Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

MINUTES

Thursday, May 10, 2007
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

Members Present

Mr. Kevin Flynn, Chair	Representing Ms. Beverly Najarian, RI Department of Administration
Mr. Jared Rhodes, Secretary	Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Robert Azar	Representing Thomas Deller, Department of Planning & Development, City of Providence
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	City of East Providence Planning Department
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	Town of South Kingstown Planning Department
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Ms. Janet White Raymond	Public Member
Mr. B. Michael Rauh	Environmental Advocate
Mr. Ralph Rizzo	Representing Ms. Lucy Garliauskas (Advisory Member) Federal Highway Administration
Mr. Robert Shawver	Representing Mr. Jerome Williams, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Representing Steven Cardi, Public Member
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Ms. Rosemary Booth Gallogly, Budget Office
Mr. William Sequino	Public Member
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Ms. Sharon Conard Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation

Members Absent

Ms. Susan Baxter	Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission
Mr. Daniel Beardsley	RI League of Cities and Towns
Mr. Jake McGuigan	Representing Timothy Costa, Vice Chair Governor's Policy Office

Guests

Mr. Claude Cote	RI Resource Recovery Corporation
Mr. Bill Legare	Northwest Transportation
Ms. Kelly Mahoney	Senate Policy
Mr. Michael McGonagle	RI Resource Recovery Corporation

Staff--Statewide Planning Program

Mr. Robert Griffith	Chief, Strategic Planning
Mr. George Johnson	Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning
Mr. Mark Brown	Principal Planner
Mr. Kevin Nelson	Principal Planner, Land Use

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Mr. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

2. Approval of April 14st Minutes

Ms. Conard Wells noted that the correct name for her agency is West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation.

Mr. Sequino moved

To approve the Minutes of April 12, 2007, with the change noted.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Prager, and carried unanimously.

3. Chief's Progress Report

Mr. Rhodes delivered the Chief's Progress Report, covering the following items:

- The deadline for CEDS applications was last Friday. 11 proposals were received and are being evaluated by staff. Mr. Rhodes, noting that in the past the Council had asked about getting information on the proposals prior to receiving final recommendations for action, distributed a summary listing the applications received by the deadline. Applications received will be referred to the CEDS Subcommittee and then to the Technical Committee for evaluation. A recommended list of priority projects will be returned to the Council for action at the June meeting. Any questions concerning the applications may be directed to the Secretary or to Mr. Vild.

- The solicitation of projects for the Safe Routes to School Program was announced last week, and application materials were sent to 130 local government contacts, as well as school departments. A press release was also issued and two workshops for applicants were held this week. This new program provides 100% federal funding for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects that will advance safe walking and bicycling to schools from kindergarten through grade 8. Mr. Rhodes commented that Statewide Planning is looking to this program to provide opportunities for

communities to support smart growth via walkable communities, and reduce childhood obesity, and conserve fuel.

- The Transportation section, together with Federal Highway and Grow Smart RI, sponsored a very successful Access Management Workshop last week. The program attracted over 60 state and municipal officials, including planners, engineers and public works staff. Federal Highway arranged for a nationally-recognized speaker to deliver the program, and three challenge grant projects were also profiled.

- The staff conducted a workshop on April 20th to brief communities with general aviation airports on the drafting of the Airport System Plan. A similar session will be held next week with the Warwick City Council to discuss how the System Plan under development relates to the TF Green expansion, and how the state plan could affect the City's Comprehensive Plan.

- Staff participated in a two-day workshop sponsored by CRMC on the Metro Bay Special Area Management Plan. An emphasis was on identifying local and state goals and policies for the upper bay waterfront that could accommodate continued growth of water dependant industrial uses, while incorporating more mixed use and residential growth and public access along the waterfront area. The discussion revealed a need for the State to assess how much waterfront industrial land it is projected to need to meet water-dependant uses in the future, and to decide the most appropriate locations for certain types of waterfront facilities. For example, the Providence harbor waterfront has access to the only deep-water channel, but the harbor has limited available land; Quonset, on the other hand has available land, but does not have deep water access unless the channel is deepened. Ms. Boyle, who also participated in the workshop, noted that it brought in speakers from other areas of the country which had faced similar issues in balancing land needs for traditional uses with growing demands for non-water dependant uses. She also noted that mixed use and residential development of waterfront land brings port cities more property tax revenues, but that traditional water dependant uses of the waterfront are essential for the state's economy overall. Mr. Schafer asked if East Providence also has access to the 40 foot dredged channel. Ms. Boyle replied that it does via the Exxon Mobil terminal and the Capital Terminals property.

