

Rhode Island State Planning Council
Draft Minutes of Thursday, April 10, 2014 Meeting
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

I. ATTENDANCE

1. Members Present

Mr. Richard Licht, Chair	Director, RI Department of Administration
Mr. Kevin Flynn, Secretary	Associate Director, Division of Planning
Ms. Jeanne Boyle	President's Designee, RILOCAT
Ms. Janet Coit	Director, RIDEM
Ms. Sharon Conard-Wells	West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation
Mr. Roy Coulombe	Public Member
Mr. Ruben Flores-Marzan	Providence Department of Planning & Development
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	RI Department of Administration, Budget Office
Mr. L. Vincent Murray	RI LOCAT, Government Official Representative
Ms. Anna Prager	Public Member
Ms. Amy Rainone	Representing Mr. Richard Godfrey, Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing
	Mr. Sam Shamoon Governor's Designee
Mr. Michael Lewis	Director, RIDOT
Mr. Mark Therrien	Representing Mr. Raymond Studley, RIPTA
Mr. John Trevor	Environmental Advocate
Dr. Michael Fine	Director, RI Department of Health
Ms. Amy Rainone	Representing Richard Godfrey, Executive Director, Rhode Island Housing
Mr. Jan Reitsma	Representing Steven Hartford, Policy Director, Governor's Office
Mr. Michael Walker	Representing Mr. Marcel Valois Executive Director, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Ms. Janet White-Raymond	Public Member
Mr. Scott Wolf	Environmental Advocate

2. Members Absent

Mr. Dan Beardsley	Executive Director, RILOCAT
Mr. Stephen Cardi	Cardi Corporation
Ms. Jeanne Cola	Chair, RI Housing Resources Commission
Ms. Marion Gold	Executive Director, RI Office of Energy Resources

3. Guests

Ms. Linda George	RI Senate Policy Office
Mr. Steve Devine	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Hogan	RI House of Representatives, Policy Office
Mr. Andy Koziol	RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Karyn Lowe	RI Senate
Ms. Bonnie Nickerson	Providence Department of Planning & Development
Mr. Robert Pavia	RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Amy Thibeault	RI Department of Transportation

4. Staff – Division of Planning

Mr. Vincent Flood	Supervising Planner, Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Benjamin Jacobs	Principal Research Technician, Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Amanda Martin	Principal Planner, Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Jared Rhodes	Chief, Statewide Planning
Ms. Dawn Vittorioso	Executive Assistant, Division of Planning

II. **AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Call to Order

Chairman Licht called the meeting to order on April 10, 2014 at 9:03 a.m.

2. Approval of the March 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes – for vote

Mr. Licht asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 13, 2014. Mr. Coulombe moved to approve the minutes of March 13, 2014 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Flores-Marzan. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were none.

4. Vulnerability of Transportation Assets to Sea Level Rise – for discussion

Mr. Licht introduced Mr. Flood and Ms. Martin who delivered an informational PowerPoint presentation (attachment 1).

Mr. Flood and Ms. Martin summarized the following content:

- This project seeks to identify transportation assets that will be inundated under 1', 3' and 5' sea level rise scenarios, not including storm surge and to determine the vulnerability and impact on priority assets.
- Transportation assets include roads, bridges, RIPTA routes, ports and harbors, airports, rail lines, intermodal hubs and bikeways.

- This study built on work conducted in North Kingstown, done in partnership with Statewide Planning, and utilized LiDAR data from USGS.
- The study has two phases, the first of which, the identification of exposed or inundated transportation assets, is in the final stages.
- The final product of the exposure stage is a set of statewide and municipal map books, showing the exposed transportation assets.
- The symbology used on the sea level rise maps has been coordinated with other State agencies that are mapping sea level rise to provide a consistent communication strategy.
- Overall, the study has found that there will be exposed transportation assets in every coastal community throughout the State.
- A lot of the impacts will be to local roads, which are not traditionally funded through the TIP.
- The study approached bridges looking at two aspects of bridge utility, freeboard height and accessibility.
- The exposure study found 66 bridges in the State had some type of concern, 49 having low freeboard heights and 46 having accessibility issues; others having both.
- The second phase of the study will take the findings from the exposure mapping and determine the priority of implementing adaptation or mitigation measures, based on urgency and the extent of the impact.
- A final report will summarize the study findings and suggest ways in which impacts can be addressed, using examples from other MPOs and other states.

