

Approved  
5/13/10

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program  
**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL**

**Thursday, May 13, 2010**  
William E. Powers Building  
Conference Room A  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

**I. ATTENDANCE**

**Members Present**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Mr. Kevin Flynn, Chair            | Representing Ms. Rosemary Booth-Gallogly, RI DOA                     |
| Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, II Secretary | Statewide Planning Program   |
| Mr. Thomas Deller                 | City of Providence Department of Planning & Development              |
| Mr. Christopher Long              | Representing Mr. Timothy Costa, Vice Chair, Governor's Policy Office |
| Ms. Susan Baxter                  | RI Housing Resources Commission                                      |
| Mr. Thomas Mullaney               | RI DOA Budget Office   |
| Mr. L. Vincent Murray             | Town of South Kingstown Planning Department                          |
| Mr. Peter Osborn                  | Federal Highway Administration                                       |
| Mr. Bob Shawver                   | Representing Mr. Michael Lewis, RI DOT                               |
| Mr. Henry Sherlock                | Representing Mr. Stephen Cardi, Cardi Corporation                    |
| Ms. Janet White-Raymond           | Public Member  |

**Members Absent**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Mr. Daniel Beardsley    | RI League of Cities and Towns                   |
| Ms. Jeanne Boyle        | City of East Providence, Planning & Development |
| Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells | West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation    |
| Ms. Anna Prager         | Public Member                                   |

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| Mr. Michael Rauh    | Environmental Advocate |
| Mr. William Sequino | Public Member          |
| Mr. John Trevor     | Environmental Advocate |

### **Guests**

|                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Ms. Kelly Mahoney | RI Senate Policy Office |
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### **Staff – Division of Planning**

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Mr. Robert Griffith | Chief, Office of Strategic Planning<br>and Economic Development |
| Ms. Nancy Hess      | Supervising Planner, Land Use                                   |
| Ms. Karen Scott     | Acting Supervising Planner,<br>Transportation                   |
| Ms. Dawn Vittorioso | Executive Assistant   |

## **II. AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. Call to Order**

Mr. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

### **2. Approval of the April 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

*Ms. White-Raymond moved to approve the Minutes of April 8, 2010 as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Deller. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.*

### **3. RI Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation 2030 – Amendment #1**

Mr. Flynn introduced Mr. Shawver who began by providing an overview of the proposed amendment. Mr. Shawver reviewed the following:

- a. An initial feasibility study was conducted on the historic station location in 2007. This study determined that reopening the historic station would not be feasible as the new sidings that would be required by Amtrak would require extensive property acquisition and relocation.
- b. An alternative site was then evaluated but also ruled out as it had limited access and would require the relocation of an existing freight yard.

- c. Recently, the City undertook an analysis of a third site located along the Northeast Corridor opposite the existing freight yard. This site, the currently preferred station location, offers improved pedestrian and vehicular access, additional parking area, and the potential of utilizing the existing Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP) as a siding for commuter trains. Preliminary assessments conducted by the City estimate that it will cost approximately \$53 million to construct a station at this location.
- d. RIDOT, in partnership with the City, is now proposing to use \$2 million in FTA appropriations for the next phase of station development, environmental assessment and preliminary engineering. RIDOT will manage the overall project while the city will provide the local match for the FTA funding. As part of the study, the environmental, operational and infrastructure impacts of constructing a commuter rail station along a high speed rail line will be evaluated in detail and the capital cost estimates for construction will be further refined.
- e. Kingston and Westerly Station. Kingston Station has recently achieved ADA compliance by Amtrak through construction of a pedestrian overpass with elevators and other passenger amenities. In addition to South County Commuter Rail service, there is a possibility in Westerly of extended service from Connecticut along the Shoreline East.

At this time, Mr. Flynn explained that a public hearing was conducted on the proposed amendment at the last Transportation Advisory Committee meeting which occurred on April 22, 2010. Mr. Flynn then introduced Ms. Scott who summarized the input received. Ms. Scott first pointed to the public hearing report which was included in the Council's packets and then advised that all public comments received regarding the further assessment of the potential station location were favorable. Ms. Scott then noted that several TAC members had however expressed concerns regarding the potential impact that siting an additional station between Providence and Boston could have on the overall travel times between the two.