- Statewide Planning along with Apeiron Institute for Environmental Living and other groups will sponsor a workshop on developing Sustainable Communities on June 8th at the Johnson and Wales Conference Center in Seekonk. Sarah James, who authored the APA guidelines on sustainable communities will be one of the featured speakers. Mr. Rhodes provided flyers giving registration information and details on the program to members.

- Land Use staff continues work on the State Investment Policy recommended by Land Use 2025. He distributed a chart showing the State funding programs being inventoried, and noted that this work would be reviewed with the Land Use Plan Implementation Committee at a meeting immediately following the Council's meeting today.

Mr. Flynn commented that staff had done a great deal of work on the Safe Routes to School Program, a program that Statewide Planning took on from DOT, since it was too small for DOT to be involved with. He noted that Mr. Rhodes had been interviewed on a radio talk show this week relative to the new Program, and ably deflected the talk show host's initial negative perceptions that the Program would endanger school children, by describing the purpose and potential benefits that the new initiative could provide for Rhode Island. Mr. Azar noted that the new program had also been profiled on NPR.

Mr. Flynn also reported that he had given a presentation on Land Use 2025 to local officials in Westerly this week. This workshop was attended by over 40 persons, including Town Council, Planning Board, and Comprehensive Plan Committee members, and provided a good dialogue on dealing with growth and development issues.

There were no questions or comments on the Chief's Progress Report.

4. FY2008 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning

Mr. Johnson reviewed this item noting that he had briefed the Council on Part Three of the draft – *Activities* -- at the April meeting. In the intervening month, the remainder of the draft Program was compiled and mailed to members. He reviewed Parts One, Two and Four of the draft, and called members' attention to two handouts in their packets which provide Statewide Planning's proposed funding of the tasks in the Program, as well as RIDOT's tasks for the Unified Work Program. He noted, relative to funding of the Work Program, that the State funding situation is more challenging than ever, with the target for FY08 State funds being approximately 20% lower than last year's. Increased reliance on federal funding sources are being used to support the Program, but this strategy cannot be sustained indefinitely. He noted that RIPTA and RIDOT's proposed planning tasks have been included, so that the document now constitutes the draft Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning. The draft was reviewed with the TAC on April 26th and with the Technical Committee last week. Neither group requested substantive revisions. The draft is also continuing to undergo in-house review.

Mr. Sequino asked if the Program provided for continuation of the Planning Challenge Grants for municipal and regional projects. Mr. Johnson replied that up to $400,000 in federal funds are proposed for such grants. Rather than have a competitive selection round, the feeling now is that these might be distributed on an "as-needed" basis as project ideas that would help implement the Land Use and Transportation Elements come forward from local governments. He noted that several conceptual proposals for projects have already been received.

There were no further comments at this time. Mr. Johnson concluded by noting that the final document will be on the Council's June agenda for action. At that time the annual planning process certifications will also be requested.

5. Destination Rhode Island: Domestic and International Migration to the Ocean State

Mr. Mark Brown of the Program's Census Data Center staff provided an overview of this item. Mr. Brown noted that draft report presents a detailed look at the people who have moved to the Ocean State from other parts of the United States and from other countries to make Rhode Island their home. The report also addresses the almost 300,000 people who have relocated entirely within our state borders.

