

## ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room  
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907  
Thursday, November 7, 2019

**Attendees:** Rui Cabral (Chair), Robert Beauregard, Benny Bergantino, John Carvalho, Vincent DeJesus, Monica Dzialo, Barry Humphries, Rhonda O'Donnell, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Angela Stabile, Lisa Stamp, Frank Susa, and Mark Susa.

**RIPTA Staff in attendance:** Lori Adamo-Savard, Nate Hannon, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Greg Nordin, Darlene Solan, Joseph Solomon.

### I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the ATAC meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

Heather Schey motioned to accept the October 3, 2019 meeting minutes, and Vincent DeJesus seconded. All were in favor.

### II. RIPTA Reports: Key performance indicators

- Stop Announcement Compliance: Jim Vincent prepared a report on bus stop announcements. Of the 96 trips that RIPTA's vendor Professional Security Services monitored in September 2019, 95 were in full compliance. 648 announcements were required, and 636 were made. 90 operators were monitored altogether.

Rui Cabral mentioned that bus announcements are just one of the suite of services that are monitored. The announcement software works well, and the vendor only monitors a small number of trips each month. Since the contract no longer adds much value, Rui motioned for ATAC to advise RIPTA to cancel it. All were in favor. The announcement software will remain in place, and drivers will be instructed to make announcements in case of system failure. ATAC members are encouraged to contact customer service if they notice problems.

- Wheelchair Lift Failures: Wheelchair lift failures have been monitored, but lifts have been phased out. Instead, RIPTA has low floor buses with ramps that are less prone to failure. Drivers can also manually control them when they get stuck.
- On-time performance: In September 2019, buses were on time on 75.9% of weekday trips and 76.0% of all trips (including weekends and holidays). In October 2019, buses were on time on 77.8% of weekday trips and 77.9% of all trips. RIPTA's goal is 85.0% on-

time performance.

- Ride key performance indicators: In September 2019, 5,131 customers were approved to use Ride. Of that total, 996 or 19.4% of eligible riders used the service in the last 90 days. Passengers took a total of 24,297 Ride trips, which was a slight decrease from September. 3,957 trips were taken on taxis. The on time performance rate was 93.9%, and the system averaged 2.23 passengers per revenue hour. Ride received a total of 8,947 calls, and the average connect time was 1 minute 55 seconds.

### III. RIPTA project updates

- Transit Forward RI 2040: Sarah Ingle, RIPTA's long range planning manager, presented on the transit master plan. She announced that the last round of public meetings on the project are likely to be scheduled in early 2020, but people may still share ideas. The project team is in the process of narrowing down the 3 proposed scenarios and developing one recommended plan. Based on the feedback they've received, top priorities include adding greater frequency and span of service, adding crosstown service, creating a frequent transit network, and making intensive bus stop improvements. Plans also include development of a high capacity trunk to serve the metro core from CCRI in Warwick to the Pawtucket/Central Falls area and improved regional service to high density areas outside the metro core.

The plan recommends the creation of mobility hubs scaled to meet each community's needs. In places that cannot support fixed route service, the plan offers other proposals such as expanded Flex boundaries and on-demand same-day reservations.

Greg Nordin, RIPTA's executive director of planning, added that RIPTA has a proposal to relocate transfers from the Warwick Mall to a larger hub at CCRI's Warwick campus. There is also a proposal to add east-west crosstown service between Warwick and Cranston.

Changes to fixed route service impact paratransit service as well. The group discussed ADA exemptions for express service and park & rides and noted that if service increases on express routes in the future, those routes may no longer be exempt.

Greg stated that RIPTA does not have enough service to meet current demand, so it will be important to build a coalition over the next few months to support a plan to pay for improvements. The State of the System report and other documents are available on the website: [transitforwardri.com](http://transitforwardri.com).

- Customer service  
Nate Hannon, RIPTA's customer service operations administrator, described his department's role in fielding complaints, presiding over the ticket office, and managing the photo ID office. Complaints are collected, categorized, and analyzed as data. Specific

comments are shared with the planning department and may be used to make service adjustments.

Nate urged passengers to call customer service every time issues arise, even if they file complaints with supervisors, to allow RIPTA to notice trends and share data. It is important to share as much information as possible, i.e. boarding time, route number, and the driver's badge number. Complaints related to Flex and Ride service are shared with Dianne Chappel. Emails submitted through the customer service form on the website arrive in real time.

The group also discussed the guidelines for the free senior/disabled bus pass program. Individuals with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level may qualify if they are above age 65 or have a disability. An application form is available on RIPTA's website.

- Downtown Transit Connector (DTC)  
Greg Nordin reported that RIPTA is building a high capacity busway through downtown Providence. Construction has been underway for about a year, and shelters will be installed this month. The ground will have textured exposed aggregate pavement and bright yellow tactile warning strips with raised bumps. Most shelters are 40' long, and all stops will have benches. The digital display monitors do not currently have audio features.

The corridor will not have any stand-alone routes, but RIPTA made significant investments in existing service, expanding service at night on Routes #3, #4, #72, and #89. Improvements carry over to Ride service as well.

#### **IV. Ride/RIPTA service feedback**

- The group discussed challenges with Uber access for passengers who use wheelchairs. This conversation is also happening at the national level.
- The committee discussed the Ride paratransit drop-off point at TF Green Airport, which is far from the departure door. Pick-ups are located near the designated spot for RIPTA buses.
- A specific complaint was made about Wampanoag Plaza. When a passenger with visual impairments asks drivers questions, it can be hard to hear. The waiting area recently moved, and it can be challenging for passengers to know where to stand.
- People have been receiving IVR texts at 5 PM (instead of 6 PM) since Daylight Savings ended.
- Committee members commented that they've received too many call and text reminders about changes to standing orders on holidays.
- People noted that the Transit app has had issues with jumping ahead. RIPTA's data currently updates every 3-4 minutes, but a system upgrade is coming soon.
- Questions about the Reveal app should be directed to Chris McKenna.

## **V. Other reports**

In 2020, passengers will begin using WAVE account-based fare payment on RIPTA's fixed route system. RIPTA is still seeking a cost-effective solution for paratransit vehicles, which do not have fare boxes. A technical solution would potentially link the fare technology with the scheduling software, but it has not been proven to be successful yet. Another option—adding fare boxes to paratransit vehicles—would be cost-prohibitive.

ATAC will issue an official statement to RIPTA about this issue. Angie Stabile motioned for Rui Cabral to draft a resolution, and John Carvalho seconded. All were in favor. It will be sent to the group in advance of the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.