

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

**Thursday, February 11, 2011**  
William E. Powers Building  
Conference Room A  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

**I. ATTENDANCE**

**Members Present**

Mr. Kevin Flynn, Chair	Representing Mr. R. Licht, Director, RI DOA
Mr. Brian Daniels, Vice Chair	Director, Governor's Policy Office
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, II Secretary	Chief, Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Lea Anthony	Representing Mr. W. Sequino, Public Member
Ms. Jeanne Cola	Chair, RI Housing Resources Commission
Mr. Thomas Deller	Providence Department of Planning & Dev.
Ms. Diane Feather	Representing Ms. J. Boyle, RI LOCAT, President's Designee
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	RI DOA, Budget Office
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	RI LOCAT, Government Official Representative
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Mr. D. Beardsley, RI League of Cities and Towns (RI LOCAT), Executive Director
Mr. Bob Shawver	Representing Mr. M. Lewis, Governor's Designee
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation
Ms. Janet White-Raymond	Public Member

**Members Absent**

Mr. Stephen Cardi  
Cardi Corporation

**Guests**

Ms. Diane Badorek  
RI Department of Transportation  
Mr. Philip Hervey  
Barrington Town Planner  
Mr. Michael Hogan  
RI House Policy Office

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Ms. Kelly Mahoney	RI DOA, Policy Director
Mr. Peter Osborn	Federal Highway Administration
Ms. Meredith Pickering	RI Senate Fiscal Office
Mr. Vince Scarano	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Mark Therrien	Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

**Staff – Division of Planning**

Ms. Linsey Cameron	Supervising Transportation Planner
Ms. Dawn Vittorioso	Executive Assistant

**II. AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Flynn called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m and introduced Governor Chafee's new Director of Policy, Mr. Brian Daniels, to the Council.

**2. Approval of the December 9, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

*Mr. Deller moved to approve the Minutes of December 9, 2010 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. White-Raymond. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**3. Transportation Improvement Program FY09-12 – Amendment #9**

Mr. Shawver first overviewed the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) portions of the proposed Amendment. A summary of his presentation is as follows:

- The amendment serves as a status report for highway and rail funds by listing the actual amounts assigned to projects in 2009 and 2010.
- The amendment reprograms and adjusts project costs and schedules that were planned but not implemented in 2009 and 2010.
- The amendment does not add any new projects except for four Pavement Management projects deemed necessary due to poor physical conditions.
- The TIP is fiscally constrained based on the expectation of federal funding to be provided in each coming year.
- The allocation of program funds according to categories includes: 33 percent to bridge funding; 19 percent to transit including RIPTA and commuter rail funds; 19 percent to highways; 9 percent towards safety; 7 percent towards miscellaneous items including change orders, enhancements, and administrative expenses; and unfortunately 13 percent towards GARVEE debt service.
- The amendment renames certain Traffic/Safety programs to better reflect the activities funded.

- The program adds two new programs, the Program to Eliminate Structurally Deficient Bridges and the Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) Program.
- The amendment updates the funding amount to what is currently available under SAFETEA-LU earmark projects.
- The amendment updates the Enhancement project schedule.
- And it redirects funding for operating the Transportation Management Center into the Interstate program.

Mr. Therrien then presented an overview of the Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority's (RIPTA) portion of the proposed amendment. A summary of his presentation is as follows:

- The amendment increases the "Bus, Facilities-Admin/Maintenance, Upgrade/Expansion 5309 Program" line item to \$5.23 million in 2011 to reflect the recent award of \$1.5 million in discretionary grant funds for the installation of solar heating at RIPTA's Elmwood Avenue Facilities;
- It adds \$0.88 million of recently awarded discretionary grant funds to the "Bus, Facilities-Passenger Rehab, Upgrade/Expansion 2009 Program" line item for the design and construction of the Greater Kennedy Plaza improvement project;
- It reprograms \$0.8 M dollars from the "Bus, Major Transit Project, 5307 Program" line item to the "Bus, Transit Operations, Small Urban, 5307 Program" line item and adds an additional \$0.48 M in state match funds to that line item. This change is in accordance with new guidance from FTA allowing RIPTA to use 80 percent federal funding for on-going transit service on Aquidneck Island and the associated reduction in funds for Major Projects will result in the delayed implementation of \$0.8 million for Alternative Analysis/Environmental Assessment.
- And it maintains fiscal constraint as the first two changes are the result of additional funding made available through discretionary grant program awards and the third represents a reprogramming of existing funds plus an additional transfer of \$.48 M from RIPTA's operating budget.

