

## RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 3, 2023  
MEETING MINUTES

**Participants (Teams and in-person):** Heather Schey (chairperson), Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Tracy Clossick, Frank Cummings, Laurie Diorio, Monica Dzialo, Elisabeth Hubbard, Bailey Phoenix, Catherine Sansonetti, Mark Susa.

**RIPTA:** Zachary Agush, James Canty, Steve Fiorentini, Joelle Kanter, Nicky Mudryy, Maribeth Pacillo, Joe Solomon, Jane Williams, Nicole Yee.

**Call to Order:** Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:11 PM. Attendees introduced themselves on Teams and in-person at RIPTA's office, 705 Elmwood Avenue, room 107.

**Approval of minutes:** Monica Dzialo made a motion to accept the minutes of the June 1, 2023 ATAC meeting. Jean Bousquet seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

### RIPTA updates:

- **Key performance indicators:** Joe Solomon presented RIdE statistics from May and June 2023. In May, RIdE provided 21,299 trips on vans (92% of all trips) and taxis provided 3,695 trips (8% of the total). 94% of trips were considered on time. In June, RIdE provided 19,744 trips on vans (87% of all trips) and taxis provided 3,064 trips (13% of the total). 95% were considered on time.

3,781 people are approved to use RIdE, but in May and June, 1,001 customers actively used the system. RIPTA is onboarding more taxi providers, and their service has been improving. Heather Schey asked whether on-time performance data includes taxis, and Joe explained that it does not, since RIdE does not have the ability to generate that data. However, RIdE is diligent about responding to complaints about taxis. If anyone has specific concerns, they can contact [ride@ripta.com](mailto:ride@ripta.com).

Jean Bousquet, RI Office of Rehabilitation Services, asked how customers are alerted when taxis are assigned. According to Joe, if a taxi is assigned in the morning, a customer service agent will call the customer. If a taxi is unable to provide the trip, an agent will call the customer between 6:30 AM and 2:30 PM to alert them about the switch.

Jean added that she continues to submit several RIdE applications for new customers to Dianne Chappel each week to expand their mobility options.

- **Project updates**
  - **Bus stop inventory:** Zach Agush described the goals and expected outputs for this project. Bus stops vary in quality and usability across the state, and RIPTA wants to understand their locations and condition. The project team has developed an inventory tool to allow staff to visually inspect more than 3,500 stops, noting sidewalk conditions, accessibility, landing zones, lighting, signage, and passenger amenities. RIPTA staff will be out in the field with tablets and yellow vests throughout September and October, gathering visual data and taking notes.

Jean asked who is responsible for maintaining crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signals. Zach explained that RIDOT maintains state roads while municipal public works departments take care of local roads. RIPTA is a guest and may advise those entities about issues but cannot control them.

Elisabeth Hubbard, RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities, said that GCD has staff trained on measurements and gradients who may be able to assist with specific spots. She suggested that riders can file complaints with the Commission about bus stops, but they can only enforce regulations on state owned roads.

- Paratransit voucher program: Joelle Kanter said that RIPTA has been tasked with planning a one-year pilot program to serve people who qualify for the Ride paratransit program but do not live within the current service area. Implementation is expected to begin on January 1, 2024 with a total budget of \$500,000. More information will follow this fall.
- Pawtucket/Central Falls Transit Center: James Canty said that two bathroom trailers have been replaced by porta potties with permanent power. Also, after issuing an RFP for an architect for the building, RIPTA selected BL Companies, Warwick. They will develop 3 conceptual designs and host 4 community outreach sessions.
- CCRI transit hub: Construction on four new stops is on track for completion before students return in late August, but the shelters are delayed and should be installed in January. They will be equipped with smart screens and schedule information.
- Travel training network: RIPTA has funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to create a Rhode Island travel training network. The project will kick off within the next few weeks, and RIPTA will work with a facilitator to review existing training programs in Rhode Island and look at best practices from other agencies.
- R-Line fare free pilot: The General Assembly required RIPTA to provide free service on the R-Line for one year ending September 30, 2023. Quarterly reports are available on RIPTA's website.
- **Fall service changes**: RIPTA makes regular service adjustments three times a year in response to seasonal changes and passenger use. Fall service changes go into effective on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, impacting Routes 1, 32, 33, 34, 40, 61X and 67.

#### **Discussion: RIPTA service feedback**

- A rider mentioned that he recently took a Ride trip between Warren and Insight in Warwick within 10 minutes of another passenger traveling between similar locations. On the way home, they were assigned to separate vans again. He suggested coordinating these trips based on geography. Another rider added that this has been an ongoing issue.

The meeting adjourned at 5:16 PM.