

**TRANSPORTATION COMMUNITY SYSTEM PRESERVATION  
CITY OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**

**I. Cover Sheet**

**Project Information**

Type of Project Request: Implementation Grant

Project Title and Location: Olneyville Square Inter-modal Transit Center  
Providence, Rhode Island

Organization: City of Providence  
Department of Planning and Development

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Grant Request: \$ 850,000.

**Abstract**

Providence is undertaking a major neighborhood revitalization effort in Olneyville, one of twenty-five neighborhoods in the City of Providence that is also an Enterprise Community. The approach is an innovative model for using transportation and inter-modal facilities as the back bone of a neighborhood revitalization effort that will also capitalize on an urban river, recycle brownfields, promote homeownership and support small business development. Revitalization activities in Olneyville have received national recognition, including *Brownfields Showcase Community* and *American Heritage River* designations. Olneyville has suffered considerable dis-investment over the past 30 years, yet it has many positive features in place that can be used to establish Olneyville as a vital, liveable urban neighborhood of 5,910. This project is focused on the commercial heart of the neighborhood, which was once the second largest commercial area in the City. The project has three elements: siting a public Transit Center, linking the Woonasquatucket Greenway/Bikeway project to the Transit Center, and re-connecting Olneyville Square and the Transit Center to the West Broadway neighborhood. Beyond the traditional role of providing efficient transportation, the Transit Center and inter-modal connections will strengthen the area as a community center, support private re-investment in Olneyville Square, and stabilize residential land uses.

## II. Project Description

### A. Historic Development and Demographics of Olneyville Neighborhood

Olneyville, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Providence,<sup>1</sup> is located in the central western section of the city. Its boundaries are Atwells Avenue to the north, the AMTRAK railway line and Route 10 to the east, the Woonasquatucket River and Route 6/Interstate 195 to the south, and Glenbridge Avenue to the west. Olneyville Square, where Broadway, Westminster Street, Harris Avenue, Hartford Avenue, Plainfield Street, Manton Avenue, Valley Street, and Dike Street all meet, has long been the industrial, commercial, cultural, and transportation hub of the entire west side of Providence. (See Map A.)

Development in Olneyville intensified early in the 19th century. The Woonasquatucket River, a source of waterpower, made Olneyville attractive to industry and numerous mill villages popped up along its banks. Throughout the 19th century, Olneyville remained a leading industrial center. Improvements in roads and the establishment of public transportation also enhanced the popularity of Olneyville. In addition, the expansion of public transportation also had a significant influence on Olneyville's residential development, particularly in the area around Olneyville Square. By 1895, electric trolleys had replaced the original horse-drawn streetcars, and new lines were extended out along Atwells Avenue to Academy Avenue. The convenience of public transportation and the possible employment opportunities in the mills further increased residential development.

After World War II the fortunes of Providence's textile giants declined precipitously. Industries moved out of the city for cities in the southern United States or shut down altogether. The effect of this demise on the Olneyville neighborhood was devastating. Thousands of jobs were lost and were never replaced. Some of these jobs have been recaptured in the costume jewelry industry but not enough to change the plight of the neighborhood. As jobs declined, Olneyville became severely depopulated as more and more residents left the neighborhood to seek new employment. This flight was exacerbated by the construction of the Route 6 connector in the early 1950s. Built to alleviate the traffic snarls in Olneyville Square, the Route 6 connector had the effect of destroying a great deal of affordable, working-class housing. Route 95 is an additional barrier that separates Olneyville from downtown.

Since the 1960s, the jewelry industry has replaced textiles in Olneyville. Numerous businesses in the Promenade Center provide hundreds of jobs to neighborhood residents. Despite the emergence of this new industry, however, Olneyville continued to lose population throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The 1980 Census showed that 16 percent of Olneyville's residents had left during the 1970s. It was not until the 1980s that the population of Olneyville began to stabilize again.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: *Olneyville: Neighborhood Analysis*, Department of Planning and Urban Development, City of Providence, 1979; *Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan 1991-1995*. (City of Providence, 1992). and *Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources*, edited by William McKenzie Woodward and Edward F. Sanderson (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986).

The population in Olneyville in 1990 was 5,910, a decline of about 9 percent from the 6,485 residents recorded in 1980. Olneyville has undergone significant demographic change over the past decade, during which the white population declined by almost 40 percent and the nonwhite population increased nearly four-fold. During this same period the number of foreign-born persons doubled and the number of persons who speak English not well or not at all increased five-fold.

Overall, the 1990 census reported that about one-third of the Olneyville population was Hispanic (34.9%), 12.3 percent were African American, and 7.2 percent were Asian. More than one in four persons living in Olneyville in 1990 were foreign-born (27.4%) and a similar proportion did not speak English well or at all. Less than half (42%) of all persons of age 25 or older had completed high school in 1990. Almost half (45%) of all employed residents in Olneyville in 1990 were employed in the manufacturing sector, the single largest source of jobs for Olneyville residents. The unemployment rate in Olneyville in 1990 was 11.3 percent, three percentage points higher than the citywide rate.

