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All about Pawtucket's new \$47 million transit hub - by Donald Grebien

February 14, 2020 - Rhode Island

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In two years, Pawtucket's state-of-the-art multi-modal commuter rail and RIPTA transit hub will become operational. This significant public transportation project, in addition to surrounding complementary infrastructure improvements, is the result of more than a decade of work between city and state officials, bus transit, and railroad stakeholders. The transit hub will provide frequent service for commuters traveling to Boston in the north and to Providence, T.F. Green Airport, and Wickford in the south.

Currently, many Rhode Islanders drive to commuter rail stations in Attleboro and South Attleboro, Mass. It is estimated that when Pawtucket's commuter rail service begins, it will attract 520 daily boardings.

Over the last two years, the design and functionality of the transit hub has been refined by ongoing coordination between RIDOT, Pawtucket city officials, and RIPTA. RIPTA bus service is scheduled to begin operation in the summer of 2020 with commuter rail service expected shortly thereafter. The bus operation itself is expected to be the second most active RIPTA transit facility in the state behind only Kennedy Plaza in Providence.

Commuter rail service in Pawtucket will provide a continuous intermodal connection between Mass. Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter rail service, one of the busiest stretches of passenger rail in the country, R.I. Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) local bus service, and improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

This transit hub project, estimated to be \$47 million (20% coming from state and local funds), is one of the largest public transit infrastructure projects in recent years. Critical funding is provided by a combination of federal, state and local sources. The scope of construction work includes the relocation of bus station services from Roosevelt Ave. to the new commuter rail station location on Pine St. with dedicated bus lanes and improved bus shelters along Exchange St. and Goff Ave.,

linking the new transit facility to Pawtucket's historic downtown. The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts is also managing the incorporation of public art into this station design as part of the state's Percent for Public Art program.

As construction begins on the new transit hub, we are already experiencing positive impact associated with a project such as this as an economic catalyst for additional private investment in surrounding areas. This transportation project is also expected enhance the redevelopment potential of the historic Conant Thread mill complex located directly to the north of the station site including nearly 2 million s/f of existing floor area. The city has also worked in close cooperation with the adjoining city of Central Falls and has collaborated with its sister city to adopt streamlined joint development regulations to facilitate redevelopment in the transit oriented district. The entire transit oriented district is also located within a federally designated Opportunity Zone adding still more to its development potential.

Our Pawtucket Department of Public Works is also working hard on complementary infrastructure improvements including sidewalk repair, paving, street trees, and commuter parking around Pine St., Dexter St., and Main St.

For more details about the city's transit hub project and/or economic development opportunities, contact commerce director Jeanne Boyle at 401 728-0500, x432; or email jboyle@pawtucketri.com.

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