



Thanks to increased federal funding, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) is moving forward with an expanded exterior repair project at the Newport Gateway Center. The roughly \$6.6 million project is being supported by the City of Newport which will contribute a 10-percent local match to the federal funding.

“Not only will the new facility better serve the community, but it should also make the Newport Gateway Center more resilient the next time a big storm hits,” U.S. Senator Jack

Reed, the Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, said when he and the other members of Rhode Island Congressional Delegation announced the increased federal dollars for the Gateway project.

The federal grant is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through a program designed to fund the repair of structures damaged by Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and also to make them more resilient to future severe weather events. Because of the coastal location of the center, RIPTA and its consultants are taking care to make sure that any repair work will also bolster the storm resiliency of the site. For example, new low-impact drainage will not only keep storm runoff from affecting surrounding areas, but will help the site handle storm influx more quickly.

The peaked canvas canopies that covered exterior pedestrian areas (and which took the brunt of the storm damage) will be replaced with permanent roofing on those sidewalk areas. The project scope now also includes better drainage, extensive repaving and new signage to make the area easier to navigate for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who pass through it every year.

In order to accommodate the expanded project scope, RIPTA is enlisting the services of additional architectural and engineering consultants. RIPTA will continue to refine the project design in concert with the City, the community and a local Design Review Committee.



Covering remains on only one pedestrian pavilion, with the rest of the area offering no protection for passengers.

Currently, with most of the canopy covering gone, there is much reduced passenger protection at the Gateway Center and the area is subject to the elements. Storms, flooding and salt damage have eroded the pavement, the parking lot, and even the concrete bases of the support columns. Worn and weathered banners have to suffice for signage. When the banners are replaced, RIPTA will also come up with a plan to improve overall signage and way-finding. New landscaping will also be part of the project. It will be integral to the new eco-friendly, low-impact drainage system, and will also improve the aesthetics. Current plantings do not compliment the property.



Crumbling concrete due to storm, water erosion and salt damage.



Landscaping does not complement the property. Newer landscaping will be aesthetically pleasing and integral to the low impact drainage system



Current signs and banners are faded and worn. Repair project will include new signage and improved way finding.

A recent visit to the site showed the importance of addressing the needed repairs at the Gateway Center before there is more deterioration. Accessible to pedestrians and transit users alike, the center is a great asset to the community and has long proven successful at taking visitors out of their cars and getting them into the community by foot and by bus.



Evan Smith, President of Discover Newport, talks to RIPTA Planning Staff during a recent visit to the site. Smith said that the tourism agency is anxious for the project to get underway so that a restored and improved Gateway Center can welcome visitors to the city.



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