Ms. Cameron concluded the formal presentations by reporting on the public hearing process and comments received. In summary, she pointed out that:

- The amendment was first advertised in the Providence Journal on December 21, 2010;
- That the notice was followed by a 30 day public comment period;
- That the public hearing was conducted in front of the TAC, as is customary, on January 27, 2011;
- And that three members of the public took the opportunity to comment.

Ms. Cameron then took the time to overview the comments received, as documented in the Public Hearing Report's Summary table, and reported that the TAC had unanimously voted to recommend approval of the amendment as proposed.

The Chair then opened the floor for questions and comments regarding the content of the proposed amendment. Ms. Conard-Wells first asked if Kennedy Plaza would eventually be eliminated. Mr. Therrien said that it wouldn't and explained that when Kennedy Plaza was originally designed, the Public Transit System had lower volumes of people commuting through it. Over the years the volume grew however and Kennedy Plaza has become more congested. As a result, RIPTA's goal is not to get rid of Kennedy Plaza but to try and access the additional curb space that is needed to accommodate the growing ridership and the buses they demand. Mr. Flynn asked if the plan included disbursing traffic to the outskirts of Kennedy Plaza. Mr. Therrien said yes and that some of the routes will be relocated to Burnside Park as well.

Ms. Conard-Wells then asked if the continuing federal transportation funding resolutions that she has been hearing about would help local cities and towns address their pothole concerns. Mr. Shawver indicated that the issues were not directly connected but did note that the potential depletion of snow removal budgets as a result of the severe winter conditions we have been experiencing could reduce DOT's ability to do pavement management projects once the winter is over.

Mr. Schaefer next asked for an update on the status of municipal expenditures from the Local Roads Program. Mr. Shawver apologized for not having the specifics available for each city and town but did note that the funds continue to flow and that the details for each municipality could be found on the Department's web site.

In concluding the discussion Mr. Murray pointed out that he was very pleased to see the references to the Complete Streets Program contained in the draft TAC minutes. He noted his Town's support for the Program and recent adoption of a related resolution. Mr. Rhodes then advised Mr. Murray that he and Ms. Cameron would be meeting with Mr. Abel Collins from the Sierra Club to discuss the Program in more detail.

There being no further discussion, *Mr. Deller moved to approve the amendment. Ms. White-Raymond seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.*

#### **4. Transportation Advisory Committee Vice Chairmanship**

Mr. Flynn explained that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is currently without a Vice Chairperson due to the recent passing of long time member Dr. Robert Quigley. In recognition of the need to fill this important office and the authority of the State Planning Council to make the appointment as specified in Rule 9.02.02, the TAC has since voted to nominate Committee member Robert Murray to this position. This nomination was presented to the State Planning Council at its last meeting and was now on their agenda for action.

*As there were no questions or comments, Ms. White-Raymond moved to approve the appointment. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.*

#### **5. Proposed 2011 Meeting Schedule**

*As there were no comments, Ms. Prager motioned to approve the proposed 2011 Meeting Schedule. Mr. Deller seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.*

## **6. Staff Report**

The focus of Mr. Rhodes's report was on some of the recent reviews conducted by the Program's comprehensive planning section.

He began with the City of East Providence's Five Year Update noting that although the update did not receive a state approval, the City's staff was to be commended for the hard work and dedication they exhibited in positively addressing four of the five concerns initially raised by the Director. The one concern he explained that was not resolved and ultimately prevented the issuance of a state approval, related to a conflict between the plans stated future land use priorities for a significant piece of vacant waterfront property and those of the State Coastal Resources Management Council.

Mr. Rhodes next moved on to Westerly. Westerly he explained had recently completed a full rewrite of their comprehensive plan and the Director's initial comments had been provided to the Town. Mr. Rhodes noted that the primary issue of concern was CRMC's call for the adoption of the Salt Pond SAMP Overlay district which had been outstanding for over twenty years. Mr. Rhodes then indicated that with the assistance of the Statewide Planning staff and the CRMC, the Town was now moving forward to adopt the Overlay district. He noted that the Town had requested an extension of their review process to allow for the local approval of the overlay district and that he anticipated Director Licht's approval.

