

RHODE ISLAND STREET CAR PLAN DITCHED FOR HIGH FREQUENCY BUSES

Ten years ago, a plan to reinstate a downtown streetcar was initiated for Rhode Island’s capital, Providence. While this plan was initialized in an effort to resurrect the streetcar era, a high price tag and a heavy dependence on federal funds kept this project from initializing as originally conceived.

In an effort to reverse declining ridership, and to improve mass transportation in Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Transit Authority (RIPTA) enacted a shift in the plan developed ten years prior, opting for a more cost effective and simpler solution; a high frequency downtown bus corridor.

The \$17-million corridor (in contrast to the \$100.2-million streetcar price-tag) is funded in large part by a \$13-million federal grant and channels seven existing RIPTA bus lines into a 1.4-mile route featuring new bus hubs on either end of the corridor.

The hub on the southern end of the corridor is near a cluster of hospitals, while the northern hub is a new inter-modal terminal constructed next to Providence Station that may eventually include new apartments, commercial, and office spaces.

Providence Station is an Amtrak station located next to the Rhode Island State House as well as a cluster of commercial developments.

What this new system means for riders is a higher frequency service through the downtown corridor. Riders using the system wouldn’t have to wait for more than five minutes for a bus. Similar to a subway system, but with much lower implementation costs, this high frequency system allows riders to get where they want to go along this corridor without having to time their schedules around the bus schedule. RIPTA also plans to invest in the six stops along the corridor, turning them into “high-visibility stations,” using

branding, custom shelters, ticket machines, bike share stations, and count-down clocks. A portion of the \$13-million federal grant (\$400,000) is being used to finance and implement the bike share system as a solution to augment the new high frequency corridor and as part of the implementation of Rhode Island’s Complete Streets action plan.

The high frequency corridor is planned through a much more direct route than the original streetcar line, provides more frequent service, and incurs much lower initial implementation costs, though still includes costs to replace buses over time.



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NOTES FROM THE TOP

BY MICHELLE HORNE

It's a New Year and already a very busy one. The Public Transit Staff is preparing for our upcoming State Management Review in May. FTA provided a training workshop in February for the DOTD Staff to prepare for the review. Program Managers have reviewed FY 2019 applications and award letters have been mailed. Operating contracts were mailed out mid-March and a quick turn-around is needed to ensure contracts are executed by June 30th. Agencies approved for capital assistance should receive contracts late April. These vehicles are expected between March and June 2019.

Speaking of vehicles, we were rolling vehicles in and out this past quarter! 72 vehicles were delivered between January and March. We anticipate the remaining 99 vehicles to be delivered between April and June. These deliveries will complete the FY 2018 order and all back log vehicles. **Special thanks to my staff who worked late some evenings to get these vehicles inspected, paid, and issued quickly to the agencies!**



Pictured: Tina Athalone, E&D Capital Program Manager, receiving FY18 vehicles.

During the week of May 14, the DOTD Public Transit Section is scheduled for an FTA State Management Review. The review will assess state management practices and program implementation of the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310), Rural Public Transportation Program (5311), Job Access and Reverse

Commuter Program (5316), New Freedom Program (5317), MPO Planning Program (5303 & 5304), and Bus & Bus Facilities Program (5339) to ensure that the programs are administrated in accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements and are meeting program objectives. These reviews are performed every 3 years or as circumstances warrant. The review will consist of a desk review, a site visit to DOTD, and site visits to DOTD's sub-recipients. Be prepared, we could be coming to your Transit Agency.

As we get closer to hurricane season, please ensure your contact information is updated in STARS as well as the Louisiana Transit Providers Guide on our website. If you need a username/password, please contact your Program Manager for assistance.

The Annual Director's Meetings are tentatively scheduled for July in Baton Rouge and Natchitoches. More information will be sent to the Executive Directors in the upcoming weeks. The Public Transportation Conference is tentatively scheduled for November 2018 in New Orleans. If you have any topics you would like to see on the conference agenda, please contact Keycha Alexander-Green, RTAP Program Manager. More information will be posted on our website soon.

Finally, I encourage you to send topics or articles for future newsletter editions to Keycha. We would love to hear your innovative ideas, techniques, and uplifting stories about your system. We want the transit newsletter to be an informative publication that addresses issues of interest to you and others. Thanks for your continued support of public transit and we look forward to seeing you soon!



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ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

To participate in the DOTD Trainings listed below, email

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TRB EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.trb.org

JUNE 18-20

Sixth National Bus Rapid Transit Conference..... Los Angeles, CA

DOTD TRAINING

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: DOTD Public Transportation Section

APR 5-6

Professional Dispatching and Scheduling Baton Rouge, LA

JUN 12-14

Driver Safety/Defensive Driving..... Zachary, LA

JUN 26-28

Driver Safety/Defensive Driving..... Zachary, LA

APTA EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.apta.com

MAY 4-8

Fare Collection/Revenue Management..... Jacksonville, FL

MAY 4-9

International Bus Roadeo & Bus & Paratransit Conference.. Tampa, FL

JUNE 7-13

International Rail Roadeo & Rail Conference..... Denver, CO

JUNE 23-26

Public Transportation & Universities Conference..... Santa Cruz, CA

NATIONAL TRANSIT INSTITUTE COURSES

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.ntionline.com

MAY 3

Transit Asset Condition and Service Quality..... Webinar

SPOTLIGHT ON...

