

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2010 MEETING**

Board Members Present: Thomas Deller, Chair; Edward Field; Kevin Flynn; Steve Durkee; John Flaherty; Christopher Long; and Everett Stuart.

Absent: William Kennedy, Stephen Devine, and Stephen Farrell.

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

Mr. Deller called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and asked if the members had an opportunity to review the minutes of the January 7 and 22, 2010 meetings and hearing they did not, he tabled the vote.

Ms. Pettine handed out 3 sheets explaining the planning decisions that get made which impact the capital and operating budgets discussed at recent meetings. The first handout was an overview of the service planning process, the next covered the capital planning process and the last was the strategic planning process tying it all together.

Mr. Therrien discussed the service planning process calling it part

art, part science. He said the science portion is tools like automated passenger counting and that the first component of service planning is the service standards. RITPA's standards were created in 1992 and adopted by the Board in 1995 and they set the basic parameters for service such as space between bus stops, running times, frequencies based on demographics and deviations off main routes. The current standards need to be updated and the automated passenger counting data (APC) needs to be incorporated.

Mr. Therrien said identifying need due to demographic changes and new development is important, but there is no formal process for getting this information and identifying need. Some agencies and developers notify RIPTA and the planners work to stay informed, but getting good and timely information is a challenging process. Mr. Therrien said RIPTA drivers and passengers are good about passing along information regarding changes they see on their routes and some state agencies that use our services also pass along information on changes that could impact services.

He said annual hours and miles of service is key because service hours and/or miles cannot be increased without new revenue to pay for it. He gave examples of how new service has been subsidized in the past by Fidelity and Universities. He cautioned that service changes impact ADA service and explained how.

Mr. Therrien said other planning that happens outside of fixed route

is for Human Services agencies and Anne LeClerc works with these agencies on their service planning needs.

Ms. Pettine outlined the capital planning process which includes the fleet plan, asset repair and replacement needs and new categories for system-wide enhancement and expansion which are metro plan study recommendations. She discussed how the six year capital plan becomes finalized and incorporated into the Statewide TIP.

Mr. Deller said last month we discussed how the 6-year plan requirement doesn't fit RIPTA's life cycle and he suggested we implemented a longer plan that works better. Mr. Therrien suggested a 20-year capital plan and 5-year operating plan updated each August as we do currently and answered questions on the current process.

Mr. Deller said it's important to tie the state transit goals & objectives into Statewide Planning's long range transportation plan and he asked Mr. Flynn how to best facilitate this. Mr. Flynn suggested Ms. Pettine move the sidebar on state transit goals & objectives to the top of the page illustrating the capital planning process as many potential projects will flow from that. Mr. Deller said RIPTA's strategic plan is a more detailed analysis of basic transit needs and goals addressed in the statewide plan and the capital planning process is where it all gets implemented.

Mr. Flynn said it's possible that this process may lead to expansion of

the long range plan. Mr. Durkee said RIPTA's new more focused approach to strategic planning may help shape Statewide Planning's long range plans. Mr. Flaherty responded that the long range transportation plan has very broad goals and objectives and the more specific plan being developed by RIPTA is very consistent with the plan and has a level of detail that will allow the plan to move forward.

Mr. Deller said we should use the long range transportation plan as the basic policy and the RIPTA strategic plan for more detailed analysis. The capital planning process is used for implementation. He said a reassessment identifying what was achieved under the TIP and what was changed and should be a cyclical process.

Ms. Pettine said the FTA strategic planning process was the basis for ours and Ms. Galbraith said the last page is a theoretical one meant to provoke thought on how to reconfigure the process.

Ms. Galbraith discussed the fleet plan, and asset repair and replacement and said this is essentially the capital planning process. She described how the fleet plan works and said this process could be applied to RIPTA's other assets such as facilities, fare collection and communication systems and other equipment. She said the 'fix it first' and 'state of good repair' methods could be applied to these assets.

Next she discussed system-wide enhancement & expansion opportunities and said this includes new initiatives and also new technology to make existing services better. Mr. Moscola discussed how the fleet plan is developed and implemented and said it could be tailored to all equipment. Ms. Galbraith said that the goal is to maintain high quality service before growth is implemented.

Mr. Flaherty asked how staff responds to requests for additional service. Mr. Therrien said the schedule is adjusted three times per year, but the planners constantly look at performance on each route and segment within the route. Changes to nonperforming routes are implemented based on this analysis and requests for additional service, but additional service is only added if someone pays or subsidizes it and he gave examples.

Mr. Therrien said that changes to the system impacting it 15% or more require public hearings and he described the hearing process and how nonperforming routes are identified and changed. Mr. Moscola then explained the headway and how this affects the schedule and ridership. .

Mr. Deller said we must work to better market the system and improve ridership. Mr. Durkee said we need better public relations to remove the stigma associated with riding the bus. A lengthy discussion of marketing and public relations ensued.

Ms. Galbraith summed up by saying the capital plan is the funding

strategy and the question for the planning committee is how to implement. Mr. Deller said a RIPTA handbook outlining our operations would be useful. He said two things should come out of the Committee, the creation of a RIPTA handbook explaining why RIPTA works the way it does, and the creation of a cyclical long range planning process.

Mr. Deller said the strategic planning process creates a knowledge base for Board members and documenting this would be helpful to new Board members. A discussion ensued regarding what to include in the handbook such as who we are, what we do, the services we provide including Flex, Ride, fixed route and rail, service planning, service standards, capital planning and state and federal funding.

Mr. Field suggested including RIPTA's enabling legislation, by-laws and ethics standards. He also suggested a marketing program directed at schools to educate riders from a young age. Mr. Stuart said goals to increase ridership should be included. Mr. Deller will work with staff to outline the RIPTA handbook and a strategic planning goals book.

Mr. Deller asked for further comment and Mr. Flaherty noted that the Governor has called on RIDOT Director Lewis to produce a study by October 2010 on the potential of merging RIPTA into RIDOT and everyone needs to be cognizant of this.

There being no further business Mr. Deller adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen M. Mandly

Recording Secretary