Mr. Rhodes then explained that the City of Woonsocket was also in the process of a full rewrite and that the Director had provided initial comments to the City on February 7, 2011. Mr. Rhodes noted that the primary issue of concern in this instance was the City's stated goal of reducing affordable housing provision from the current 16.5% to 12.5%. This he pointed out was clearly in conflict with the State Guide Plan. He emphasized that staff had been in contact with the City on this matter but that no official response had yet been received. He concluded by noting that the City has until April 7, 2011 to respond.

He then moved on to Smithfield noting that two amendments were received from the Town on December 13, 2010. The first re-designates a tract of land adjacent to Route 295 from an Industrial Classification to a Planned Corporate Classification. This amendment was consistent with the State Guide Plan and an approval was issued on February 9, 2011. The second revises a key strategy for the provision of affordable housing and was still under review.

Mr. Rhodes also noted that the City of Cranston had submitted a full rewrite of their comprehensive plan to the Program for review on December 16, 2010. That review he explained is underway and that a draft staff report was not scheduled to be delivered until February 28, 2011.

Mr. Rhodes then switched from discussing those comprehensive plans and amendments that were undergoing official review to those that were being reviewed as drafts. He noted the completion of the draft reviews for Pawtucket, Burrillville, Hopkinton, and North Kingstown and on going reviews for Coventry and Exeter. Mr. Rhodes said that the Cities and Towns with whom the Statewide Planning staff has worked with so far are receptive to the process and that they truly seem to appreciate the feedback that has been provided; which ultimately results in a more effective comprehensive planning process.

In concluding, Mr. Rhodes summarized the ongoing comprehensive plan update efforts that are being funded through the Challenge Grant initiative and advised the Council that their proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act had been introduced again this year in the Senate as S 0021.

Mr. Flynn then took a moment to update the Council on other staff efforts. Mr. Flynn said that the Energy Facility Siting task force will be meeting on February 10, 2011 to discuss the Wind Siting Standards and Guidelines; which involves several cities and towns that have expressed concern with Wind Turbines. Mr. Flynn said that the Legislature wanted this to be performed back in 2007; however, staffing shortages prevented this from going forward. Mr. Andrew Kostrzewa, a recent transfer from the Energy Office, will be assisting with these efforts. Concurrently, the Energy Guide Plan will be updated by Mr. Paul Gonsalves.

Mr. Flynn discussed the Water Plan Consolidation presentation that Ms. Nancy Hess presented at the last SPC meeting and then said that a meeting with the Water Resources Board Policy Committee has been scheduled to discuss strategic planning efforts.

Next, Mr. Flynn discussed the Homelessness Hearings that he recently attended. He then took a moment to thank Jeanne Cola, Housing Resources Commission Chair and Mr. Brian Daniels for their support. Mr. Flynn said that Senator John Tassoni conducted the three hearings and proposed the immediate closure of the Harrington Hall facility in Cranston. Mr. Flynn then explained that the former Training School was reviewed as a potential alternative location; however, the facility requires construction work and is not readily available for occupation. Additional facilities are being considered.

Mr. Flynn also discussed the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Mitigation funds. He announced that \$8.9 M was approved by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for flood mitigation funding. Mr. Flynn said that staff from the Office of Housing and Community Development will be requesting proposals from municipalities in the near future.

At this time, Mr. Murray asked if the Wind Energy Siting products would be for general guidance and if they would provide a model ordinance. Mr. Flynn said yes that is his expectation.

Mr. Schaefer explained that a Legislator recently suggested that the city and town councils enact moratoriums until Statewide Planning staff completes the work. In response, Mr. Flynn said that moratoriums should be assessed on a case by case basis. He then added that the Town of North Kingstown has already passed their own.

Ms. Conard-Wells next asked for clarification regarding the development concerns that were presented by the Charlestown Trails Edge Project. Mr. Flynn responded by noting that it was found to be inconsistent with Land Use 2025 given its location, design and overall density. Ms. Conard-Wells then asked if there was a conclusion or resolution to the larger issue of how to best provide for affordable housing in rural settings. Mr. Flynn said that an Advisory Committee was formed and they are meeting to put forward clear guidance. Ms. Conard-

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Wells then said that she would be interested in attending the Committee's meetings as did Mr. Murray.

**7. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**8. Adjourn**

*There being no further discussion Ms. White-Raymond motioned to adjourn. Mr. Trevor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:50 A.M.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Jared L. Rhodes, II  
Secretary