



March 13, 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 at United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, and was called to order at 2:05 PM. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes, indicating that some participants met in person and others joined through Teams.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA planner, began by announcing the Coordinating Council's vision: accessible, coordinated statewide mobility for all Rhode Islanders. She then presented the final report of the 2023 Rhode Island Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for approval, noting that once adopted, the plan will be in effect for 5 years, replacing the 2018 plan. It includes all projects selected for FTA Section 5310 funding (for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) in Rhode Island, and features these elements:

- An executive summary
- An overview of plan requirements
- An outline of the planning process and community engagement
- A summary of existing transportation services in Rhode Island
- Maps detailing gaps in service and areas of need
- Plan strategies
- A recommended action plan

Maureen Maignet motioned to approve the new Coordinated Plan. Estephany Matrille seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The plan was approved and will be available on RIPTA's website.

Estephany Matrille then motioned to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2023 Coordinating Council meeting. Mario Olivieri seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Amy Pettine, Nelson\Nygaard, then gave an update on RIPTA's R-Line fare-free pilot. She described the R-Line as the busiest bus route in the state, running from Pawtucket to Kennedy Plaza along North Main Street and through the South Side of Providence along Broad Street. The pilot program began on September 1, 2022 and



ends on August 31, 2023, allowing fixed-route passengers to ride the bus without paying fare and Ride paratransit customers to take free trips within ¼ mile of the R-Line service area. In her presentation, Amy outlined rider characteristics along the route, impacts on RIPTA revenue, and RIPTA's other fare programs, and also compared the pilot to other transit agencies' fare-free programs. The pilot will be evaluated on several factors including access, mobility, and equity; RIPTA's financial health; operational efficiency; and community benefits. A discussion followed the presentation, with participants describing their priorities as expanding service to new locations, offering fare programs that apply to all routes, and extending the service span to cover more weekend and evening hours.

Several RIPTA project updates followed:

- RIPTA's low-income pilot program launched last fall with a network of partners, including community action agencies, identifying program participants who 1) have incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level and 2) do not qualify for other transit assistance programs. Although the initial rollout was slower than expected, 775 passes have now been distributed, giving participants free trips on RIPTA's fixed-route buses for 6 months.
- A vehicle sharing pilot program is operating in Newport County with funding from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). Age-Friendly RI is the lead partner, with RIPTA providing planning support. Looking Upwards is providing a van, driver, and staff support to operate the pilot through the end of June. The service aims to fill transportation gaps for older adults and people with disabilities, and to overcome challenges related to serving different clients with the same vehicle. Val McHugh, Looking Upwards, said that participants appreciate the program, particularly for trips to stores and medical appointments. The next Coordinating Council meeting in May will focus on this project.
- Community transportation webpages are still in development and will move to RIPTA's website soon. Staff will share a link as soon as the information is public.

Member agencies and organizations shared additional updates:

- Tina Pedersen encouraged everyone to download the Parking Mobility app to assist with data collection on parking violations and blocked curb cuts.
- Mario Olivieri, EOHHS, reported on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the state's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) brokerage.



- Darlene Reza Rossi announced the March 15th deadline for AARP's Community Challenge grant program. Projects must be completed by November 30, 2023.
- Estephany Matrilie extended an invitation to the New England Partnership Community Action Partnership conference at Gillette Stadium on June 5-6, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council
March 13, 2023 Attendance List (in person and Teams)**

Council Members	Organization
Nicole Arias	RI Office of Healthy Aging
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Sarah Ingle	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Anne LeClerc	RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Jennifer Marquis-Carusio	RI Office of Veterans Services
Mario Olivieri	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services

Others Present

Name	Organization
Joe Cournoyer	United Way/2-1-1
Anne Galbraith	ASG Planning
Maureen Maigret	Senior Agenda Coalition
Estephany Matrille	RI Association of Community Action Agencies
Val McHugh	Looking Upwards
Mariana Moore	United Way/2-1-1
Lorna Oinonen	AARP volunteer
Tina Pedersen	RAMP
Amy Pettine	Nelson\Nygaard
Darlene Reza Rossi	AARP Rhode Island
David Schultz	Senate Fiscal Office
Bill Schwartz	Nelson\Nygaard
Heidi Showstead (by phone)	advocate
Holly Snyder	AARP volunteer