Having concluded the formal presentation, the Council engaged in the following discussion:

Mr. Licht questioned whether there is any consensus as to whether the impacts will be 1', 3' or 5' of sea level rise. Ms. Martin stated that the uncertainty being in when we expect to reach each scenario and that we will eventually reach 5' of sea level rise. She also stated that the 1' projections seem to be between 2030 and 2060, and that CRMC has adopted a policy expecting 3' to 5' of sea level rise by 2100.

Ms. Coit asked whether Statewide Planning will be requiring the municipalities to incorporate the projections into their comprehensive plans. Ms. Coit also asked for clarification on the guidance Statewide Planning will give as to when the municipalities can expect these changes. Ms. Martin replied that Statewide Planning is developing a resource for state and local decision makers, with a particular focus on RIDOT, local Departments of Public Works, local planners and RIEMA, and it will be up to each organization as to how they will use the information.

Mr. Rhodes added that amendments to the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act were passed in 2011 that now require municipalities to address natural hazards and climate change, including sea level rise, in their comprehensive plans. Mr. Licht asked whether under the new law comprehensive plans must be new every 10 years and updated every five years. Mr. Rhodes replied that the plans must be updated every 10 years, with an implementation report every 5 years showing the progress the municipality is making toward implementation. Mr. Licht then stated that within the next 10 years, every municipality is going to at least consider sea level rise.

Ms. Boyle stated that the time horizons anticipated for the onset of sea level rise extend beyond the time horizons of a municipal Capital Improvement Plan or comprehensive plan. Ms. Martin replied that the time horizons do not however extend past the expected life time of many of the transportation assets.

Mr. Rhodes stated that Statewide Planning has been working with the Town of North Kingstown to pilot the concept of addressing climate change within comprehensive plans. He also stated that this type of analysis will feed back in to the State Guide Plan through the long-range transportation plan. Mr. Rhode added that Statewide Planning is working both the local angle, through local comprehensive plans, and the statewide angle, folding the information back into the State Guide Plan. He also mentioned that this is the same approach being used for economic development and housing.

Mr. Licht asked if the difference from 1' to 3' of sea level rise is dramatically more than the difference from 3' to 5' of sea level rise, even though both are just 2 feet. Ms. Martin replied that the difference between 3' and 5' is still significant, but that it seems to have more relation to the way the State's roadway network is laid out, being that there is just more infrastructure within 5' of high tide than within 3' or 1'. Mr. Licht followed up by stating that some people may say that 5' of sea level rise is still 100 years away, but that 3' could still have serious impacts.

Mr. Lewis stated that the impacts depend on the service life of the individual facility and the value of the facility. He agreed that the information being studied is critical for decision-making and cited the example of Poppasquash Road in Bristol that may be underwater after 1' of sea level rise and questioned how often the State should keep investing in a road like that. He then stated that there are State roads that are going to be worthwhile to build a causeway with a road at grade because the State will want the road for the next 100 years. Mr. Lewis stated that there will be many miles of local road and that the municipalities may not be able to adapt all roadways, which may lead to decisions about abandonment or other non-adaptive solutions.

Mr. Murray commented that the charts in the presentation be expressed in miles instead of feet to make it easier for people to understand.

Ms. Coit asked Mr. Lewis whether it is true that if roads are destroyed and the State or municipalities haven't incorporated higher elevations, bigger culverts or moving the road into their planning efforts, then disaster recovery funds require that the road be put back the way it was. Mr. Lewis replied that he believes that is the case, that you can only replace in kind. Ms. Coit stated that was the case for Corn Neck Road after Sandy.

Mr. Licht asked whether you are allowed to protect the asset against the next storm. Ms. Coit replied that if you want the money right away, you have to use it to replace it as it was, but that RIEMA has indicated that if your local mitigation plan provides for the fact that you'd like to do more with the road if impacted by a storm, then the money can be spent to improve the asset. She stated that this type of planning is critical for recovery funds. Mr. Lewis added that he believes Sandy has caused some rethinking of that requirement.

