

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RIPTA Transportation Conference Room
705 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island 02907
Thursday, January 24, 2019

Attendees: Benny Bergantino, Rui Cabral (Chair), John Carvalho, Vincent DeJesus, Monica Dzialo, John Gaffney, Janice Musco, Heidi Showstead, Angie Stabile, Lisa Stamp and Mark Sousa.

RIPTA Staff in attendance: Mark Therrien, Jim Vincent, Greg Nordin, and Joelle Kanter.

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Rui Cabral called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM. Angie Stabile made a motion to approve the December 6, 2018 meeting minutes, which was seconded by John Carvalho. All were in favor.

II. RIPTA Reports

- **Stop Announcement Compliance:** Jim Vincent, RIPTA's Compliance Officer shared data on automatic stop announcements. Of the 86 trips that were monitored in December, the system worked 84 times, and one driver made half of the announcements on their own.
- **Staff Introduction:** Greg Nordin, RIPTA's Director of Planning, introduced two new staff members: Joelle Kanter, a human services transportation planner who started in December, and Matt Biskey, a service planner who joined in January. Joelle is working as part of the long range planning team, and Matt is focusing on day-to-day operations for both fixed route and non-fixed route services. Joelle will continue to staff the ATAC meetings, and the planning department will have a strong presence on the committee.
- **2019 ATAC Meeting Schedule:** Due to a conflict with monthly state Transportation Advisory Committee meetings, Greg Nordin suggested moving the ATAC meetings to the first Thursday of each month. Once the room availability is confirmed, staff will amend the schedule, email it to the committee, and post it on the Secretary of State's website. Ride customer service agents will also be informed about the change. The February meeting will be cancelled, and the next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7th at 4 PM.
- **Transit Forward RI:** Greg reported on three public meetings held in

December in Woonsocket, Providence, and Newport on the transit master plan. He encouraged everyone to visit the website, transitforwardri.com, to view documents and share feedback.

- **Ride Operator Uniforms:** Mark Therrien announced that RIPTA and Ride uniforms will soon have reflective tape to help drivers stand out in the dark, improving overall safety.
- **Wheelchair Lift Failures:** Last month, RIPTA reported two wheelchair lift failures. However, Mark noted that other issues might be more critical for future discussions. The group expressed interest in looking at other metrics to evaluate service, so RIPTA staff will compile a list of categories for the committee to consider at the March meeting. In April, staff will share the requested statistics.

III. Advocacy Efforts

Heidi Showstead led a discussion about ways for Ride and RIPTA customers to make their voices heard on important issues. To encourage more people to get involved, she suggested:

- Learning from local grassroots groups that also focus on transportation issues such as the RIPTA Riders Alliance.
- Training new Ride clients about the rules of the system.
- Understanding how Ride operates.
- Getting more direction from RIPTA and Ride on advocacy and outreach.

Other ideas from the committee included:

- Increasing representation from fixed route riders on the ATAC.
- Creating ATAC marketing materials to share with riders who might be interested in participating.
- Outreach to people with all types of disabilities.

Although the ATAC is specifically an advisory committee for RIPTA, established according to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations, the committee considered inviting a representative from the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health & Human Services (EOHHS) non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) broker, MTM, to attend meetings.

Mark Therrien, RIPTA's executive director of paratransit services, offered to invite staff from RIPTA's marketing department to the March meeting. To increase the diversity of the committee, he recommended inviting members of other advocacy groups as well.

The focus of the discussion shifted to ride sharing through transit network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, which are not required to be accessible.

However, when available, customers may be able to select accessible vans.

Staff described several upcoming advocacy opportunities:

- ATAC members can participate in National Transit Institute (NTI) training on Managing Community Mobility on April 10-11 in Providence. Several members expressed interest in attending.
- RIPTA will cover Ride fare for members who want to participate in the monthly OSCIL lunch & learn series.
- Staff will inform the ATAC about house finance committee meetings related to funding the bus pass program.

Other announcements:

- RIPTA feedback related to the scheduling app or interactive voice response (IVR) system should be directed to Chris McKenna.
- RIPTA is currently not operating service for the EOHHS NEMT broker, MTM, but MTM does buy passes for specific customers. The brokerage system is expected to improve within the next few weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM before the new vehicle tour.