Using data captured in the decennial census, the report defines how many of us moved during the last five years of the twentieth century (1995-2000). Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey presents patterns of population redistribution among the states, focusing primarily on recent immigration. This report examines that data – and data made available from other sources - to present a detailed look at people on the move, and specifically, how that movement impacts the population and demographics of Rhode Island. He noted the data are for discrete period, but reflect on-going trends. He noted that the report had been reviewed with the Technical Committee and several revisions included to reflect members' comments. Major points made by Mr. Brown included:

- Overall, migration accounted for 14% of the state's population change in the 1990s
- Domestic in-migration (97,000) between 1995 and 2000 outweighed domestic out-migration (94,000) by about 3,000.
- The top five states impacting Rhode Island migration in this period were Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, California, and Florida.
- 17% of Rhode Island's elderly population moved during the 5 year period; Massachusetts accounted for 31% of the elderly in-migrants to Rhode Island. .
- Rhode Island had the sixth highest net out-migration rate among young, single, college educated adults between 1995 and 2000. For every single, young, college-educated adult moving into Rhode Island, approximately 1 ½ moved out.

- The non-Hispanic, White population continued to decline as a proportion of the overall population, due to migration and differential birth rates. Hispanics have formed the largest fraction of domestic in-migration recently, and represent 47 percent of all new immigrants moving into Rhode Island. Overall, the Hispanic population has grown from 2 percent of the state's population in 1980 to 8.7% in 2000.
- The percentage of foreign born has grown slightly in recent decades, but is only about 1/3 the level of foreign born in Rhode Island in 1910.
- In 2000, the largest share of foreign born Rhode Islanders were of Latin American origin, followed by European, and Asian origins.
- The figure on page 28 illustrates the distribution of foreign-born residents of Rhode Island by community. Concentrations are evident in Providence, Central Falls, Pawtucket, and East Providence, but immigration also affects other communities to varying degrees.
- The data sources include illegal as well as legal immigration, and other estimates of illegal immigration vary widely. One official source, from the Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated the number of illegal immigrants in Rhode Island in 2000 at 1.5% of the population; this compares with 2.5% nationally.

Mr. Schafer asked if the 1995 data source was from the Census. Mr. Brown replied that it was from the Census's American Community Survey, which uses a small sample. Mr. Schafer asked if migration from Puerto Rico are counted in the foreign born statistics. Mr. Brown indicated that persons borne in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa and other US possessions are not considered foreign born. Mr. Schafer asked if, based on the data, the commonly-heard characterization of Rhode Island as a "welfare magnet" appears accurate. Mr. Brown replied that this report did not include data sufficient to confirm or dispel such a description. He noted however, that there are some data available in the Department of Human Services case load tracking system which could be used to more fully explore this concept. This data identifies undocumented aliens who are recipients of benefit programs in Rhode Island. He noted that in many cases, although the parents in a household may not be eligible, a child, born in the US may be eligible. He cited 1,100 children of illegal aliens are getting cash benefits, and approximately the same number obtain food stamps or medical assistance. He recalled a report prepared by the Division of Planning in the mid-1990s which attempted to quantify a "Dependency Profile" of Rhode Island.

Mr. Azar asked if the data support the notion of a "brain drain" affecting Rhode Island. Mr. Brown stated that the available Census data do show an excess of out-migration of the young, college-educated population; but also note anecdotal reports of recent in-migration of young people to trendy areas and artists colonies in downcity Providence and Pawtucket. This may indicate a trend that could counter the departure of other college-educated young persons.

Mr. Schafer asked how college students are counted in the surveys, and if Rhode Island's high number of college students wouldn't skew the numbers relative to other states. Mr. Brown agreed that how a student attending college in Rhode Island is counted in the Census depends on timing relative to the survey periods, but noted, that the surveys are done periodically so this factor may balance out over time.

Mr. Shawver suggested that the picture painted is that Rhode Island is loosing its best and brightest, and replacing them with a less-skilled, more dependent population.

Ms. Boyle stated she found the analysis in the report to be excellent and suggested including more on the anecdotal reports of young people coming to the state's cities.

Mr. Rauh noted that the "brain drain" topic is of considerable concern to the Economic Policy Council, and suggested that its Director be asked to give a presentation at a future meeting.

Mr. Sherlock suggested that the brain drain is to some extent a normal phenomenon, in that Rhode Island cannot be expected to offer opportunities in all economic sectors or careers studied in its colleges. It is natural that some young people will leave for opportunities elsewhere, but others may come to Rhode Island for opportunities its economy offers.

