

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual meeting: RIPTA Webex Thursday, November 5, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Participants: Rui Cabral (Chair), Robert Beauregard, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, Frank Cummings, Laurie Diorio, Monica Dzialo, Deanne Gagne, Elisabeth Hubbard, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Angelina Stabile, Mark Susa.

RIPTA Staff: Marc Ebuna, Nate Hannon, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Chris McKenna, Greg Nordin.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Angie Stabile motioned to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2020 meeting. Deanne Gagne seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

II. RIPTA reports: key performance indicators

In September, RIde provided 11,297 trips, which is a 45% reduction from September 2019. 95.3% of trips were on time. Included in that monthly total are 2,315 trips for Honeywell employees. RIde expects the number of trips to decrease as COVID numbers continue to rise.

For RIPTA's fixed-route service in September, 81.2% of trips were on time, 9.5% were early, and 9.3% were late. 376,649 time points were sampled.

III. RIPTA Project Updates

- One-Call/One-Click Planning Study: RIPTA recently kicked off a planning study for a One-Call/One-Click transportation resource that would provide a one-stop shop for customized trip planning information in Rhode Island. It would be available by phone or through a website, and would be targeted to older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. After meeting with key project partners in early October, the Nelson\Nygaard consulting team led three focus groups for consumers. Next steps include meeting with transportation providers and reviewing results of surveys sent to One-Call/One-Click centers around the country. RIPTA staff will keep the ATAC informed about the project, and meeting participants were encouraged to contact Joelle Kanter with feedback.
- Free/Reduced Fare Bus Pass Applications: Nate Hannon, RIPTA's customer service

manager, described changes to the application and recertification process for bus passes for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Since RIPTA's photo ID offices closed earlier this year, RIPTA transitioned to a mail and online application process. Nate advised people to pay attention to the expiration dates on their cards and start the certification process at least a month ahead. He also noted that RIPTA's website has a checklist of required items which include a photo for new applicants, proof of identification, and an award letter for proof of disability. If people need copies of forms, RIPTA customer service staff can mail them directly. RIPTA will follow up on a question regarding the security of online applications.

- Mobility on Demand study: RIPTA is conducting a study to transition scheduling software to become more dynamic. As the study progresses, RIPTA staff will engage ATAC members and Ride customers.

IV. Ride/RIPTA service feedback

- One participant said that Ride and fixed route services have been working well for various appointments.
- Another noted that Route #54 has skipped the Lincoln Mall stop on Sundays.

V. Discussion

- Multi-hub plan: At the last meeting, an ATAC member had requested a presentation on the proposed multi-hub plan. RIPTA shared the request with RIDOT but did not get a response. Governor Raimondo and Mayor Elorza held a press conference on the plan this afternoon and issued a statement about a forthcoming public engagement process. The project will be funded through a \$35 million bond, passed in 2014, to create hubs that would improve transfers around the state.

Liza Burkin, Providence Streets Coalition, expressed interest in hearing ATAC members' responses to the multi-hub project. Her organization advocates for safer streets and more transportation choices in Providence and is hosting a virtual panel on November 17th to discuss the plans. She shared her contact information for those interested in getting involved.

In response, meeting participants shared the following comments:

- One ATAC member will withhold judgement until he sees more details.
- Another member who has a visual impairment said that it may be difficult to keep track of 4 hubs, and her trips would potentially require additional stops.
- It would be confusing for many riders.
- Riders haven't been publicly engaged in the process yet.
- There is concern for people with visual impairments and mobility challenges, especially during inclement weather.
- Tying down mobility scooters would be a problem for passengers who must transfer to several buses.
- Safety is a concern, particularly for those who are homeless.

- This may be considered a misuse of funds if they were intended to improve areas around the state that are underserved by transit.

The ATAC discussed writing a letter to express its concern but agreed to wait until members have had a chance to read the governor's press release or participate in the Providence Streets Coalition meeting. This will be a discussion item during the December ATAC meeting.

- Wave: RIPTA does not have an update on integrating Wave fare collection into the paratransit system.
- Considerations for future meetings:
 - ATAC may invite speakers from other areas to present at upcoming virtual meetings. Meanwhile, RIPTA will share a link to a report from the Greater Portland Council of Governments on inclusive engagement.
 - The next ATAC meeting is scheduled from 4 to 5:30 PM on Thursday, December 3rd, and should be hosted on Zoom.

The meeting adjourned at 5:26 PM.