



# RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW







# A Message from the CEO

Dear Fellow Rhode Islanders,

At RIPTA, our mission is clear: to provide safe, reliable, and accessible mobility for every Rhode Islander. Public transit connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and the opportunities that shape daily life. This year, we strengthened those connections by focusing on service reliability, enhancing the customer experience, investing in infrastructure, increasing our sustainability efforts and introducing innovative programs that expand access to transit across the state.

We advanced several initiatives that directly support riders in meaningful ways. From expanding employer partnerships through Wave to Work, to improving afternoon service for Providence Public Schools, to launching our new Bus Buddy and multifamily residential programs, our team has remained focused on making transit easier to use and more responsive to the needs of our communities.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on service reliability, workforce development, financial sustainability, and creating a modern transit network that meets the evolving needs of the state. I am incredibly proud of the dedication of our employees, whose commitment makes everything in this report possible.

Thank you to our riders, partners, and the communities we serve for your continued trust and support. Together, we are building a stronger, more sustainable, and more connected Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Christopher Durand  
Chief Executive Officer  
Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)





# ***Ridership & Service Initiatives***

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RIPTA's mission is rooted in providing reliable, accessible, and equitable mobility for all Rhode Islanders. Whether traveling to work, school, medical appointments, or the events and community activities that shape daily life, our riders depend on us to keep them connected. This year, we advanced several key initiatives that enhanced service, expanded access, and strengthened our role as a vital link for communities across the state.

## ***Multifamily Residential Pilot Program***

This program invited multifamily residential property owners and managers to order free monthly transit passes for their residents for December 2025 and January 2026. The pilot strategically targeted communities already well-served by transit, with the goal that, following the conclusion of the free period, property managers may choose to continue using the accounts and paying for their tenants' transit trips. The program received an overwhelming response, resulting in the distribution of over 900 transit cards to new transit riders. Funded by the RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council.

## ***Providence Public Schools: Afternoon Service Improvements***

To better align with student needs, RIPTA implemented afternoon service enhancements for Providence Public Schools. These improvements were designed to increase efficiency and reduce the need for transfers.

## ***New Travel Training Program***

RIPTA developed a comprehensive Travel Training Program with a primary emphasis on training community partners, service providers, and advocates who support seniors and individuals with disabilities. These newly created videos, pocket guides and training materials will help trusted community organizations learn how to teach others to use public transit safely and independently. This program will officially launch in 2026.



# Ridership & Service Initiatives

## **Hop-On Hop-Off Newport Returns for Fourth Season**

Funded by Discover Newport and the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, the seasonal Hop-On Hop-Off Newport service provided an easy, car-free way for residents and visitors to explore key destinations throughout the city. By reducing congestion and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in a green and resilient city, this service supports both community livability and the local economy. RIPTA recorded 142,951 passenger trips on Route 67 and 13,632 passenger trips on Route 68 between May 23 and October 31, 2025.

## **Rhode Island Football Club Partnership**

RIPTA partnered with Rhode Island FC to provide efficient transit connections for gameday travel. This initiative introduced new riders to public transit while helping to reduce traffic congestion and parking impacts in surrounding neighborhoods.



## **Bus Buddy – Personalized Transit Guidance**

RIPTA launched the Bus Buddy program, offering one-on-one in-person support from RIPTA staff to help new riders understand routes, schedules, and the fundamentals of traveling independently on public transit. This individualized guidance helps riders build confidence, learn new routes, and navigate the transit system with ease.





# Innovative Pilot Programs

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## **Summer Youth Pass Program**

RIPTA partnered with 15 youth-serving organizations to provide free summer transit access for young riders.

The program supported **489 unique** participants, who took **13,170 trips**, helping expand mobility, support youth programming, and encourage lifelong transit use.

## **Flex On Demand**

In 2024, RIPTA debuted Flex On Demand service, offering app-based, on-demand transportation within the 203 Flex Zone, which includes Narragansett, South Kingstown, the University of Rhode Island, and the Kingston Train Station.

