

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

January 27, 2011 @ 6:30 p.m.
RI Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

TAC members present:

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Dan Boudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Russ Chateaufneuf	RI Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Ann Clarke representing Mr. Kevin Dillon	RI Airport Corporation
Ms. Marilyn Cohen	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Robert Murray	Public Member
Ms. Linda Painter	City of Providence
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member
Ms. Harriet Holbrook representing Mr. Mark Therrien	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and Towns

TAC members absent:

Mr. Alan Brodd	Town of Cumberland
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public member
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. Jim Soctomah	Narragansett Indian Tribe
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health

Others in attendance:

Mr. Abel Collins	Sierra Club
Ms. Eugenia Marks	RI Audubon Society; Coalition for Transportation Choices
Mr. Bill Lagare	Valley Transportation Corporation
Ms. Meredith Pickering	RI Senate Fiscal Office
Ms. Margherita Pryor	Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition
Mr. Kevin Viveiros	Pare Corporation

Statewide Planning Staff Present:

Mr. Kevin Flynn	Associate Director
Mr. Jared Rhodes	Chief
Ms. Linsey Cameron	Supervising Planner
Ms. Ronnie Sirota	Principal Planner

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Approval of November 18, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Upon motion of Mr. Walker to approve and seconded by Mr. Sherlock the November 18, 2010 minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Ms. Margherita Pryor commented that she hopes the written Agenda would be clearer about what the specific items are, especially on the Staff Report. Ms. Linsey Cameron who prepares the staff report stated that it serves as a summary of what is going on in the division. It does not include items to be acted on during the current meeting.

4. Transportation Improvement Program FY 09 – 12 – Major Amendment #9

Ms. Shocket called the public hearing to order at 6:36 p.m. As is customary, a complete report documenting the formal proceedings of the public hearing is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment 1.

TAC Consideration – for action.

Following the close of the public hearing, Ms. Shocket resumed the TAC meeting at 6:57 p.m. Ms. Shocket stated that the TAC would consider the comments received and the staff will prepare a public hearing report. She stated that the meeting would proceed with the TAC's consideration of the proposed amendment.

In reference to the TIP 2011 – 2012 Program Functional Categories pie chart figure distributed by Mr. Shawver during his presentation before the TAC, Mr. Wood asked Mr. Shawver if the 7 percent other category allocated under the TIP is a budget planning number. Mr. Shawver replied that yes, it was a planning number.

Mr. Schiller expressed concerns related to RIPTA's TIP amendments, one being that unlike the Highway Program, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) allows RIPTA to have broad funding categories which can result in projects being funded under more blanket categories without a lot of background information. Mr. Schiller was also concerned with TIP amendment item Facilities-Passenger Rehab Upgrade/Expansion itemized on page 23 for \$880,000 in 2011 and that it was not included in the October TIP amendment draft. Through discussion it was identified that the item was included in the November draft and it is intended to fund the Kennedy Plaza/peripheral bus hub project. Mr. Schiller also expressed concern that passengers and bus drivers were not

receiving enough information and input into this project. The dispersal of bus connections outside of Kennedy Plaza could be problematic for passengers who might have to walk potentially long distances at night and in the cold, to reach Kennedy Plaza or elsewhere when transferring buses he noted.

Mr. Baudouin added that RIPTA has offered many public presentations, with an average attendance of 300 people, regarding the vision as to what Kennedy Plaza could be like in the future. There will likely be more public comment/input opportunities because the goal is to create a more vibrant public space that is comfortable for pedestrians and passengers in and around downtown Providence. Mr. Schiller requested that passengers be notified when RIPTA is holding a public presentation. To his knowledge notices of the meetings were not posted on RIPTA's website. In addition, Mr. Schiller suggested the notices be posted within clear view of RIPTA passengers and drivers.

Mr. Wood stated that the record should reflect RIPTA's request for additional funding in the TIP, which is documented in the November 4, 2010 letter from Mark Therrien to Jared Rhodes and is included in tonight's TAC packet. The letter states that under the TIP's Facilities-Passenger, Upgrade Expansion category the grant "will fund design and construction of small peripheral hubs that are part of the Greater Kennedy Plaza project. This project includes construction of passenger amenities, improved signage and design of new traffic circulation patterns and improved traffic light configuration, identification of potential designated bus lanes and new bus berths."

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any other comments or questions on the TIP Amendment. Ms. Barker asked about the status for constructing bicycle/pedestrian access over the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge, which is identified for \$3.75 million in future funding under the TIP. Mr. Walker then asked if the current restricted bicycle/pedestrian access to the bridge is based on the road's limited access highway designation. Questions were also raised about the status of constructing the future park and fishing pier adjacent to the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge approach in North Kingstown. Mr. Shawver replied that DOT is responsible for the demolition of the prior structure and for the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian access projects. He added that he was not prepared to give a full briefing on the status of the project but would be happy to do so at the next meeting, if so desired. However to the best of his knowledge DEM is the entity that would be responsible for following through on any prior commitments for the public park and/or fishing pier. At this time there are no associated funding commitments within the TIP for these components.

