

**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 Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Russ Chateaufeuf	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. Shockett 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

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
January 27, 2011 at 6:30 P.M.

RI Department of Administration  
Conference Room A  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908

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Draft Public Hearing Report  
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)  
FY 2009-2012 – Amendment #9

## Report Contents

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- II. Formal Public Hearing Proceedings
- III. Conclusion
- IV. Public Notice
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## I. Public Comment Summary and Response

Speaker	Comments relative to Proposed Amendment	Response
1. Eugenia Marks, <i>Audubon Society of Rhode Island and Coalition for Transportation Choices</i>	1. Expressed The Audubon Society of Rhode Island's support for the amendment.	1. Support noted.
	2. Called for the reconciliation of apparent inconsistencies between the tabular and graphical data found on page 11 of the initially approved TIP narrative.	2. RIDOT is currently working to asses inconsistencies which appear to be primarily due to database rounding procedures (with the exception of the "Other/Gas Tax" category). The Federal Highway Administration previously advised that the narrative portion of the TIP does not need to be revised to reflect content of amended TIP tables.
	3. Commented that one of the ways to reduce emissions that contribute to global warming is to reduce highway use/dependency by reallocating a higher percentage of funds to support public transit, commuter rail, freight rail, pedestrian amenities, and bicycle accommodations.	3. Comment noted.
	4. Noted concern with Rhode Island's reliance on bonding and Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles (GARVEE) and the need for more sustainable state transportation funding policy which reduces debt service cost.	4. Concern shared. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) shares the concern and has recently expressed its support for the appointment of the Special Legislative Study Commission on Sustainable Transportation Funding enacted into law during the last session of the Rhode Island General Assembly.
	5. Requested that the Safe Routes to School Program include State funds for additional pedestrian safety assessments and technical assistance to municipalities.	5. The lack of state funds available for transportation activities has been well documented. In any event, progress in the Safe Routes to School program has not been impacted by the lack of funding. The program's slow start is attributable to start-up measures necessary for program implementation and to the lengthy planning/design/permitting process that projects in this program must complete. These factors are based on federal requirements and cannot be overcome, no matter how much funding is provided.
	6. Asked whether the \$5M assigned to future years for Bicycle Route Signage would include on street striping of safe designated bicycle lanes?	6. The draft TIP does not include \$5 million for Bicycle Route Signage. Street striping for bicycle lanes can be considered after an assessment of the appropriate bike routes during the updating of the State Bike Map. Funding could either be included in the State's striping contract or in individual road improvement projects.
	7. Desires that some of the funding programmed to "Traffic/Safety Design/Planning" be allocated to improving pedestrian safety at bus stops, crosswalks, and crossing signals.	7. The Traffic/Safety Design/Planning line item funds design and planning work for all other Traffic/Safety projects listed. The type of improvements requested can be funded in the RI Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (RI*STARS) program designed to quickly address small scale safety issues such as those listed in the question.
2. Margherita Pryor, <i>Public Citizen and member of the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition</i>	1. Commended Transportation 2030 as a planning document but noted that the TIP needs to provide greater attention to the goals of Land Use 2025 specifically for compact development, a reduction in sprawl, and the support of walkable centers.	1. The United States of Department of Transportation recently commended the State Planning Council for the superb level of coordination that has been achieved between land use and transportation planning through the adoption of Land Use 2025 and Transportation 2030. The States Transportation Improvement Program furthers this by focusing available resources on system preservation and maintenance as opposed to extensions of the State highway system that would further suburban sprawl.
	2. Expressed concern that the percentage of funds dedicated to highways as opposed to transit and alternatives modes of travel were still to high.	2. Comment noted.
3. Bill Legare, <i>Valley Transportation</i>	1. Comments were unrelated to the TIP. See detailed narrative.	1. Not applicable.

## II. Formal Public Hearing Proceedings

### A. Attendance

#### **Speakers (for public comment):**

Ms. Eugenia Marks, Audubon Society of RI; Coalition for Transportation Choices  
Ms. Margherita Pryor, Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition  
Mr. Bill Lagare, Valley Transportation Corp.

#### **TAC members present:**

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair, Public Member  
Ms. Sue Barker, Greenways Alliance  
Mr. Dan Baudouin, Providence Foundation  
Mr. Russ Chateauf, RI Department of Environmental Management  
Ms. Ann Clarke representing Mr. Kevin Dillon, RI Airport Corporation  
Ms. Marilyn Cohen, RI Chapter American Planning Association  
Ms. Harriet Holbrook representing Mr. Mark Therrien, RI Public Transit Authority  
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  
Mr. Michael Walker, RI Economic Development Corporation  
Mr. Michael Wood, Public Member

#### **Others in attendance:**

Mr. Abel Collins, Sierra Club  
Ms. Meredith Pickering, RI Senate Fiscal Staff  
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

### B. Call to Order

Ms. Fran Shocket, TAC Chair, opened the Public Hearing at 6:43 p.m.

