

THE NEW PUBLIC TRANSIT ALLIANCE
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
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Investing in cleaner and smarter transportation choices will benefit our economy, public health, and the environment. Automobile dependency is a major factor in climate change, urban decay, sprawl, affordable housing crises, increased risk of respiratory disease, cardiovascular illness and obesity. The most immediate and effective way to mitigate our impact on climate change is to expand public transit.

The overall benefit of public transit to society is massive. By getting people out of cars, we improve public health, reduce global warming, improve air quality, encourage safe walkable communities over sprawling, exurban development and protect open space.

To this end, the New Public Transit Alliance (NuPTA), a coalition of public health advocates, environmentalists, community organizations, business groups, labor, and transit riders, has come together to strengthen our public transit system. We define a robust statewide public transportation system to include all forms of bus, rail and ferry service, car and vanpools, as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The New Public Transit Alliance (NuPTA) takes public transportation policy positions based on the following principles:

1. NuPTA supports the most energy and land conserving, and least polluting modes of transportation.
2. A robust and efficient statewide public transportation system is essential to Rhode Island's quality of life and future well-being, both in terms of economic development and environmental stewardship.
3. A first-class public transit system is a strategic advantage for Rhode Island's economic future, due to its small size, dense population, and current dependence on imported oil.
4. Rhode Island's transportation system should provide everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, with adequate access to jobs, shopping, services, recreation, and affordable housing.
5. NuPTA recognizes that RIPTA is widely regarded as well-managed and provides very good service given its serious funding constraints at a time of increasing demand for service.
6. All transportation planning in the state of Rhode Island should ensure vigorous and effective public participation. Before significant new investments can be made in expanding public transportation, key stakeholders will first need a detailed vision of what a first-class, intermodal public transportation system would look like in Rhode Island.
7. While significant long-term capital investments and sustained operational funding for public transportation are needed to achieve the goal of first class public transportation system, we also believe that there are incremental improvements that can enhance public transportation in the short-term.
8. Land-use development patterns and transportation planning are inherently linked. An orientation to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian needs in the siting and design of new development contributes to the vibrancy of our urban, town and village centers. Conversely, locating retail and other businesses beyond RIPTA routes adversely affects the ability of firms to hire and retain employees as well as air quality.

9. Concentrating growth within a connected network of urban and town centers affords a better opportunity to achieve the requisite density for supporting enhanced transit service and reduced vehicle trips. Therefore zoning, financing, land-use controls and other policies should concentrate employment near transit stations or stops, promote denser residential areas to allow shorter trips, integrate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commerce (markets, restaurants, services, etc.) into residential neighborhoods, and reduce parking requirements and eliminate parking subsidies.
10. Existing communities should be revitalized or retrofitted, as necessary, to achieve these qualities and to enhance their quality of life. At the same time revitalization is spurred, however, localities must develop strategies to ensure that affordable housing is preserved. If transit-oriented development is going to work at its best, those struggling at the lowest economic rungs must not be excluded from the benefits.
11. Any state or municipal investment strategies and policies designed to enhance public transportation must consider the position of Rhode Island within the regional transportation network.
12. Funding for new investments in public transportation requires creative solutions including partnerships with the private sector and other financing that grows with demand.
13. Federal and local subsidies should prioritize public transportation systems. Such subsidies are especially needed to correct the history of heavy subsidies to motor vehicles, including trucks.
14. Transportation subsidies which handicap the achievement of the above principles should be eliminated and all appropriate public agencies involved in transportation issues should ensure vigorous and effective public participation in transportation planning

Add your Organization to the New Public Transit Alliance (NuPTA)

If your organization agrees with the above principles, fill out the information below and return this page to the Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter, 17 Gordon Avenue, Suite 208, Providence, Rhode Island 02905.

Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Email: _____

Join NuPTA Listserv? Y N

The New Public Transit Alliance meets the second Tuesday of every month for lunch at the Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter office.