This flexible model improves convenience and gives riders a modern mobility option that better meets real-time travel needs. The pilot, originally scheduled to end in August 2025, has been expanded through December 31, 2026, to allow for continued evaluation of ridership trends, service performance, and opportunities for long-term implementation.

This year, Flex on Demand completed over **13,500 trips**.

*Both programs are funded by the RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council.*





# ***Business Development***

This year, RIPTA continued to strengthen strategic partnerships that support economic growth and expand access to reliable public transportation. Working closely with major employers like Amazon and regional economic hubs such as Quonset Business Park, RIPTA advanced initiatives that better connect workers to job opportunities and help businesses meet their transportation needs. These collaborations not only enhance mobility for employees but also reinforce RIPTA's role as a key partner in Rhode Island's economic development ecosystem.

## ***Wave to Work***

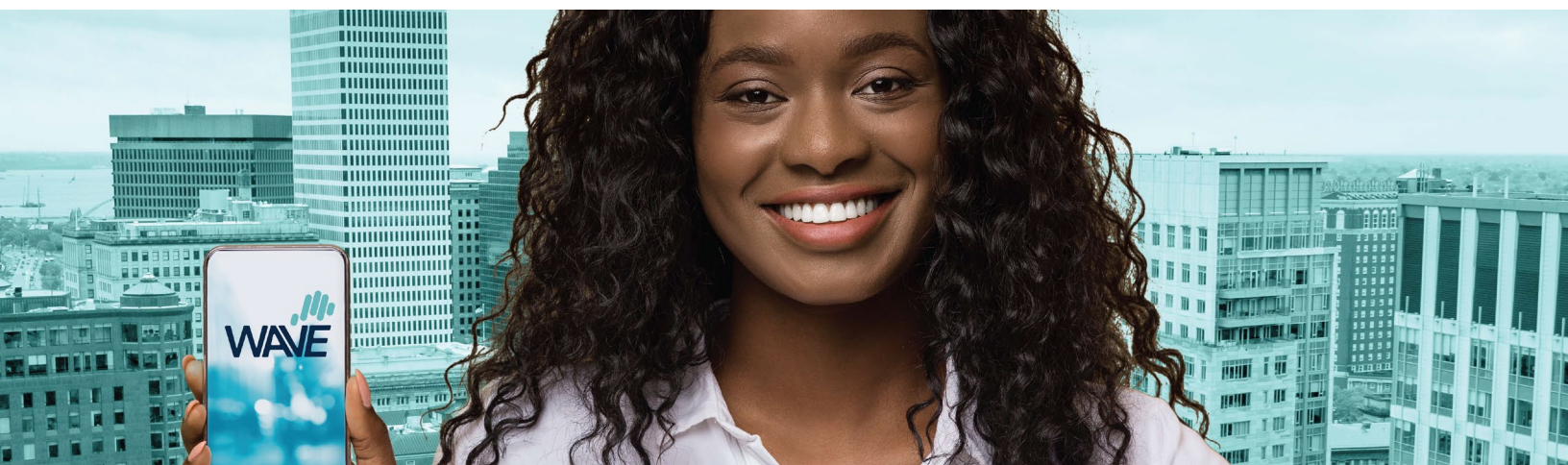
RIPTA expanded its Wave to Work partnerships with employers including the Omni Hotel, Miriam Hospital and other major organizations. These collaborations support workforce mobility by offering employees a convenient and affordable way to commute, while also helping businesses attract and retain staff.

## ***Enhanced Route QX***

In June 2025, RIPTA implemented significant cost-neutral improvements to Route Qx (Quonset Express) to better align service with workforce needs. The route now provides a seamless connection from Woonsocket to Providence and on to Quonset Point—directly supporting one of Rhode Island's largest employers, Electric Boat, and meeting the needs of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd shift workers. Improvements to Route 20 also extended service to the New England Institute of Technology, where Electric Boat employees receive paid job training.

## ***Supporting Rhode Island's Innovation Economy***

RIPTA proudly participated in the Innovation Crawl, a collaborative initiative led by Innovate Newport and RIHub that showcased Rhode Island's vibrant innovation ecosystem. The event brought together more than 40 entrepreneurs, industry professionals, and community leaders for an immersive tour of some of the state's most forward-thinking companies and creative workspaces. RIPTA demonstrated how public transit plays a vital role in supporting economic development and fostering innovation. Participants had the opportunity to learn about RIPTA's mobility initiatives, strategic partnerships, and ongoing efforts to connect Rhode Island's workforce to emerging industries.





