

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2010 MEETING**

Board Members Present: Thomas Deller, Chair; Edward Field; William Kennedy; Kevin Flynn; Stephen Devine; John Flaherty; Christopher Long; and Everett Stuart.

Absent: Stephen Farrell; Stephen Durkee; and Alfred Moscola.

Also Present: Mark Therrien; Henry Kinch; Amy Pettine; Anne Galbraith; Ellen Mandly and members of the public whose names are listed on the meeting sign-in sheet.

Mark Therrien introduced Anne Galbraith and described her role in the Planning Department. New member Everett Stuart introduced himself.

Mr. Deller asked Mark Therrien and Amy Pettine to assess RIPTA's goals and create a strategic plan that incorporates all aspects of transit and funding. He said he tried to make the Committee more diverse by including members from other agencies and organizations.

Mr. Deller asked if the members had had a chance to review the minutes of the November 3, 2009 Strategic Planning Committee

meeting. The members indicated that they had and Mr. Field made a motion that the minutes be approved as presented. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Next Mr. Deller asked if the members had had a chance to review the proposed 2010 Strategic Planning Committee meeting schedule. The members indicated that they had and Mr. Flynn made a motion that meeting dates be adopted as proposed. Mr. Flaherty seconded the motion and 2010 meeting schedule was unanimously approved

Amy Pettine then began the Metro Transit Study Update by discussing streetcars and rapid bus. She said the study was a feasibility analysis of streetcars and the results were a resounding “yes”. She said during the alternatives analysis the alignment concept is studied in detail focusing on the effects of alternative solutions to the area’s transportation problems. Information on the costs, benefits, and impacts of alternatives are developed to provide a sound basis for project decision making.

She said the next step is economic analysis with the ultimate outcome being the selection of a local alternative, after public hearings. After this in the eyes of the federal government we are an official process. RIPTA would be the lead agency as the state’s mobility manager, working with RIDOT, Statewide Planning and the City of Providence.

The Committee discussed the difference between environmental assessment and impact studies and Mr. Therrien said the streetcar project falls under an environmental assessment. Mr. Devine cautioned that the project schedule is aggressive and that we should be prepared to switch the category to impact.

Because the project is under \$250 million Ms. Pettine said it qualifies as a small starts project. Mr. Therrien explained the "small starts" federal funding parameters. Mr. Deller asked about getting the Board's approval for development of the streetcar RFP. Mr. Therrien said RFP development can begin now, and then the Board approves the RFP when finalized. A discussion ensued regarding various small starts projects statewide.

Next Ms. Pettine distributed and discussed a new transit corridor roadmap which described how the process works beginning with alternatives analysis, then federal review, project sponsorship and design and finally the start of construction.

Mr. Field asked for a clarification between streetcars and trolleys and Ms. Pettine explained that streetcars are more efficient than buses and signify a commitment to economic investment and an enhanced transit system that offers more choices. She said people prefer streetcars to buses spurring higher ridership. Mr. Field asked how and Ms. Galbraith interjected that streetcars have less of a fear factor for riders because they are on a fixed route.

A conversation ensued regarding funding of streetcars and Ms. Pettine said local business investment will be pursued. Mr. Deller added that the City of Providence is discussing funding with Providence hospitals and universities.

Next Ms. Pettine discussed rapid bus service a popular concept which will be initially implemented on the 11 & 99 routes – a four mile corridor connecting three communities. She said rapid bus routes will have line and stop branding to distinguish the high service line, frequent service, transit signal priority and schedule reliability.

She said improved passenger infrastructure will feature shelters with local design and standard versions, improved paper and electronic schedule information. The roadways will also be improved where appropriate to include queue jump lanes at traffic intersections, delineated bus stop lanes and bus stop consolidations.

Ms. Pettine then elaborated on the handout detailing first phase rapid bus investment costs, timelines and partners and answered questions on same. Mr. Therrien contributed to this discussion and added that he and Mr. Moscola are working on the rapid route bus designs and also designing the new trolleys to be part of the specialty fleet. Ms. Pettine continued by discussing the branding and marketing of the rapid buses. Mr. Flaherty asked if these initiatives would require an amendment to the capitol plan and Mr. Deller said

not at this point.

Next a discussion ensued regarding how the buses will interact and service the Warwick and Wickford train stations. Ms. Pettine said they will service the train stations and Mr. Deller said the Strategic Committee should plan to discuss this issue in more depth and asked staff to prepare a fact sheet including service from new hubs.

Ms. Pettine moved on to a review of related planning documents and said the documents had been cataloged and compiled as requested and were distributed to the Committee in a seven page document. Anne Galbraith compiled the overview of related documents which have also been listed and linked on RIPTA's website. She thanked John Flaherty and Steve Devine for their assistance.

Ms. Galbraith then read through the 9 areas outlined in the handout and briefly elaborated on each and following this asked to be notified if any documents were missing.

Ms. Pettine and Ms. Galbraith briefly elaborated on the handout discussing existing RIPTA partnerships. They said the document was broken out by federal government, RI state government, municipalities and then councils, committees and task forces.

Next Mr. Deller moved onto Committee goals and timelines saying the Board expects the Committee to project a clear vision and be very

involved in capitol funding and this may require meeting more than once a month. The Committee held a brief discussion regarding the goals and focus of the Committee and funding of projects. Following this discussion Mr. Deller asked Mr. Therrien to do a review of service standards and said the Committee will spend more time on this topic at the February meeting.

The Committee decided to meet again in January to discuss funding and after schedule consultation and discussion a meeting was set for Friday, January 22nd at 8:30 a.m.

Mr. Therrien gave a brief description of service standards describing them as the template for operations, and said they direct frequency of routes. Routes are reviewed by the planning department annually and more often if service cuts are contemplated. He said the master plan should be updated every 10 years but it is sometimes difficult due to understaffing.

Mr. Deller asked for public comment and Kevin Flynn said he had received a draft 30-page certification review from Federal Highway and Federal Transit and they received 5 commendations where the reviewers pointed out 5 specific areas they liked and one related to RIPTA. Mr. Flynn read the remark commending RIPTA on initiatives related to the Metro Transit Study.

Mr. Deller reiterated the additional meeting date scheduled for

January 22nd and there being no further business adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary