

RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, January 5, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

Participants (Zoom and in-person): Heather Schey (chairperson), Robert Beauregard, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, John Carvalho, Kerry Clark, Tracy Clossick, Frank Cummings, Paul Delpape, Monica Dzialo (vice-chairperson), Devin Guirales, Donna Lee James, Crystal Martin, Janice Musco, Tina Pedersen, Ed Soares, Angie Stabile, Mark Susa.

RIPTA: James Canty, Marc Ebuña, Steve Fiorentini, Sarah Ingle, Gary Jarvis, Joelle Kanter, Joe Solomon.

Call to Order: Heather Schey called the ATAC meeting to order at 4:01 PM. Attendees introduced themselves on Zoom and in-person at RIPTA's office, 705 Elmwood Avenue, room 107.

ATAC Membership: Joelle Kanter presented a list of active members based on their participation in 5 of the past 12 meetings. Members are: Robert Beauregard, Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Rui Cabral, Kerry Clark, Monica Dzialo, Devin Guirales, Barry Humphries, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Ed Soares, Angelina Stabile, and Mark Susa.

Approval of minutes: John Carvalho motioned to approve the December 1, 2022 meeting minutes. Monica Dzialo seconded the motion. All were in favor.

RIPTA reports

- Department presentation: RIPTA's Chief Technology Officer Gary Jarvis described his role which supports all aspects of the agency. His department is comprised of three parts, focusing on development, network, and security. The development team handles special reporting by getting data from different systems and putting it into a usable format. They support the Wave fare payment system as well. The network team is responsible for internal and external communication, including buildings, signage and audio announcements.

Gary said that his department is now prepared for hybrid meetings, but it can be challenging to find a room large enough to seat people safely while still maintaining the camera view. His department is building out the transportation conference room across the street with cameras and audio as well. Moving forward, RIPTA will use Teams for online meetings instead of Zoom, and a small group may be able to test this in advance.

Gary welcomed questions and comments after he spoke.

- Bob Beauregard mentioned an issue using the Reveal app for paratransit. Joe Solomon will follow up on it.
- Paul Delpape said that he had difficulty getting into Zoom, and he asked RIPTA to share links for one tap mobile.

- Kerry Clark asked RIPTA to make sure ADA announcements are accurate and raise the volume on speakers outside buses to hear the route numbers more clearly. He said that the speakers on the new 30' buses work well, but he recently missed a 17 bus because he didn't hear the announcement. Gary responded that drivers cannot adjust the volume, but he would ask the ATMS person to look into it.
- Another issue is that the stop for the current Pawtucket Transit Center is announced too early. Gary said that his department uses GPS and can change the parameters to make them more accurate.
- A few people shared positive feedback about hosting the meeting on Zoom, making it easier for people who live far from Providence to participate.
- Project updates:
 - Sarah Ingle described RIPTA's **paratransit expansion study**, requested by the General Assembly to look at bringing paratransit service across the state. The Ride paratransit system currently meets federal rules, providing complementary service within ¼ mile of fixed bus routes. RIPTA's consulting team looked at ridership, costs, and design, and estimated that statewide expansion would increase ridership by 31-33% and would add about 65,000 trips/year. The cost per trip would also increase because the trips would cover a longer distance. An expansion would require additional drivers, between 26-28 new vehicles, and a budget of \$5.5—6.5 million plus capital costs for new facilities. RIPTA submitted a report to the House Speaker, Senate President and Governor this week, and Sarah expects an interesting conversation about this during the legislative session.
 - The update of the **RI Public Transit—Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan** is still underway. RIPTA will share a draft with ATAC for review as soon as it's available.
 - RIPTA continues collaborating with partners to distribute Wave cards that offer 6 months of unlimited travel to individuals who qualify throughout the state. This **low-income pilot program** launched last fall and will benefit 600 riders.
 - Within the next few weeks, RIPTA plans to schedule a time for people to view sample **bus stop signs**.
- Service changes:
 - **Pawtucket/Central Falls Transit Center:** RIPTA's Pawtucket Transit Center is moving from Roosevelt Avenue to Pine Street and Goff Avenue on January 23rd. Joelle Kanter will share a copy of the winter service change flyer with the group when it's available. Affected routes are:
 - Route 1 Eddy/Hope/Benefit
 - R-Line: Broad/North Main
 - 71: Broad Street/Pawtucket Ave.
 - 72: Weeden/Central Falls
 - 73: Mineral Spring/Twin River/CCRI (Weekday)
 - 75: Dexter/Lincoln Mall
 - 76: Central Ave.

- 78: Beverage Hill/East Providence
- 80: Armistice Blvd.
- QX: Quonset Express

In response to a question from Devin Guirales about whether RIPTA bus schedules would align with the MBTA schedule, Marc Ebuña said that since the R-Line runs consistently, people can make close connections to commuter rail. Jim Canty also added that he is working on scoping the building at the new hub, and he expects it to go out to bid in February.

Discussion:

- RIPTA service feedback:
 - Tina Pedersen expressed concern about the accessibility of floating bus islands. This led to a discussion about snow clearing responsibilities which fall to property abutters throughout RIPTA's network. People were encouraged to report any issues to their towns.
 - Tracy Clossick suggested that the taxi services that RIPTA contracts with for Ride trips should be labeled. The unmarked black cars can be difficult to identify. Tina Pedersen said that riders should ask for the driver's name and license plate number on each trip.
- 2023 ATAC planning: Meetings will continue on the first Thursday of each month except for July. The April meeting will also be rescheduled due to a conflict with holidays.
- General Q&A:
 - The group discussed plans for Kennedy Plaza, particularly during the construction period for the Superman Building. Liza Burkin said that the project to raise the street level on Washington Street and East Approach will go to the city's board of contracts meeting soon. She suggested that RIPTA should invite Providence planning staff to join an upcoming ATAC meeting.

The next ATAC meeting is scheduled on February 2, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 PM.