

“It became clear to us that we needed improved tools to better coordinate trips, improve service efficiencies and most immediately reduce the cost of supplemental cab service required to meet the growing demands of our ADA program. We needed something not only flexible, scalable and powerful, but a real turnkey transportation management system that would satisfy our paratransit and Flex service requirements now and into the future.”

- Doug Wood, RIde Program Director, RIPTA



Rhode Island Public Transit Authority: Statewide Mobility Management Technology in Action

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) manages and operates a coordinated, specialized transportation service for the State, called the RIde Program. RIPTA also operates a general public community circulator service called Flex.

Using over 120 vans, RIde provides nearly 3,000 trips a day for RI seniors, developmentally disabled individuals, RIPTA ADA customers and Medicaid recipients. RIde’s Customer Service Center takes trip reservations, schedules all services, provides billing and service reports for funding agencies and monitors service quality.

RIde’s Flex Service is a zone-based, general public RIPTA service incorporating both demand response and point deviation service. It operates as a community circulator and feeder service to RIPTA fixed route bus service traveling outside of the Flex zone.

Scaling to Handle Long-term Demands

RIPTA turned to RouteMatch Software to make significant improvements to its technological infrastructure and provide a system that would be flexible and scalable enough to meet long-term transportation demands.

Today, RIPTA is transformed. RouteMatch provides a completely integrated Intelligent Transportation System for RIPTA which includes a paratransit scheduling software system, automated call center IVR technology from LogicTree Corporation; and, AVL/MDC in-vehicle technologies from Mentor Engineering, Inc. With a central call center of 22 employees, RIPTA uses these technologies to link the RIde program directly with its service providers, allowing each to monitor and better manage service in real-time.

Service dispatching had been a manual process, so the changes in this area have been significant. Efficiencies in service routing, scheduling, and dispatching resulting in improved customer service have all been realized. “We can identify the best passenger grouping and routing automatically and send that manifest to the drivers via their on-board computers. The GPS system provides route instructions for the driver and at the end of the day, all the ride information is downloaded into our main center for verification and billing,” explains Wood.

Additional ROI Realized

Automating tasks has led to time and cost savings. Billing requires far less time to complete and they had two FTEs leave that they didn’t have to replace. “With RouteMatch’s scheduling engine (RSE) we have successfully reduced our ADA cab trips by nearly 25 percent while increasing ADA ridership on our van service. This translates into very significant long-term cost savings for RIPTA,” stresses Wood.

With these transit ITS technologies, RIPTA has seen a critical impact on customer service as well. “Complaints have gone down while at the same time we have become more efficient. We owe that to improved information for drivers, better management tools for dispatchers and our overall ability to field calls and resolve passenger problems faster,” notes Wood.

Further customer service improvements are expected with the new IVR technology. The RIde phone system now calls ADA passengers automatically to remind them of their next day pick-up times. This service will be expanded to other agency clients and will include automated customer call information and trip scheduling.