

RI ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Thursday, November 6, 2025
MEETING MINUTES**

In attendance: Chairperson Heather Schey, Benny Bergantino, Christopher Bove, Myles Brawn-Husband, Rui Cabral, Justin Cartright, Kerry Clark, Vincent DeJesus, Laurie Diorio, Casey Gartland, Barbara Henry, Mona Hussein, Megan Johnston, Melanie Lawhead, Raymond Lemerick, Diane Lesuer, Olivia Lozier, Bob Marshall, Crystal Martin, Jeff Mello, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Christie Seymour, Jenaya Smith, Angelina Stabile, Mark Susa, Paula Vinacco.

RIPTA: Zachary Agush, Nick Dwyer, Armando Ferreira, Steve Fiorentini, Paul Harrington, Sarah Ingle, Joelle Kanter, Jamie Pereira.

Call to Order: Chairperson Heather Schey called the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) meeting to order at 4:09 PM. Joelle Kanter then presented hybrid meeting guidelines.

Myles Brawn-Husband made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 4, 2025 meeting. Jeff Mello seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Minutes were approved.

Preparation for ATAC Officer Election:

Joelle Kanter, RIPTA, read the names of current ATAC members. These individuals have participated in at least five of the past twelve meetings and are eligible to vote for officers and run for election. Members are: Benny Bergantino, Jean Bousquet, Christopher Bove, Myles Brawn-Husband, Rui Cabral, Justin Cartright, Kerry Clark, Vincent DeJesus, Rachel Ferreira, Deanne Gagne, Zachary Gauthier, Dylan Giles, Barbara Henry, Mona Hussein, Melanie Lawhead, Diane LeSuer, Raymond Lemerick, Nick Lett, Olivia Lozier, Crystal Martin, Jeff Mello, Richard Moreau, Janice Musco, Grace Pires, Brian Rice, Heather Schey, Christie Seymour, Jenaya Smith, Angelina Stabile, Mark Susa, and Paula Vinacco.

Joelle then read the chairperson and vice-chairperson position descriptions and outlined the election process. The next step is to request nominations for both positions by Tuesday, November 18th. Members will then be able to vote online through Wednesday, December 3rd. Following the announcement of election results at the next ATAC meeting on December 4th, members will vote in the new officers. Two-year terms will begin in January 2026.

Presentation: Nick Dwyer, RIPTA Manager of Fare System Administration:

Nick Dwyer then introduced himself as RIPTA's manager of fare system administration. Since starting this role over the summer, he has been learning about how the fare system works, addressing public-facing issues, and coordinating with RIPTA's vendor (Init) to improve the back end of the Wave account-based fare system for RIPTA staff.

A discussion followed.

- One rider who uses a wheelchair said that Wave photo ID cards are easy to tap when boarding.
- Another rider mentioned issues when trying to load funds onto a Wave card.
- A RIdE paratransit customer believes that even with fare capping, the RIdE program should have fare products that correspond to products in the fixed-route system. For example, he said that the Wave to Work program allows employers to purchase pre-tax monthly passes for fixed-route riders, but it doesn't offer the same benefit for employees who use RIdE. Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) staff confirmed that they provide some clients with paper RIdE tickets but not Wave fare products. Joelle pointed out that organizations may support RIdE customers by adding fare value to their Wave cards.
- Several RIdE customers complained about long wait times when calling RIdE to add value to their Wave accounts when requesting a trip. They also described having trouble during trips when they wanted to switch their form of payment (from Wave to a RIdE ticket). They asked for more information about this policy, noting that fixed route customers don't have to indicate their form of payment before their trips. Armando Ferreira explained that since RIdE vans don't have Wave validators, customers must choose their form of payment when they schedule their trips. This should change once the validators are in place. Jamie Pereira said he recognizes that this is a priority for the group, and he will discuss the policy with the RIdE division.
- Other riders were interested in updates on fare validators on RIdE vans. RIPTA will follow up when information is available.

RIPTA updates

- Key performance indicators: Joelle reported on RIPTA's average monthly ridership in 2025. As of September 2025, average systemwide monthly ridership was 1.17 million including 1.14 million fixed route bus trips; 5,900 Flex trips; and 27,500 RIdE paratransit trips. Fixed route on-time performance was 78.1% in July, 77.2% in August, and 73.9% in September.
- Project updates:
 - RIPTA RIdE-MTM Go app: According to Armando, RIdE identified an issue with Google Maps on drivers' tablets that affected the RIdE app's vehicle tracking feature. RIPTA's IT department is now working on updates for each tablet.
 - Real-time signage in Kennedy Plaza: Zachary Agush announced that RIPTA has installed five real-time screens at high ridership stops. Over the next few weeks, the rest of the shelters in Kennedy Plaza will have new signage including text to speech buttons. These buttons will be upgraded in the Newport Transportation Center as well.

A participant noted that sign poles in Kennedy Plaza used to have Braille signage, but that is no longer the case. He said the push to talk buttons provide limited information. Zach will follow up with RIPTA's communication and service planning teams about this.

- ADA User Guide: Joelle reported that RIPTA will finalize edits to the ADA User Guide soon, incorporating feedback from ATAC reviewers.

- Travel training: RIPTA continues to talk to senior centers and other partner organizations about how to utilize the new travel training materials including videos, pocket guides, and training modules.

Feedback

- Phone hold times:
 - A Ride paratransit customer mentioned being on hold for an hour on the Where's my Ride line. She asked whether Ride could set up another phone number for those calls.
 - Another customer commented that wait times had gotten significantly better recently.
 - A customer said this issue was raised at the recent NFB Convention, and they proposed a few solutions. He suggested that calls to the Where's My Ride line could go to dispatch all the time, or RIPTA could set up a separate number for this service. He also recommended using the iPhone Hold Assist feature to get notifications when calls resume.
- Late Ride trips:
 - A customer said she was recently charged \$50 for missing a medical appointment when her Ride van picked her up late. She had scheduled the trip to arrive an hour early and was frustrated that she didn't get a call from Ride to notify her about the delay.
 - Another customer said that Ride picked him up from work more than 45 minutes late five times in October. Another meeting participant suggested that fixed route customers also have to plan extra time for their trips, especially during rush hour.
 - Another customer said she shouldn't have to schedule trips to arrive an hour in advance. She would appreciate a call when her van is running late to give her the option of making plans to get another ride. To follow up, another rider asked about the Ride staff resources needed to make those calls.
 - To avoid the need for these calls, everyone agreed about the importance of fixing the Ride app to allow customers to track their trips in real time.
- Other issues:
 - Participants discussed whether there would be any benefits to regionalizing Ride service. This might require transfers between vans which would potentially slow trips down.
 - Members discussed plans for the upcoming officer election. Joelle confirmed that someone who runs for chair may also run for vice-chair.
 - A customer who has a visual impairment said that Ride drivers sometimes don't read their manifests and assume she is going to In-Sight when she is actually on her way to work. Another customer agreed that drivers haven't been reading their notes, and they've ignored her specific directions for getting picked up at school.
 - A customer recommended changing RIPTA's late cancellation policy when vans are running more than 20 minutes late. For example, he recently cancelled a trip to the train station since he would have missed his train. Ride gave him a late cancellation warning.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.