Median family income in 1989 in Olneyville was \$16,857, 41 percent lower than the citywide median family income. The incidence of poverty in Olneyville was up sharply in 1990 from 1980 levels for all demographic groups. In 1990, almost four out of ten persons (37.4%) were poor, 35.5 percent of families were living in poverty, more than half (53.9%) of all children were poor, and the proportion of elderly living in poverty was 27.9%, which was twice the rate reported for elderly persons in 1980.

The composition of the housing stock in Olneyville continued to change over the past decade. In 1990 there were about 12 percent fewer housing units in Olneyville than there were in 1980, mostly due to the demolition of blighted buildings and to house fires. The proportion of owner-occupied units declined from 26.4 percent in 1980 to 19.3 percent in 1990 whereas the percentage of units that were renter-occupied increased from 73.6 percent to 80.7 percent. More than 7 out of 10 housing units in Olneyville in 1990 were located in buildings with three or more units; one out of three housing units was located in a building with five or more units. More than half of all housing units in Olneyville (55%) was built more than 40 years ago. There is a residential density of 10 units per acre.

The median value of owner-occupied housing units in 1990 was \$81,400, 27 percent lower than the citywide median. The median rent in Olneyville in 1990 was 14 percent lower than the citywide level. According to the 1990 census, six out of ten residents in Olneyville moved into their present housing unit within the past five years. During 1999 and 2000 the City will be constructing three new school facilities in the City's west end. This will include an elementary, middle and high school to service the increasing number of school age children.

## **B. Olneyville Square Present Conditions**

Olneyville Square contains a mix of land uses including:

- Retail: hardware store, grocery store, sandwich and coffee shops, Laundromat and some clothes stores,
- Financial Services: two banks and a third is constructing a new ATM,

- Public/Institutional: post office, public library and churches,
- Industry/Manufacturing: print shop, industry, jewelry assembly and wholesalers, and
- Residential: elderly tower and some apartment units over first floor commercial space.

While automobile counts in the Square are high, traffic passes through the Square on route to another destination and drivers do not patronize the establishments. There is a high rate of turnover for first floor storefront space and an even higher long-term vacancy rate for second floor space. Routes 10/6 have physically separated the Square from the West Broadway neighborhood and areas to the south and west. The auto traffic dominates and in many areas the pedestrian environment is inhospitable. The Woonasquatucket River is all but forgotten, as it is hidden from view behind mill buildings or paved right up to its banks. The City did make some basic improvements in the 1980's including an expanded traffic island and some street trees, but the majority of the public right of way remains harsh and uninviting. The area has the potential to become more of a vital community center by strengthening the pedestrian elements, building on its transportation hub function, rounding out the land use types, and establishing a strong positive identity.

Despite the physical decline, there are residents who make Olneyville home and given the right support can start to reverse the decline. A bilingual organizer notes that the Hispanic population is ready and willing to make a commitment to Olneyville. These residents see the neighborhood as a place where the American dream can come true, a place where they can raise their families, work and be a part of a community. They are willing to put down roots and became the next generation to make this urban neighborhood home. Two major grass roots planning and coordinating projects are underway in the neighborhood including a *Weed & Seed Initiative*<sup>2</sup> and a neighborhood-planning group, the *Olneyville Collaborative*. Both of these groups include community members and representatives of community organizations. The City is providing staff support and resources to their efforts. Restoring Olneyville Square is consistent with the objectives of both of these groups and the City has included them in these efforts.

### **C. Supporting Activities in Olneyville Neighborhood**

The Olneyville revitalization is begin supported with a variety of initiatives including (See Map B):

#### *Open Space and the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project*

As described, the Olneyville area developed around the Woonasquatucket River that meanders through Olneyville into downtown Providence. The river is the focal point of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project, a major public improvement initiative. Once completed, the Greenway will cover 4.4-miles with a bike path connecting four parks and linking the neighborhood with the river. The Greenway project has three goals: increase recreational

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<sup>2</sup> Weed & Seed is a US Department of Justice Program that utilizes a strategy of “weeding” crime while also “seeding” the area with supporting services. The Olneyville Weed & Seed program is under the auspices of the Providence Department of Planning and Development.

space in the Olneyville neighborhood, restore the natural environment along the river and provide an additional transportation corridor. The project is a collaborative effort of the City, State and the non-profit group, The Providence Plan. The Greenway project combines funding of nearly nine million dollars from private and public sources. The bike path was funded as a \$3.1 million priority project in TEA21; the State has committed an additional \$800,000 in the TIP; the City has committed \$2.9 million for park improvements and remediation of brownfields along the Greenway; Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has received \$200,000 from the EPA for remediation design at two brownfields sites; the Rhode Island Foundation has provided \$100,000 for acquisition of river-front land in Olneyville Square; The Trust for Public Land has supported land acquisition efforts by means of a \$600,000 loan from the Ford Foundation; and the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund has supported The Providence Plan's Greenway plan development, public programming and stewardship efforts with a \$450,000 grant. As of November 1998, improvements have been completed at two City parks, land acquisition efforts are underway and the bike path is in design. The Greenway and bike path should be completed in two (2) years.

