

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 3, 2022
MEETING MINUTES

Participants: Heather Schey (Chair), Robert Beauregard, Benny Bergantino, Tyson Bottenus, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, Rui Cabral, Kerry Clark, Earnest Covington, Frank Cummings, Monica Dzialo, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Angie Stabile, Mark Susa.

RIPTA Staff: Brooks Almonte, James Canty, Marc Ebuña, Nate Hannon, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Greg Nordin, Joe Solomon.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order on Zoom at 4:04 PM. She thanked the new vice-chair, Monica Dzialo, and shared how much she learned from former ATAC chairperson Rui Cabral. Zoom participation guidelines followed.

II. VOTE: Frank Cummings motioned to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2022 ATAC meeting. Angie Stabile seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

III. RIPTA Updates

- Joelle Kanter read a RIPTA board resolution, approved on February 16th, thanking former ATAC chairperson Rui Cabral for his service to the committee.
- Greg Nordin announced a series of online workshops about proposed service changes in Pawtucket, Newport and West Bay. The new Route 16 would provide service to the Center of New England in Warwick, while new Newport service would connect the North End with beaches.
- Joelle shared an update from John Chadwick about the procurement of new Turtle Tops that followed his presentation at the last ATAC meeting. The new shuttles are similar to the old ones, with all steps fairly identical in height, and the seatbelts conform to the latest safety standards that require both a lap and shoulder belt.
- Joelle also announced that the first round of listening sessions for the statewide Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan update will be scheduled in late April.
- Greg encouraged the committee to get involved in the planning process for the proposed Dorrance Street transit center which would provide RIPTA riders with more amenities such as a dedicated customer service center and a covered waiting area. RIPTA staff will come back to ATAC with more updates on the project.

IV. 2022 ATAC Planning

- Committee goals/potential changes: Heather suggested reporting on RIPTA's key performance indicators quarterly instead of monthly. After the group discussed several options, they agreed to host discussions once a quarter while continuing to receive the reports by email every month.
- Learning opportunities about living and moving with disabilities: Heather would like to introduce learning opportunities on topics such as RIPTA's Flex program. She also wants to invite ATAC members and others to share their experiences with disabilities and mobility challenges.
- Presentations from RIPTA departments: Greg plans to continue asking RIPTA leaders to present to ATAC on each department's operations and how they impact passengers.

V. Presentation

Jim Canty, RIPTA's Executive Director of Project Management, gave a presentation about accessibility considerations for RIPTA projects. He explained that his department completes projects launched by other departments, and he highlighted the importance of identifying stakeholders, understanding their needs, and making modifications based on feedback heard during project planning phases. He noted several ongoing RIPTA projects including the electric bus charging station, the conversion from diesel to a gas tank, and transit signal prioritization, along with future projects including renovated shelters outside the East Side bus tunnel, an expanded terminal at URI, an added building at the Pawtucket bus hub, the replacement of bus stop signs, and a new shelter program.

Following Jim's presentation, Kerry Clark suggested installing unique tile markers to help people who are completely blind gather information. He said that bus shelters help identify where bus stops are located, but it can be difficult for passengers to know where to stand near signs on poles.

In response to a question about whether all RIPTA shelters are accessible, Greg said that RIPTA follows rules around ADA compliance, but the agency can do better and will consider adding tactile markings or audible features.

VI. Discussion/Chat

- General Q&A
 - Robert Beauregard expressed concern about accessing shelters near Insight because the street does not have crosswalks. Greg suggested that crosswalks are an important issue, and RIPTA can work with RIDOT and/or municipalities on improvements. Marc Ebuña added that RIPTA is planning for a bus stop and shelter replacement program.
 - Robert also pointed out that Route 116 has no sidewalk, and snow is not shoveled from the sides of the road before Lincoln Mall. He and Marc engaged in a discussion about

adding a crosswalk by the Lincoln Senior Center, and they agreed that the municipality should be involved in finding solutions.

- Jean Bousquet mentioned that snow was not cleared from the area between the floating bus stop and the sidewalk in front of the Office of Rehabilitation Services on Fountain Street in Providence. She also noted that the island does not align with the wheelchair ramp on the sidewalk. Liza Burkin, Providence Streets Coalition, offered to serve as a liaison between the city and the community on this issue through the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council.
- RIPTA service feedback
 - Angie Stabile said that she has been using the RIde Reveal website since the app has not been working. Joe Solomon suggested that people should log out and log back in when the app gets stuck. Heather asked Brooks Almonte, RIde, to let ATAC know about any updates to the Reveal app.

The meeting adjourned at 5:16 PM.