TECHNOLOGY AND TRANSIT (PART 7) - FIRST VIRTUAL FARE CARD VIA ANDROID PAY

Home to the Intel Corporation and Nike Inc., the city of Portland Oregon is often at the forefront of innovation. A recent launch of the first virtual public transit card via Android Pay will put another notch in Portland's innovation belt.

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (TriMet) in Portland entered into a partnership with Google to beta test this technology. A select group of TriMet riders were able to test out the new system before it's full deployment.

This project was a milestone for TriMet and their fare management and technology partners; Moovel (Hop FastPass™ mobile app provider) and INIT (transport ticketing specialist).

The "tap-to-pay" technology uses near field communication (NFC) and allows riders to securely store a virtual Hop card on their Android smart phones. NFC is a set of protocols that enables smart phones and other devices to establish radio communication with each other by touching the devices together or bringing them into proximity.

When riders tap their smart phones or devices to any of the 1,200 electronic readers across the transit system, a back-end processing system is able to process the payment for the multi-agency transit system. This



back-end processing system "MOBILEvario" serves as the core intelligence for the project and is a product of the transport ticketing specialist INIT.

This back-end processing system is also able to process physical debit or credit cards as well as digitally stored payment methods such as Android Pay, Apple Pay, and Samsung Pay.

The processing system calculates the fare, validates the transactions, and because all the mobile pay transactions are performed against the back-office data bank, riders can get accurate and current account information anytime and anywhere.

The trademarked Hop FastPass System was initially developed using open architecture, which eventually allowed easy integration with more than a dozen partners (including

Google) without making major changes to the system. The back-end processing system was designed as a financial system to track each transaction performed and allowed easy interface to multiple "off-the-shelf" accounting software programs.

This move is part of TriMet's plan to continue the deployment of technological solutions to replace paper tickets as fare. The Hop system also allows TriMet to anonymously collect ridership and travel pattern data. This data is aggregated and used to examine ridership trends, which ultimately helps TriMet with planning, while individual transactions, such as where a person tapped their phone or card is only available to be used by support staff for customer support.

DOTD ON THE GO...



One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers in Louisiana in order to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training materials, as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

SITE VISITS

Part of the outreach and assistance that DOTD provides to the Rural Public Transportation (Section 5311) and Elderly and Disabled (Section 5310) providers are site visits from the program managers. In the last quarter, DOTD visited the following 5310 & 5311 providers: St. Helena Parish, Iberville Parish, Terrebonne Parish, River Parishes, East Feliciana Parish, Sabine COA, New Orleans COA/Arthur Monday, Bossier COA, and Ouachita ARCO.

OUTREACH

To further the goal of providing some form of public transportation in all 64 parishes, as listed in the Louisiana Vision 2020 Plan, DOTD has been conducting educational visits to all the parishes in Louisiana that do not currently have some form of public transit service. Last quarter DOTD completed outreach for the following parishes: Lafourche Parish.

TRAINING

DOTD staff provided the following trainings in the last quarter: Drug and Alcohol, OMB Super Circular - 2 CFR 200, Passenger Service and Safety training, and Microsoft Excel Level 2. DOTD is now offering basic computer training Statewide. For more information, please contact Keycha Alexander-Green, RTAP Program Manager.

If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to Michelle.Horne@la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/Public Transit Section, attn: Michelle Horne, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.

FROM CAPITOL HILL...

The ability to apply non-U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) funds as local match to Sections 5307, 5310, and 5311 programs began under SAFETEA-LU in 2005 (and included former Section 5316 and 5317 programs). The focus of using human service funds as local match for transit projects under SAFETEA-LU was to leverage federal investment and increase coordination among transportation service providers. MAP-21 and now the FAST Act both continue the emphasis on coordination, while both expand attention to environmental and economic sustainability. By adding these areas of attention other federal agency funds have been added to the list of resources of potential local match in addition the funds identified by SAFETEA-LU.

Some of the funding sources now eligible to be used as local match are U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S Department of Labor, and U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development funds.

Another example of a non-DOT program fund that can be used as a local match is the funding provided under the Older Americans Act. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has recently published guidance on how to use Older Americans Act funds with FTA programs.¹

Guidance on federal and local match requirements is provided by the FTA in the Circulars for Sections 5307², 5310³, and 5311⁴. Section III in each circular describes match requirements and eligible sources for local funding, as requirements for the local match vary from program to program.

A list of frequently asked questions about determinations for federal fund eligibility as local match is also provided on FTA's website.⁵

FTA grant recipients and sub-recipients should communicate with their FTA Regional Office to determine if a non-DOT grant match is appropriate and allowable.

¹ <https://www.acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/older-americans-act>

² https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FINAL_FTA_circular9030.1E.pdf

³ https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/C9070_1G_FINAL_circular_4-20-15%281%29.pdf

⁴ https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Circular_9040_1Gwith_index_-_Final_Revised_-_vm_10-15-14%281%29.pdf

⁵ <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/procurement/third-party-procurement/local-matching-funds>

