



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RIPTA Riders Demand No Cuts at Board Meeting RIPTA Riders teams up with Occupy Providence to protest service cuts

Providence, Rhode Island- Public transportation supporters gathered with members of the Occupy Providence movement at 12:45pm in Kennedy Plaza to board the #20 bus to RIPTA's monthly board of directors meeting. They came together with signs and slogans to oppose service cuts that will go into effect in December unless the board acts to stop them.

Abel Collins, a member of RIPTA Riders and the program manager of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Sierra Club, said that "RIPTA's board and management need to make every effort to solve their budget deficit without cutting service critical to riders, but those efforts have not yet been made."

"Before cuts are made, the board has a duty to seek funding that will allow RIPTA to maintain its current service" added Randall Rose, a RIPTA Riders and Occupy Providence member, "in fact, they have a responsibility to pursue the funds necessary to implement the strategic plan they adopted earlier this year that seeks to expand public transportation."

RIPTA Riders has worked with the Sierra Club RI, the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 618, and RIPTA itself to organize rallies around Providence over the past several months. The group has also collected more than 2500 signatures on its petition to 'save RIPTA' which goes to Governor Chafee and the leadership of the General Assembly.

RIPTA Riders and other transit advocates have expressed concern that the transit agency has not done enough to secure supplementary funding from the statehouse that will tide it over while they work to change the broken financing model that provides RIPTA with annually declining revenues. At the board meeting, members of the RIPTA Riders Group demanded that the board and RIPTA CEO Charles Odimgbe develop a strategy for soliciting money from legislators.

Jared Paul, a member of Occupy Providence's direct action working group, spoke in solidarity with the transit advocates, "public transportation is just another thing that's being taken from the 99% so the country can continue to be run for the benefit of the 1%. Banks got bailed out, and we continue to get sold out, and it's time for that to stop." Occupy Providence is a gathering of people that seeks an alternative to the fundamental inequality and injustice of a system which places profit over people.

"With RIPTA's ridership continuing to increase, public transportation is helping more Rhode Islanders to lower their household transportation costs and keep their jobs," said Collins. "We need more service, not less."

RIPTA Riders is an independent grassroots group

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