RIPTA LAUNCHES COMPREHENSIVE FARE STUDY

First Round of Community Meetings Scheduled for April 14th

Providence, Rhode Island, March 31, 2015 – The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) is embarking on a transit fare study that will review all fare products it offers as well as the rates that are charged. One of the main goals of the study – which is expected to take about four months – is to determine if RIPTA is offering the types of fare products (such as all-day passes, or 15-ride passes) that best meet passengers' needs.

The RIPTA Board of Directors awarded the contract for the study to LTK Engineering Services of Ambler, Pennsylvania in the amount of approximately $170,500 at its February Board Meeting."This really will be an in-depth look into how passengers use fares in our system today," said Amy Pettine, Executive Director of Planning at RIPTA. "We're going to be looking at what types of fare products and sales locations might make it easier for people to use RIPTA. And we're also going to be looking at overall issues such as whether we should continue to be 'one state, one rate' as well as how we can use fares to create easier connections to commuter rail."

" This study is also going to give us chance to look at what we may want to offer in the future to take advantage of the latest fare technology like mobile payments and hopefully attract some new riders to our system," she said.

By working with the consultants, RIPTA will be able to delve into details of its fare structure and explore alternatives such as fares based on distances traveled or the duration of trips. RIPTA currently charges a flat rate of $2.00 per trip and .50 cents for transfers. This statewide rate has been in effect

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since 2010 when it was raised from $1.75. This new study marks the first time that RIPTA has hired a professional consulting firm for an in-depth review of its fare structure and the products it offers passengers.

Working with RIPTA's Planning Department, LTK Engineering is expected to submit recommendations to the Board of Directors in early July. If the Board decides to consider a change in RIPTA's fare structure or policies, it will follow up with a public review process that will include public hearings. Pettine stressed, however, that RIPTA will be soliciting public input throughout the process and will not wait until the recommendation phase to enlist comments from riders. "There will be a lot of public input before a recommendation is even made to the Board," Pettine said. "One of the most important tasks in this effort is to ensure equity and to make sure any changes to our fares do not place undue burden on any one particular sector of riders."

Beginning this month, RIPTA and LTK will start meeting with representative groups of passengers and will also launch the first round of informal sessions intended to solicit feedback from the general public. The first two community meetings will be held in Providence and are scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2015 in the auditorium of the Providence Foundation, 30 Exchange Terrace, Providence. There will be an early session from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and evening session from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

In addition to speaking with passengers, the fare study research will include interviews with drivers and other front-line employees as well as analyzing farebox data and reviewing "best practices" in the transit industry.

LTK is one of the oldest and largest rail consulting firms in the country and provides services in a variety of areas including systems engineering, operations analyses, and fare system studies. The firm has done work for Amtrak, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and the Florida Department of Transportation.

Passengers are advised to check www.RIPTA.com and RIPTA's social media outlets ((Facebook @RideRIPTA, Twitter @RIPTA_RI) for information on the study.

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