



RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 237

EFFECTIVE May 26, 2024

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's central bus hub at Kennedy Plaza is an essential component of our state's transportation infrastructure, providing vital connections for residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, The proposal to relocate the central bus hub from Kennedy Plaza to a vacant lot near Interstate 95, specifically known as "Parcel 35," raises significant concerns for our community, particularly in light of RIPTA's budget crisis and impending service cuts; and

WHEREAS, The City Council is aware and concerned that up to this point, Kennedy Plaza has not been presented or considered as an option for the bus hub relocation, and urges all relevant authorities to include Kennedy Plaza in the discussion and decision-making process regarding the future location of the central bus hub; and

WHEREAS, Kennedy Plaza should be considered the default option and treated at least as equally as the other options being presented, and RIPTA should not be working from an assumption that the City wants the hub moved; and

WHEREAS, We believe we need to make an affirmative statement to clarify that the City Council is not pushing for the hub to be moved from Kennedy Plaza, as Kennedy Plaza is a City property and belongs to all people, serving as a central location walkable to housing, jobs, City Hall, the Courts, the State House, and rail, which is the definition of transit-oriented development; and

WHEREAS, The opinions of Transit Riders are of utmost importance and should be central to the decision-making process regarding the future location of the central bus hub; and

WHEREAS, Transit riders, who rely on the central bus hub for their daily transportation needs, were denied the opportunity to voice their opposition to the relocation plan at any public forums, including the meeting of the 195 Redevelopment District Commission; and

WHEREAS, Moving the central bus hub to a location near Interstate 95 would likely disrupt existing transit routes, increase travel times for passengers, and hinder accessibility for those who depend on public transportation; and

WHEREAS, The proposed relocation to Parcel 35, commonly referred to as "Siberia" by critics, lacks the central location and proximity to essential services, such as City Hall, the Financial District, Providence Place, and the train station, that Kennedy Plaza offers; and

WHEREAS, The decision to relocate the bus hub to Parcel 35 has raised significant concerns among community members, as evidenced by public opposition and financial implications highlighted by various news outlets, indicating a potential disconnect between the project's execution and the community's needs and expectations; and

WHEREAS, The financial arrangements surrounding the Providence Transit Center project, including the \$16.9 million contract with Next Wave Partners and the allocation of a significant portion of available bond money before securing the land or beginning construction, raise questions about the stewardship of taxpayer funds and the project's feasibility; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 bond money was designated for capital improvements and can be used for existing RIPTA infrastructure, including Kennedy Plaza, and other central bus facilities, making it a viable option for enhancing public transportation services.

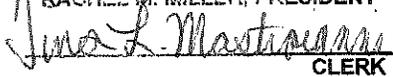
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council vehemently opposes the relocation of Rhode Island's central bus hub from Kennedy Plaza to Parcel 35 near Interstate 95; and

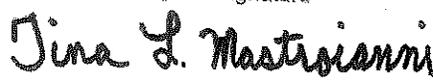
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council explicitly emphasizes that it is not and has never advocated or expressed in any way to RIPTA and any other relevant authorities that they would like the bus hub moved from Kennedy Plaza, reaffirming the Council's commitment to preserving Kennedy Plaza as the central bus hub for the benefit of our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council urges the 195 Redevelopment District Commission and the RIPTA Board of Directors to pursue meaningful public input and discussion regarding the future of the central bus hub, emphasizing the importance of maintaining Kennedy Plaza as a viable option for the bus hub and not proceeding with a process that excludes it from consideration as a potential location; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, the 195 Redevelopment District Commission, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, the Office of Governor Daniel J. McKee, the Office of Rhode Island Speaker of the House K. Joseph Shekarchi, the Office of Rhode Island Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, and the Office of Mayor Brett Smiley to emphasize the importance of preserving the central bus hub at Kennedy Plaza for the benefit of our community.

IN CITY COUNCIL
MAY 16 2024
READ AND PASSED


RACHEL M. MILLER, PRESIDENT

CLERK

Effective without the
Mayor's Signature

Tina L. Mastroianni
City Clerk