

## RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 2, 2023  
MEETING MINUTES

**Participants (Teams and in-person):** Heather Schey (chairperson), Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Kerry Clark, Tracy Clossick, Frank Cummings, Paul Delpape, Vincent DeJesus, Laurie Diorio, Monica Dzialo (vice-chairperson), Deanne Gagne, Casey Gartland, Devin Guirales, Crystal Martin, Janice Musco, Tina Pedersen, Grace Pires, Val Reishuk, Ed Soares, Angie Stabile, Mark Susa.

**RIPTA:** James Canty, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Maribeth Pacillo, Matthew Quider, Joe Solomon.

**Call to Order:** Monica Dzialo called the ATAC meeting to order at 4:07 PM. Attendees introduced themselves on Teams and in-person at RIPTA's office, 705 Elmwood Avenue, room 107.

**Approval of minutes:** Before requesting approval of the February 2, 2023 meeting minutes, Joelle Kanter asked whether participants wanted their names attributed to specific comments made during the discussion, or if they preferred to keep them anonymous. The group agreed to keep names in internal notes for RIPTA staff and to remove them from the public minutes. Angie Stabile made a motion to accept the minutes with the discussed modifications. Jean Bousquet then seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**RIPTA update on the Pawtucket Bus Hub Passenger Facility:** Matthew Quider, RIPTA project manager, provided an update on design and construction requirements for a new building at the Pawtucket-Central Falls Transit Hub. The facility design should match the style of the new train station while tying in with the older mill buildings in the neighborhood. Matthew noted that the design process will include public outreach to gather input on amenities such as public restrooms, an interior waiting space, a small retail space, ticket vending, and real-time screens. Outreach will begin this summer, and the design should be completed in late 2023 with construction wrapping up by summer 2026.

Meeting participants asked about the maintenance of real-time information screens. MBTA is responsible for its own screens, and RIPTA is working with Connectpoint digital signage. The project will be designed to meet federal and state guidelines for accessibility features, but meeting participants recommended exceeding those standards. Other suggestions included making audible announcements for bus arrivals and departures and adding a guide dog relief area near the lawn.

### **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan**

Projects selected for FTA Section 5310 funding, which is for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, must be included in the Coordinated Plan. FTA requires these plans to be developed through an inclusive process and updated every 5 years. Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, shared a draft of Rhode Island's updated Coordinated Plan by email before the ATAC meeting and announced that comments would be accepted through Monday. It will be presented to the Human Services

Transportation Coordinating Council for approval on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> and then posted on RIPTA's website.

### **RIPTA project updates**

- Ride/Wave integration: RIPTA, Reveal, and Init have successfully tested Wave payment for trips on Ride vehicles, but it has not worked for contracted taxi services yet. Chris McKenna, Ride, will continue to work with partners to find a solution.
- Community transportation webpages: RIPTA has submitted community transportation content to its web development team, and the new web pages are currently being populated. They should be live within the next few weeks.
- Downtown Transit Center: Sarah Ingle announced that proposals are due on April 17<sup>th</sup>, and a selection will follow. There has already been significant interest in the RFP.
- Federal grant submissions: RIPTA planning staff recently submitted FTA and USDDOT grant applications for statewide bus stop improvements and upgrades to transform seven routes to rapid bus status. Announcements should be made this summer.
- Vehicle sharing project: Age-Friendly Rhode Island and Looking Upwards are partnering with RIPTA's planning staff to implement a new pilot transportation service in Newport County with funding from the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. Looking Upwards has hired a driver and is dedicating a vehicle to serve older adults and people with disabilities in the community. The pilot service launched this week and should run through the end of June.

### **Discussion:**

- RIPTA service feedback:
  - A Ride customer expressed concern about the Reveal app not working. When the carrier changes from a Ride van to a taxi, she wants advance notice about the switch. Chairperson Heather Schey agreed to contact Ride after the meeting to request calls from customer service agents to riders about those changes when the app doesn't work.
  - A fixed-route rider requested information on RIPTA's website and the Transit app when buses are delayed. RIPTA staff recommends visiting the service alert webpage: <https://www.ripta.com/alerts/>.
- General Q&A:
  - Questions were asked about the availability of Narcan in Kennedy Plaza. A social service agency partner may become responsible for this.
  - The group discussed whether to resume meetings in person or continue following a hybrid format. While some people like meeting in person, others said that they appreciate cutting out travel time and having more people join. The next meeting will continue to be scheduled on Teams.
- Announcements:
  - Tina Pedersen announced that the Parking Mobility app launched in Rhode Island last Wednesday. She encouraged everyone to download it to report parking issues, log where

accessible parking should be, and note sidewalk obstructions. The data collected through the app will help support relevant legislation.

The next ATAC meeting will be postponed by a week due to a conflict with holidays and will be scheduled at 4:00 PM on Thursday, April 13, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 PM.