

**Barrington**  
**Wednesday, September 8, 2004**  
**12:00 pm - 2:00 pm**

On Wednesday, September 8, 2004 at Noon, at the Barrington Public Library - Auditorium, twenty-one (23) members of the public attended, including one (1) public official. Thirteen (13) made oral comments, and two (2) gave written comments.

Alfred Moscola opened the meeting at 12:00p.

Oral Comments were provided as follows:

**Representative Susan Story** expressed her concern about the reductions in the Ride service.

**Paula Bradley**, representing Congressman Kennedy's office, said she is concerned about the Ride program and for Route 9. Many people depend on the Ride program.

**Richard Gaffney** (his testimony was read by Doug Wood) is President for the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island. He said people need service to get to work. If not, they will need government assistance, which will become a tax burden on the citizens. If he has no bus service, he would be forced to move and find a new doctor.

**Barry Humphries** is a blind diabetic and a user of the paratransit program for 95% of his travel. He said he is concerned for the disabled, seniors and the working poor. He suggested using smaller buses on low ridership routes. If cuts are necessary, hold them to a minimum.

**Angelina Teixeira** said she is concerned about ADA cuts. She is looking for employment and her search would be very limited if the cuts are implemented.

**Mary Jane Fry** said she is a user of the Ride program for doctor visits and she has no other means of transportation. A lot of elderly use RIPTA for shopping.

**John Carvalho**, a member of the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island, lives in North Providence and said if service to Route 52 is cut, he and many of his neighbors will be affected. They use the ADA service for doctor visits and other errands. He asked that RIPTA keep cuts to a minimum.

**Tom Padwa** said he uses Route 60 even though he has a car. With respect to evening service cuts, he said that during Waterfire and other events there is very limited parking and the buses are overflowing. Even without Waterfire Route 60 is full on Saturday evenings. He urged RIPTA not to do blanket cuts.

**Joy Dennis** said she is a disabled senior from West Barrington and uses ADA service for medical appointments, and computer training in Warwick. She can still maintain independence with the bus service. Cuts would also affect the volunteer (transportation) system. Services should be streamlined and cuts should be limited. She suggested

using big buses during peak hours and small buses at other times, and to cut weekend service.

**Tom Cute**, representing the Amalgamated Transit Union 618 for RIPTA, provided a history of Rhode Island transit and RIPTA. He hopes RIPTA stays a statewide system. He noted how all transit bond referendums have been approved by Rhode Island voters, evidence of Rhode Islanders' support of transit. He said we need to create a transportation trust fund, and that Rhode Island is one of very few states that do not have one. He urged everyone to call their state and local representatives, mayors, councilpersons and the Governor.

**Gracie Grout** said that if paratransit service is cut then her independence would be threatened. Her blind friends would lose their voice in shaping their future. Her trips to the Barrington YMCA for exercise would stop, as would her midweek church meetings. She would be okay with weekend cuts if weekday service is maintained.

**Naomi Hersfeld** said she has been a RIPTA rider for 25 years and cannot afford to drive and park downtown. She questioned expenditures on highway projects. She said Rhode Island is funding people to drive individual cars, not supporting mass transit. When there is limited service people stop thinking of the bus as an option.

With no more comment from the public, the meeting adjourned at 1:05p.

**Sheila Dobbyn**, representing the East Bay Mental Health Center, provided comments at 1:40p. She said cuts to Route 32 would affect all of her clients. Some people rely on the route for work and it may be hard for them to find other jobs. She also knows someone who works in Pawtucket that will be affected by the cuts. People without cars will be left without options. Trying to find a job within walking distance is a huge obstacle.

Written Comments were provided as follows:

**Joy Dennis** submitted an email sent to the Providence Journal, which outlines four reasons why she feels RIde and RIPTA service cuts should not be implemented.

**Richard Gaffney** submitted a written copy of his oral testimony, which discusses the importance of ADA service and how customers will be impacted by the reduction of fixed route service.

RIPTA staff in attendance included:

Al Moscola, Mark Therrien, Deb Dawson, Jim Dean, Doug Wood, James Daley, Nicole Langlois, Greg Harris, Erminio Conte, Shawn Whalen and Brooks Almonte.

**Barrington**  
**Wednesday, September 8, 2004**  
**6 pm - 8 pm**

On Wednesday, September 8, 2004 at 6 pm, at the Barrington Public Library - Auditorium, twenty-five (25) members of the public attended, including one (1) public official. Nineteen (19) made oral comments, and four (4) gave written comments.

Alfred Moscola opened the meeting at 6:00p.

Oral Comments were provided as follows:

**Senator David Bates** suggested that tiered rates be considered. He hopes the budget can be worked out to maintain current service.

**Megan Reynolds**, 15 years old with Down syndrome, said she is worried about changes to the RIPTA system. She said she learned how to ride the bus two years ago so she could get to school, to the hospital, to visit family, and to other places where she volunteers and goes to camp. She said she likes the bus and is proud to have independence. She will never drive and hopes to be able to use the bus to attend college and get a good job.

