

RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 7, 2023

MEETING MINUTES

Participants (Teams and in-person): Chairperson Heather Schey, Jean Bousquet, Liza Burkin, Rui Cabral, Tracy Clossick, Grant Dulgarian, Olivia Lozier, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Ed Soares, Angie Stabile, Mark Susa, Katherine Tennett.

RIPTA: Zachary Agush, James Canty, Steve Fiorentini, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Maribeth Pacillo.

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Team: Anne Galbraith

Call to Order: Chairperson Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

Jean Bousquet made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2023 and November 2, 2023 ATAC meetings. Rui Cabral seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

ATAC Election: Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, described the officer election process. After requesting nominations from the 16 current ATAC members in good standing, current chairperson Heather Schey was the only candidate who came forward. She received 9 votes through Survey Monkey and 1 additional vote by email, giving her a simple majority of votes. Rui Cabral made a formal motion to elect Heather Schey as chair, and Jean Bousquet seconded. Heather Schey was elected for a second term as chairperson.

Joelle did not receive any nominations for vice-chair before the online voting period started, but several names were submitted through the survey. Those nominated individuals will be asked to provide a 200 word personal statement, and if interested, they will be included in a new online vote before the January committee meeting.

Presentation and Discussion: Rhode Island Travel Training Network

Anne Galbraith, ASG Planning, presented ideas for new programs and resources to support travel training in Rhode Island. As part of the consulting team led by Nelson\Nygaard, she announced that RIPTA received an FTA grant to create a statewide travel training network and develop resources to support it. The team has already completed a review of existing conditions and gathered ideas from other regions. A separate working group also met in November and will help to review materials moving forward.

During the discussion, when asked what would be useful to include in new RIPTA materials, ATAC participants mentioned:

- Shorter videos are better (3 minutes or less).
- Closed captioning and/or sign language would be helpful.

- Audio descriptions are crucial (during text only parts of videos).
- They are interested in examples of training materials from other regions.
- Videos could be organized by topic, such as how to read a schedule, buy a Wave card, fill out a Ride application or read a bus header sign.
- The comic book style How to Ride Guide is too busy. Simple step by step guides (with photos) might be better.
- The ADA User Guide has a lot of useful information but can be condensed. Links to the website can help to simplify the content.

Anne elaborated on 3 key areas: group training, a “train the trainer” program for organization leadership to share what they learned with their clients, and the statewide network which would bring organizations together periodically to share information. She recommended organizing a checklist of skills with a corresponding webpage and suggested that the training curriculum could be organized into modules to mix and match for different purposes.

When asked what information would be beneficial to new riders, ATAC participants suggested:

- Information about how people pay for trips (how to get a Wave card and use it, how to set up the app, etc.)
- Wave information specifically for the Ride program.

Anne will meet with RIPTA staff next week and will follow up with ATAC later this winter for specific recommendations about the materials. Joelle agreed to share links to materials and videos with the group by email after the meeting.

RIPTA Project Updates:

- Paratransit expansion pilot: RIPTA staff reviewed responses to a request for qualifications for vendors to supplement the Ride paratransit service for this pilot and will make a recommendation.
- Phase 2 low-income pilot program: Management will shift to partner agencies by February 1, 2024, and partners will collaborate to sustain financial support.
- Ride/Wave integration: Testing should begin in early 2024.

Discussion:

Joelle shared the draft ATAC meeting calendar for 2024.

To follow up on last month’s discussion about whether Ride drivers should beep to announce their arrival, the Ride division clarified [policies](#). Each rider is responsible for being ready at the designated pick up location at the beginning of the ready time window. If a rider does not appear, the driver calls into dispatch, and coordinators attempt to contact them prior to designating them as a no show. The Ride [complaint process](#) is also well defined on the website and in the [ADA Users Guide](#). Riders may also submit comments through an [online form](#).

Meeting participants suggested giving passengers the option to request beeps in the drivers' notes. Others said they would like RIPTA to partner with rideshare companies who use apps to announce when cars are coming.

General Announcements:

Liza Burkin, Providence Streets Coalition, spoke about RIPTA's projected budget gap and described the request from several community groups for an additional \$10 million in the state budget. She encouraged ATAC members to get involved in this campaign by contacting her:

liza@ourstreetspvd.org.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.