



November 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes for the Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council

The Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council) meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM in the RIPTA board room, 705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, and online through Microsoft Teams. An attendance sheet is attached to these minutes.

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA planner, began by announcing the Coordinating Council's vision: accessible, coordinated statewide mobility for all Rhode Islanders.

Mario Olivieri motioned to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 Coordinating Council meeting. Lorna Oinonen seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Director Kasim Yarn, Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services (RIVETS), presented an overview of the five-year Rhode Island Veterans Services Strategic Plan which takes a critical look at services, gives partners an opportunity to provide feedback, and applies lessons from past experience to improve service delivery. He described RIVETS' role as a resource hub, managing the Unite Us platform to engage veterans, identify their needs, connect them with services, and strengthen partnerships to support them. Since transportation is one of the top service requests (along with benefits navigation and income support), RIVETS funds monthly bus passes for some clients and assists others with completing applications for RIPTA's senior/disabled program. RIVETS expects these requests to grow.

James Rajotte, Director of Strategy and Innovation for the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health & Human Services, then presented on the state's Olmstead planning process. This is a whole-of-government approach to complying with a Supreme Court case that views segregation of people with disabilities as discrimination. It aims to move people with disabilities from restrictive settings to more inclusive environments with the appropriate level of care, preventing unnecessary institutionalization. Community engagement has been a top priority, and the core planning team has developed a website, sent out surveys, and organized community listening sessions. James outlined four overarching planning themes—social determinants of health, health and human services quality, foundational systems management, and community capacity and support—and described the key partners engaged in the Olmstead Advisory Group and planning work groups.



James led a discussion, asking for feedback on what was working well and what needed improvement. Participants mentioned concerns about veterans getting access to jobs, housing, and other services; support for people with disabilities in emergency situations; and the need for universal design in rental housing. A draft Olmstead Plan will be ready for review in February 2025.

Agency project updates followed. Mario Olivieri described EOHHS' work to ensure that the state's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) program provides trips correctly and on time.

Joelle Kanter also shared information about a few RIPTA programs:

- The Ride Anywhere paratransit pilot program launched in January, allowing Ride paratransit customers to request trips anywhere in the state. RIPTA will compile data and submit a report to the General Assembly next spring, comparing actual trip demand with earlier forecasts and recommending alternatives.
- RIPTA's low-income pilot program continues, offering discounted fare products to organizations that support clients facing housing insecurity and homelessness.
- RIPTA is working on a grant funded travel training program, drafting new materials for organizations that support older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income groups.
- RIPTA launched the Flex on Demand microtransit pilot program in the 203 Flex zone (Narragansett/South Kingstown), allowing passengers to request rides directly using a smartphone app.

Tina Guenette then announced the launch of her organization's new website, rampapproved.com, that promotes accessible business locations and advocates for inclusion.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council
November 18, 2024 Attendance List (in person and Teams)**

Name	Organization
Benny Bergantino	RI Division of Statewide Planning
Steven Boudreau	RI Office of Healthy Aging
Daniel Brogan	Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
Anita Chase	RI Department of Human Services
Jacques Dextrateur	RI Office of Veterans Services
Laurie Diorio	RI Office of Rehabilitation Services
Robin Gannon	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Ishaa Gatkari	RI Department of Health
Tina Guenette	RAMP
Peter Joly	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Joelle Kanter	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Maureen Maigret	RI Senior Agenda Coalition
Amethys Nieves	RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals
Lorna Oinonen	AARP RI
Mario Olivieri	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services
James Rajotte	RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Holly Snyder	AARP RI
Kasim Yarn	RI Office of Veterans Services