Mr. Walker asked at what point is Statewide Planning, in their conformance reviews that are required when seeking other funds, going to say that a project is not in conformance because of this type of analysis and therefore not allow a grant application to be submitted. Mr. Rhodes asked for an example. Mr. Walker gave the example of a project seeking to put a sewer line into a commercial area that isn't already served by sewers that will expand the commercial opportunity in the area and may be seeking funding from EDA. Mr. Walker then asked at what point in the process, given that sea level rise is an 85-year time horizon, does Statewide Planning say it isn't consistent.

Mr. Rhodes replied that this type of consistency review will likely come after Statewide Planning has incorporated the appropriate content into the State Guide Plan, which is the basis that is used for making consistency decisions.

Mr. Walker asked that if East Providence puts in their comp plan that they need to think about sea level rise and climate change, including 5' of sea level rise will be around the year 2100, and they've got an opportunity to correct an issue in the community that can also support adaptation, for example expansion of commercial opportunities in the waterfront district, when will Statewide Planning say that the city didn't do what it was supposed to do.

Mr. Rhodes stated that Statewide Planning will have to wait and see as those situations come up and evaluate each one. He added that he didn't feel that he could give an exact date based on a hypothetical.

Mr. Licht stated that useful life is a term of art, even though it is used as an exact science. He stated that the State has invested hundreds of millions of dollars of State historic tax credits in buildings, many of which are over 100 years old, and some of the buildings are in floodplains because they were built along the rivers so that the rivers could give them power. Mr. Licht stated that the Internal Revenue Code says that the useful life of real estate is 30 years and that most buildings are built with the hope that they'll last a lot longer. Mr. Licht added that it depends on what the particular investment is.

Mr. Reitsma introduced himself and stated that he is working on climate change issues through the Executive Climate Change Council. Mr. Reitsma stated that this is an area that needs to be addressed in the report and that the Council is hoping to make some practical recommendations. Mr. Reitsma stated that one recommendation will be to think about an assistance program that could help municipalities to address State recommendations and climate change adaptation planning. He added that the State needs to rethink how the State provides assistance, which is not always the same as more money and more staff, but could be a rethinking of how assistance is structured. Mr. Reitsma added that this type of mapping is a huge first step, allowing communities to begin to deal with this, but that it begs the question of whether communities can really rely on the data for their planning and decisions.

After seeing the Mackerel Cove example in Jamestown, Ms. Coit stated that it should be noted that in this location, during the '38 hurricane, a school bus full of children were swept to their deaths. She added that even 70 years ago, storm surge was affecting that area.

Mr. Licht asked whether Connecticut is doing a similar study to this. Ms. Martin stated that Statewide Planning reached out to Connecticut and Massachusetts but didn't hear anything from them. She also stated that she doesn't believe they are ignoring the issue.

Mr. Licht added that there is a part of the Amtrak rail line in southern Connecticut that looks very vulnerable. Mr. Flood stated that Groton has done a similar study to the work undertaken by North Kingstown, and that there is an Amtrak bridge in Stonington, CT, that they closed in order to elevate it to account for sea level rise.

Mr. Licht asked whether there is a map of downtown Providence. Mr. Flood replied that there is one, but the presenters didn't bring it with them.

Mr. Wolf asked if there is a plausible scenario under which the impacts could happen in a lot less than 85 years. He also asked if the 85-year number is a conservative or aggressive number, or somewhere in between. Ms. Martin replied that the projection started out seeming conservative, but that the science is starting to say that we may continue to see increasing rates of sea level rise.

Dr. Fine asked whether there has been much change in sea level over the last 25 years. Mr. Flynn replied that there has been 10 inches over 80 years, but the sense now is, and CRMC would agree, that the rate of acceleration locally is becoming much greater. He added that from CRMC's perspective that sea level rise is going to accelerate at a much higher rate over the next 80 years than it had in the previous.

Ms. Coit asked whether CRMC is currently on the State Planning Council. Mr. Licht replied that they will be, if the legislators pass the bill that has been introduced. Ms. Coit added that during the discussion she kept looking for Grover Fugate, Director of CRMC, who would be better able to speak to the rate of sea level rise in the northeast. She stated that Mr. Fugate would be able to give the Council information about subsidence, a tipping point, an ice cap melting scenario and other things that could happen to vastly accelerate sea level rise. She also stated that she believes he belongs on the Council.

