



# **COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #4**

**LOCATION OF MEETING:** RIPTA BOARD ROOM, PROVIDENCE

**DATE/TIME OF MEETING:** FEBRUARY 21, 2013, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

## **ATTENDEES**

Dan Baudouin, Providence Foundation  
Mike Burns, City of Pawtucket  
Linsey Callaghan, RI Statewide Planning  
Steve Devine, RI Department of Transportation  
Anne Galbraith, ASG Planning  
Greg Harris, RIPTA  
Michael Hogan, RI House of Representatives  
Tom Kravitz, Town of Burrillville  
Bonnie Nickerson, City of Providence  
Maureen Martin, RIPTA Board  
Ruben Flores Marzan, City of Providence  
Amy Pettine, RIPTA  
Tim Pimental, RI Airport Corporation  
Don Rhodes, RIPTA Riders Alliance  
Andrew Silvia, City of Pawtucket  
Geoff Slater, Nelson\Nygaard Consulting  
Angie Stabile, Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)  
Mark Therrien, RIPTA  
Barry Schiller, Coalition for Transportation Choice / citizen

## **PURPOSE/AGENDA:**

This was the fourth meeting of the Advisory Committee for the RIPTA Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). The agenda included a general project update, a presentation on the two alternative service scenarios RIPTA has developed for public input, and information on the ongoing public outreach effort.

**HANDOUTS: Agenda, Fact Sheet #2 on Service Scenarios, Flyer announcing public meeting dates/locations**



## MEETING SUMMARY:

### Project Update

Amy Pettine, RIPTA, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda and project schedule. The project is nearing completion, with recommendations to be made to the RIPTA Board once the public outreach process is complete. Other project milestones met since the last Advisory Committee meeting include: RIPTA Board approval of the updated Service Guidelines, completion of the detailed Route Evaluation process, and the development of alternative service scenarios.

### Alternative Service Scenarios

Geoff Slater, Nelson\Nygaard, provided an overview of the two service scenarios. The scenarios present combinations of options for improving RIPTA service and are designed to make service easier to understand, more convenient, faster and more productive. Mr. Slater gave a detailed explanation and examples of the changes that RIPTA is proposing to implement systemwide. These include:

#### Proposed Improvements to Service Design

- Develop a “family of services” to better match routes to customer demands, including Rapid Bus, Key Corridor routes, Urban Aterials, Crosstown/Suburban routes, Regional routes, Express/Commuter routes and Flex services
- Develop a Frequent Service Network which would form the “back-bone” of RIPTA’s system. This network would include Rapid Bus and Key Corridor routes, where service operates every 10 or 15 minutes, as well as Transit Emphasis Corridors where several routes join together and offer high frequency service.
- Simplify service, making routes more direct and eliminating route variants that serve few riders
- Improve hubs and develop Superstops
- Expand service to new areas that have the density to support transit services
- Better integrate RIPTA and commuter rail service
- Improve express services
- Consolidate stops to speed service
- Consolidate duplicative services
- Discontinue some very poorly utilized services

#### Proposed Schedule Improvements

- Operate service with regular/clockface headways
- Coordinate schedules on routes operating in the same corridor
- Revise service frequencies and spans to better match demand

#### Proposed Improvements to Branding and Public Information

- Renumber and rename some routes to improve legibility/avoid confusion
- Highlight Frequent Service Network
- Improve schedule brochures and maps

### Public Outreach Effort

Amy Pettine noted that RIPTA’s website has been updated to provide detailed information about the concepts described above, as well as on the changes proposed to each individual route. RIPTA is now encouraging customers to view the proposed changes on the website and post comments. Customers and others are also invited to attend one of seven upcoming public information sessions around the state. Ms. Pettine also offered to have a member of RIPTA’s staff come and discuss the COA project and proposed changes with organizations who are interested in learning more about the ideas.



### **Advisory Committee Discussion/Input**

Steve Devine noted that there may be a strong demand for bus service between Wickford Station and Newport during the summer tourist season. He also mentioned that the relationship between park-ride lots, bus service and train service in the South County area needs to be considered from a broader perspective by both RIPTA and RIDOT.