# Capital Projects & Infrastructure

## Pawtucket-Central Falls Transit Center

Construction began last fall and continued through 2025 on a new intermodal passenger facility that will include a staffed customer service window, indoor waiting area with real-time information screens, public and driver restrooms, and a Pawtucket Police substation, all designed to enhance the experience for both bus and rail passengers. The facility is scheduled to open January 2026.

## Enhancing the Employee Experience

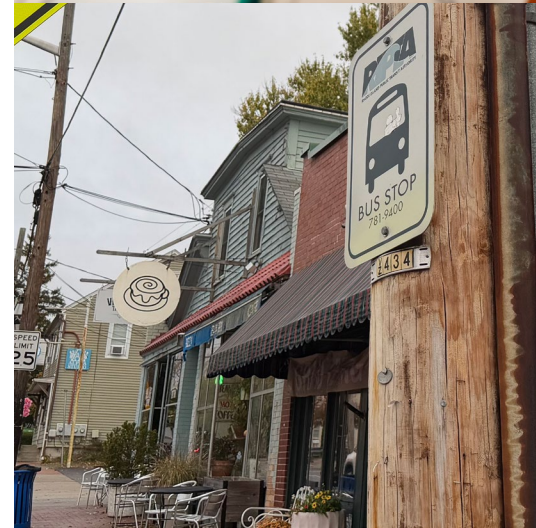
RIPTA continues to prioritize the well-being of our essential workforce through the installation of new employee restrooms at the Kennedy Plaza Passenger Terminal. Highlighting the collaboration between management and labor unions, this project represents a key step in our ongoing efforts to modernize infrastructure for both passengers and employees.

## Metro Connector Study

In 2024, RIPTA launched the Metro Connector Study to plan for high-capacity transit improvements along key corridors in Central Falls, Pawtucket, Cranston, Providence, and Warwick. The project aims to develop fast, frequent, and reliable, transit that connects regional activity centers, neighborhoods, and major transportation hubs in the Providence area while achieving other state goals related to climate, sustainable housing growth, public health, and boosting the economy for the benefit of all. This year, RIPTA carried out detailed technical evaluations on short-listed routing alternatives in preparation for selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative. Development of high-capacity transit is a key goal of the Transit Forward RI Plan and will pave the way for higher ridership, expanded mobility for Rhode Islanders, better service, and bigger investments in public transit.

## Bus Stop Inventory Completed

After three summers of field work by RIPTA planning staff, the Agency completed a comprehensive inventory of more than 3,600 bus stops. The team documented stop conditions, amenities, sidewalk quality, and potential obstructions. This data is already informing improvements and will remain a critical tool as we advance accessibility, safety, passenger information, and amenities systemwide.





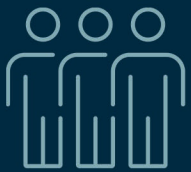
# Performance Data & Benchmarking

## Operational Efficiency Study

RIPTA underwent a State-required Operational Efficiency Study, providing a comprehensive review of the agency's operations, costs, and performance. The study confirmed that RIPTA's operating and administrative costs are in line with or lower than peer transit agencies, despite serving a service area more than twice as large. The report provided recommendations to guide future operations.



RIPTA's operating costs are **in line** with peer average.



Administrative costs are **slightly below** average.



RIPTA maintains a **higher** farebox recovery rate than most of its peers.



RIPTA brings in **more advertising revenue** than half of its peers.



Despite having a service area **over twice as large** as the average of its peers, RIPTA has a **cost per trip** that is roughly **in line** with the peer agency average.

**18%**  
**BELOW**

Total transit spending per capita for RIPTA is about 18% below the peer set average, at \$101 per capita compared to the \$123 per capita average among peer agencies.



