five years. It defines strategies to preserve, maintain, grow and enhance Rhode Island's transportation choices. Many of the strategies can be accomplished with a one-time action, such as securing our ability to cross state borders, or installing new bicycle racks. Others are activities where RIPTA plays a coordination role, such as working with other government entities to develop a *State Rail Plan*. Together, these actions represent a shift in thinking at RIPTA and present our vision of a 21st century transit system for Rhode Island.

The benefits of transit are increasingly being recognized and pursued throughout the United States and ridership has increased to record levels across the county. This resurgence is due, in part, to the fact that transit provides a relatively high rate of return when compared to other investments. Benefits include:

- Transportation is the biggest contributor to carbon emissions in the United States; transit helps reduce automobile use, carbon emissions and the rate of global climate change.
- Transportation is the second largest household expense after housing; transit provides a less expensive mobility option for our citizens.
- Transit has the potential to mitigate public health impacts by diverting travel from automobiles, reducing air pollution and local asthma rates, and encouraging walking.
- Transportation infrastructure is the #2 factor in business location cited by real estate executives involved in location decisions (*Site Selection Magazine*, November 2008); transit brings employees to work and reduces corporate costs to subsidize parking.
- Transit investments create jobs; RIPTA is one of the top employers in the state, providing meaningful employment to Bus Operators, Mechanics and other professionals. Construction of proposed initiatives will create additional short-term jobs and other indirect economic benefits.

This “*Vision for the Future of Transit in RI*” presents a realistic and achievable plan for realizing these benefits.

Rhode Island has undertaken significant public infrastructure investments over the last decade (including the relocation of Interstate 195, the enhancement of highway and rail access to Quonset Point, the purchase and rehabilitation of the Dunkin Donuts Center, and the construction of a Combined Sewer Overflow project to help preserve Narragansett Bay). Each of these has contributed to the overall economic development potential and livability of our communities. **It is time to make similar investments in our statewide transit system.**

*“Investing responsibly in our transportation infrastructure – including a 21st century mass transit system – is increasingly seen by Rhode Island’s civic and business leaders as essential for rebuilding a vibrant and robust economy”*

— John Flaherty, Co-Chair Coalition for Transportation Choices

## Our Vision

Imagine a future in which a wide range of multi-modal, convenient, and attractive transportation choices help promote growth, and support thriving, livable communities throughout Rhode Island.

As the state’s Mobility Manager, we aim to achieve this vision in a fiscally responsible manner, working with federal, state, local and private partners to realize the benefits a modern transit system can provide and to improve the overall quality of life in Rhode Island.



We challenge Rhode Island to capitalize upon the benefits RIPTA's network brings to our state. Transit touches on nearly every aspect of state policy and is a component of economic growth, environmental sustainability, affordable housing objectives, and land use considerations. With State Guide Plan documents, independent legislative audits, and local comprehensive plans calling for enhanced transit, there is clearly a need and a desire to provide RIPTA with the funding to implement this vision. Our Governor and General Assembly must take the lead in supporting RIPTA, as virtually every transit system in the country requires some level of public support to maintain and grow its services. By preparing this plan, we have set the stage for action and investment, and make the following commitments:

- We are willing, ready and able to transform our agency into a full partner dedicated to helping the state, individual communities and private businesses achieve stated growth and sustainability objectives.
- We are committed to introducing new operating efficiencies, growing our ridership base to increase revenue from our fare boxes, and identifying other innovative sources of revenue to help close the gap between current funding and desired service levels.
- We are prepared to fully implement our vision once provided with a sustainable source of long term funding that will allow these investments to proceed, and will hold ourselves accountable to the action steps identified in this document.
- We will use these funds in a fiscally responsible manner, creating performance measures and a transparent management process to report on our progress in achieving stated goals.

We are optimistic about the opportunities before us, and are excited about the possibility of serving as a meaningful partner in Rhode Island's evolution as part of the green and sustainable economic movements of the 21st century. We invite you to join us in preserving the unique character of our state and enhancing the livability, vibrancy and sustainability of our statewide community.

**Rhode Island Public Transit Authority**  
**Board Members**

**Chairman**

John Rupp

**Vice-Chair**

Thomas E. Deller, AICP

Michael Lewis

William Kennedy

Edward J. Field

Rochelle Bates Lee

Stephen Durkee

Jerome Williams

**Strategic Planning Subcommittee Members**

Thomas E. Deller, RIPTA Board Vice-Chair

Stephen Durkee, RIPTA Board Member

Edward J. Field, RIPTA Board Member

William Kennedy, RIPTA Board Member

Christopher Long, Policy Advisor, Governor's Office

Stephen Devine, Chief, Intermodal Planning, Rhode Island DOT

Kevin Flynn, Associate Director, Rhode Island Statewide Planning

John Flaherty, Co-chair, Coalition for Transportation Choices

Everett Stuart, Chairman, Rhode Island Association of Rail Passengers

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