

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907
Thursday, June 22, 2017
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Attendees: Rui Cabral (Chair), John Gaffney, Angie Stabile, Barry Humphries, Janice Musco, Pamela Amaral, Kelly Richards, Mark Susa, Barbara Henry, Justin Hardwright, Jon Carvalho, Jane DeMelo, Janice Musco and Heather Schey

RIPTA Staff in attendance: Mark Therrien, Jim Vincent and Cristy Raposo

MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Angie Stabile made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. John Carvalho seconded the motion. All the rest were in favor.

II. FOLLOW UP FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- **How to Engage the RIPTA Board**

Rui Cabral emailed the RIPTA Board Chair with a description of the ATAC and invited him to attend the May ATAC meeting. *Follow-up: Rui Cabral has not yet received a response from the RIPTA Board. Rui will send a follow-up email to the Board Chair and the CEO's administrative assistant.*

- **Crossing Elmwood Avenue**

Rui Cabral sent a letter to RIDOT requesting that RIDOT update the pedestrian signal so that is audible. Passengers coming here for their bus passes are required to cross the street. To date, Rui has not received a response. Rui is going to resend the letter. Mark Therrien will inform RIPTA's Executive Planning Director Amy Pettine of the letter that was sent to RIDOT and request her assistance in receiving a reply.

- **Kennedy Plaza & Summer Service Changes**

Mark Therrien asked the committee for feedback on the changes that were just implemented. John Gaffney stated that it was difficult to find or identify a RIPTA supervisor.

- **Service Animals**

Mark Therrien stated that he spoke to a service animal dog trainer and another transit colleague. The dog trainer stated that it is up to the passengers to take responsibility for their service animal, but the animal should never be in an aisle. If the bus or van jams on its brakes, the dog could sustain serious injuries. Mark

instructed the committee to use their own judgment and do what they think is best. He also suggested that passengers with service animals sit in the front seat of the Ride van where there is additional room. RIPTA will work on a policy for the drivers. He encouraged the ATAC to share their experiences with RIPTA. Rui Cabral is going to reach out to other National Federation of the Blind members for feedback on this topic. *Background: At a previous meeting, Heather Schey reported that a driver made her put her service dog between the seats; the dog could not fit and was uncomfortable. She asked if RIPTA driver training instructs drivers as to where service animals should sit and how the animals should be approached.*

III. Q-STRAINT DEMONSTRATION FEEDBACK

Earlier this month, Q-Straint demonstrated their new wheelchair securement products for the public and drivers. Mark Therrien reviewed the feedback with the ATAC. He reported that drivers really liked the new product.

Anna Liebenow, former ATAC Chair, is concerned that someone with limited mobility will find it difficult to push the button that locks the chair into place. Vincent De Jesus sent an email stating that he is concerned the system will not be able to accommodate all the different size and type power chairs available. ATAC members were concerned that they would miss their stop, because they cannot see it in the rear-facing position. Mark Therrien stated that per federal regulations, there can only be one rear-facing seat. Therefore, if available, the passenger would have the option of choosing the rear-facing or front-facing seat.

Mark Therrien stated that Q-Straint is available in over 70 different transit systems. He will look to see if there are other companies that offer the same or similar product.

John Gaffney made a motion to explore the option for the possible installation of this wheelchair system for future bus purchases. Angie Stabile seconded it. All were in favor.

Q-Straint is a company that produces wheelchair passenger safety solutions for public and private transportation. Their Quantum system guarantees self-securement in under 25 seconds without requiring the driver to leave their seat to help. This is the transportation industry's first fully automatic rear-facing wheelchair securement station. Quantum lets wheelchair and scooter passengers board the bus or train, position their chair and simply push a button to secure themselves in a stable and safe rear-facing position. The device locks your chair in and holds you in place. Q-Straint also demonstrated their Q'Pod, which offers forward-facing driver-assisted wheelchair securement.