### *Housing*

The three housing organizations in the neighborhood, Olneyville Housing Corporation (OHC), Habitat for Humanity and Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), have formed a collaborative to work on expanding the stock of affordable housing. The three groups will receive funding from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation to hire a consultant to prepare a neighborhood plan for housing in the area. On going housing work includes improvements to the existing stock and new construction projects. OHC is presently using HOME funds to rehab rental units for occupancy by low/moderate income tenants. OHC has received funding of 4.2 million in tax credits to undertake a 32 unit rental project that will include 5 gut rehabs and moving two houses. The nine total structures include 8 two family and 1 three family. OHC will set up a subsidiary to be the landlord and hire a professional management firm. The Affordable Housing Program of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, has given OHC a grant of \$166,000 to be used for grants to low and moderate income residents for closing costs and down payment assistance. It is estimated that 15 families can be assisted. In addition, Habitat for Humanity has outlined a plan to use volunteer labor to construct two duplexes on vacant lots and is in the process of renovating a single family home. RIOP is also active in the area of housing and is working collaboratively with Habitat and OHC to pre-qualify residents to become homeowners.

### *Economic Development*

In FY 99, the City has committed \$100,000 of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to improvements along Manton Avenue. These funds will be used to upgrade this commercial corridor that leads into Olneyville Square. Also, through the *Brownfields Showcase Community* program HUD will be providing Providence with a Community Builder in March 1999. The Community Builder will have economic development expertise and will focus on an assessment of the Olneyville Square economic climate. A study of the area will identify the businesses operating, the gaps in service, major problems facing businesses and business development, and make recommendations for revitalizing these retail areas. The proposed Transit Center will play a key role in the plan for new business development. Such additional services as childcare and a drug store, to complement the existing uses, will be explored. The Community Builder will also assess

the vacancies on the second floor levels of the Square for the potential to establish additional transit oriented residential development. The Providence Economic Development Corporation will assist these efforts with its low interest loan fund for small business development.

## **D. TCSP Project**

### **1. Transit Center in Olneyville Square**

The density and low rate of automobile ownership among the population of Olneyville makes the Square a natural place for a substantial transit presence. Presently, the Square is the fourth largest transit hub in the State with five routes bringing 270 inbound and outbound busses through on a daily basis. The Square is one of the biggest boarding/alighting points in the system. Approximately 1,100 passengers board or alight RIPTA busses in Olneyville Square each day.

Map C shows how Olneyville Square is at the confluence of five separate routes serving employment centers, job services, retail, and medical facilities. Sites in the West Side of Providence and the towns that border Providence to the west are common destinations for many residents of the Olneyville neighborhood. With a high concentration of households receiving public assistance, two important destinations are the offices of the job training/job placement services, ProCap and PC Works, along Hartford Avenue. RIPTA's Hartford Avenue route passes through Olneyville Square and serves both of these offices. Map D shows the high rate of households receiving public assistance income in the census tracts surrounding Olneyville Square. The map also represents the service expansions proposed by RIPTA as part of their FTA Welfare to Work/Reverse Commute grant application. If RIPTA is awarded the grant, Olneyville Square will receive extended night service designed to allow individuals working non-traditional schedules to use transit for work transportation.

The location of Olneyville Square in the RIPTA system makes it the most convenient spot to transfer from an inbound bus to an outbound bus heading to the various parts of the West Side, Johnston, Cranston, and North Providence. However, given the lack of facilities and security in the Square, many people do not feel comfortable making transfers in Olneyville. Instead, these riders travel all the way into the Kennedy Plaza hub in downtown Providence only to transfer to a different bus heading back out through Olneyville Square. This adds eighteen (18) minutes to their trip. When the time spent waiting for the second bus in Kennedy Plaza is factored in the rider could be adding as much as thirty (30) minutes to their commute. The Transit Center will provide RIPTA with a facility from which new services and service for specific employment centers can be developed. Both Providence Place Mall and the State's Quonset Park Development projects have the potential to become employment centers. With training the Olneyville/Hartford labor pools can provide a source of manpower to meet the demands at these centers. RIPTA will be able to develop a transit option out of the proposed Olneyville Square Transit Center.