Ms. Boyle requested that the report on the study include examples of what communities can do to address sea level rise, with examples. Mr. Flood replied that there will be a section on what places around the country and around the world have done to adapt, with case studies.

Mr. Licht added that there are ways to plan for this, if you are fixing something or repairing it, that it may cost a little more money to address pending sea level rise concerns up front, but doing so could save money in the long run.

Mr. Reitsma asked how easy or difficult it is for Statewide Planning to keep updating this information. He provided the example of the newly approved state rail plan, and whether there might be opportunity to further update it and asked how easy or difficult it would be to do that. He stated that he has reviewed the draft housing plan developed as part of RhodeMap RI and asked to what extent it considers the potential impacts on housing stock.

Mr. Rhodes replied that Statewide Planning and the State Planning Council are able to continually revise the content of the State Guide Plan, though it does require a standard public hearing process. He added that there are some administrative hurdles, but they are not great. Mr. Rhodes also noted that the program's Rhode Map RI team was coordinating with RIEMA to see if there are existing housing stock that could be integrated into this State Guide Plan Element.

Mr. Reitsma added that this raises some issues, if the State keeps putting out updated plans and it is almost inevitable that the plans could be obsolete the day they are issued.

Mr. Flores-Marzan asked whether this study is addressing other types of extreme weather events and if anyone is going to be studying them in the future. Mr. Licht stated that CRMC's Beach SAMP is talking about surge as well as sea level rise, but that it is limited. Ms. Martin stated that now that Statewide Planning has figured out how to do this kind of analysis, it is going to be easier to do other types of analysis if modeled data is available. She said that Statewide Planning can't necessarily model storm surge, but if someone else has done it, Statewide Planning has a better sense of how to use the data in the model to look at the impacts.

Mr. Flores-Marzan stated that extreme heat, extreme snow storms and other extreme events will affect the State's urban fabric. Mr. Licht said that this will be a topic of discussion in the Executive Climate Change Council and will likely be addressed in the Council's report. Ms. Coit added that there is a meeting of the Council on April 15th that is about municipalities, what they are doing now, what they are worrying about and what they need to do to address climate change.

Ms. Coit added that CRMC has projections of Providence, and across the state, of 5' of sea level rise and storm surge that are pretty dramatic. She stated that the question remains what is to be done with the scenarios.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Licht thanked Mr. Flood and Ms. Martin for their presentation and moved to the next agenda item.

5. **2014 TIGER Grant Proposals** – *for discussion*

Providence Streetcar

Mr. Licht introduced Ms. Nickerson, Director of Long-Range Planning for the City of Providence, who delivered a presentation on the Providence Streetcar proposal (attachment 2). Having concluded the formal presentation, the Council engaged in the following discussion:

Mr. Licht asked Ms. Nickerson to clarify how the projects to revamp Kennedy Plaza, and the streetcar project, which will go through Kennedy Plaza will integrate with one another. Ms. Nickerson replied that the City is currently the biggest investor in the revisions to Kennedy Plaza, having put \$2 million into the beginning phase of the transformation. She stated that the City has been working very closely with RIPTA and community partners to make sure the Kennedy Plaza re-visioning happens in a way that is beneficial to all involved and works with the proposed streetcar initiative. Mr. Licht added that the State will also be a big partner if the Governor's \$40 million bond issue is passed.

Mr. Therrien added that there is no scenario in which RIPTA would leave Kennedy Plaza, stating that Kennedy Plaza will always be a hub of transit activity. Ms. Nickerson added that Kennedy Plaza is the center of downtown and is always going to be where the City wants to see transit. She stated that running the streetcar line through Kennedy Plaza enhances all of the work that is happening there and is planned for the area.

Mr. Licht stated that the City is seeking something where there are a limited number of federal dollars available and that all other federal dollars come through the statewide planning process, whereas TIGER grants do not. Therefore, the State Planning Council has no say in the grant applications. Mr. Licht then stated that whether it is the City's money, the state's money or the federal government's money, it is transportation money. Mr. Licht then asked, if we had \$114 million dollars to spend on transportation enhancement, is this what we'd spend it on? Mr. Licht stated that he realizes that Providence is initiating the request, and has a different perspective, but that he didn't think this question was being asked.

