

RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 1, 2025
MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: Chairperson Heather Schey, Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Chris Bove, Myles Brawn-Husband, Rui Cabral, Justin Cartright, Kerry Clark, Vincent DeJesus, Rachel Ferreira, Deanne Gagne, Casey Gartland, Zachary Gauthier, Dylan Giles, Barbara Henry, Mona Hussein, Melanie Lawhead, Raymond Lemerick, Nick Lett, Olivia Lozier, Crystal Martin, Jeff Mello, Janice Musco, Brian Rice, Christie Seymour, Angelina Stabile, Mark Susa, Paula Vinacco.

RIPTA: Zachary Agush, Brooks Almonte, Steve Fiorentini, Paul Harrington, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Jamie Pereira, Joseph Solomon.

Presenters: Adam Jensen, Reveal Transit; Bill Schwartz, Nelson\Nygaard; Brian Siegel, Foursquare ITP.

Call to Order: Chairperson Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:10 PM.

Myles Brawn-Husband made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 3, 2025 meeting. Jeff Mello seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Ride Anywhere pilot study: draft report review: Bill Schwartz, Nelson\Nygaard, presented on the draft report that had been emailed to the committee that afternoon. His team's scope of work involved collecting data on the statewide paratransit pilot program, analyzing survey results, and gathering feedback through focus groups and interviews. He described program utilization, outlined costs, and shared best practices for consideration going forward.

ATAC participants then shared feedback on the report. Suggestions included reformatting charts and referencing that some Ride Anywhere trips would have happened through Ride service, with customers transferring to another mode to get to destinations outside the ADA service area.

One rider asked about the suggestion to switch to in-person Ride eligibility. Bill explained that functional assessments ensure that paratransit eligibility is for the people who really need to use the service. He added that most transit agencies do this now, resulting in a better process and an improved understanding of customer needs. These systems are not meant to be onerous, and they have formal appeal processes. For customers with permanent disabilities, some agencies also grant continuous eligibility. To remove an administrative burden, trips to/from RIPTA office for these assessments would be free.

Another rider expressed concern about the potential for negotiating trip times. Bill said that an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provision allows transit agencies to negotiate trips within an hour

of requested times, but they must be practical, and they typically fall within a shorter range. Any program changes would be vetted carefully before being implemented, and he would only recommend negotiating trips when agencies have capacity limits.

To follow up, RIPTA staff will share relevant information from the FTA circular about these policies. ATAC members were also encouraged to submit comments to RIPTA on the report by May 7th.

RIPTA operational efficiency study: Brian Siegel, a transportation planner at Foursquare ITP, presented on the efficiency study led by WSP at the direction of the Governor and General Assembly. It will give RIPTA insight into changing travel patterns and strengthen strategies from past planning efforts. The work involves analyzing route data, looking at RIPTA's economic impact and environmental benefits, and benchmarking against peer systems to identify opportunities for improvement. In addition to this quantitative analysis, the team is scheduling hybrid stakeholder meetings around different service types this month. Recommendations will be outlined in a report to be released in mid-June.

RIPTA updates:

- RIPTA/Ride key performance indicators: Systemwide ridership for the past 12 months was 9.5 million, which was a 2% decrease from the prior year. This included 9.2 million fixed-route trips; 224,500 Ride paratransit trips; and 48,100 Flex trips. Fixed-route on-time performance was 79.1% in January, 79.6% in February, and 78.9% in March 2025.
- RIPTA Ride—MTM Go app update: Adam Jensen, Reveal Transit, announced that the most recent Ride app updates had been completed. They involved color changes, push notifications, and the removal of a 'will call' option. Starting on Tuesday, taxi company names should also appear in the app. Adam described the functionality, explaining that ADA is the only trip purpose option, and the list of mobility types was reduced. Trip requests made through the app will be considered pending until Ride CSAs approve them and send out push notifications.

Android has approved the app name change to RIPTA Ride—MTM Go, and Apple should give approval within the next few days. Ride will send customers an announcement when the app is published.

Adam answered questions from riders about selecting wheelchair type from a dropdown menu. He also explained how common locations were pre-populated. When customers start typing the name, it should appear. If a location is not on the list, they should call Ride to request it.

Adam will continue working with the Ride team to get feedback, and they'll prioritize requests for updates through sprint cycles. There will be an opportunity for discussion about the app at the next ATAC meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 PM.