The fact that many riders do not feel comfortable transferring in Olneyville Square also causes another problem for RIPTA. Busses are often riding at capacity between Olneyville Square and Kennedy Plaza. This forces RIPTA to "double-head" some routes in the peak hours thereby increasing the number of peak vehicles. If more riders alighted these busses to make their transfers at Olneyville Square the capacity problem could be diminished.

## **2. Functional Aspects of the Olneyville Square Transit Center**

To encourage riders to make transfers at Olneyville Square, RIPTA will lease approximately 1,000 square feet of ground floor retail space in the Square to house a Transit Center. This will provide riders with a handicapped accessible, indoor, lighted, and heated/air conditioned waiting area. To ensure a constant presence in the Transit Center RIPTA will sublet approximately 200 square feet each to two different retail service providers. RIPTA envisions that one of these retailers will sell convenience items such as gum, drinks, sandwiches, newspapers, etc. The other would be any type of retailer who feels they could benefit from the customer base in the Transit Center. Having this retail presence in the Transit Center will increase the feeling of security and convenience for riders.

The Transit Center will also help to promote Olneyville Square as the gateway to the off-road portion of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway. RIPTA busses are equipped with bike racks so bike path users will have a convenient way to get to the off-road portions. Those who ride the bike path to the Square will have a secure waiting area to transfer from bike to bus.

Aside from the retailers, the Transit Center will include 12-15 seats in a passenger waiting area, restrooms, and pay phones. The Center will also be equipped with an electronic information kiosk to provide RIPTA system information to riders in multiple languages. There will be a wall sized RIPTA system map with multilingual instructions and an Olneyville neighborhood map highlighting connection routes to the Greenway and social services in the neighborhood. The Center will also include a community bulletin board on which neighborhood groups can post announcements and a wall plaque describing the history of Olneyville Square. For revenue generating purposes the center will have advertisement billboard space and an area for freight service drop-off boxes. RIPTA will explore the possibility of an indoor bike rack to keep bikes secure and protect them from the elements if residents or bike path users want to bike to the Square and take a bus into the city.

## **3. Links to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway/Bikeway Project**

As part of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project (WRGP) areas along the Woonasquatucket River in Olneyville Square will be reclaimed as greenspace. The Trust for Public Land is negotiating for the acquisition of a twenty-foot wide linear parcel within the grocery store parking lot that runs parallel to the river. Presently this parcel is entirely paved, with the edge of pavement extending to the top of the riverbank. The WRGP envisions this parcel returning to a green state and functioning as a linear park that will be used by elderly shopping at the grocery store, residents crossing through the parking lot to access the post office and bicyclists coming into the square from the bikeway. This lot is centrally located and highly visible, being located in the midst of the high volume destination points of the post office, grocery store, Laundromat and coffee shop. Funding for the acquisition and improvement of this parcel has been awarded by a private foundation. The City has committed bond funds for the design of the park and matching construction dollars.

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway Plan calls for the establishment of a river walk along San Souci Drive. San Souci is a 700-foot long block that runs parallel to the river providing access to

parking areas for a bank, hardware store and several small businesses. This area is presently the "back door" to the square and is underutilized. The river runs right along San Souci and at the midpoint of the street takes a ninety-degree curve that provides a unique long view-corridor of the river. In 1995 the WRGP initiated the Woonasquatucket River Festival as a means of increasing the visibility and appreciation of the river. The festival is held on San Souci Drive and includes musical performances, canoe rides on the river and environmental awareness activities for children. Local organizations including the Olneyville Boys & Girls Club, the Hartford Park Tenants Association and the Olneyville Businessmen's Association are involved in the festival. Attendance in 1997 was estimated at 1,000 and the festival is a beginning point for having the community claim the riverfront area. The City has set aside a portion of its neighborhood bond funds for the design and improvements along San Souci Drive. Design work is currently underway including traffic analysis to study the feasibility of making San Souci a one way street and using more of the right of way for a river-walk. Some TCSF funds will be used to match the City's bond dollars and to connect the San Souci river-walk area with the heart of the square and the RIPTA Transit Center. The river itself will become a point of neighborhood pride and be restored as part of Olneyville's identity. The Transit Center and the river will have a direct pedestrian and bicycle link, and to greatest extent feasible a visual connection. (See Map E.)

The WRGP includes the recycling of a mill building at a brownfields site located 3/10 of a mile outside Olneyville Square. This building will be re-used for live/work space or residential/office space. The rest of this 6-acre riverfront parcel will be turned into greenspace and be used for the bikepath. The success of the brownfields re-use is tied to the vitality of Olneyville Square.

