



November 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes for the Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council

The Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council) meeting was held in RIPTA's Transportation Board Room, 269 Melrose Street, Providence, and called to order at 2:07 PM. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes.

Maria Cimini motioned to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021 Coordinating Council meeting. Benny Bergantino seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Bob Robillard, Director, Coventry Department of Human Services and President, RI Senior Center Directors Association, gave a presentation on the role of senior centers during the pandemic. Through their membership in the association, senior centers shared resources and best practices with each other. In rural parts of the state in particular, directors discussed the similar needs facing seniors in different communities and looked for opportunities to collaborate by potentially sharing staff and funding.

Throughout the pandemic, senior centers shifted their focus to serving basic human needs by delivering food and medication, providing vaccines, and coordinating with food pantries. Some centers had on-site clinics as well. Combatting social isolation has also been a priority, with senior center staff providing one-on-one outreach to keep people connected while their doors were closed. Although many centers have continued to operate vans to take people to medical appointments and meal sites, they have faced challenges with finding staff to drive them.

Following the presentation, the Coordinating Council discussed the need for a transportation system that serves all people who have limited mobility, particularly in rural parts of the state. Currently, transportation funding leads to compartmentalization, and providers have segregated the system for seniors.

Anne LeClerc announced that the RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH) has been charged with surveying the population across the board about their transportation needs. Chris Ausura, RI Department of Health, also expressed interest in looking at the transportation data throughout the pandemic in order to help justify future investments. A conversation



will continue at the next Coordinating Council meeting about the planned transportation survey and previous data gathering efforts, including information from Age-Friendly RI's social isolation work group.

After the discussion, Sarah Ingle, RIPTA, reviewed highlights of the 2021 Coordinating Council work plan. Bi-monthly Coordinating Council meetings were held virtually until September, when they resumed in person. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) funding supported several important projects throughout the year including the One-Call/One-Click study, a Mobility on Demand study, and Wave human services fare integration.

After reviewing the draft 2022 Coordinating Council work plan, the group shared several suggestions:

- Chris Ausura asked about how the infrastructure bill will impact the transportation coordination work. In particular, he wanted to understand what goals and objectives are tied to it, how the pieces fit in, and how we will benchmark and track our progress. He recommended making the work plan goals specific and measurable.
- Tasks should be assigned to specific individuals or work groups.
- The plan should include a timeline.
- Communication should be a priority, but the group should consider the right content, frequency, and audience for messaging. The Coordinating Council may decide to contribute relevant content to existing newsletters instead of generating its own. Options may include sharing information with newsletters prepared by RIPTA, Statewide Planning, BHDDH, RIDOT, DHS, HEZs, the Office of Healthy Aging and senior centers.

Anne LeClerc and Chris Ausura agreed to assist with 2022 work plan revisions before the next meeting.

Several project updates followed:

- The Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan is a federally mandated plan that prioritizes the investment of FTA's Section 5310 funds based on need, requiring all funded projects to be listed. The current plan has been useful in shaping the Coordinating Council's program of work, and the process includes both public involvement and data collection. Moving forward, it will also be important to think about leveraging Section 5310 funds into grant opportunities to support priority projects.



- RIPTA announced that its updated State Management Plan will broaden the agency's ability to spend section 5310 and 5311 funding, allowing funds to pass through to subrecipients. The plan will be available for comment in a few weeks on RIPTA's website.

Discussion

- Heidi Showstead thanked RIPTA for planning to expand the span of certain routes, which also allows people who use the RIde paratransit system to stay out later and be more active in their communities.

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 PM.



Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council

November 8, 2021 Attendance List

Council Members	Organization
Nicole Arias	RI Office of Healthy Aging
Christopher Ausura	RI Dept. of Health
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Maria Cimini	RI Dept. of Human Services
Laurie Diorio	RI Office of Rehabilitation Services
Sarah Ingle	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Anne LeClerc	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Jason Lyon	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Jennifer Marquis-Caruso	RI Office of Veterans Services
Julie Oakley	RI Department of Transportation

Others Present

Name	Organization
Bob Robillard	Coventry/RI Senior Center Directors Association
Heidi Showstead	Disability advocate

By Phone

Name	Organization
Wendry Boudreau	West Warwick HEZ
Seena Franklin	CCAP
Ray Goff	Burrillville