# Performance Data & Benchmarking

## Analyzing Real-Time Operations

RIPTA continues to strengthen its approach to service planning by closely comparing scheduled service with real-world operations. By analyzing real-time performance, operator feedback, and recovery times, we are identifying targeted adjustments that enhance reliability. This analysis directly informed the Winter 2026 service changes, ensuring that updates reflect rider demand and support more predictable workdays for operators.

## Route Performance Analysis

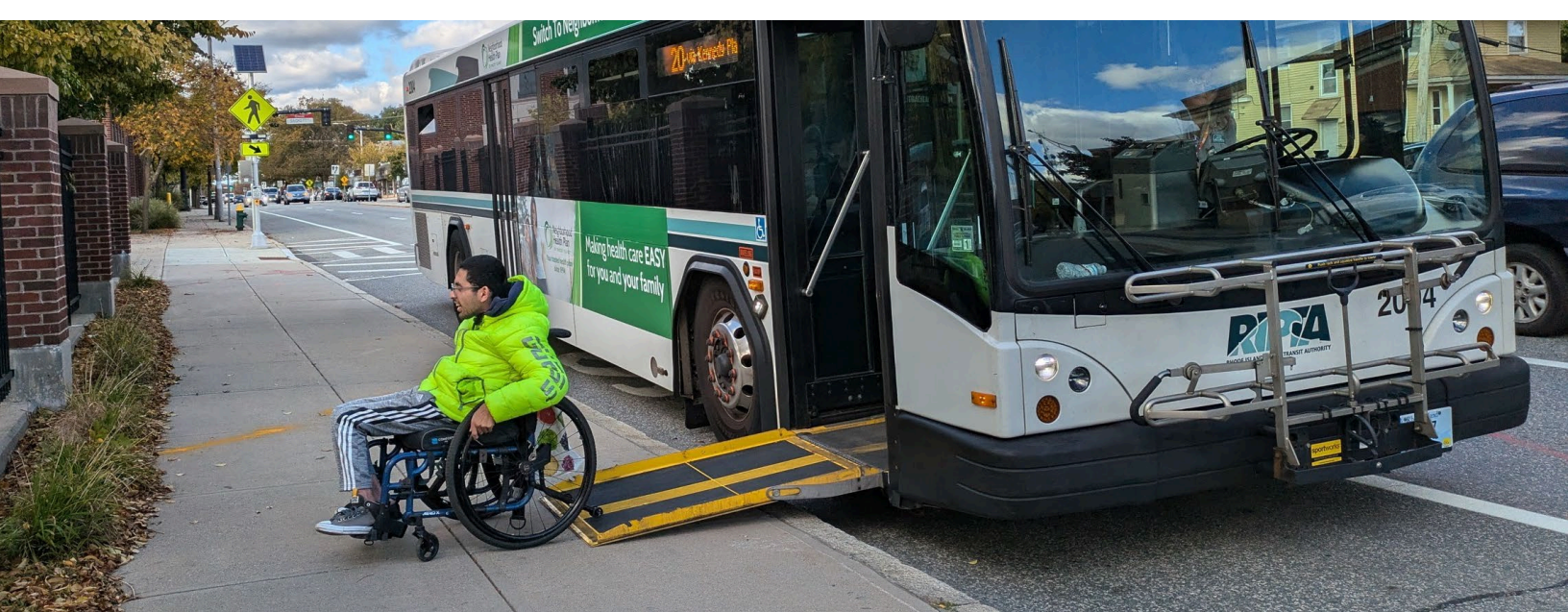
Using systemwide performance data, RIPTA conducts ongoing evaluations of route efficiency, on-time performance, and demand patterns. These insights help guide schedule adjustments, resource allocation, and long-term planning. For Winter 2026, route-level data revealed opportunities to adjust express trip times to better align with passengers' work schedules.

## Technology Integration

RIPTA is exploring new tools and technologies to better integrate operational systems and streamline data analysis. Improving how information flows between platforms—from scheduling software to real-time vehicle data—will allow staff to make more informed decisions more quickly. This work will support future service adjustments and help the agency be more responsive to evolving passenger needs.