Under the TCSF program the City would evaluate further public infrastructure improvements in Olneyville Square that will serve to link the bikeway to Olneyville Square and promote pedestrian and bicycle movement in Olneyville Square. The plan will seek to improve the public space and establish connections between destinations points, in order to encourage an active public space and re-establish Olneyville Square as a major community and retail center. The improvements will service Olneyville residents and those new comers using the RIPTA Transit Center as an interim destination point. Olneyville Towers, located in the heart of the square includes 154 units with a total of approximately 175 elderly residents and there is a residential density of approximately 10 units per acre. The improvements, along with economic development support from the City, should result in private investment geared to providing goods and services for the local residents and visitors to the Square. A strong commercial center will also play a role in stabilizing the residential land uses in the area.

Traveling from west to east, the Woonasquatucket Greenway/Bikeway will come down Manton Avenue and turn onto Delaine Street. The bikeway continues for approximately 2/10 mile down Delaine Street before turning onto a short side street, crossing the river and becoming an off-road facility again. Olneyville Square is the major commercial/retail area within access of the bike path and is less than 500 feet away. The TCSF portion of the Olneyville Square project would make improvements to the sidewalk area between Delaine /Manton Avenue and the Square so bicyclists and pedestrians will be better served and the bikeway connects both to the retail and community heart of the square and the RIPTA Transit Center. Improvements along this stretch will include street trees, sidewalk resurfacing, and other street furniture. The traffic light at Delaine and Manton will be upgraded to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian activity as part of the bikeway construction in the year 2000.



A special feature of this area will be the incorporation of public art into the sidewalk improvements. The local community centers, Joslin Community Center and Nickerson House, will utilize their youth programs to generate artwork that can be incorporated into the sidewalk project. This will add to the place making and reflect the community interests and diversity. The project may highlight the area's history as home to various immigrant groups or reflect the current diversity of cultures. The art project will be coordinated through the Olneyville *Weed & Seed Program*, and the images and messages created by the children will be used in the sidewalk area with a media such as ceramic tiles, concrete paints or pole banners. (See Map E.)

The Transit Center will bring a new vitality to the square and this along with the other public improvements bodes well for augmenting the types of services and businesses that are located in the Square. Improvements within the right-of-way to make the area more "pedestrian friendly" include: evaluation of appropriate street furniture, fencing elements, use of pavers to add to the aesthetics of the area, adding a pedestrian/bicycle link from the RIPTA Transit Center to the river-walk area, and reviewing the quality and location of the crosswalks. Both the Transit Center and the pedestrian environment will be accessible to the mobility impaired. Given the concentration of elderly in the neighborhood and the reliance that the disabled have on public transit, it is important that the improvements service these populations.

### **C. Reconnecting with the West Broadway Neighborhood**

TCSP funding will also be used to improve the connection between Olneyville Square and the West Broadway neighborhood along Westminster Street. From the turn of the century up to the 1950's, Olneyville Square served as a retail center for the City's west end, including the West Broadway neighborhood. The construction of Route 10 separated Olneyville Square from the West Broadway neighborhood and severed the connection. Westminster Street is a one-mile long artery that has a daily car count of 19,500 and is a major gateway connecting the west to Downtown, via Olneyville Square. The West Broadway Neighborhood Association (WBNA) continues to focus on the revitalization of Westminster Street as a major priority for local grassroots activity. Planning studies have identified the major issues along Westminster Street as: the lack of identity and character, stagnant economic activity, poor physical appearance and an unsafe and unfriendly pedestrian environment.

For the past six years, the WBNA has worked on this vision through its Westminster Street Community Development Committee. The WBNA is working to return Westminster Street to what it once was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century - the neighborhood's "Main Street". A revitalized Westminster Street would provide local services to the residents and be a source of pride. This neighborhood has strong residential areas with well kept historic homes, a 10-acre park area and an Armory building that is slated to be renovated into a film studio. The ingredients are in place for a strong urban neighborhood that encourages patronizing of local businesses and community interactions in public spaces. The WBNA is also working to restore the connection between Westminster Street and downtown that was severed with the construction of Route 95. The Mayor has voiced support for re-establishing this connection through construction over Route 95.

To date WBNA has accomplished the following:

- purchased and renovated a former 1930's Texaco Gas Station into the WBNA Headquarters at 1560 Westminster Street (the building has office space for the WBNA and for two community police officers, meeting space for the community and is a resource center for neighborhood information).
- created a loan/grant program for facade improvements to business on Westminster Street
- worked with the City on design guidelines for an overlay zone for the street to guide new development and to be incorporated in the city's zoning code as a model for other neighborhoods
- replaced sidewalks and curbs and added a view corridor on one third of the length of the street and are working to secure funds for the rest of the street, and
- planted over 120 trees on the street.

