



## **July 14, 2025 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 2:02 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, announced the Coordinating Council's vision: accessible, coordinated statewide mobility for all Rhode Islanders. She then presented minutes from the May 12, 2025 meeting for the council's review.

Joelle announced the launch of the statewide travel training network. This federally-funded project aims to encourage older adults and people with disabilities to use public transportation independently and with confidence. Network partners gathered at the Cranston Central Library on June 24<sup>th</sup> to review training modules and watch videos on planning a trip, paying for a trip, and riding the bus. Over the next few weeks, RIPTA will continue refining the training materials, reaching out to new partners, and distributing print guides for riders.

The group shared feedback, suggesting minor content changes, accessible formats for screen readers, and options for translating materials. RIPTA plans to make the materials available to network partners online.

Agency updates followed:

- David Schultz, RI Senate Fiscal Office, reported on the state budget allocation of additional gas tax funding and highway maintenance funding through vehicle registration fees to support RIPTA.
- Mario Olivieri, RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services, reported on the agency's contract with MTM for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation, the Elderly Transportation Program, and RI Works transportation. MTM's base contract expires in a year with four one-year options to continue. Mario said that the number of unique riders has decreased, and he can follow up with specific numbers.
- Anita Chase, RI Department of Human Services, shared that RI Works clients can get daily reimbursements loaded onto their EBT cards for attending activities and using their own transportation.
- Darlene Reza Rossi announced that AARP RI is planning Walktober, a series of coordinated walking events in partnership with America Walks.



Sarah Ingle, RIPTA, then gave an update on the agency's budget situation. Even though RIPTA secured an additional \$15 million through a gas tax increase, the agency is still carrying a \$17 million deficit. An efficiency study should identify opportunities to bring in some additional revenue, but to balance the budget, RIPTA is proposing service cuts. Up to 20 routes may be eliminated, and up to 30 routes may have reduced spans or eliminated segments. RIPTA has announced a series of public hearings and will conduct a neighborhood impact analysis and Title VI analysis on the impacted routes.

Other announcements:

- The RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities is hosting its virtual public forum on July 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The Accessibility is Beautiful event is scheduled on Saturday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at the Steel Yard.
- AARP RI is celebrating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Social Security on August 14<sup>th</sup> with two special events.

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 PM.



**Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council**  
**July 14, 2025 Attendance List (in person and Teams)**

| <b>Name</b>        | <b>Organization</b>                                                           |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Benny Bergantino   | RI Division of Statewide Planning                                             |
| Lindsay Bush       | Southern RI Volunteers                                                        |
| Anita Chase        | RI Department of Human Services                                               |
| Jacques Dextrateur | RI Office of Veterans Services                                                |
| Laurie DiOrio      | RI Department of Human Services                                               |
| Tina Guenette      | RAMP                                                                          |
| Sarah Ingle        | Rhode Island Public Transit Authority                                         |
| Peter Joly         | RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals |
| Joelle Kanter      | Rhode Island Public Transit Authority                                         |
| Gabriella Laurenzo | The Village Common of RI                                                      |
| Anne LeClerc       | RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals |
| Maureen Maigret    | Senior Agenda Coalition of RI                                                 |
| Amethys Nieves     | RI Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals |
| Lorna Oinonen      | AARP RI volunteer                                                             |
| Mario Olivieri     | RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services                              |
| Darlene Reza Rossi | AARP RI                                                                       |
| Donna Rook         | RI Department of Human Services                                               |
| Mark Schieldrop    | AAA Northeast                                                                 |
| David Schultz      | Senate Fiscal Office                                                          |
| Holly Snyder       | AARP RI volunteer                                                             |