

## ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA board room, 705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI  
Thursday, August 5, 2021  
MEETING MINUTES

**Participants:** Rui Cabral (Chair), Benny Bergantino, Kerry Clark, Monica Dzialo, Barbara Henry, Mark Susa.

**RIPTA Staff:** Marc Ebuña, Steve Fiorentini, Nate Hannon, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Joe Solomon.

### I. Call to Order

Chairman Rui Cabral called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:06 PM.

Monica Dzialo motioned to approve the minutes from the June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 meeting. Benny Bergantino seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, shared an update on ATAC membership. According to the by-laws adopted by the committee last year, active members are the individuals who have attended at least 5 of the last 12 meetings. Current members are: Robert Beauregard, Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, Rui Cabral, Frank Cummings, Vincent DeJesus, Laurie Diorio, Monica Dzialo, Deanne Gagne, Elisabeth Hubbard, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Angelina Stabile, Lisa Stamp, and Mark Susa. The list will be updated again before the committee votes to elect new officers.

Monica Dzialo thanked RIPTA for organizing the ATAC meetings on Zoom throughout the past year to maintain the committee's integrity.

### II. RIPTA Reports

- Key performance indicators: RIPTA shared Ride data from May and June 2021. In May, Ride provided 11,495 van trips and 207 taxi trips for 16,660 passengers (including personal care attendants). Of the 3,923 customers approved to use Ride, 703 were active over a 90 day period. On-time performance was at 92.8% for the month.

In June, Ride provided 12,133 van trips and 239 taxi trips for 18,247 passengers (including personal care attendants). Of the 3,923 customers approved to use Ride, 751 were active over a 90 day period. On-time performance was at 92% for the month. Additional data points for both months were outlined in a report that was emailed to the group in advance.

RIPTA staff will share fixed-route on-time performance data for May, June, and July at the next meeting.

- One-Call/One-Click study: Joelle Kanter reported on RIPTA's One-Call/One-Click study, which looked into the feasibility of introducing a new trip planning resource for multiple transportation providers in Rhode Island. The study launched in September 2020 with focus groups, led by a team of consultants, with older adults, individuals with disabilities, social service providers, and transportation providers. Many ATAC members participated in the meetings. The consulting team then conducted surveys and in-depth interviews with people who manage One-Call/One-Click systems in other states including Mass RideMatch, Find My Ride PA, Way 2 Go in Tompkins County (NY), and Transportal (Jacksonville, FL), and summarized their findings in a best practices report.

This spring, the consultants presented RIPTA with recommendations for a phased approach to creating a new system. In the first phase, RIPTA will update the content on its website this fall to make it easier for older adults and individuals with disabilities to utilize. RIPTA also plans to add a new section on its website for Transportation by Communities, featuring all of the options available in each municipality. In later phases, RIPTA will consider developing a trip planning resource that includes multiple providers.

Following the presentation, Benny Bergantino, Statewide Planning, requested a list of the focus group meeting dates and number of participants for each one.

Kerry Clark requested any information on RIPTA's website to be accessible with a screen reader.

- Project updates:
  - Sarah Ingle reported that many of RIPTA's West Bay service changes proposed in June will go into effect in September. Winter changes are likely to be more substantial and should provide increased span and frequency of service.
  - RIPTA is continuing its outreach efforts for the Wave account-based fare system. Buses will continue accepting legacy fare products through the end of October, and after that, they will accept fares on Wave cards and cash. Staff will provide an update on plans to integrate Wave into the Ride system at an upcoming meeting.
  - RIPTA is also preparing to hire a vendor to conduct an on-board rider survey this fall. It will focus on fixed route and Flex services in order to provide origin and destination data, in compliance with FTA guidelines.

- RIPTA will also update the state’s Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan.
- RIPTA hopes to introduce an on-demand pilot program in a Flex zone to test the technology for providing an Uber/Lyft type service.

### III. Discussion

- RIPTA service feedback
  - Kerry has been using the Flex service in Woonsocket, which is available on a first come-first served basis. He views it as a good option for door to door trips, especially when it can be difficult to get around in the winter. It is also more cost effective than booking trips through Ride.
  - Barbara is interested in finding information about the shuttle to the Newport ferry, including pick up locations downtown. RIPTA customer service was not able to provide her with that information when she called.
  - Kerry asked whether the automated announcements on buses were going away. RIPTA staff responded that this is a federal requirement on buses and the system will remain in place.
  - He also said that it is challenging to identify bus stops without shelters on certain routes, and he recommends installing signs on materials that are unique to RIPTA. Sarah mentioned that RIPTA plans to add more shelters and will be pursuing a signage improvement program in the near future.

- Planning for upcoming ATAC meetings  
 Rui commented that hybrid (in person/virtual) meetings are challenging to run because the Zoom participants have a difficult time interacting with those who are in the same room. Monica added that Zoom enabled people to participate in meetings despite their concerns about the pandemic and any transportation challenges they face.

Rui recognized the state’s new requirement for mandatory in-person public meetings without the option of using Zoom in their place. He proposed hosting every other meeting on Zoom as an option. The group also expressed interest in hosting hybrid meetings with RIPTA staff in place to manage different roles.

Rui will gather more feedback from ATAC members who did not attend the meeting. Sarah Ingle, RIPTA, offered to help facilitate a conversation about this to enable broader participation in meetings. A by-laws change may be needed.

The group also discussed whether members could represent others at the meetings. People can raise issues of concern for those who do not attend, but they cannot vote on their behalf.

The health screening process was also discussed, with questions arising about

requirements to take temperatures and/or see proof of vaccination. Rui responded that these policies are dictated by the state.

Another question arose about how to accommodate individuals who have hearing impairments on Zoom. A transcription may be available for anyone who requests it in advance, and participants can also utilize the chat feature.

The next meeting is scheduled on the Thursday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, before Labor Day weekend.

The meeting adjourned at 5:24 PM.