Mr. Licht also stated that he doesn't believe the permanency argument. He stated that he grew up on Elmgrove Avenue, where the 41 rail car had been, and that the 41 bus now runs along the same line, and so continued the 41 line for the last 75 to 100 years. Mr. Licht asked why the City couldn't invest now in a bus along the line, even though no one is there, and have it run until people start to develop, to see if they really do.

Mr. Flores-Marzan responded with an example from Tuscon, AZ, where a rail line is in the final stages of construction and they have already received over \$800 million of private investment along the line. He stated that with all of the projects that the State is focusing on, this project provides an excellent proposition for folks outside of Rhode Island to start investing here. Mr. Flores-Marzan also cited the Sugar Hill streetcar in Salt Lake City, which already has \$400 million in private investment along the route. He stated that this project is being looked at nationwide and that people are expecting it to happen. He added that if the state doesn't have the opportunity to provide funding for this, perhaps there is an opportunity for more public private partnerships.

Mr. Licht replied that he understands that transportation infrastructure fuels economic investment, but that he was not convinced it has to be a fixed rail in the street that is so expensive. He stated that a bus, even running empty buses, would be a lot cheaper, and could facilitate development. Mr. Licht added that Salt Lake City and Tuscon are not Providence, Rhode Island, and that those cities have seen a lot of growth. Mr. Licht acknowledged that this is the Mayor's number one priority, and that the State Planning Council isn't going to make the decision, but that he has never been convinced that streetcars will drive economic development. Mr. Licht stated that economic development is about a lot of things. Mr. Licht added that transportation is needed to get people back and forth, but he doesn't know why it needs to be a fixed rail that costs so much money and is immovable if you find out that the wrong decision was made.

Mr. Flores-Marzan responded that the empirical data provides the factual evidence to make the case and that he would be happy to discuss it with Mr. Licht at a later date.

At this point, Mr. Licht excused himself for another meeting and asked Mr. Flynn to chair the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. Nickerson stated that the next presentation is on RIDOT's proposal for enhancing the Amtrak station as a multi-modal station. She stated that the City doesn't see any of the proposals as either/or propositions, but that there are a lot of complimentary things about each one that helps them to work together to enhance the capitol city as a multi-modal center. She stated that the City is also launching its bike share program this summer and is putting a new pedestrian bridge in place with the help of RIDOT. Ms. Nickerson stated that it is all part of making the capitol city an easy place to leave your car and choose to do something else.

Ms. White-Raymond asked about the financial impacts to the businesses that might be located along the streetcar route, as well as how the \$3 million annual operating cost is expected to be funded. She also stated that she agrees that the State and the City business climate need to be analyzed and really addressed before we might see the development.

Ms. Nickerson responded that during the Core Connector Study, the idea of a business assessment district along the route was analyzed and it didn't go anywhere. She stated that there will be no special assessment to property owners, rather there will be a tax increment area that will cover approximately a ¼ mile around the route. Ms. Nickerson stated that the tax increment financing district will capture the future increment from the property tax coming in and dedicates a portion of that, starting with 54% and going down over time, to finance the project. Mr. Flynn asked whether the district will fund capital or operation expenses. Ms. Nickerson replied that it will go to operations. She stated that most of the businesses already have a special assessment through the Downtown Improvement District so another assessment wasn't an option. She added that many business owners are enthusiastic about the route because they see it as a benefit to them.

Ms. Conard-Wells stated that economic development is about connecting people to jobs and, looking at the map, she didn't see anything that connects the west end, one of the poorest neighborhoods, in any current or future plans. Ms. Conard Wells stated that she doesn't understand why one the line going across Potters Avenue and connecting the west end to jobs is not included.

