

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual meeting: RIPTA Webex Thursday, October 1, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Participants: Rui Cabral (Chair), Robert Beauregard, Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Laurie Diorio, Monica Dzialo, Deanne Gagne, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Angelina Stabile, Lisa Stamp, Mark Susa.

RIPTA Staff: Nate Hannon, Joelle Kanter, Greg Nordin, Joe Solomon.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:07 PM.

Angie Stabile motioned to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2020 meeting. Heather Schey seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

II. One-Call/One-Click Focus Group Announcements

As described at the last ATAC meeting, RIPTA is conducting a study to develop a statewide One-Call/One-Click transportation information center. This would potentially provide customers with a single point of contact to learn about available transportation options, especially for older adults, individuals with disabilities and others who rely on public or community transportation.

RIPTA staff invited ATAC members to participate in a One-Call/One-Click focus group discussion for individuals who have disabilities and community advocates at 11 AM on Wednesday, October 14th. Other focus groups will be targeted to older adults and social service clients. The sessions will help the project team understand how Rhode Islanders find information about the transportation services available to them, as well as the gaps and challenges they face when seeking such information.

III. RIPTA reports: key performance indicators

RIPTA reported that in August, 80.5% of fixed route buses were on time while 10.8% of trips were early and 8.7% of trips were late. Ridership is still at about 50% of pre-COVID totals, with RIPTA moving an estimated 22,000—25,000 passengers per day. This is up from a low point of about 14,000 passengers in April.

In August, RIdE provided 10,553 trips, which is about half of the trips that it operated pre-COVID. 4,462 customers were approved to use RIdE service, but only 602 people were active customers within a 90-day period. In addition to providing trips to approved customers, RIdE provided 2,823 trips for Honeywell employees and 1,127 Meals on Wheels deliveries in August. Those figures are included in the monthly total. On average, RIdE provided 340 trips per day.

ATAC members remain interested in hearing statistics about both the fixed route and paratransit systems at future meetings.

IV. Discussion

- RIdE/RIPTA Service Feedback:
 - The group discussed their recent experiences on RIdE shuttles and RIPTA's fixed route buses. Greg Nordin, RIPTA's Chief of Strategic Advancement, said that RIPTA is taking cleanliness very seriously, spending an additional 200 hours per day cleaning vehicles. Drivers are responsible when something happens during the course of the day. They can call dispatch to swap out a vehicle or send staff out to address issues. In cases where RIdE vehicles do not appear to be clean or items are left behind, passengers can call RIdE or email Joe Solomon at ride@ripta.com. For fixed route buses, Nate Hannon reminded the group that RIPTA's customer service staff is trained to take complaints and contact street supervision.
 - In general, the feedback has been very positive. However, the group wanted to point out opportunities for improvement.
 - All operators are required to wear masks. If customers notice drivers who don't wear masks, they should contact RIPTA customer service.
 - An ATAC member was told that she could not take her carriage on a bus. RIPTA staff will follow up to inquire about the details.
 - Another ATAC member mentioned an incident where two buses passed him by outside Colt State Park in Bristol at 7:30 PM. He uses a mobility scooter and was concerned about being stuck. Since it was after 6 PM when RIPTA customer service hours end, he was not able to get in touch. RIPTA does not have a program for picking up people who miss their buses.
 - A customer also complained about a driver not helping him properly tie down his mobility scooter. He has mentioned this to street supervisors but has not yet issued a formal complaint through customer service.
- Considerations for future meetings:
 - The next ATAC meeting is scheduled from 4 to 5:30 PM on Thursday, November 5th. Some members suggested changing the date or potentially meeting in person outdoors. Greg Nordin responded that in the short term, while the pandemic continues, RIPTA will continue to maintain virtual meetings. In the spring, the group may discuss this again.
 - The group has an opportunity to invite speakers to give virtual presentations on

best practices in other communities. RIPTA staff asked the group to suggest topics of interest by emailing ATAC chairperson Rui Cabral.

- An ATAC member requested a presentation on plans to relocate bus stops from Kennedy Plaza. The bus hub planning process is being led by RIDOT, and Greg Nordin will relay the request to add this topic to the next ATAC agenda.
- Some participants had difficulty with the meeting access and audio. RIPTA will consider other platforms for hosting future virtual meetings.

V. Other Reports

- An ATAC member inquired about using Wave cards. Anyone interested in receiving cards by mail should visit the RIPTA website, email Joelle Kanter, or call RIPTA customer service at (401) 781-9400 to request them. Another option is to use the Wave app.
- Rui Cabral asked for an update on RIPTA's plans to incorporate Wave fare collection into the RIdE system. Greg Nordin responded that RIPTA is working with a vendor to determine whether the preferred option is a back-end integration or the addition of Wave validators on RIdE vehicles.
- Rui also announced the upcoming NFB convention on Zoom on Friday, October 16th from 1-4 PM and all day on Saturday, October 17th. Registration is free.

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.