

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907
Thursday, February 6, 2020

Attendees: Rui Cabral (Chair), Robert Beauregard, Justin Cartwright, Carney Coopwood, Vincent DeJesus, Monica Dzialo, Deanne Gagne, Barbara Henry, Barry Humphries, James Killingham, Janice Musco, Jeanne Ouellette, Grace Pires, Randall Rose, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Angela Stabile, Lisa Stamp, Frank Susa, Mark Susa, and Olivia Williams.

RIPTA Staff in attendance: Nate Hannon, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the ATAC meeting to order at 4:09 PM.

Angie Stabile motioned to accept the December 5, 2019 meeting minutes, and Robert Beauregard seconded. Heidi Showstead abstained, and all others were in favor.

II. Election-Related Items

After the December meeting, RIPTA staff reviewed the ATAC by-laws to ensure that the election guidelines were clear. Certain rules had been informally adopted by the committee over the years and appeared on the ATAC page on RIPTA's website, but they had not been incorporated into the by-laws, which were last amended in 2012/13. For example, the website states that "To be eligible to vote in an ATAC meeting, a person must have attended at least four meetings during the past year," but that requirement does not appear in the current by-laws.

The committee agreed to have RIPTA staff draft an amended version of the by-laws and circulate them by email. At the next ATAC meeting in March, they will be considered for a vote. If they are approved, the officer election can be held at the same meeting.

Following a lengthy discussion, the committee agreed upon these by-law amendments related to membership:

- ATAC membership will be established twice a year, at meetings held six months apart.
- In order to vote, members must have attended 5 of the previous 12 ATAC meetings. An official roll call will be conducted at every meeting, and RIPTA staff will maintain attendance records.
- RIPTA staff will be considered ex-officio (non-voting) members. Partner agency representatives may become voting committee members if they meet the attendance criteria.

The committee also reviewed the language pertaining to the election of officers in the by-laws. They currently state that “The terms shall be for two years, starting on January 1, of each odd and even numbered year, with re-election possible for two consecutive terms.” The group recommended clarifying that this totals three terms altogether. That change will be incorporated into the revised draft by-laws and revised draft officer position descriptions.

In addition, the committee discussed the code of conduct and potential repercussions for demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior. As currently written, the code of conduct gives the chairperson broad latitude to exercise his or her discretion, but RIPTA staff responsibilities have not been outlined. The committee recommended that a revised draft should address this.

III. Olivia Williams’ Capstone Project/Transportation Survey

Olivia Williams, a graduate student at the Rochester Institute of Technology, is completing a Capstone project on accessibility in Rhode Island. She is conducting a survey to learn about people’s experiences with RIPTA and Ride with a special focus on accessible services. Different formats of the survey are available including an online version which RIPTA staff will share with ATAC contacts. The deadline for survey completion is at the end of February. In April, Olivia plans to report on the recommendations and propose her ideas to RIPTA and Ride leadership.

IV. RIPTA reports: key performance indicators

- On-time performance: In December 2019, buses were on time for 78.9% of weekday trips and 79.5% of all trips (including weekends and holidays). In January 2020, buses were on time for 82.3% of weekday trips and 82.3% of all trips. RIPTA’s goal is 85.0% on-time performance.
- Ride key performance indicators: At year end, in December 2019, 4,981 customers were approved to use Ride. Of that total, 993 or 19.7% of eligible riders used the service within the last 90 days. Passengers took a total of 18,367 Ride van trips in December, 19,278 in November, and 22,676 in October. The total number of taxi trips was 3,666 in December, 4,076 in November, and 4,267 in October. The on time performance rate was 94.2% in December, 93.3% in November, and 94.6% in October. The average number of passengers per revenue hour was 2.07 in December, 2.21 in November, and 2.36 in October.

V. Additional RIPTA project updates

Winter service changes went into effect on January 18th. Seven RIPTA routes have been extended to serve the Downtown Transit Connector: 3 Oakland Beach, 4 Warwick Ave., 51 Charles St/CCRI Lincoln, 54 Lincoln/Woonsocket, 58 Mineral Spring Avenue, 62 URI/South Kingstown, and 72 Weeden St/Central Falls. Routes 1 and 92 also serve some DTC stops.

VI. Ride/RIPTA service feedback

- One attendee mentioned several experiences related to Ride customer service. A taxi driver

sent him a text to let him know that he didn't have time to pick him up, and in a separate incident, he had an angry driver snatch his Ride ticket. He mentioned that due to his health issues, he can't always be ready within the estimated pick-up window, and he sometimes has to let them go. He also questioned the policy of drivers using GPS instead of following customer's directions. In response, Nate Hannon, RIPTA's customer service administrator, suggested that people should contact Ride if they have issues with Ride service or taxi companies, and they'll be connected to Dianne Chappel to file a complaint.

- Another passenger shared an experience on Route 34 outbound leaving Kennedy Plaza at 4:40 PM on Saturday, January 18th. Passengers had to assist the driver with directions, and although he didn't know where he was, the driver didn't call dispatch. The passengers did not feel safe. This was a particular concern for a blind passenger who depends on audio announcements to know when to exit. RIPTA staff responded that it's helpful to raise these issues face to face, but it's also important to get this information to RIPTA right away. These complaints should go directly to street supervision to determine whether drivers need extra training.
- Two ATAC members traveled on route #54 to the train station, and the bus missed the exit for 116 to Lincoln Mall. Rather than turning around, the driver simply asked if anyone needed to get out there. This was a concern for individuals who have visual impairments. In another situation, one of those passengers mentioned that he arranged for a trip from a meeting in Bristol, and it didn't show up.
- Another member relayed the experience of a passenger who had a Ride trip scheduled on a holiday weekend, but didn't get a call. When he called dispatch, he was told that he cancelled the trip, and he should figure out what to do on his own.

VII. Other reports

- An attendee raised concerns about the meeting time and requested a more focused 1.5-hour meeting (from 4:30 to 6 PM) instead of the current 2-hour meeting (from 4 to 6 PM). RIPTA staff will find out whether this is a possibility. In the past, meetings were held in the mornings, and they had low attendance. She also encouraged ATAC members to participate in RIPTA board meetings to raise issues directly with agency leadership.
- The committee discussed ADA requirements for requesting sign language interpretation for public meetings. For OSCIL meetings, details about how to make requests are included in all meeting materials, and state that interpreters can be provided with 48-72 hours advance notice.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.