Ms. Nickerson replied that there will be a robust process to figure out what the best places are for future extensions of the line. She stated that for the current line, they had to figure out where there was already a base of ridership, which is why they have it connecting universities and hospitals. Ms. Nickerson stated that on the first day that it opens in 2018, they want the line to be full, so they have to go where there is a base of riders

today. She stated that in terms of future extensions, they have just been brainstorming ideas based on where there are natural transit hubs that they'd like to connect to in order to give people more choices of how to move around, like to Olneyville Square. Ms. Nickerson added that there will certainly be a process to look at how to connect to employment hubs, because the whole point of the line is to provide access to employment, services and education.

Ms. Conard-Wells stated that connecting to a hub that exists and where there is a base of people is great, but that the west end is one of the highest unemployment areas, and maybe it is because there is no hub to help people connect. She stated that this is just continuing a long history.

Ms. Nickerson agreed and stated that is why the City thinks it is important to build an extension to Prairie Avenue. She stated that CCRI is there and that a lot of development is happening along Prairie Avenue and that there are certainly logical extensions from there.

Mr. Wolf had some comments about how this proposal fits in to what other places are doing. He recalled Mr. Licht's comments about Tuscon and other high-growth cities, but stated that there are other slow-growth cities that are doing this, such as Cincinnati, New Haven and Kansas City. Mr. Wolf stated that there are already investments being made in Cincinnati and Kansas City, before the line is in operation. Mr. Wolf also stated that he saw an earlier iteration of the streetcar plan that suggested that the number of workers along the route is considerably higher than many other medium-sized cities' proposed streetcar routes. He stated that he thinks this is a very viable proposition based on the number of people that are likely to be in the catchment area. He also stated that this point doesn't negate the comments that Ms. Conard-Wells made about the extensions, but in terms of practicality and feasibility, there is a strong case to be made for it, especially looking at what is going on elsewhere.

Dr. Fine stated that there are 400 medical students at Brown in the Knowledge District, not at the University, and only 200 of them are in rotation at any time and therefore only 200 of them have to move from the medical school to RI Hospital at max. He also stated that the APC building sees 3,000 to 5,000 people a day, mostly from Providence and the west side.

Mr. Therrien stated that to operate bus in the corridor at the level of the streetcar would cost more money, operationally, because of the number of drivers. He stated that it would cost about \$25 million to do it by bus from an investment perspective and it would cost more to operate. Mr. Therrien added that RIPTA has added a tremendous amount of service to the west end and the south side over the last 6 months and so the area is being treated much better than it has in the past.

Ms. Conard-Wells stated that she understands that, but that nothing connects those areas across the City. She stated that connection could be made with one straight line.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Flynn thanked Ms. Nickerson for her presentation and moved to the next TIGER proposal.

Providence Station Transit Center

Next, Mr. Flynn introduced the presentation on the Providence Station Transit Center. Mr. Lewis invited

Mr. Andrew Koziol, from RIDOT, and Mr. Therrien to lead the presentation (attachment 3). Mr. Lewis then added that the State needs to look at all of the transportation initiatives as a layered system. He stated that the long-term goal is to build a logical, unified system that better serves all Rhode Islanders and has more access for more people to reach more jobs, whether by rail, bus or streetcar. Mr. Lewis stated that a city-centric approach to the streetcar is appropriate, but it doesn't mean that in the future it cannot become something larger. Mr. Lewis shared his vision of the streetcar crossing the river sometime in the future.

Mr. Koziol and Mr. Therrien then delivered the Providence Station Transit Center PowerPoint presentation (attachment 3). Having concluded the formal presentation, the Council engaged in the following discussion:

Mr. Flynn noted that there is fairly significant interest in developing a parking facility at the Garrahy courthouse complex, which could be part of this proposal. He stated that there seems to be renewed interest in the idea and that the parking facility could also potentially serve the 195 properties that are nearby.

Dr. Fine asked whether anyone had looked into the idea of building a multi-story parking garage on the State offices sites that are currently parking lots. He stated that there is not enough parking now and that much of the parking that is available is used by commuters. Dr. Fine wondered if a multi-story parking garage would be appropriate, and could possibly pay for itself if used by commuters.

Mr. Lewis posed whether the parking lots are really the best use of the space in the State offices complex. Mr. Lewis stated that since there is such a large population of state employees working on the site, they are trying to create less demand on the parking by having more opportunities for transit.

Dr. Fine replied that in the short-term, there will be a lot of demand as people come to use the Amtrak station.