## Hiring & Training Plan Development

A strategic hiring and training plan is currently underway to ensure RIPTA remains fully staffed and prepared for future service needs. RIPTA is focused on preparing for anticipated retirements, proactively training new operators, and filling key maintenance and administrative roles that are already budgeted. Ensuring adequate staffing across the organization is essential to maintaining reliable service, supporting schedule changes, and keeping buses in a state of good repair.







# *Improving Passenger Experience*

RIPTA is dedicated to delivering efficient, reliable, and customer-focused transit services that meet the evolving needs of its community. Through strategic investments across the agency, RIPTA was able to increase customer support availability, deploying key digital solutions for rider convenience and specialized services, and modernize transit infrastructure.

## ***Bus Shelter Upgrades***

RIPTA continued to focus on bus shelter improvements throughout 2025 with the goal of creating safer, more accessible, and more welcoming transit spaces for riders. Cleanliness, repairs to existing shelters, the addition of new Tolar shelters, and enhancements to ADA accessibility have been a priority for the agency.

## ***Expanded Customer Service Hours***

In January, the Customer Service Call Center expanded its weekday hours, opening at 6:00 AM instead of 8:30 AM. This schedule change ensures that passengers have access to comprehensive support and critical information when they need it most.

## ***Real-Time Rider Information***

RIPTA expanded its customer-facing technology by installing new real-time information screens within shelters in Kennedy Plaza transit center and inside the intermodal building. These screens provide up-to-the-minute updates on arrivals and departures, solidifying RIPTA's commitment to convenient and reliable public transit.



# Improving Passenger Experience

## Modernizing Paratransit

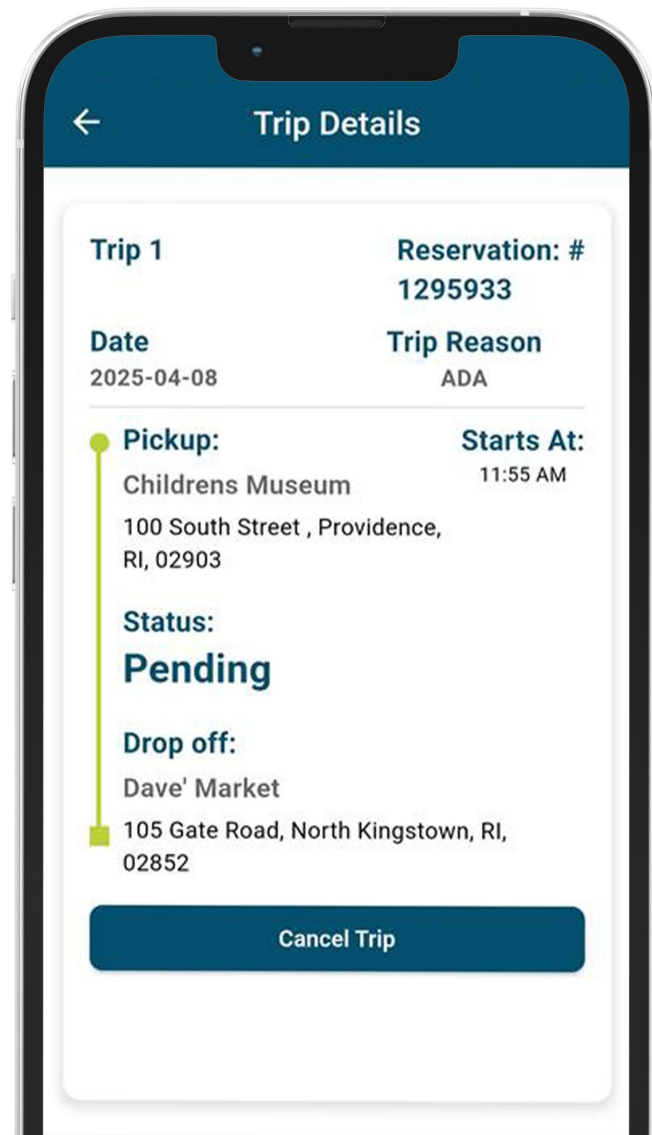
RIPTA launched the RIPTA Ride – MTM Go app, a new digital tool giving Ride and Ride Anywhere passengers greater control over their travel. Designed for passengers with disabilities, this tool streamlines the paratransit experience by allowing users to manage reservations and view estimated arrival times directly from their smartphones, fostering greater independence and reducing the need for call center support.