In concluding her comments, Ms. Scott asked if the Council had any questions or concerns. Mr. Deller echoed those expressed by the TAC regarding the site's proximity to the Providence and South Attleboro sites and asked whether impacts upon travel times between Providence and Boston would be assessed as part of the planned work. In response, Mr. Shawver assured Mr. Deller that the issue would be addressed.

*As there were no further comments or questions, Mr. Deller moved to approved the proposed amendment and Ms. Raymond-White seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.*

#### **4. FY 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project Priority List**

Mr. Flynn introduced Mr. Griffith who began by over viewing the application process. Mr. Griffith explained that seven applications were received and that all met the threshold criteria. Mr. Griffith next noted that if approved by the Council, the proposed PPL would be submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Mr. Griffith then summarized the proposed PPL as follows:

1. Mosaico Community Development Corporation

\$2,150,000 is requested by the Mosaico Community Development Corporation for the acquisition and rehabilitation of an 186,000 square foot industrial mill complex in Bristol formerly known as the Kaiser Mill. The goal of the project is to rehabilitate the mill complex into a vibrant business center offering employment and workforce training opportunities for neighborhood residents. The mill is a Brownfield site that has experienced considerable physical and aesthetic deterioration. A total of 766 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 48 points.*

2. NBC Wind Turbine Project

\$1M is requested by the Narragansett Bay Commission for the installation of a utility scale wind turbine at Field's Point in Providence. The wind energy project will supply a clean renewable source of electricity to the Commission's wastewater treatment facility. A total of 16 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 48 points.*

3. Ann & Hope Business Incubator

\$500,000 is requested by the Town of Cumberland to create a business incubator and neighborhood commercial center in an underutilized historic mill located in a low-moderate income area on the Blackstone River. The incubator will be located on the upper floors while the commercial space on the ground floor will provide shops and services. The project includes the acquisition of the second floor of the southeast building as a condo unit, architectural design for improvements to create a business center, basic improvements for shared facilities, stairs and moveable partitions; and project coordination, permit applications and legal services. A total of 427 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 45 points.*

4. Pawtucket Armory Center for the Arts

\$114,689 is requested by The Pawtucket Armory Association (DBA Pawtucket Armory Center for the Arts), a 501c non-profit corporation. The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre and the Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts are tasked with historically preserving the Pawtucket Armory as a community resource, an economic driver and a center for the arts and arts education. Phase I and Phase II of the project are complete, with \$5.25 million from public and private partnerships invested to transform the building into the home of The Gamm and JMW Arts High School. The current request is reflected in Phase III's \$1,190,843 exterior capital budget for much-needed work to preserve the structural integrity of the Armory before further deterioration occurs. Upon completion, the Center will anchor the Pawtucket Arts District and preserve or generate 244 direct or indirect jobs.

*Score: 44 points.*

5. Branch Village Growth Center Sewer Improvements

\$1,760,583 is requested by the Town of North Smithfield for sewer improvements to implement the development and revitalization plan within the Branch Village district. The plan seeks to provide a pad-and-rehab-ready development site to accommodate new business investment. A total of 1,906 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 37 points.*

6. Highland Business Center

\$650,000 is requested by the Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island Inc. for the construction and leasing of a 20,000 square foot, multi-tenant, flexible manufacturing building in the Highland Corporate Park in Cumberland. The project is designed to accommodate the needs of small firms for quality, flexible manufacturing space in the 1,000 to 5,000 square foot market. The project will be owned and leased by the Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island, Inc. A total of 109 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 31 points.*

7. Enhanced Youth Training Job Training and Business Incubator

\$500,000 is requested by the City of East Providence for the acquisition, build out and facility upgrades to the East Providence Youth Center for the purposes of creating an enhanced training and subsidized employment continuum administered through the East Bay Community Action Program. The project proposal will seek to acquire and complete renovations to a 7,300 square foot vacant building located on Waterman Avenue, and convert the facility into a two-tiered service facility. The proposal will fund the establishment of the enhanced training facility within the building, occupying about 50 percent of the existing space and the establishment of an onsite business incubator within the remaining portion of the building. The building is currently for sale. A total of 177 jobs (direct and indirect) are projected as a result of this project.

*Score: 28 points.*

At this time, Mr. Griffith asked the Council if anyone had any questions or comments regarding the above applications. Mr. Deller asked if previously approved projects required resubmission in order to remain on the PPL. Mr. Griffith responded that previously approved projects remain on the PPL for three years after which they require resubmittal.