Mr. Flynn added that the State is cracking down on the use of the State offices lots for commuter parking. He also stated that capitol hill is in a suburban mode, with 5 acres of parking adjacent to a highway ramp and highway visibility. He agreed that in the long-term, surface parking is likely not the highest and best use in this urbanized area.

Dr. Fine agreed, but stated that the Department of Health currently has 35 boards and commissions, a lot of volunteers and a lot of foot traffic and they are seeking to be consumer friendly.

Mr. Koziol noted that DOT is in the planning stage of an FRA grant that is looking at connecting to the mall by extending the platforms underneath to be able to connect to the parking garage with an elevator. He added that the idea is very conceptual, but it could be a real opportunity.

Mr. Flynn stated that Statewide Planning has been out in the community as part of the RhodeMap RI work and has observed, particularly in the low-income and minority communities, a perception that this work is geared at "getting poor people out of Kennedy Plaza". He added that he understands a broader transportation issue is at hand, but there is a sense in the community that this project is about trying to get "undesirable" people out of Kennedy Plaza. He indicated that this perception needs to be addressed and corrected.

Mr. Lewis agreed and stated that clearly more needs to be done. He added that the transportation improvements are about getting a better transit service for people who use it, bringing more people in to use it, having transfers take place in a public facility with amenities, and notching up the kind of level of service that has traditionally been provided to the RIPTA rider.

Mr. Reitsma asked whether anyone has looked at the resiliency issues with the two proposals discussed and to what extent the latest projections are being taken into account when determining feasibility, cost and design.

Mr. Koziol replied that this project is a planning grant, where the \$1.25 million in funding will bring the project through 30% design, and that resiliency can be incorporated into the environmental review.

Mr. Reitsma added that some of the projections show that there is concern in these areas. Mr. Flynn added that the CRMC maps do not just show static sea level rise, but also include the storm surge of the 1938 hurricane, which makes the impacts much worse. Mr. Reitsma added that there are opportunities that come with these projects as well. He stated that there have been serious storm water issues in this particular area and that there are ways to deal with it that could set an example for how to do things in a more sustainable way. He also noted that if we flag the issue right from the start there is an opportunity to address it and set a precedent that might be helpful for others.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Flynn thanked Mr. Koziol and Mr. Therrien for their presentation and moved to the next TIGER proposal.

I-95 Providence Viaduct

Mr. Flynn then introduced Director Lewis who delivered RIDOT's Providence Viaduct's PowerPoint presentation (attachment 4). Having concluded the formal presentation, the Council engaged in the following discussion:

Mr. Walker asked whether submitting the streetcar proposal jeopardizes the viaduct proposal. Mr. Lewis replied that he believes the delegation will ask the State for its priority. He also noted that there will be other TIGER grant opportunities under the current administration and that if either one was successful, they would pursue the other one in the next period. Mr. Lewis added that he has already decided to move forward with the proposal and that it will need financing. He stated that the revised concept for the northbound lane adds approximately \$30 million to the base project, considering that the Smith Street bridge needs to be replaced and the northbound lanes need to be repaved anyway. He summarized that the total for the project is in the \$220 to \$230 million range, and that some of the work would have to be done anyway. Mr. Lewis also stated that the proposal would add 1 ½ to 2 years to the construction project, meaning that I-95 would be under construction until 2021.

Mr. Wolf asked for more clarity on the numbers for the streetcar request and the viaduct, in terms of what is being asked of the federal government. Mr. Lewis replied that they are asking for \$20 million for the viaduct project and \$1.2 million for the planning grant. He also noted that the two projects don't compete with each other politically or geographically. Mr. Flores-Marzan added that Providence is asking for \$20 million for the streetcar project as well.

Mr. Lewis stated that historically, it is true that applicants don't get everything they ask for, so if they ask for \$20 million they can reasonably expect \$10 million, if they can expect anything at all. He added that RIDOT received \$10 million for their last proposal, but that they had asked for \$40 million. Mr. Lewis also stated that Rhode Island's success rate is about 5 to 1 compared to other states, and that we need to be cognizant of the politics that may go into the decisions.

Mr. Wolf asked whether anyone was aware of how much TIGER funding we've pursued in previous years.