Dan Baudoin suggested a Warwick hub might also be considered at the Interlink rail station

Barry Schiller asked if RIPTA would consider the physical location of bus stops as they consolidate stops along corridors. RIPTA recognized that it is generally preferable to stop on the far side of the intersection, but depending on the unique characteristics of each corridor, that is not always possible.

Tim Pimental asked whether one specific scenario would be selected and advanced. Amy Pettine replied that the scenarios are intended to give people choices about the types of improvements proposed. They also represent a “cost-neutral package” of changes that could be implemented without impact to RIPTA’s budget. Once RIPTA received public input, the intent is to again mix and match preferred options in a cost-neutral way, coming up with a final package of changes for implementation.

Steve Devine suggested RIPTA coordinate with GATRA to make sure connections can still be made in Pawtucket between the two regional bus services.

Maureen Martin noted the slide which gives an example on how Routes 27 and 28 would be coordinated along Broadway really resonates, and it should be highlighted to help people understand how these changes will improve service.

Tom Kravitz echoed Ms. Martin’s comments and suggested the visuals and graphic examples be shared with local officials and other decision-makers.

Don Rhodes also stated that he thinks the proposed concepts are all good. He also suggested RIPTA have a plan to remind riders to leave earlier in foul weather, just as RIDOT suggests people leave extra time when driving on the highways in poor conditions. He asked who had responsibility for clearing snow from bus stops and shelters. Mark Therrien responded that although there is no simple plan for dealing with snow at bus stops, it appears as though local city enforcement has recently helped keep sidewalks clear.

Barry Schiller noted the current scenarios only discuss weekday service, and asked about potential changes to weekend service. Geoff Slater replied that since weekday service is the highest priority, RIPTA wants to identify the most effective changes for these trips first. Once final weekday changes are proposed and the budget implications are understood, the team will propose weekend changes. These would primarily relate to span and frequency of service. Route alignments would be the same on weekdays and weekends.

Dan Baudoin commended the team on the work performed and the concepts proposed. He asked when the detailed route evaluations would be reposted on the website. Amy Pettine explained that the route evaluation page is being reconstructed and will be reposted shortly; this was necessary in order to replace the route evaluation “blog” with the service scenario “blog.” Mr. Baudoin also suggested that RIPTA roll out the final COA improvements together with real time information capabilities and other upcoming enhancements.

Bonnie Nickerson asked about RIPTA’s timeframe for bus stop consolidation. Mark Therrien explained the timeframe would be considered as part of the COA implementation plan. In some instances, RIPTA will certainly take advantage of planned street reconstruction projects and modify bus stops as part of the



construction process. For example, RIDOT is reconstructing Elmwood Avenue next year and RIPTA plans to consolidate stops along this corridor at that time. In other cases, RIPTA will prioritize by identifying which routes are most in need of consolidation in order to meet service guidelines and goals. It will likely take several years to bring the statewide system in line with the new bus stop spacing guidelines.

Linsey Callaghan and Maureen Martin asked about the process RIPTA would follow to eliminate a stop. Greg Harris noted that in the past, RIPTA would place a temporary sign at the stop. Amy Pettine noted that flyers and other communications would also be necessary.

Don Rhodes said that often RIPTA buses arrive early and the drivers say they must do this to keep on schedule, as recovery time at the end of the line is limited. Mark Therrien explained that over the last 10-12 years, RIPTA has reduced recovery time from 29% of trip time down to 15% of trip time; but noted that the industry standard is actual 10-15% which implies the scheduling is reasonable.

### **Next Steps and Next Meeting**

RIPTA and the project team will spend the next two to weeks focusing on public outreach. Comments received will be used to repackage the proposed changes into a final set of recommendations. These recommendations will be brought to RIPTA's Board of Directors, and the Board's Strategic Planning subcommittee will likely be involving in guiding future implementation.

It is anticipated that there will be one more Advisory Committee meeting.