The travel environment along Westminster Street into Olneyville Square is a hostile one dominated by automobiles. While there is a sidewalk area, the area is inhospitable and includes going under the highway access ramp through a dark and dismal stretch. The TCSP design contract will include evaluating how this area can be improved to act as a gateway into the Olneyville Square. It is anticipated that pedestrian and bicycle traffic will increase into the square as a result of the Transit Center and the bikeway construction. Improvements in this area may include: sidewalk repairs and handicapped ramps, decorative lighting, street trees, pavers, cross walks, major aesthetic improvements to the bridge abutments and decorative fencing elements. Westminster Street is scheduled for re-surfacing through the TIP this spring and preliminary discussions have included a bike lane as part of the new street layout. The TCSP contract will review how to maintain this connection into the square to link with the RIPTA Transit Center and the Woonasquatucket River Greenway/bikeway. (See Map E.)

### **III. Purpose and Criteria.**

The Olneyville Square Inter-modal Transit Center meets the **TCSP Objectives** in the following manner:

**Improve the efficiency of the transportation system:** By allowing passengers to save at a minimum 9 minutes in each direction of their trip, it will promote transit use through the West Side of Providence. Better passenger information in the Transit Center will demonstrate to West Side residents how they can use transit to travel throughout Rhode Island. Also, promoting transfers at Olneyville Square creates more space on the bus between Olneyville and Kennedy Plaza, where ridership is heaviest along each of these routes. This will eliminate the need to add more service to these routes to handle overcrowding. The hub will provide a user-friendly area for inter-modal connections between bikes, buses, and pedestrians.

**Reduce the impacts of transportation on the environment:** This project will link transit with the Woonasquatucket River Greenway, thereby increasing transportation options. This link is facilitated by the fact that RIPTA buses are equipped with bike racks. This convenient access to the Greenway opens a pedestrian and bicycle corridor into and out of the city. Improving transit options and amenities in Olneyville Square will encourage west side residents to use transit in

their daily travel. Easing the pressure on the Olneyville/Kennedy Plaza bus runs will also save on trips, reducing bus miles.

**Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure:** This project increases the convenience of transit and alternative modes of transportation through the West Side of Providence. This will reduce congestion in Olneyville Square and on Routes 6 and 10, two highways that are considered inadequate and antiquated. Also relieving capacity on bus lines east of Olneyville Square will eliminate the need for RIPTA to increase fleet size to meet peak demands. The project also supports the revitalization of two urban neighborhoods, providing a high level of service that encourages people to live in the urban core.

**Ensure efficient access to jobs services and centers of trade:** Efficient access for west side residents is achieved through reduced bus trip time to jobs, services and centers of trade including: Olneyville Square, Cranston Industrial Park, Hartford Avenue retail district in Johnston, Downtown Providence, Rhode Island College, Department of Labor and Training on Manton Avenue and scattered factory locations throughout the west side of Providence. The bike path connects Olneyville to the one million square foot Providence Place Mall, now under construction, that will be a center of service sector jobs. The Providence/Cranston Private Industry Council contracts with two organizations to provide job counseling and training on the west side of Providence. Both of these organizations, PC Works and ProCap, have offices on Hartford Avenue. West side residents will be able to transfer at Olneyville Square to the Hartford Avenue bus that services both of these locations.

**Encourage private sector development patterns:** Introducing a passenger waiting location and improving pedestrian mobility in Olneyville Square will create a captive audience for pedestrian oriented retail services. The Transit Center should support the development of diverse land uses as new services are sited, the brownfields Riverside Mills is re-used and the residential environment is re-invigorated. Strengthening urban neighborhoods promotes re-development in the urban core.

**Implementation Grant: Preservation Practices:** Rhode Island General Laws requires each municipality to complete a Comprehensive Plan that is consistent with State Plan Elements. Once adopted by the municipality, all municipal and state agency land use decisions must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The revitalization of the Olneyville neighborhood through housing, commercial and transit-based rehabilitation is consistent with *Providence 2000: The Comprehensive Plan*. This plan is a policy document that guides the preservation and revitalization of the City's downtown and neighborhoods. Implementation actions include zoning overlay districts that promote a specific pattern of development including - Historic District Zones, Institutional Floating Zones and the Downcity District.

In addition all major projects in Providence that include transportation funds are done in the context of the *Providence 2000: The Comprehensive Plan* and include a strong planning component. Examples here include the Capital Center project that created new areas for development by re-locating train tracks, the proposed re-location of Route I-195 that will open up forty-five acres for development and proposed modifications to RIPTA's main hub at Kennedy Plaza. All of these projects are tied to detailed planning studies and specific development

regulations to facilitate density and guide the private sector investments that will come as a result of the transportation and infrastructure investments.

#### **IV. COORDINATION**

See Attachment from MPO.