Mr. Flynn stated that last time the state submitted for \$40 million and Providence also submitted, but he wasn't sure of the amount.

Mr. Lewis stated that other jurisdictions have submitted multiple requests, and while some have received multiple grants, some have not received a single grant.

Ms. Prager stated that planners have to be historians, knowing what came before, what worked and what didn't. She noted that she has seen rotaries replaced by intersections and lights, only to be turned back into rotaries. She agreed with Mr. Licht in that she is not sure that the streetcar proposal will be good for Rhode Island because they include a structural change to the roads, and wonders if there is another way to accomplish the same thing. Ms. Prager noted that just because there is money available, doesn't mean that we have to apply if we're not sure it is good for Rhode Island. She added that those who don't know history are bound to repeat it.

Mr. Flynn responded that the City of Providence is free to apply, but that it is a good question. He referred to Mr. Flores-Marzan's comments that there are a lot of examples around the country where similar initiatives have resulted in the desired effect of spurring construction activity. Mr. Flynn stated that while this belief may not be universally accepted, but that fact doesn't stop anyone from submitting an application. He added that the State Planning Council is not making the call.

Ms. Prager stated that she understood, but that it is on the agenda for discussion. She added that she isn't sure what will be done with the comments, but wanted to make sure her comments were noted. She stated that she has seen things happen in a circular way and that \$117 million is a lot of money.

Mr. Flynn stated that the comments were excellent and added that the comments were not falling on deaf ears.

Ms. Prager noted that she is interested in Mr. Reitsma's comments about finding new ways to help communities besides technical assistance and money. She stated that she would like the State Planning Council to have the opportunity to be informed of what those other ways could be. Ms. Prager stated that the local communities can't keep up with what they have now and that Rhode Island's 39 municipalities do a lot of repetitive work.

Mr. Reitsma agreed, stating that the urgent need to talk about climate change and resilience creates an opportunity to see additional opportunities. He stated that RIEMA has a tremendous role to play and is focused on assisting municipalities. Mr. Reitsma added that if we can pull capabilities from all the state agencies and put it together into an assistance structure, we may be able to provide timely assistance even though we may not be able to get more money to build new assistance programs. He stated that there may also be ways to think more in an entrepreneurial way about where resources are available. Mr. Reitsma stated that there are a lot of resources available in the state, with the academic institutions for example, and that we should marshal them and combine them. He noted that people from URI and Brown are working with the state planners and other agencies to come up with information and resources that communities can use. Mr. Reitsma stated that we need to start sharpening it and focusing it so that the municipalities feel that there is real, meaningful, practical assistance available and that they are not on their own.

Ms. Prager stated that there is a need to coordinate all of the planning. Mr. Flynn added that Statewide Planning has been able to make changes to impart to the communities that we think of them as our partners and our clients, not the recipients of more work than we can figure out how to give them.

Mr. Wolf stated that while the streetcar does have great costs, the projections are that it also has big benefits. He stated that those who think it is a good idea see it as a major economic development initiative, in addition to transportation. Mr. Wolf added that he couldn't justify the project strictly on transportation, but that when you look at the economic development potential and what is being realized by other communities, it is much more easily justifiable. He stated that there is somewhat of a competitiveness issue and that a lot of the mid-size cities that are options for businesses and talented people to go to other than us are investing in this now.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Flynn thanked Mr. Lewis for his presentation and moved to the next agenda item.

6. FY 2015 Unified Transportation Planning Work Program – for discussion

Mr. Flynn held the discussion about the work plan until the next meeting.

7. Associate Director's Report – for discussion

Mr. Flynn held the Associate Director's comments until the next meeting.

8. Other Business – for discussion

Mr. Therrien stated that RIPTA has requested an administrative adjustment to the TIP program in order to move funds from FY 2011 and 2012 into the current TIP.

Mr. Rhodes stated that approval from the State Planning Council is not necessary based on the written agreement that Statewide Planning has with DOT and RIPTA. He added that Mr. Flynn has the ability to approve the request that they just wanted to make the Council aware of this action.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Flynn asked for a motion to adjourn. Council member Lewis motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Council member Wolf and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kevin Flynn
Secretary