Mr. Flynn next asked what the deadline for submitting the projects to EDA was. Mr. Griffith indicated that they were due by June 30, 2010.

In concluding Council questions Ms. Baxter asked if the Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island Inc. was a subsidiary of the RI Economic Development Administration. In response, Mr. Griffith indicated that they were not.

As there were no further questions Mr. Flynn asked for a motion. *Ms. White-Raymond moved approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murray and approved unanimously.*

## **5. Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning FY 2011**

Mr. Rhodes began by giving the Committee an overview of the Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning. He noted that: its preparation is a requirement of the Federal Highway and Transit Administrations; that it includes DOP as well as RIPTA and RIDOT components; and that its primary purpose is to document intended work tasks for the coming year as well as the funding sources that will be used to cover costs. He then explained that the item was placed on the agenda for discussion only, that action would not be requested of the Council until the June meeting and that this course of action was chosen so as to provide a wider opportunity for Council input.

Mr. Rhodes then proceeded to highlight the work tasks proposed for the coming year while encouraging Council members to interject with their thoughts or concerns at any time. First to do so was Mr. Deller who suggested that the Council should begin thinking about ways to assist the communities with transit oriented development. Mr. Deller referenced the Village / Growth Center concept and then asked if it would make sense to insert language and discussion about transit oriented development. Mr. Murray added that many communities find the Village Center initiatives an attractive way to approach their Comprehensive Plan and then said that this easily ties into sustainability. He also mentioned however that use of the "Growth Center" terminology can create anxiety within the general public as they are reluctant to change. Mr. Rhodes agreed and noted that the terms apply to different settings, rural vs. urban respectively, and are not intended to be used interchangeably. Mr. Flynn said the intent is to put together the best ideas and market them by building a Village/Growth Center manual for the communities.

Mr. Rhodes continued his presentation and having concluded Mr. Murray noted that the goals were ambitious and then asked if they were attainable. In response Mr. Rhodes acknowledged that the goals would not be attainable should the current staff vacancies not be approved for filling. Mr. Flynn added that the vacancies have been included in the FY 2011 budget that has been introduced to the General Assembly but noted that there still is a possibility that they could be eliminated.

Mr. Flynn asked the Council if anyone had any further comments or questions. There being none and with no action required he moved on to the next agenda item.

## **6. Chief's Progress Report**

Mr. Rhodes provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan Legislation. He explained that an early draft was introduced in the Senate but that staff was awaiting introduction of a replacement bill that would incorporate the changes made by the State Planning Council over the past month.

## **7. Other Business**

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Mr. Flynn advised the Council that he will be a presenter at the upcoming Power of Place Summit on May 14, 2010. Mr. Flynn said that his presentation will cover four years of progress and achievements accomplished in implementing land use 2025. Ms. Baxter asked if Housing will be one of the components and Mr. Flynn indicated that it plays a prominent role throughout.

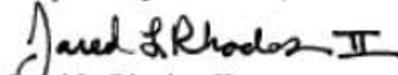
Additionally, Mr. Flynn announced that Ms. Noreen Shawcross, Chief, of the Office of Housing and Community Development will be retiring on May 28, 2010. Mr. Flynn invited the Council to attend the fundraising retirement event. Mr. Flynn said that the proceeds will be submitted to the Homeless Transportation Fund coordinated through Cross Roads Rhode Island. The gathering will be held on June 15, 2010 at the Wannamoisett Country Club, Rumford, RI at 5:30 p.m. and tickets will be \$30.

Ms. Baxter, speaking as the Chair of the RI Housing Resource Commission, said that during Ms. Shawcross' five-year tenure, she was committed, passionate and extremely knowledgeable. Ms. Baxter then said that Ms. Shawcross helped bring the Housing Commission to the forefront. Ms. Baxter said she will miss Ms. Shawcross and wishes her well. Mr. Flynn also took a moment to mirror Mr. Baxter's comments and then said Ms. Shawcross is a joy to work with and she will be missed.

**8. Adjourn**

*There being no further discussion Mr. Deller motioned to adjourn. Ms. White-Raymond seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:54 A.M.*

Respectfully submitted,



Jared L. Rhodes, II  
Secretary