#### **V. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The following partners are part of the TCSP funded project:

- *City of Providence, Department of Planning and Development* - Oversee design and construction of street improvements, coordinate citizen and business participation and public art component. Oversee supporting revitalization activities in the areas of housing, brownfields and economic development.
- *Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)*- develop and operate Transit and Information Center in Olneyville Square, monitor routes and adjust as needed.
- *The Providence Plan: Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project* - Work on stewardship and public participation for the Greenway, participate in the design of the Olneyville Square improvements.
- *West Broadway Neighborhood Association* - Represent interests of the West Broadway residents in the design and improvements for Westminster Street, the Transit Center and link to the Greenway/Bikeway.
- *Joslin Community Center/Nickerson Community Center* - Sponsor youth art activities, within their existing day care and after school programming, that can be incorporated into the public space improvements.

The Department of Planning and Development will coordinate public participation into the design of the project by sponsoring a series of meetings to be held in Olneyville Square. A special outreach will be made to the residents of Olneyville Tower and the business owners through door to door leaflets. The general public will be included, as well as, community organizations in Olneyville and the Olneyville Community Police. Meetings will be held to solicit ideas and input, review conceptual designs and approve final designs.

**VI. SCHEDULE**

**TCSP Proposed Implementation Schedule**

1999	MAY	Grant Award	
	JUNE	RFP for Design Services	
	JULY	RFP for Evaluation Services	
	AUG	Contract Awards	
	SEPT	Public Meetings: <i>Ideas, Conceptual Drawings &amp; Final Designs</i>	Evaluation Pre Analysis: <i>Data Gathering, Focus Groups, Interviews &amp; Photo Documentation</i>
	OCT		
	NOV		
	DEC	Bid Preparation/ Permitting	
2000	JAN		
	FEB		
	MAR		
	APRIL	Construction Bid Award	
	MAY		
	JUNE		
	JULY		
	AUG		
	SEPT		
	OCT	Construction Completed	
	NOV		
	DEC		
2001	JAN		
	FEB		
	MAR		
	APRIL		
	MAY	Post Evaluation of Project: Data Gathering, Interviews, Photo Documentation	
	↓		
2003	MAY	Outcome Evaluation	

**VII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Total Costs</i>	<i>Source</i>
<b><i>Personnel &amp; Services</i></b>		
Staff Administration	10,000	City In-Kind
Travel - 2 Trips, 1 Person	1,300	TCSP
Design Services - San Souci Drive	15,400	City Bond Funds
Design Services - TCSP Links Schematic	26,000	City In-Kind
- Final & Bid Preparation	60,000	TCSP
Evaluation Services	10,000	TCSP
<b>SUB-TOTAL Personnel &amp; Services</b>	<b>112,700</b>	
<b><i>Project Costs:</i></b>		
Sidewalks/Handicapped Ramps, Crosswalks, Concrete Pavers	219,050	TCSP
Fencing, street furniture	85,000	TCSP
Bridge Relief Panels	30,000	TCSP
Public Art Component	25,000	TCSP
Street Trees & Shrubs	91,000	TCSP
Bollards, Concrete Curbing	28,800	TCSP
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>478,850</b>	<b>TCSP</b>
Contingency - 10%	47,885	TCSP
<b>SUB-TOTAL Project Costs</b>	<b>526,735</b>	
<b><i>Associated Improvements</i></b>		
San Souci Drive Riverwalk	200,000	City Bond Funds
Linear Park Acquisition and Improvements	90,000	Rhode Island Foundation
	60,000	City Bond Funds
<b>SUB-TOTAL Associated Improvements</b>	<b>350,000</b>	
<b><i>RIPTA Transit Center</i></b>		
Initial 36 month lease <sup>3</sup>	36,000	TCSP
Renovation of 1,000 SF <sup>4</sup>	125,000	TCSP
Electronic Information Kiosk, Wall Maps	89,000	TCSP
<b>SUB-TOTAL RIPTA</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>TCSP</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,239,435</b>	<b>TCSP Funded: \$848,035</b>

<sup>3</sup> Grant funds will be used for an initial 36-month lease @ \$1,000/month. Following that period, RIPTA will fund the rent for the facility through revenue from advertisement in the Transit Center and possible revenue from leases on other RIPTA property. The day to day upkeep of the facility (cleaning, opening, closing) will be the responsibility of the retailers as part of their lease agreement.

<sup>4</sup> Including Architectural Services, @ \$125/square feet.

## **VIII. PROJECT EVALUATION PLAN**

The City will hire a consultant to complete an evaluation plan that includes two studies of the TCSF project. The contract will be open to private consultants and university based research centers such as the URI Transportation Research Center or Brown University's Taubman Public Policy Center. The effect of the Transit Center will be measured in various ways, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and at different time periods. As indicated by the schedule the evaluation consultant contract would be signed at the beginning of the project, so a review of baseline conditions can be made. This review will include interviews with residents, business owners and transit riders, the compilation of figures on RIPTA riders, photo documentation of existing conditions, commercial vacancy rates and the number and types of businesses operating in the Square. The consultant will then follow the project over its 18-month implementation, completing the first phase of the evaluation at two years from the grant award. This study will review the process and product of the project.

