

## RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 1, 2023  
MEETING MINUTES

**Participants (Teams and in-person):** Heather Schey (chairperson), Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Rui Cabral, Kerry Clark, Tracy Clossick, Carney Coopwood, Frank Cummings, Paul Delpape, Casey Gartland, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Ed Soares, Angie Stabile, Kristine Sullivan, Mark Susa.

**RIPTA:** James Canty, Marc Ebuña, Steve Fiorentini, Nate Hannon, Joelle Kanter, Maribeth Pacillo, Cristy Raposo Perry, Joe Solomon, Jane Williams.

**Call to Order:** Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:05 PM. Attendees introduced themselves on Teams and in-person at RIPTA's office, 705 Elmwood Avenue, room 107.

**ATAC membership:** Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, then read the names of individuals who have attended 5 of the last 12 ATAC meetings, and according to committee by-laws are considered active members: Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Kerry Clark, Tracy Clossick, Frank Cummings, Monica Dzialo, Devin Guirales, Crystal Martin, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Heather Schey, Heidi Showstead, Ed Soares, Angelina Stabile, and Mark Susa.

**Approval of minutes:** Grace Pires made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 4, 2023 ATAC meeting. Kerry Clark seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**RIPTA Presentation—RIPTA Marketing & Communications Department:** Cristy Raposo Perry, RIPTA's director of communications & public outreach, described her goal as helping to improve internal and external communications. Her department is working to ensure full website accessibility and increase the quantity of social media postings. In response to questions, she added that RIPTA will take a multi-pronged approach to communicating about the end of the R-Line fare free pilot, utilizing social media, digital boards, and direct outreach.

Cristy introduced her new colleague Jane Williams, who has background in media, social content, and video, and named other team members who weren't present at the meeting: Barbara Polichetti, who does copywriting for social media posts and detour updates, and two members of the Commuter Resources Team—Peter Michaud and Erminio Conte—who lead travel training to educate individuals and companies about RIPTA services. They are also getting ready to roll out an employer benefits program called Wave to Work.

### RIPTA Project Updates

- Community College of Rhode Island transit hub: James Canty announced that work has started at CCRI, and a fence has been erected around the site. Construction is expected to

take 10 weeks and should be completed before students return in the fall.

- Pawtucket-Central Falls transit center: James added that RIPTA has received several proposals for the passenger facility at the Pawtucket-Central Falls transit center and will bring a recommendation to the board next month. As part of the public outreach effort, the selected design team is expected to present to this group. In addition, RIPTA is connecting with MBTA to organize a field trip with a training session on using commuter rail schedules and accessibility features.

### **RIPTA Service Changes**

The following summer service changes will go into effect on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>:

- Route 14 West Bay will serve the Wickford Junction train station 7 days/week and will no longer serve the Greenwood Community Church Park-n-Ride stop at Kenyon Avenue and Gillmore Street.
- Route 67/Bellevue Ave./Salve Regina University has enhanced summer service, running on weekdays every 20 minutes from 8 am to 8 pm. Weekend service will run every 15 minutes from 10 am to 6 pm. Trips on this route are free through October 31<sup>st</sup> thanks to a sponsorship by Discover Newport.
- Route 68/CCRI Newport/Memorial Blvd./First Beach has free service between June 18<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> through a sponsorship by the Episcopal Diocese of RI.
- Several routes have minor scheduling adjustments: R-Line, 51, 54, 55, 57, 60, 71 and 92.

Marc Ebuña said that RIPTA is slowly making progress with recruiting more operators and is targeting routes that have on-time performance issues, particularly those impacted by Route 6/10 construction.

### **RIPTA Service Feedback**

Several participants shared feedback on their experiences with RIde trips assigned to taxis:

- One person mentioned that for the past 3-4 weeks, cabs have been arriving about a half hour late. In one case, she ended up canceling the cab and taking an Uber, but she would have liked accurate updates on timing to help her plan. She also said that cabs sometimes arrive 45 minutes too early to pick her up from work.
- Another rider mentioned that a cab company called when they were already running half an hour late to ask whether she still wanted the ride. She recognizes that the Reveal app doesn't show which cab operator is scheduled, but that information would be helpful.
- Another participant added that several cab companies have poor customer service. He understands that they try to take every job to fit everyone in, often at the expense of running late.

Other feedback:

- A question was asked about whether Ride customers can note a preference not to take cabs. They do not currently have that option.
- A participant mentioned a specific building that Ride has trouble getting to and will contact Joe Solomon for assistance.
- Another individual said that he has been using Ride more frequently lately, and the drivers seem happy. He's only had one incident where a driver parked in the wrong place and Ride had to send another car.
- An agency partner gave Dianne Chappel two thumbs up and said "she's awesome at processing Ride applications." She understands that she's swamped with applications, and she described her as "an unsung hero who should be recognized."

#### **General Q&A**

- A participant said she likes the idea of signing up for Lyft, which Massachusetts agencies use for paratransit. Others added that this would be helpful as an option for those who are comfortable with it.

Heather reminded the group that ATAC will not meet in July.

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.