## Expanding Paratransit

Ride customers with disabilities are also eligible for the premium Ride Anywhere Program, made permanent by the General Assembly, which allows them to request curb-to-curb trips to and from locations within Rhode Island - beyond the 3/4-mile ADA service area.

## Upgrading Paratransit

RIPTA is making significant investments to modernize and expand its Ride paratransit fleet, enhancing safety, comfort, and reliability for riders with disabilities. The Authority ordered 50 Frontrunner vans built by Model 1 Commercial Vehicles for Ride. These new vans feature a low-slope ramp and flat entryway for safer, easier boarding; an upgraded wheelchair lift with gas springs to reduce operator effort; kneeling capability similar to fixed-route buses; and a spacious, modern interior designed for passenger comfort. These new vehicles will replace older vans while also expanding the overall fleet—allowing RIPTA to meet growing demand for the Ride Anywhere program and reduce reliance on outsourced taxi services.





# Workforce Development

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**CDL Permit Test Training Program** In 2024, RIPTA partnered with the Rhode Island Institute for Labor Studies & Research (RIILSR) to launch a new Commercial Driver's License (CDL) permit prep program designed to attract and prepare future transit drivers.

This innovative initiative provides participants with paid, instructor-led classroom training as they work toward obtaining their CDL permit. Since its inception, 35 participants have successfully completed the program.

## **Mark Masse, RIde Operator**

Marc Masse recently celebrated two years as a RIde Paratransit Driver, and he still truly loves coming to work each day. After spending more than three decades working in a small photography business, Marc found himself at a crossroads when the industry he helped build began to change.

After taking some time to reset and figure out his next step, Marc was encouraged to give RIPTA a try. Driving wasn't something he had initially planned on, but once he got behind the wheel, everything clicked. "Once I started driving, I loved it," Marc shared.

Training played a big role in helping Marc feel confident in his new career. The CDL training was a big perk, allowing him to get paid while studying for the CDL exam. He was part of a small training class, and he credits the instructors with creating a supportive, low-stress environment. While the materials were initially intimidating, the hands-on approach and repetition made all the difference. "They train you so well that by the time you take the test, you're confident you're going to pass," he said.

At this stage in his life, Marc says the stability and balance the job provides are just as important as the work itself. "It's a great quality-of-life job," he said. "I can see myself doing this for a long time."





# Workforce Development



## ***De-escalation Training***

The Customer Service Department received de-escalation and conflict resolution training provided by the RI Institute for Labor Studies and Research. The training focused on essential skills such as effective communication, empathy and active listening, recognizing early signs of escalation, the importance of maintaining composure during conflict, problem-solving and cultural awareness. De-escalation strategies have been shown to reduce customer frustration, increase productivity, and boost employee confidence, making these training courses a valuable investment in both employee development and customer experience.



## ***New Apprenticeship and Mentorship Program with Community College of RI***

RIPTA is actively collaborating with CCRI to develop a new internship program, working closely with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) to bring this initiative to fruition. This partnership aims to create meaningful hands-on learning opportunities for students while helping to strengthen and cultivate RIPTA's future workforce.



## ***National Transit Institute Training***

In 2025, RIPTA employees continued to strengthen their expertise by participating in free training offered through the National Transit Institute (NTI). Established to support the public transit industry through high-quality education, NTI provides federally funded courses designed to help transit agencies understand and meet federal compliance requirements. RIPTA staff from a variety of departments took part in these programs to enhance their skills, stay current with federal regulations, and support the agency's commitment to safety, efficiency, and regulatory excellence.





# Budget & Finance

In 2025, RIPTA faced a \$32 million deficit for FY 2026 following the exhaustion of federal COVID-relief funding. Without action, this shortfall would have led to widespread service reductions, layoffs, and significant cuts to ADA paratransit service statewide. To address the gap, RIPTA aligned operations with available resources and implemented necessary adjustments.