The second evaluation study will be completed further out so the Transit Center can become operational and there is time for the private sector to respond to the inter-modal network established in Olneyville Square. This study will be completed four years from the date of award and will revisit the figures on transit riders, services run out of the Transit Center, commercial vacancy rates and businesses operating in the Square. This phase is an assessment of the outcome of the TCSF funded product.

The attached lists the basic goals and objectives of the TCSF Project. The chart following outlines the performance measures and evaluation methods to be used to assess the project's attainment for each objective.



***TCSP OLNEYVILLE SQUARE INTERMODAL TRANSIT HUB  
GOALS & OBJECTIVES***

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***Goal: Improve the Efficiency of the Transportation System in the Neighborhood.***

1. Improve the level of service for transit riders by providing: indoor and safe waiting area, accessible information center, shorter trip time, and more direct connections to job centers.
2. Connect bus, bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel -all of which are or will be heavily used in this area.
3. Reconnect West Broadway neighborhood pedestrians and bicycle/transit riders with Olneyville Square - correct the division created by Routes. 10/195.
4. Improve the pedestrian environment for all residents, and in particular the mobility impaired.

***Goal: Support the revitalization of the neighborhood.***

1. Use Transit Center as focal point for the community and as a means to strengthen a positive identity for Olneyville.
2. Increase the number and diversity of businesses in Olneyville Square.
3. Involve the residents and business owners in the improvements to Olneyville Square.
4. Make functional and aesthetic improvements to Olneyville Square to support it as a neighborhood commercial center/transportation hub.
5. Support the infrastructure improvements with an economic development strategy that provides funding and training for new businesses.

***Goal: Improve the state of the Natural Environment.***

1. Draw recognition to the river as an asset and connecting link between Olneyville Square and other sections of the City.
2. Support re-use of local brownfields sites for open space, residential use and economic development.



Objective	Performance Measures	Data Sources
1.1 Improve the level of service for transit riders by providing: indoor and safe waiting area, accessible information center, shorter trip time, and more direct connections to job centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of transfers made at Olneyville</li> <li>• ridership on routes from Olneyville east and from Olneyville west</li> <li>• number of passengers using Transit Center</li> <li>• Boarding and alighting at Olneyville</li> <li>• From PIC subcontractors: number of people in Olneyville placed in jobs or job training that will be using transit to travel to the site</li> <li>• Rider assessment of travel experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RIP</li> <li>• pre/</li> <li>• inter</li> </ul>
1.2 Connect bus, bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel - all of which are or will be heavily used in this area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of users</li> <li>• transit riders travel mode to transit center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RIP</li> <li>• bicy</li> <li>• abou</li> <li>• Cen</li> </ul>
1.3 Reconnect West Broadway neighborhood pedestrians and bicycle/transit riders with Olneyville Square - correct the division created by Rte. 10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of users</li> <li>• completion of improvements</li> <li>• subjective analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focu</li> </ul>
1.4 Improve the pedestrian environment for all residents, and in particular the mobility impaired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completion of improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anal</li> </ul>
2.1 Use Transit Center as focal point for the community and as a means to strengthen a positive identity for Olneyville.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subjective analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focu</li> </ul>
2.2 Increase the number and diversity of businesses in Olneyville Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number and types of new businesses</li> <li>• number of loans through PEDC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pre/</li> </ul>
2.3 Involve the residents and business owners in the improvements to Olneyville Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• numbers attending meetings</li> <li>• diversity of those attending</li> <li>• involvement of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recc</li> <li>• revi</li> </ul>
2.4 Make functional and aesthetic improvements to Olneyville Square to support it as a neighborhood commercial center/transportation hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completion of improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focu</li> </ul>
2.5 Support the infrastructure improvements with an economic development strategy that provides funding and training for new businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of loans made</li> <li>• number of inquiries processed and number of those given any assistance by PEDC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recc</li> <li>• recc</li> </ul>
3.1 Draw recognition to the river as an asset and connecting link between Olneyville Square and other sections of the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subjective analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focu</li> <li>• ride</li> </ul>
3.2 Support re-use of local brownfields sites for open space, residential use and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• viable re-use at Riverside Mills building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data</li> </ul>

## ATTACHMENTS

Map A: Olneyville Neighborhood, Providence, Rhode Island

Map B: Supporting Activities in Olneyville

Map C: Connections Through the Olneyville Square Hub

Map D: RIPTA Welfare to Work Proposal

Map E: TCSP Project Improvements

Attachment F: Letter from MPO

Letters of Support:

*Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)*

*The Providence Plan*

*West Broadway Neighborhood Association (WBNA)*

*Joslin Community Center*

*Nickerson Community Center (under separate cover)*