

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual meeting: RIPTA Webex Thursday, June 4, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Participants: Rui Cabral (Chair), Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, Monica Dzialo, Elisabeth Hubbard, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Heidi Showstead, Angela Stabile, Lisa Stamp.

RIPTA Staff: Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Greg Nordin, and Matthew Salisbury.

I. Call to Order

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

Angie Stabile motioned to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2020 and May 7, 2020 meetings. Grace Pires seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

II. Providence Streets Coalition Overview

Liza Burkin, organizer for the Providence Streets Coalition, introduced the alliance of community organizations that advocates for safer streets and more transportation choices in Providence. The coalition has fiscal support from People for Bikes, a national organization, and formally launched in Providence in December. It currently has a diverse group of 20 partners and 30 supporters and can serve as a conduit between community members and public agencies. Greg Nordin, RIPTA's Chief of Strategic Advancement, expressed RIPTA's support for the coalition's work, noting that its focus on pedestrian and cyclist safety and mobility will improve the street network for all users.

III. Continued Impact of COVID-19 on ATAC Members

The group discussed recent trips using RIdE and RIPTA fixed-route bus service, which several described as very clean. They were reminded that operators and passengers are expected to wear their masks at all times and maintain physical distancing.

IV. Update on RIPTA projects

Greg Nordin shared the following RIPTA information:

- COVID-19 protocols and recovery plans:
 - Unlike many other agencies, RIPTA has maintained its service levels. This helps to ensure social distancing and allows passengers who work late hours to continue riding.
 - RIdE has also continued to provide paratransit service, but the number of scheduled trips has dropped significantly.
 - To help keep people safe, RIPTA has enhanced its cleaning processes, moving some RIdE operators to the utility division to assist with cleaning.
 - Paratransit vehicles are currently limited to 4 passengers, and fixed route buses are limited to 20 passengers. In cases where the passenger load consistently

- o exceeds 20 people, RIPTA may deploy additional vehicles.
 - o RIPTA has temporarily stopped new enrollment in the free/reduced fare bus pass program for seniors and adults with disabilities, but people who have expired passes can request temporary extensions.
 - o For now, the Kennedy Plaza facilities remain closed.
- Downtown Transit Connector: This project remains under construction, and the striping of bus and bike lanes with red paint has already started. This visual separation between the sidewalk and traffic lanes will make the spaces more pedestrian friendly.
- WAVE fare technology: The WAVE project is expected to launch later this summer. Funds may be set aside to integrate the Ride program into the system, but plans have not been finalized.
- Service changes: On June 20th, minor summer service changes will go into effect. School trips will be removed, and evening trips on routes 6 and 19 will be extended at night.

V. RIPTA key performance indicators

Joelle Kanter shared a report from RIPTA's Ride division. In May 2020, Ride provided 2,044 trips, in addition to 4,996 trips for new services such as meal delivery and employee transportation. Of the 4,714 customers approved to use Ride, 349 have actively used the service in the past 90 days. This is only 7.4% of approved riders.

VI. Feedback: RIPTA/Ride service

- Passengers expressed concern about potential overcrowding on buses. Greg Nordin said that overcrowding has not been an issue at night, but just in case, RIPTA enforces a policy to pick up all passengers on the last trip of the day to ensure that no one is stranded.
- Recent protests have caused a few service disruptions. To stay informed, RIPTA encourages passengers to sign up for alerts through email and social media.

VII. Other reports

- The group discussed opportunities for transit network companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft to provide accessible trips, although other communities have experienced issues regarding federal compliance and driver training. This discussion will continue.
- The July ATAC meeting will be cancelled.

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.