As we look ahead to FY 2027, we remain committed to strengthening RIPTA's long-term financial stability without any additional service reductions. Working together with our partners, we will continue to evaluate and pursue dedicated, reliable, and diverse funding streams that support RIPTA's mission now and for the years to come.

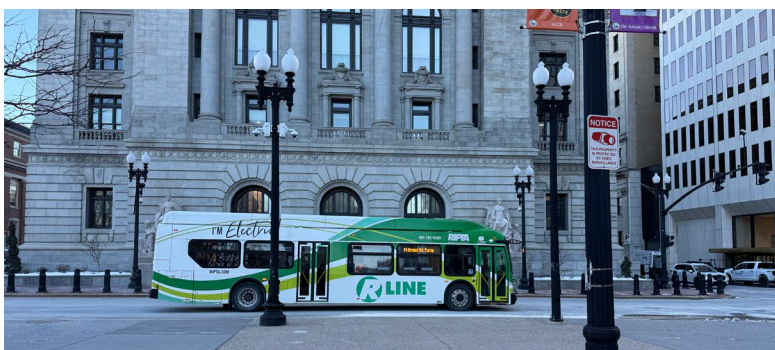
## Cost Reductions

- **Reduced FTE count from 896 to 845**
- Fixed-route service reductions
- Outsourced ADA trips reduced
- Administrative Personnel reduced



## One-Time Cost Reductions

- Legal cost savings
- Improved pension performance
- Fuel lock savings



## New Funding

- Gas Tax Increase (\$0.02/gallon): \$8.7M for FY 26
- Highway Maintenance Account Increase: \$5.7M (This is an annual allocation)



## Revenue Improvements

### Structural

- Fare Increase FY 2027 (\$1.2M)
- Federal Reimbursements (\$2.1M)
- Advertising Increase (\$0.5M)
- CMAQ Operating Support (\$0.2M)

### One-time revenues

- State Operating Advance (\$3M)
- CMAQ Prior Year Carry (\$2M)





# Engaging New Riders

From welcoming new students to campus to processing bus pass applications at senior centers, our outreach team travels across the state to actively introduce new riders to public transit. This personalized approach goes beyond traditional marketing; it breaks down usage barriers by providing essential, hands-on service where they are most needed. This year, we attended over **100** events, tabled **18** campus events, visited **31** senior centers and processed over **200** Reduced Fare Bus Passes.

 **3,500+ people**

 **111 events**

 **244 passes**





# ***In the Community***

RIPTA demonstrated its commitment to the community through various initiatives and events throughout the year, emphasizing the vital role a transit agency plays in fostering connections and supporting the people it serves. Public transportation is more than just a means of getting from one place to another; it is a lifeline that brings people together and supports access to opportunities, resources, and services. As such, a transit agency's engagement with the community it serves is critical to building trust, inclusivity, and a shared sense of purpose.

## ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas in July***

Summer is the hardest time of the year for many individuals and families in Rhode Island. RIPTA held an agency-wide Christmas in July Food Drive to help alleviate this seasonal hardship for Rhode Islanders. Together, employees successfully collected over 500 lbs. of food for the Rhode Island Food Bank.



## ***Stuff A Bus Toy Drive***

In collaboration with RIPTA, the P-Bruins hosted the annual "Stuff A Bus" Toy Drive throughout December home games. This initiative collected new, unwrapped toys to fill a bus, which were then donated to children receiving care at Hasbro Children's Hospital.



## ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Elder Angel Giving Tree***

RIPTA partnered with the West Warwick Senior Center, Kent County Meals on Wheels and other senior centers to make the holidays a little brighter for older adults in the community.



## ***Buy Nothing Day Coat Exchange***

RIPTA embraced the spirit of giving this holiday season by collecting 150 new and gently worn coats and warm items for the Buy Nothing Day Coat Exchange, held on the State House lawn. This annual event provides individuals and families with essential winter gear, often serving as their primary resource for staying warm during the colder months.



