

RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 13, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

Participants (Teams and in-person): Heather Schey (chairperson), Benny Bergantino, Kerry Clark, Tracy Clossick, Carney Coopwood, Frank Cummings, Monica Dzialo (vice-chairperson), Deanne Gagne, Casey Gartland, Devin Guirales, Barbara Henry, Crystal Martin, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Val Reishuk, Ed Soares, Angie Stabile, Mark Susa.

RIPTA: Zach Agush, James Canty, Marc Ebuña, Nate Hannon, Joelle Kanter, Joe Solomon.

Call to Order: Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (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: Angie Stabile made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 2, 2023 ATAC meeting. Monica Dzialo seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Tribute to ATAC member Robert Beauregard: After RIPTA staff showed a video tribute to Robert Beauregard, who passed away in early March, people shared their memories, describing Bob as a good friend, a unique character with a good heart, and an incredible advocate who looked out for others and took action to make things better. RIPTA staff also recognized Bob's persistence to improve bus stop infrastructure, and they credited him for keeping them informed about his experiences as a visually impaired rider using a scooter on fixed-route buses, particularly in Woonsocket and Lincoln.

RIPTA reports:

- Ride Reveal app update: Joelle Kanter provided an update from Chris McKenna, RIdE. Last month, once RIdE management heard about some customers experiencing issues with the Reveal app displaying the incorrect transportation mode, they realized that some taxi provider labels were incorrect or incomplete, causing the app to default the notification to van service. While they worked on resolving this issue, Heather Schey asked RIdE to make courtesy calls to notify customers about service mode changes. Chris shared that the taxi name labels have since been restored, and customers should now receive accurate service mode notifications. At the meeting, riders confirmed that the app is now working correctly.
- Key performance indicators: This report will be presented at the next meeting.
- Project updates:
 - Customer Satisfaction Survey: RIPTA is offering an annual survey prepared by the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG) through the end of April online at: [RIPTA.com/Survey](https://ripta.com/survey). People may also call RIPTA customer service to complete the survey over the phone.
 - RI Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan: The statewide Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council formally adopted this plan last

- month. Implementation of recommended strategies is ongoing.
 - Wave/Ride integration: This project is in a new stage of development. After successfully testing Wave payments on Ride vans, the team is getting ready to test payment on taxis. More updates will follow.
 - Route 10x service: On Monday, April 3rd, RIPTA started providing service to Foster, extending Route 10x to serve a new Park-N-Ride lot across from the Foster Police Department at 182 Howard Hill Road. RIPTA's commuter resource and customer service teams will conduct a site visit in June to share information with residents.
 - Safety investments in Kennedy Plaza: RIPTA and the City of Providence announced additional resources to increase the presence of Providence Police officers and Downtown Improvement District (DID) safety ambassadors in Kennedy Plaza during high traffic times.
 - R-Line free-fare pilot update: Next month, RIPTA consultants will give an in-depth presentation to ATAC and ask for feedback about paratransit usage in the R-Line service area, which is also free during the pilot.
- New RIPTA buses: Zach Agush gave a presentation on the new Gillig fleet that includes twelve 35' buses (accommodating 35 seated passengers) and twenty-eight 40' buses (accommodating 40 seated passengers), with a maximum capacity of 59 (with some riders standing). They have a new aqua/turquoise graphic design, similar to the style of the new R-Line buses. All new buses are ADA compliant and have foldable seats in the front area to accommodate 2 wheelchairs. They are also equipped with automated passenger counters, bike rack counters, and transit signal priority capability.

In response to questions, Zach added that later this year the 2009 fleet should be retired. He also explained that transit signal priority is limited to RIPTA's fixed route fleet and aligns with hardware at specific intersections where municipalities own the transit signals and roadways. Meeting participants also shared feedback on the new buses, with a rider on Route 92 saying that she loves the new Gilligs. Another rider on Route 73 observed that smaller wheelchairs can fit on the 35' buses, but people in larger motorized scooters may have difficulty turning them around.

Discussion:

- RIPTA service feedback:
 - A Ride customer described several incidents where taxis picked him up 30-40 minutes late.
 - Another Ride customer said that she has arrived at destinations 45 minutes to an hour earlier than requested.
 - A fixed-route rider has had drivers ask her whether she's going home when she pulls the cord to exit the bus. She's concerned about this being unsafe.
 - Another rider with visual impairments has had issues using Google to identify bus stop locations. In Pawtucket, near D'Angelo, someone had to assist him. Marc Ebuña said that he would look into this and update the GTFS pins. Also, in the future, bus stop signage may include stop numbers, making them easier to identify. Tactile features

- may be considered as well.
- Another fixed-route rider described an incident where a driver made a negative comment about transporting a passenger in a wheelchair. He also said that R-Line buses are sometimes full, so he leaves adequate time in case he has to wait for the next bus. He asked about mid-route driver reliefs which should only happen at very specific points.
 - Another rider described an incident where a driver on Route 34 stopped the bus at McDonald's to pick up food on the way from Seekonk to Providence. In response, Nate Hannon reminded everyone to call RIPTA customer service immediately to help staff identify problems and find solutions.

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 PM.