



## **January 9, 2023 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 board room, 705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, and was called to order at 2:02 PM. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA planner, began by announcing the Council's vision: accessible, coordinated statewide mobility for all Rhode Islanders. Jean Bousquet motioned to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2022 Coordinating Council meeting. Jay Burdick seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Joelle then presented on the federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility's (CCAM) 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, which was recently adopted. CCAM was established two decades ago and is led by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in coordination with 28 other agencies across 11 federal departments. Together, these agencies administer 130 federal programs that fund transportation for older adults, people with disabilities and/or individuals of low-income.

The strategic plan includes a mission statement: The CCAM collaborates to improve transportation access for all people. It follows with 3 strategic goals and outlines activities and performance measures that support them:

- Goal 1: Strengthen the CCAM and improve multisector collaboration at all levels and across jurisdictions.
- Goal 2: Promote the development of safer and more accessible transportation networks.
- Goal 3: Address CCAM agency policies that impede transportation coordination.

Meeting participants were encouraged to view a PDF [copy of the strategic plan](#) on FTA's website and consider its influence on statewide human services transportation coordination in Rhode Island. Jean Bousquet is also interested in learning about successful coordination activities in other states, particularly in New England.

RIPTA project updates followed, starting with the low-income pilot program that was announced last fall. Through a network of partner organizations across the state, RIPTA is offering 6 months of unlimited free transportation to 600 low-income and unhoused individuals who do not qualify for other transit assistance programs. More than 200 passes have been distributed to date, and RIPTA has extended the application



deadline. In December, several Coordinating Council members and partners participated in a pilot program working group meeting where they discussed rollout challenges and plans for data collection.

Estephany Matrille, RI Association of Community Action Agencies, said that the state's seven CAP agencies followed different processes for identifying pilot program participants and determining eligibility. Although enrollment is slower than anticipated, she believes there is a strong need for the program.

Sarah Ingle then reported on RIPTA's paratransit expansion study which was completed in December. The General Assembly asked RIPTA to study its existing paratransit service which operates within ¾ mile of fixed-route bus service, and to evaluate the possibility of expanding statewide. After examining ridership, costs, and design for an expanded program, RIPTA's consultants estimated that ridership would increase by 31-33%, adding more than 65,000 trips per year. Any service changes would involve prioritization and would need to be phased in, as they would require additional drivers, vehicles, and storage facilities.

Other RIPTA project updates:

- RIPTA is completing a review of the draft RI Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, which determines priority projects that utilize FTA Section 5310 funds. It should be released to this group for comment soon.
- RIPTA staff continues to review content on the draft community transportation webpages. The information should be live on RIPTA's website this spring.
- On January 23rd, RIPTA's Pawtucket Transit Center is moving from Roosevelt Avenue to Pine Street and Goff Avenue where riders can connect with MBTA commuter rail service.

Member agencies and organizations shared additional updates:

- Jason Lyon, EOHHS, said that a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the state's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokerage was posted on December 28<sup>th</sup>. The existing contract expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Benny Bergantino, Statewide Planning, announced a partnership with several agencies to develop Justice40 environmental justice indexes, which will impact transportation investments. This project kicked off in December and will continue for 18-24 months.
- Jennifer Marquis-Carusio shared that the RI Office of Veterans Services has enrolled 128 veterans in its grant-funded transportation program.



- David Schultz, Senate Fiscal Office, expects an exciting legislative session.
- Jay Burdick, United Way of Rhode Island, runs The Point's 2-1-1 outreach program and has been hiring new drivers for the RV.

The next Coordinating Council meeting is scheduled on Monday, March 13, 2023 and will be held in a different location.

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council  
January 9, 2023 Attendance List**

<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Jean Bousquet	RI Office of Rehabilitation Services
Laurie Diorio (by phone)	RI Office of Rehabilitation Services
Sarah Ingle	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Jennifer Marquis-Caruso	RI Office of Veterans Services
Jason Lyon	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Betsy Sheridan	Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Others Present

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jay Burdick	United Way/2-1-1
Estephany Matrille	RI Association of Community Action Agencies
David Schultz	Senate Fiscal Office
Heidi Showstead (by phone)	advocate