Ms. Shocket asked if there were other comments or discussion. There were none.

Mr. Murray moved that:

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) adopts the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #9 as presented to the TAC and forward the recommendation to the State Planning Council.

Ms. Holbrook seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by the TAC.

5. Staff Report

Ms. Shocket welcomed Linsey Cameron as a new staff person. Ms. Cameron gave the Staff report:

Ms. Cameron stated that Mr. Baudouin at the last meeting commented that the RI State Senate would be appointing a special Legislative Study Commission on Sustainable Transportation Funding to examine new potential revenue streams for transportation initiatives. Mr. Baudouin asked that a letter be sent to Senator Teresa Paiva Weed regarding the TAC's support to make appointments to the Commission and for them to embark on a study on the subject. With the full TAC's support a letter has been mailed and a copy was included in the member's packet.

Also discussed at the last meeting was the issue of nominating a new Vice-Chair to the TAC. As an update, the item was placed on the State Planning Council's December meeting agenda for information only. There was unanimous consensus among council to place the appointment of Bob Murray as the Vice-Chair of the TAC on their February agenda for action.

Also discussed at previous meetings was the need for staff to update the State Rail Plan. Statewide Planning along with RIPTA and DOT are all on the same page and feel comfortable issuing the Request for Proposals to complete the State Rail Plan that will meet the guidelines of the Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008. Plans are to forward the RFP on to the Division of Purchasing tomorrow or early next week. Purchasing will then advertise the RFP and hopefully a consultant will be selected within 4 to 6 weeks. Ms. Clarke asked if there was a Task Force for this Plan and if the Airport Corporation could be part of it. Mr. Rhodes replied that they could.

Staff is also in the process of setting up a meeting with one of our neighboring Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Massachusetts's Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). SRPEDD serves 27 cities and towns in Southeastern Massachusetts including Seekonk, Attleboro, Taunton, Fall River, New Bedford, Rehoboth, and Swansea. Ms. Cameron stated that at this point Mr. Jared Rhodes, Mr. Bob Shawver from DOT, Mr. Mark Therrien from RIPTA, and herself will serve as the initial contacts from Rhode Island for some general discussion regarding cross border issues and potential transportation connections between Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. It is the intent to use this opportunity to bring to the surface any concerns that would require more in-depth discussion with additional people at the table at a later date. Barbara Breslin, the Federal Highway Administration team leader for Rhode Island has also been invited to participate. Ms. Cameron will keep the TAC posted on the outcome of that meeting.

As TAC members may have discussed before, part of FHWA and FTA's requirement of our certification includes drafting air quality conformity regulations. Staff has been working with RIDEM to draft the Air Pollution Control Regulation that is specific to transportation conformity and the working group has had two successful meetings in the last month. It should also be noted that the EPA is in support of the current draft. DEM is just about ready to proceed with preparing for the public hearing process and hopefully staff will bring it before the TAC and State Planning Council in the next month or two.

Ms. Cameron stated that she would like to thank everyone for making the extra effort to come out tonight to move the TIP Amendment forward. Hopefully everyone was able to get here safely and the effort is appreciated. The next TAC is scheduled for Thursday, February 24 in this location.

6. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any additional public comment.

Ms. Marks referenced a federal DOT press release, which follows a policy statement on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and regulations. The press release addresses integrating bicycles and pedestrians accommodations on new, rehabilitated and limited access bridges with connections to streets and paths. Ms. Marks also referenced the "Complete Streets" concept that welcomes walking, biking and public transportation as well as cars. According to the Coalition for Transportation Choices, ingredients found in a "Complete Street" include sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, pedestrian signals, and more.

Mr. Abel Collins of the Sierra Club and coordinator of the Coalition for Transportation Choices's Complete Streets initiative reiterated Ms. Pryor's and Ms. Marks' statements regarding Complete Streets and funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects. He added that the TAC should consider bike and pedestrian projects when prioritizing funding under the TIP. Mr. Collins is working with an enhancement grant on Elmwood Avenue that include these concepts and he encourages other similar projects with complete street elements.

7. Other Business

Mr. Baudouin asked if the TAC could have a copy of the Complete Streets resolution going around to the cities and towns initiated by the Coalition for Transportation Choices. Mr. Baudouin also suggested that the resolution be a potential action item for the TAC. Mr. Rhodes stated he would try to obtain the document and circulate it to the TAC.

Mr. Schiller thanked the speakers who made excellent points, especially Ms. Marks' comments on bicycles and bridges. He also called attention to two additional issues. One is the condition of snow on sidewalks, where he asked TAC members to encourage enforcement of the local snow removal ordinances. The second issue was the upcoming Senate meetings set to discuss transportation funding, and he encouraged TAC members to lend their support.

In follow up Mr. Baudouin asked if the TAC could develop a formal position statement on the need for greater transportation funding in Rhode Island. Mr. Rhodes stated he would get back to the TAC on this item. Ms. Shocket requested that this item be added to the February 24 meeting agenda.

8. Adjourn

Upon motion of Mr. Murray and Mr. Baudouin to adjourn, the TAC adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linsey Cameron
Supervising Planner

Attachment #1