Ms. Conard Wells stated she felt that an intangible factor in young persons' staying or leaving is whether a sense of community is provided. She stressed that Rhode Island needs to provide a social and cultural life to engage people and make them want to stay in their communities. She cited the African Alliance of Rhode Island which is working to keep communities together as a positive model for such efforts.

Mr. Murray agreed, citing the model of South Kingstown, where the community life attracts a number of URI graduates to settle in Rhode Island. But, he also agreed with Mr. Sherlock that with the high number of graduates Rhode Island turns out, some attrition is inevitable.

Mr. Azar cited the West End neighborhood of Providence as an example of an area developing a real sense of place, even though it is being affected by gentrification. Ms. Wells cited the importance of insuring that all residents feel included in a neighborhood's future.

6. <u>State Planning Council Rule V: Solid Waste Facility Siting</u>

Mr. Nelson provided an overview of the pertinent provisions of the Council's adopted Rule V governing the process for obtaining a Certificate of Approval for the siting of solid waste facilities in the state. Developed in response to several provisions of Rhode Island General Laws which require a certificate be obtained from the Council prior to review of a solid waste facility license application by DEM, these regulations provide definitions and delineate sensitive areas where such facilities are prohibited, and outline a process and factors for the Council to consider in taking action on an application for a certificate of approval. All facility proposals must compliance with the criteria of Rule V, including avoidance of prohibited areas, and evaluation of alternative sites and comparative environmental impacts. In addition, public facilities proposed by the R.I. Resource Recovery Corporation must be found to be in conformance with the State Guide Plan. Mr. Nelson also noted that a public comment period is required prior to Council action on any application.

Mr. Flynn noted that this item was on the agenda not as a academic refresher, but in response to an application from the Resource Recovery Corporation for expansion of disposal areas at the Central Landfill in Johnston. He noted that the Corporation's proposal was included in the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan approved in April by the Council, but that Rule V requires a separate action by the Council before the Corporation can present its plans and application to DEM for review. The staff has accepted and is reviewing the application, and a public comment period will be conducted during the next few weeks. A staff report on the application will be presented for action by the Council at the June meeting.

Mr. Sequino asked how contentious the application was expected to be. Mr. Flynn stated there was no way to know that, but noted that the essence of the expansion proposal was included in the comprehensive plan recently approved by the Council, and that a public hearing was held on the draft plan in the landfill host community, as part of the review process. Comments at that hearing focused on controlling impacts of the current landfill, but there was not much direct opposition to the proposed expansion. Mr. Sequino asked if a tour of the Central Landfill could be arranged for the Council. Mr. Rhodes indicated that could be done, however, the Council would have to be cognizant of the provisions of the Open Meetings Law, and post notice of the tour if it met the definition of a "meeting".

Mr. Rizzo asked why Section V of the Rule is "Reserved". Mr. Flynn stated that presumably this was a reflection of the 1991 Landfill Siting Study done by the University of Rhode Island for the Corporation prior to the last major expansion of the landfill. He noted that the Guide Plan just approved

included a reference to that Report, and a finding that it was considered to have continuing validity. Mr. Johnson suggested that this section of Rule V may have been reserved based on legislation directing that the Central Landfill be the state's primary disposal facility.

Mr. Trevor noted that the URI Study included an extensive evaluation and ranking of potential alternative sites for landfill expansion, and recommended sites at the Central Landfill as the best options. This has guided the Corporation's planning.

Ms. Prager indicated that the application is for expansion of an existing site, and the Council should also be guided by that fact.

Ms. Prager moved to

> **Authorize the Public Comment Period for the Application of the R.I. Resource Recovery Corporation's proposed expansion of the Central Landfill.**

Ms. Boyle seconded this motion and it carried unanimously.

7. Other Business

Mr. Flynn noted that he had been informed that Ms. Garliauskas of the Federal Highway Administration would soon be moving to take a similar post in Massachusetts. He indicated that a motion to recognize Ms. Garliauskas's contributions to the work of the Council during her tenure and support for the Program's endeavors would be in order.

Ms. Raymond moved to

> **Thank Ms. Garliauskas for her engagement with the Council and role in promoting coordination between the Program and DOT.**

The motion was approved by unanimously consent.

8. Adjourn

There being no other business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jared L. Rhodes, II
Secretary