

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907
Thursday, April 4, 2019

Attendees: Benny Bergantino, Rui Cabral (Chair), Monica Dzialo, John Gaffney, Deanne Gagne, Barry Humphries, Janice Musco, Jeanne Ouellette, Heidi Showstead, and Mark Susa.

RIPTA Staff in attendance: Mark Therrien, Greg Nordin, Kevin Perry, Joelle Kanter, Matt Biskey, and Jim Vincent.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Heidi Showstead motioned to accept the March 7, 2019 meeting minutes, and John Gaffney seconded. All were in favor.

Rui Cabral clarified meeting protocols in an effort to keep conversations civil. He urged committee members to respect others' points of view, even when they disagree.

II. Marketing Opportunities

- **Review of draft ATAC outreach materials:** The committee has expressed interest in printing a brochure and linking to a PDF on RIPTA's website. Staff emailed draft content to the group for review before the meeting. The front side will feature information about joining the committee, and the back may include information about customer service.

Recommendations for the front side include:

- Making the connection between ADA and transit by referencing ADA as the impetus for creating the committee.
- Using active language, encouraging people to help affect change.
- Featuring the general ATAC meeting date and time.
- Listing RIPTA's general customer service phone number for information about the ATAC meeting schedule.

Recommendations for the back include:

- Targeting the customer service information to the disability community.
- Offering opportunities for people to provide input outside the committee structure (through contact with customer service).

Staff will revise the content and share another draft before the next meeting.

- **Discussion about website content:** The committee plans to conduct a thorough review of all pages on RIPTA's website that relate to customers who have disabilities. Initial suggestions included:
 - Adding information about the Reveal app for RIdе customers.
 - Communicating about how to buy RIdе passes.
 - Ensuring that the URLs match the content, and that paratransit information is separate from information about the reduced fare bus program.
 - Featuring alternatives to the RIdе program in order to expand transit options for customers with disabilities.

Staff will review all relevant web pages to check for accuracy, and a small working group may assist with the effort.

III. RIPTA Reports

- **Stop Announcement Compliance:** Jim Vincent shared a report on automatic stop announcements. Of the 75 trips that Professional Security Services monitored in February 2019, 100% were in full compliance.
- **Fare System Upgrade:** Kevin Perry, principal analyst in the planning department, shared an update on RIPTA's transition to account based fare technology. RIPTA is in the process of installing devices on fixed route vehicles that will begin accepting new smart cards in a few months. Customers will be able to access their accounts on the cards or their smart phones and will add value by linking to credit and debit cards.

Greg Nordin, planning director, acknowledged issues with RIdе integration. RIPTA wants to provide the benefits of the account based system to paratransit users in a cost effective way, so that one account can apply to all modes, but RIdе vehicles do not have their own fare boxes, which presents a challenge. To resolve this, RIPTA and the vendor, init, are considering the feasibility of a few alternatives to installing fare boxes, validators, and AVL GPS devices on paratransit vehicles.

In response to questions, RIPTA staff explained that the new system will not offer joint fare products with neighboring transit systems such as MBTA at this stage, but it will not prevent future coordination. In addition, as a policy, RIPTA will not offer zoned fares.

- **Metrics:** Following discussions at previous ATAC meetings, staff recommended sharing different data points to help identify systemic issues and make necessary changes.

While RIPTA staff responds directly to customer service inquiries and complaints, the committee wants to take an active role in analyzing ADA specific customer service requests for both fixed route and RIdе service. Staff will continue to analyze data and

report to the committee consistently to inform ATAC members about ridership trends.

An example of an important performance statistic is the average length of customers' trips from month to month and/or year to year. While it is difficult to compare the length of fixed route and paratransit trips, it is important to know whether RIde statistics are trending up or down.

IV. RIde/RIPTA Service Feedback

The committee discussed the benefits of the RIde Reveal app, although some customers have recently complained about getting logged out of the system. The app now has a WC label to let riders know when their Ride will be provided by a wheelchair accessible minivan instead of a van or taxi.

In response to a question about sending customers notifications when Rides arrive, Mark Therrien noted that a few other paratransit providers have tried this, but it has not been effective. RIde may offer this service upon request, but calling 1,200 calls to riders each day would be cost prohibitive for RIPTA.

V. Other Reports

Rui Cabral reiterated that the committee aims to diversify in terms of disability, and he hopes to engage more representatives of the developmental disability community.

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 PM.