IV. RIPTA REPORTS

• Stop Announcement Compliance

Jim Vincent, RIPTA's Compliance Officer, is overseeing the Professional Security

Services, the company that monitors RIPTA's fixed-route performance. All ADA compliance requirements, including stop announcements, wheelchair securement, use of the lift/ramp, and basic customer service functions will be monitored and documented.

Jim Vincent provided the following RIPTA Bus Monitoring and ADA Announcement Compliance Report:

93 bus trips were monitored in May

Of those 93 trips, 92 of the automated announcements worked (99% functioning).

1 bus driver made zero announcements when the ATMS malfunctioned.

Jim reported that the ATMS system was working between 82-87% of the time last fall. RIPTA is getting closer to the ATMS working 100% of the time. Rui would like to know how many total times it has not worked and of those total times how many times a driver actually made an announcement. A single driver is monitored three times a year. It is unlikely the same driver will get on a bus where the ATMS malfunctions twice in a row.

Jim Vincent confirmed that bus drivers are required to make announcements at requested stops, but it is a tricky one to test. It is not part of the monitoring contract, but he will ask Professional Security Services about it.

- **Wheelchair Lift Failure**

There were zero total wheelchair failures for the month of May.

- **Complaints**

ATAC would like to know the total number of complaints Ride receives in one month.

V. RIDE/RIPTA SERVICE FEEDBACK

- **Fare Product**

Barbara Henry stated that the change card and transfers both look and feel the same; a passenger with visual impairments has a difficult time distinguishing between the two. Drivers do not tell passengers what is left on the change card or if it is a transfer. Cristy Raposo stated that RIPTA is purchasing fareboxes with new technology including reusable transit cards that they can add value to as needed.

- **Bus Shelter Request**

Barbara Henry would like a bus shelter constructed at the bus stop where she lives. Mark Therrien suggested she present a petition to RIPTA signed by residents. RIPTA typically installs bus shelters at bus stops with a high number of boardings.

- **Ride Tablets**

John Carvalho asked if there is an issue with the Ride GPS tablets. Mark Therrien stated that in certain areas, the older tablets shut off due to a lost signal and are not rebooting correctly. He reported that the old tablets will be replaced in the next week.

- **Taxis**

ATAC members reported issues with taxi drivers. Mark Therrien stated that Ride has terminated their relationship with taxi companies that do not adhere to RIPTA's policies. Going forward, Ride will only work with Orange, Corporate, Anytime Anywhere, Best, and Economy taxi companies. He reported that by the end of August, all taxi drivers will be drug tested and will then go into a random pool for future testing. All taxi drivers will also be required to attend a RIPTA training session. Furthermore, Ride will provide all taxis with GPS tablets or they will purchase their own.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS AND MEMBER REPORTS

- **Q-Straint**

Q-Straint held demonstrations on their wheelchair securement product at Kennedy Plaza on June 1 for passengers and drivers.

- **July Meeting**

Angie Stabile made a motion to cancel the July ATAC meeting. John Carvalho seconded the motion. All were in favor. The next ATAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2017 at 4pm.

- **Ride Rule and Policy Update**

Mark Therrien stated that Ride will be updating their rules and policies. He will present the changes to the ATAC for review. He confirmed that there is an appeal process for anyone who receives a suspension, is not approved for the Ride Program, etc. Mark Therrien stated that the No Show Policy is very fair and the rate of no shows is relative to the percentage of rides taken by that individual. The ATAC requested that RIPTA email the No Show Policy to the committee and add it to the August agenda. *Follow-up: Cristy Raposo emailed the Ride No Show Policy on June 23, 2017.*

Angie Stabile made a motion to end the meeting at 6:00pm. John Carvalho seconded the motion. All were in favor.

When calling to schedule your Ride to the ATAC meeting, please be sure to tell the Customer Service Agent that you are going to and from the ATAC meeting so that you will not be charged. If you would like to take the complimentary Ride trip from Kennedy Plaza to the ATAC meeting, you must contact Cristy Raposo by 4:30pm on Tuesday, August 22, 2017 to reserve your ride (raposo@ripta.com or 784-9500 x1242).