

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907
Thursday, May 2, 2019

Attendees: Benny Bergantino, Rui Cabral (Chair), John Carvalho, Monica Dzialo, Deanne Gagne, Michael Montanaro, Janice Musco, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Angie Stabile, Lisa Stamp, and Mark Susa.

RIPTA Staff in attendance: Mark Therrien, Greg Nordin, Joelle Kanter, Matt Biskey.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

Angie Stabile motioned to accept the April 4, 2019 meeting minutes, and John Carvalho seconded. All were in favor.

II. Marketing Opportunities

- **Review of draft ATAC outreach materials:** Rui Cabral described minor modifications to the brochure content. In order to have a wide reach, RIPTA's general phone number will be listed as the contact for the committee, and the customer service team will filter calls and direct them to other personnel as needed. Greg Nordin will communicate with customer service about the ATAC to make sure that they have up-to-date information.
- **Report on website content recommendations:** Deanne Gagne and Angie Stabile met with RIPTA staff last Thursday to review the pages on the website that relate to accessibility and suggest minor edits. Rui called in. The website has a substantial amount of content, and some language is required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

To make the content easier to understand, Heather Schey suggested that an informational video showing someone signing would be helpful. Heidi Showstead added that infographics would be beneficial on both the website and brochure for people who have difficulty reading. RIPTA's planning and marketing teams will review all comments and take them into consideration.

III. RIPTA Reports

- **Key Performance Indicators: Fixed Route**

- **Stop Announcement Compliance:** Joelle Kanter shared a report on automatic stop announcements. Of the 50 trips that Professional Security Services monitored in March 2019, 100% were in full compliance. The company was short-staffed in March, but new monitors began working in April. Going forward, they will monitor a minimum of 100 runs each month.
- **Wheelchair passengers:** Matt Biskey looked at the number of wheelchair passengers between January and March 2019 to determine whether overcrowding was an issue. He noted low overall wheelchair ridership of 1-5 wheelchair riders per 100 bus trips on the busiest routes. Since buses are designed to hold two wheelchairs at a time, the data does not indicate a significant problem.

Heidi Showstead mentioned a general concern about passengers in wheelchairs feeling unwelcome on fixed route buses. RIPTA does not have data that shows whether a driver unjustly passes by a passenger in a wheelchair, but if a customer contacts RIPTA to complain about an experience, RIPTA's customer service team should have a record of it.

Mark Therrien suggested that RIPTA staff should look at all ADA-related customer complaints for the year. The committee also discussed its obligation to educate RIPTA drivers and other staff about sensitivity toward passengers who have disabilities. Since RIPTA's training department is under new leadership, the committee has an opportunity to recommend changes to the curriculum. RIPTA should budget for training and retraining drivers and should involve ATAC members in the process.

Some committee members also expressed interest in assisting with training new customers, noting that they were involved in creating policies for RIde customers. All rules about no shows and late cancellations are already listed on the website. Deanne recommended that RIPTA should schedule meetings with agencies that serve customers who have disabilities about how to use RIde, the app, and the IVR system. Some suggested involving ATAC members in that training.

RIPTA's Chief of Strategic Advancement Amy Pettine will attend an upcoming ATAC meeting to discuss fixed route training and related issues.

- **Key Performance Indicators: RIde**

- Joelle shared a report on RIde statistics from March 2019. The system had total ridership of 23,424, with an on-time performance rate of 95.3%. 5,067 customers are approved to use RIde, and 993 eligible customers actively used the service in the last 90 days. A total of 8,166 calls were made in March.

- Mark Therrien added that Ride ridership has increased about 3% each month, and at the same time, it has been challenging to recruit and hire new drivers. His goal is to send 10% of trips on taxis, but that number has increased to 15% of total trips.

IV. Ride/RIPTA Service Feedback

Mark announced that Ride will soon be the first system in the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) to use Ford Transits. RIPTA expects to get 25 new 8-passenger vehicles in June and should have them on the road by September. They will have diesel engines, and instead of automatic doors, they have slider doors that require drivers to get out. The steps are also higher than the vans currently in use. Using new vehicles can present challenges, but Ride hopes that these vans will fit into the system.

Janice Musco asked a question about how to cancel one part of a trip. Since each trip appears on the app individually, confirming or cancelling each part should be an option. Dianne Chappel and Chris McKenna can assist with this.

Lisa Stamp mentioned a glitch in the phone system that hides some trips. Rui suggested that trips are sometimes listed out of order with the second trip announced first.

Some information in the IVR does not appear in the app. For example, the IVR includes an estimated arrival time, which is useful. The app and Reveal website (<https://rider.revealportal.com>) should have the same information, and the next update on the Reveal app should clear this bug and resolve other issues.

We also discussed cancellations after midnight, which can be done through the IVR or by searching for upcoming trips in the app, clicking on that day, and using the cancel option.

Mark mentioned that data on the computer server will soon shift to the cloud, and eventually, Ride should move toward online scheduling.

We talked about privacy issues as well. RIPTA only shares information with taxi companies about customers who use wheelchairs, and does not inform them about riders who have visual impairments. Phone numbers are also blocked. Some customers noted that it would be helpful to let drivers know about visual impairments for safety reasons. Others suggested that riders should always ask drivers to name the customer they are scheduled to pick up.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.