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TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS TO LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Project Fact Sheet #2

RIPTA will soon introduce Rapid Bus, a new service with uniquely branded stops, frequent service and added amenities that will significantly improve the speed and attractiveness of bus service.

What is Rapid Bus?

RIPTA is moving forward with the design and development of Rhode Island's first Rapid Bus corridor. This effort follows the *Metropolitan Providence Transit Enhancement Study* which first evaluated the feasibility of introducing Rapid Bus service in the metropolitan Providence area. (For more information on the *Transit Enhancement Study*, please visit www.transit2020.com.) **The Broad/North Main corridor, running from the Cranston/Providence border, through downtown Providence, and along North Main Street into downtown Pawtucket, has been identified as the corridor with the highest potential for introducing this improved, higher level of service.** This corridor is currently served by RIPTA routes 11 and 99, the two highest ridership routes in RIPTA's statewide system.

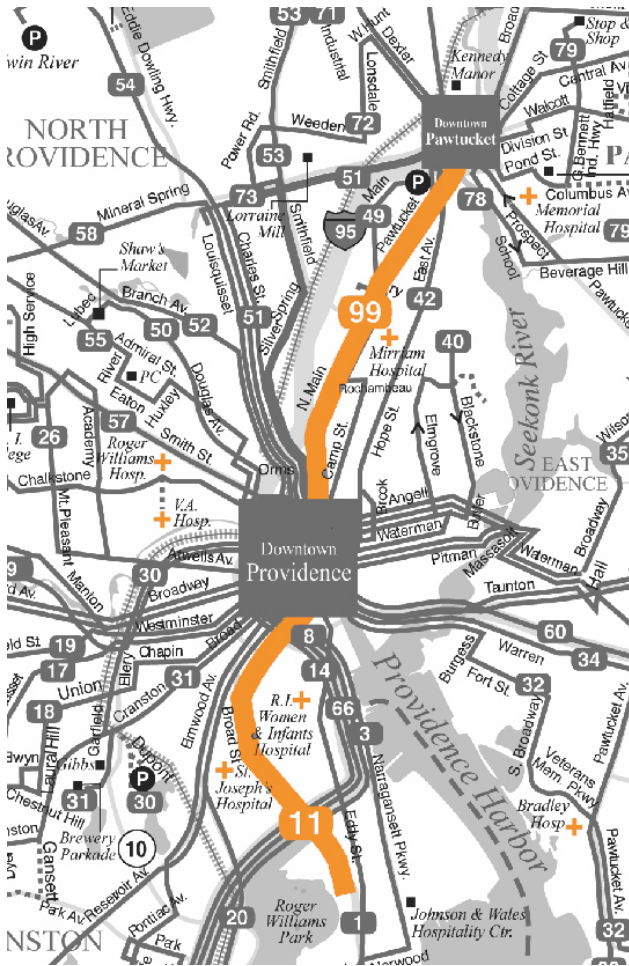
Elements of RIPTA's Rapid Bus service will include:

- Line and station/stop branding to distinguish the high service line;
- Frequent bus service;
- Limited stop/express bus service;
- Transit signal priority for improved travel times and schedule reliability;
- Optimal siting of bus stops and bus stop consolidation;
- New shelters, including local design/build and standard versions;
- Improved schedule information, both paper and electronic;
- Curb-cuts and other features to improve accessibility;
- Improved fare collection methods;
- Queue jump lanes at traffic intersections; and,
- Intersection improvements

Over the past decade, many transit systems have successfully introduced Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Rapid Bus systems. These systems provide rail-like quality of transit service, but with modern attractive buses instead of trains, and are typically less expensive to construct than rail service. While BRT systems are primarily designed to operate in exclusive lanes or roadways restricted to buses only, **Rapid Bus operates on existing streets without dedicated lanes.** Rapid Bus is especially appropriate in areas where restricted right-of-way does not allow the construction of dedicated transit lanes. By implementing some components of a BRT system, Rapid Bus provides a lower-cost alternative that still provides many of the same benefits of BRT.



BRT and Rapid Bus systems typically include unique stop branding, limited or express bus service, transit signal priority at intersections, off vehicle fare payment systems, and real time arrival information. (Left to right: Eugene, Oregon's EmX; Los Angeles, California's Metro Rapid; and Boston, Massachusetts' Silver Line.)



Routes 11 and 99 carry nearly 10,000 passengers a day. The new Rapid Bus route will link them through downtown Providence.

RIPTA is now working to advance and implement Rapid Bus service on the Broad/North Main corridor, using a mix of design elements that will result in improved service on routes 11 and 99. RIPTA's goal is to create a Rapid Bus route that combines the quality of other modes of transit with the flexibility of buses. Plans call for the creation of a single branded route, with a focus on station amenities and on measures to increase the frequency and speed of buses through the use of queue jump lanes, bus bulbs, and signal priority. These features will **make service fast, reliable, convenient, comfortable and clearly identifiable.**

The estimated infrastructure cost of the Rapid Bus route is approximately \$2 million, including traffic signal and roadway improvements, branding, passenger infrastructure and other amenities. Buses deployed on this route will be RIPTA's new hybrid buses. The new buses provide a high level of comfort and amenities, including low floors for faster passenger loading and unloading. This improved service will begin running on the Broad/North Main corridor in Fall 2012. RIPTA is currently coordinating a bus stop inventory, evaluating stops to meet current service standards, developing service plans for the corridor, and working to maximize customer service opportunities through RIPTA's upcoming real time information system.

The transit signal priority and roadwork improvements associated with the Rapid Bus route will take place in two principal phases: Phase I (Preliminary Design) and Phase II (Final Design). Work to be conducted under Phase I includes preliminary traffic engineering, intersection analyses, and roadway changes, as well as conceptual

traffic signal priority system design. RIPTA and the consultant team will work closely with RIDOT and the cities of Providence and Pawtucket regarding the design and review of traffic engineering plans. Phase I will also include coordination with the cities of Providence, Cranston and Pawtucket regarding conceptual engineering, parking strategies and the opportunity to integrate other desired land use policies along the corridor. Phase II will involve final design and construction services. RIPTA is also working with a consultant team to develop branding strategies for Rapid Bus.

What other corridors are being considered for Rapid Bus?

Over time, Rapid Bus will likely be expanded to other lines in the RIPTA system. After routes 99 and 11, the highest ridership routes in Providence are Route 20 on Elmwood Avenue, Route 27 on Manton Avenue, and Route 56 on Chalkstone Avenue. RIPTA has classified these routes as "Key Bus Routes" and is working with the City and RIDOT to ensure that these routes are "rapid ready". In the future, these routes will have priority for conversion to Rapid Bus routes.

**For more information,
please contact:**

Martina Haggerty, Project Coordinator
phone: 401.680.8528
email: mhaggerty@providenceri.com