

**May 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes for the Rhode Island  
Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council**

The Coordinating Council meeting was held online through Zoom and called to order at 2:03 PM. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes.

Following brief introductions, Heidi Showstead motioned to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2021 Coordinating Council meeting. Catherine Taylor seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, initiated a discussion about local and regional opportunities for mobility management. She and Maria Cimini, RI Dept. of Human Services, represented Rhode Island in a regional call organized by Judy Shanley, National Center for Mobility Management. During that meeting, Maria recognized an opportunity to expand the focus of future Coordinating Council meetings beyond RIPTA projects to highlight other agencies' support for their clients' transportation needs.

The conversation began by defining mobility management as an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer. With an understanding of the critical need to connect people with resources, Maria asked participants to consider whether they view themselves as mobility managers or if other staff in their organizations perform that role. She also asked the group to consider who they serve, how those individuals get around, and how they may struggle with mobility. As a follow up question, she encouraged the group to think broadly and holistically about the statewide transportation network, and to consider how different transportation services such as buses, ride shares, and bike shares are currently coordinated.

Participants shared the following ideas about Rhode Island's transportation options, using a mobility management lens:

- Carpooling systems are important for getting people to places where RIPTA doesn't go, including neighboring states. It would be helpful if more wheelchair accessible options and stipends were available for individuals who have disabilities.
- From a state perspective, different agencies are trying to solve transportation issues and pay for them on their own, competing for limited resources. Can funding be coordinated?
- More access to recovery sites is essential to providing better support for individuals experiencing substance abuse. Currently, the Anchor Recovery Center on Centerville Road has limited bus access.
- Thundermist Health Center offers clients Uber rides to help bridge transportation gaps. Staff is also interested in installing a bus shelter near the West Warwick facility that serves 20,000 clients.
- Travel training led by case managers can be helpful since riding the bus can be intimidating for clients who may be unfamiliar with taking public transit.
- In some cases, it makes sense to look outside RIPTA for solutions. For families who need to drop off young children at daycare, public transportation can take a long time.
- Clients struggle in places like Westerly and Tiverton, where public transportation is limited, particularly if they live in shelters or need to schedule appointments for their children.
- Transportation needs depend on where clients live within different communities. For example, some very low-income individuals within the Cranston Health Equity Zone area had trouble accessing the main food pantry due to a lack of direct public transportation, personal vehicles, and large family sizes. In response, Cranston Health Center has been prepacking foods for them. In Coventry, Foster, and Scituate, clients consistently need transportation to jobs and childcare.
- Peer navigators would be helpful to educate new Ride paratransit clients about using the system.
- Bike riding may be an easy solution for some people, and communities can work with mutual aid to provide help with getting bikes. As an example, Age-Friendly Rhode

Island's social isolation workgroup has partnered with RI Bike on free resources to train older adults to ride bikes.

The Coordinating Council is considering several ways to continue this discussion, such as sending surveys and convening subcommittees. Meanwhile, anyone interested in addressing the needs of older adults may participate in Age-Friendly Rhode Island's transportation workgroup chaired by Diana Gugliotta.

Following the discussion, Sarah Ingle, RIPTA, shared an update on the One-Call/One-Click planning study. This service would provide a clearinghouse for trip planning information, accessible to all by phone or computer. Since the consulting team last reported to this group on its research on best practices, they have developed preliminary recommendations. RIPTA's customer service department is considering expanding its role beyond answering questions exclusively about RIPTA services to provide information about other local mobility options. RIPTA also plans to enhance its website with better information for older adults and individuals with disabilities to support this effort.

Joelle Kanter then shared an update on RIPTA's Wave human services fare technology integration study. Last fall, RIPTA launched the Wave account based fare system that allows riders to tap smart cards or their phones when they board a bus to pay for each trip. Over the past few weeks, RIPTA has been contacting organizations about setting up institutional Wave portals that enable them to apply bus passes and other fare products to their clients' accounts virtually. Joelle also noted that RIPTA will stop selling older pass products at the end of June and will stop accepting them on buses at the end of October. RIPTA is planning to integrate Wave into the RIde paratransit system soon, and will begin transitioning participants in the free/reduced fare bus pass program to new Wave cards when they apply for renewals.

Members followed with updates from their organizations:

- Catherine Taylor announced that Age-Friendly RI is seeking volunteers for Be Kind RI, its volunteer matching platform. Seventy-five volunteers are already active, serving 60 individuals and families. She also said that the organization is developing a manual on transportation options for older adults, with support from a RIDOT grant.

- Bob Robillard reported on behalf of the RI Senior Center Directors Association that each center has its own timeline for reopening. Many have continued offering services to meet their clients' basic needs, such as health and safety, providing assistance with shopping and accessing medication. Now they are working towards keeping people connected through socialization. The Coventry Senior Center opened today, and the community has funding available to purchase a new van.
- Maria Cimini, RI Dept. of Human Services, said that the RI Works program will send out a mailing to their clients about the transition to Wave cards for their monthly bus passes.
- The United Way RV is out on the road again, visiting different organizations.

The meeting adjourned at 3:29 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council**  
**May 10, 2021 Attendance List**

<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Present?</b>
Eric Carroll	2-1-1/United Way of RI	By phone
Maria Cimini	RI Department of Human Services	By phone
Paul Council	West Warwick HEZ	By phone
Seena Franklin	Comprehensive Community Action Program	By phone
Ehren Hunt	Tricounty Community Action	By phone
Sarah Ingle	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority	By phone
Arthur Johnson	2-1-1/United Way of RI	By phone
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority	By phone
Anne LeClerc	RI Dept. of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals	By phone
Bill Legare	Valley Transportation	By phone
Jason Lyon	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services	By phone
Michele Mitchell	West Warwick HEZ	By phone
Lauren Nocera	Thundermist Health Center	By phone
Julie Oakley	RI Dept. of Transportation	By phone
Darlene Reza Rossi	AARP Rhode Island	By phone
Bob Robillard	Coventry, RI Senior Center Directors Association	By phone
Heidi Showstead	Disability advocate	By phone
Catherine Taylor	Age-Friendly RI	By phone
Meg Underwood	Warwick Senior Services	By phone
Nathan Watchous	RIPTA	By phone
Kasim Yarn	RI Office of Veterans Services	By phone