

# Fare Study In-Depth Goals:

The primary purpose of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) Fare Study is to perform a comprehensive analysis of the current RIPTA fare structure and to provide a series of recommendations to create a new fare structure that is easy to understand and equitable while also incorporating new technology and fare collection methods where appropriate.

The Fare Study will provide a detailed analysis of current RIPTA fare structures and fare products, and will identify strengths and weaknesses in current policies. The study will then develop recommendations which will provide alternative fare structures and products for RIPTA. The impacts to ridership, revenue, maintenance and other areas will be taken into consideration. Other issues to be explored include, but are not limited to: integration of new fare media, fare equity, pass programs, fare and product integration with neighboring agencies such as MBTA and Amtrak.

The final product of the Fare Study will be a recommendation to RIPTA's Board of Directors for adoption of the new fare structure and a clear plan of implementation for this structure.

Currently, RIPTA is comprised primarily of fixed-route bus service throughout the State of Rhode Island. RIPTA offers several levels of fixed route service, including: regular fixed route, high-frequency key corridors, Rapid Bus, and Express service. RIPTA has adopted a "One State, One Rate" fare policy, with all services costing a regular base fare of \$2.00 (ADA base fare is \$4.00). RIPTA charges \$0.50 for transfers, which are valid for 2 hours after purchase, although free transfers are also included in most fare products. RIPTA's current fare structure was adopted in 2010.

RIPTA offers several fare products, including: monthly passes, 15-ride passes, 7-day passes, 1-day passes and RIPTIKS. RIPTIKS are sold in packages, which allow for 10-trips and include a free transfer with each trip. In addition, RIPTA provides half fare (off-peak) or no fare (all day) passes for qualifying senior and/or disabled passengers through its Senior Disabled pass program. RIPTA has several contractual relationships, including the Upass program with colleges and universities and the EcoPass program with major employers. RIPTA also has agreements under which it provides service for the Providence Public Schools, on-campus trips at University of Rhode Island, and Medicaid-funded transportation to medical appointments allowed by the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services. RIPTA allows children 5 and under to ride free when accompanied by an adult.

The goals of the Fare Study are:

- Revised fare structure – RIPTA's current fare structure is complex and sometimes confusing, despite the "One State, One Rate" fare policy. Passengers often qualify for different fare media depending on the type of pass they possess:
- Simplified fare media – RIPTA's current fare structure often creates unique passes or tickets for every fare product.

- Minimize use of mechanical portions of fareboxes and ticket vending machines – RIPTA utilizes GFI fareboxes and ticket vending machines for fare collection and fare product sales. Fareboxes undergo significant wear and tear due to constant motion of the buses and repetitive use from passengers. A fare structure that minimizes the mechanical operations of fareboxes and maximizes digital transactions is desired so RIPTA can reduce the operational and maintenance cost of fareboxes.
- Equity – RIPTA is the provider for public transportation throughout the State of Rhode Island, and a fare structure that is equitable to all residents is a required outcome of this fare study. Equity must be examined in terms of the state’s geography, service type, and service frequency. An equity analysis must be completed for each of the fare policies and alternatives recommended as part of this study.
- Inter-agency compatability – RIPTA’s service boundaries overlap with several other transportation providers in the area, most notably the MBTA commuter rail service. Whenever possible, fare products should be integrated to ensure minimal passenger confusion. Proposals should address strategies for greater integration and provide implementation plans for those strategies.
- The fare study is anticipated to take approximately 4 months and will culminate with recommendations to the Board of Directors in July 2015.