**Renee Doran**, Megan's mother, said it is important for the disabled to have their independence. Removal of service reduces opportunity. Jefferson Boulevard has a lot of employment opportunities. Her daughter needs the bus service to become a productive member of society. She also expressed concern about service cuts to Wallum Lake.

**Ken Perlow** said he uses RIPTA to go to work. He bought a house partly because it was on the bus line. He suggested using smaller buses to reduce cost and satisfy riders.

**Lynn Coughlin** said she has a license but can only drive short distances due to her medical condition. RIPTA should first look at where expenses can be reduced. She noted the new supervisor vans and said she can never find a supervisor at Kennedy Plaza. Many people use transit because they can't afford to buy, operate, and maintain a private vehicle. Service should be reduced where the lines are not used.

**Beth Tengwall** rides Route 33 and has used RIPTA service for 20 years as her only means of transportation and she depends on the service. She said she has seen many cuts, which makes it more and more difficult for her to reach her destinations. She would be willing to pay more.

**Patrick Tengwall** used RIPTA for 25 years. He said he wishes he could depend on transit to save wear and tear on his vehicle and help the environment. As a spouse of a disabled person they need alternatives. They bought their house based on proximity to the bus route and he looks for jobs based on the ability to go to work by transit. He said he is one accident away from being dependent on public transportation, and so are we all. He said RIPTA is needed for people's lifeline, for economic development, and for the renaissance of Providence and the rest of Rhode Island.

**Mark Laroche** said he bought a home on Willett Avenue because of the bus route 32, which he uses to get to his small business in Providence. He said RIPTA needs to make the case to the state that transit service is needed. He would be willing to pay more.

**John Roberts** said he needs the bus system to find and get to work. He said RIPTA should consider cutting staff and salaries. The smaller routes are as important as the larger ones. Not all supervisors are helpful; are they all needed?

**Ken Bryant** said his first concern is RIPTA's mission – which should include all towns in Rhode Island. RIPTA could be one of the foremost transit agencies in the country in terms of service and ridership. RIPTA should be proactive and look for more riders.

**Renee Doran** suggested reducing the number of people dependent on the Ride program; they should use the fixed route system to reduce cost.

**Harriet Downy** said she bought a house on Route 32 and her husband depends on the bus. RIPTA should be supported by the state. It would be a two-mile walk to get to another bus line.

**Bob Coffey** submitted a letter that was read by RIPTA staff. The letter stated that he represents the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee and they are concerned about transit for the disabled. The elderly and disabled rely on transit for medical appointments, shopping, school and work. Many would be homebound without the service. RIPTA needs to maximize the number of riders on Ride vans; better scheduling is needed. The state needs to finance RIPTA.

**Frederick Rounds** said it is important for Rhode Island to have a statewide system for economic and tourism reasons. Government subsidy should be a priority to meet expenses.

**Loise Rounds** asked how RIPTA fares compare to other states.

**Al Moscola** said RIPTA fares are not considered high, they are about middle. He said that RIPTA needs to continue to look at efficiencies and to find a dedicated revenue stream. He noted that ADA costs are rising and that RIPTA is looking into whether some of those riders can use regular service.

**Sandra Wiegert** asked about the success of park and ride.

**Mark Therrien** said that RIPTA serves 24 lots, some do well and some don't. He said the RIPTA Board wants more park and ride lots.

**Linnea Cedergren** questioned the route rating. She suggested diverting Route 33 down Willett Avenue if Route 32 is cut.

**Mark Therrien** explained how the ratings were calculated.

**Mary Vanellie** suggested RIPTA use smaller buses.

**Al Moscola** explained that with the use of small buses RIPTA would have two bus fleets. Small vehicles last only half as long.

**Ann Connor** said she is appalled that service cuts are being considered. She uses the bus for many trip purposes. She said the gas tax should be raised to fund transit. People in Rhode Island need a good mass transit system. The trolleys are wonderful.

With no more comment from the public, the meeting adjourned at 8:00p

Written Comments were provided as follows:

**Joanne Pezzullo** wrote that cutting Route 32 would greatly impact her life. She also wrote that service reductions will hurt the handicapped and cost savings measures, like cutting administrative costs, should be reviewed.

**Laurie Miskimins** submitted testimony opposing the elimination of weekend and holiday service because of its potentially harmful effect on underemployed people.

**Kenneth Perlow** submitted testimony in opposition to cutting Rout 32. He suggests that using smaller buses might work on lower use runs.

**Bob Coffey** submitted testimony that was read into the record. (See oral comment section.)

RIPTA staff in attendance included:

Al Moscola, Mark Therrien, Deb Dawson, Jim Dean, Doug Wood, James Daley, Nicole Langlois, Greg Harris, Shawn Whalen and Brooks Almonte.