

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Virtual meeting: RIPTA Zoom

Thursday, June 3, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

Participants: Rui Cabral (Chair), Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Kerry Clark, Frank Cummings, Laurie DiOrio, Monica Dzialo, Elisabeth Hubbard, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Ed Soares, Angelina Stabile, Mark Susa.

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

I. Call to Order

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

Monica Dzialo motioned to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2021 meeting. Heather Schey seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

II. RIPTA Reports

- Key performance indicators:
 - Joe Solomon shared Ride paratransit data from April 2021. Ride provided 11,898 van trips and 181 taxi trips for 10,986 ambulatory passengers and 1,093 passengers who use wheelchairs. 8,183 were subscription trips and 3,896 were demand. 4,993 customers were approved to use Ride, and 642 passengers actively used the service. On-time performance was at 93.8% for the month. Additional data points were outlined in a report that was emailed to the group in advance.
 - RIPTA staff shared fixed-route on-time performance data as well. In April, 364,021 time points were sampled. 83.2% were on time, 6.9% were early, and 9.9% were late. Trips are considered on time when they depart between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late.
- Project updates:
 - Greg Nordin reported on plans to redesign RIPTA's West Bay service from Warwick south to Narragansett and Westerly over the next 2-3 years, with the first changes going into effect in fall 2021. RIPTA recently solicited feedback at a public workshop, and people will have an opportunity to share additional comments at virtual public hearings on June 10th. The proposed fall 2021 changes will have minor impacts on the ADA corridor, but future changes will improve connections along Route 2/Bald Hill Road to the Center of New England, East Greenwich, and The University of Rhode Island.

- Service to Honeywell’s facility was discontinued last week, as the company ceased production of N95 masks. This opens capacity for additional Ride service.
- Two weeks ago, RIPTA removed its capacity limits on all RIPTA fixed route and paratransit vehicles. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) still requires drivers and passengers to wear masks on public transit.
- At the last ATAC meeting, RIPTA shared an outline of plans to integrate Ride into the Wave account-based fare system. This involves coordination between two vendors, and contracts must be signed. More updates will follow.
- RIPTA submitted an application for an FTA Low-No Emission program grant to electrify the fleet on Aquidneck Island, potentially including Ride and Flex vehicles. This would be a pilot program to allow RIPTA to explore the technology, understand the vehicles, and get feedback. If RIPTA receives funding, ATAC members indicated that they would like to participate in conversations about procurement to advocate for electric vehicles to emit audible sounds that help people identify them.

III. Discussion

- RIPTA Service Feedback:
 - Kerry Clark recommended increasing the volume on the speakers that announce route numbers on buses because it can be challenging to hear when the doors open. RIPTA staff will relay this information.
 - Jean Bousquet, RI Office of Rehabilitation Services, said that while she was crossing the street with a client near Kennedy Plaza, she noticed tree branches blocking pedestrian crossing signs. RIPTA staff said that the city owns the signal, so the Providence Dept. of Public Works or City Forester should be responsible. 3-1-1 should be a good starting point for contacting the city.
- General Q & A:
 - In response to a question about whether ATAC planned to meet in person later this year, Greg Nordin said that the governor’s order that allowed open meetings to be held online is due to expire in late June. If it is not extended, the committee will meet in person.
 - Elisabeth Hubbard, Disability Rights RI, commented that many people view online meetings as more accessible than in-person meetings. Rui Cabral added that they are more efficient because they eliminate the need for travel time. The group acknowledged the different benefits of online and in-person meetings, but they indicated that they would like the online option to remain available. RIPTA staff will stay in touch as this unfolds.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.