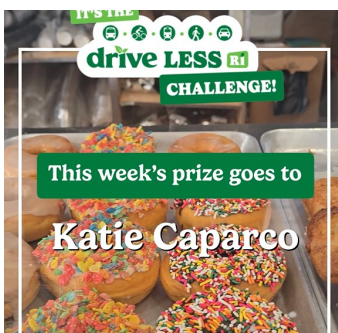
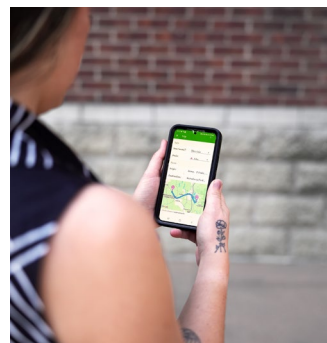
# A Greener Rhode Island with Drive Less RI

## Mobile App Rebrand

RIPTA launched a refreshed and rebranded version of its commuter app in March, introducing **Drive Less RI**. Designed to make sustainable travel easier and more rewarding, the app helps users plan trips, log green commutes, and earn rewards for riding the bus, carpooling, vanpooling, biking, or walking. Drive Less RI offers trip-planning tools, carpool matching and vanpool assistance. Users can also track their environmental impact, including gas saved, reduced emissions, and money saved. The updated app, available on mobile devices and desktop, automatically rolled out to existing users and positioned RIPTA to reach new audiences while supporting a healthier, more sustainable Rhode Island.

## Drive Less RI Challenge

RIPTA launched the year-long Drive Less RI Challenge in October to encourage Rhode Islanders to shift from single-occupancy vehicle trips to more sustainable travel. Users who log at least one green trip per week in the Drive Less RI app are automatically entered to win weekly and quarterly prize drawings to local businesses. Funded by the RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council, the challenge runs through September 30, 2026.





# A Greener Rhode Island

Whether you're biking to work or riding on one of our electric buses, you're doing your part to create a greener Rhode Island.

## No Pollute Commute

RIPTA's Commuter Resource RI team held its **second annual "No Pollute Commute"** challenge in recognition of National Bike Month. The initiative encouraged commuters to replace a car trip with a ride on two wheels, and this year, **88 participants** signed up to take part. Biking and taking the bus can be a winning combination for people who want to bicycle part of the way to work and then take public transportation. This approach not only helps commuters save money on fuel and parking costs but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a cleaner environment. All fixed-route buses are equipped with bicycle racks, making it easy for riders to combine biking with public transit for an eco-friendly commute.



reduced carbon emissions

**3.46 tons**



gas saved

**353 gallons**



miles bicycled instead of driving

**8,212 miles**



money saved

**\$5,749**





# Awards & Recognition

## **Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)**

### **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting**

RIPTA has been awarded this certificate for its FY 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The Certificate of Achievement is “the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management,” the association stated in its letter to RIPTA.

## **\$25 Million Low or No Emission Grant Program Award**

This Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant award will be used to support RIPTA’s transition to low- or zero-emission buses. Of the 230 fixed-route bus fleet, only eight are hybrids.

## **ACEC-RI 2025 Engineering Excellence Award**

RIPTA partnered with engineering company WSP for critical work on our East Side Tunnel Rehabilitation project in Providence. WSP won the American Council of Engineering Companies RI Engineering Excellence award for their work on the 2,000-foot-long structure, which included both construction oversight and design. The project was successfully completed on time, lasting from March through October 2024. The repairs have brought the tunnel, which sees 250 bus trips each day, back to its original splendor.

## **Sustainable Transportation Award – Northeast Renewable Energy Coalition**

The award recognizes RIPTA's outstanding leadership and commitment to advancing sustainable transportation solutions throughout Rhode Island. RIPTA was selected for this honor in recognition of its innovative efforts to reduce emissions, improve air quality, and provide environmentally-responsible public transit options for Rhode Island residents.







Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

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**Robert Kells, Vice Chair\***

**James Lombardi, Vice Chair**

**James Leach, Treasurer**

**Patrick Crowley, Secretary**

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**Bernard Georges\*\***

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**Marcy Reyes**

**Heather Schey**

*\*Departed from Board on April 1, 2025*

*\*\*Term began June 2025*