### C. Proceedings to Date

Mr. Jared Rhodes, Chief, summarized the proceedings to date. Specifically he noted that:

- The proposed amendment includes changes to the approved TIP that have been proposed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA).

- In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Rhode Island State Planning Council, Department of Transportation and Public Transit Authority, which outlines procedures for amending and modifying the TIP, the request has been classified as a major amendment.
- The amendment requests were made to the Statewide Planning Program on November 4, 2010 by RIPTA and November 8, 2010 by RIDOT.
- The required 30-day notice of the hearing and of the opportunity to submit comments was published in the Providence Journal on December 21, 2010 (see Section IV) with subsequent distribution to the transportation mailing list and the State Planning Council, as well as posting on the Statewide Planning Program website.
- The Department of Environmental Management, Office of Air Resources has determined that the proposed amendment would conform to the State Air Quality Implementation Plan.
- As of the start of the meeting, staff had not received any written comments.

#### ***D. RIDOT Presentation***

Mr. Robert Shawver gave an overview of RIDOT's proposed portion of Amendment #9. A summary of his presentation is as follows.

- RIDOT's amendments to the TIP now include federal funding from the March 2010 floods and stimulus funding received with the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
- The TIP 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 funding each 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 that is aimed to be more responsive to local community bridge and safety needs.
- 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.

### ***E. RIPTA Presentation***

Ms. Harriet Holbrook then presented an overview of RIPTA's portion of the proposed Amendment. A summary of her presentation is as follows.

The amendments requested by RIPTA generally include the award of two competitive grants and reprogramming of funding for Small Urban Transit Operations. The three (3) specific TIP changes proposed by RIPTA are as follows:

- The Facilities/Maintenance, Upgrade/Expansion Section 5309 will be increased to \$5.23 million to include the award of \$1.5 million to install solar heating at RIPTA's Elmwood Avenue Facilities. This project will be financed with 80 percent federal funds.
- In the Facilities-Passenger Rehab, Upgrade/Expansion Section the addition of \$0.88 million to fund the design and construction of small peripheral hubs that are part of the Greater Kennedy Plaza project. The project includes construction of passenger amenities, improved signage, design of new traffic circulation patterns, improved traffic light configuration, identification of potential designated bus lanes and new bus berths. This project is funded with 80 percent federal funding.
- Adds \$0.64 million to the Transit Operations/Small Urban line of the TIP in both 2011 and 2012. This change is a result of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) new guidance that now enables RIPTA to use 80 percent federal funding for on-going transit service on Aquidneck Island. In order to add these funds, RIPTA requests that the Major Transit Projects line of the TIP be reduced to \$0.99 million in 2011 and \$6.54 in 2012. This reduction in funds for Major Projects will result in the delayed implementation of \$0.8 million for Alternative Analysis/Environmental Assessment.

In conclusion, RIPTA's requested changes maintain fiscal constraint of the Transportation

Improvement Program.

## ***F. Public Hearing Procedures***

Mr. Jared Rhodes, Chief of the Statewide Planning Program, next reviewed the procedures for the conduct of the public hearing. Specifically he noted that:

- The hearing was being held by the State Planning Council in front of the Transportation Advisory Committee to accept comments on draft Amendment #9 to the State of Rhode Island's Transportation Improvement Program for fiscal years 2009-2012.
- The hearing would be conducted in accordance with the State Planning Council Rules of Procedure and the Administrative Procedures Act.
- Comments would first be received from those who have signed up on the registration forms available at the door, in the order in which they are completed and after the customary recognition of elected officials.
- Those who speak must identify themselves and address all comments to the Chair.
- Each speaker would be limited to an initial presentation of five minutes to insure that all who wish to speak may have an opportunity. After all who have registered have spoken, any others wishing to speak or make supplemental comments would be recognized.
- Written statements would be given equal consideration and may be read into or submitted for the record.

## G. Public Comments Received

1. Ms. Eugenia Marks, Senior Director of Policy, Audubon Society of Rhode Island and representative for the Coalition for Transportation Choices

- Ms. Marks formally presented her written comments, which are summarized in the Public Comment table and included in this report in their entirety under Section V.

2. Ms. Margherita Pryor, public citizen and member of the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition

- Commended Transportation 2030 as a planning document but noted that the TIP needs to provide greater attention to the goals of Land Use 2025 specifically for compact development, a reduction in sprawl, and the support of walkable centers.
- Requested that new development projects and commercial centers be considered as potential transportation nodes in RIPTA's redesign of Kennedy Plaza and planning for new peripheral hubs.
- Expressed concern that the percentage of funds dedicated to highways as opposed to transit and alternatives modes of travel were still too high.
- Commented that the RI DOT needs to think more boldly about and better integrate pedestrian and bicycle amenities into construction. As an example Ms. Pryor used the \$50 million allocated under the TIP for the Henderson Bridge and questioned why it has to be built to highway specification when it does not function as one. She also suggested that the bridge be more pedestrian and bike friendly.
- In conclusion, Ms. Pryor proposed that Rhode Island pursue similar initiatives for bicycle planning as Massachusetts. She then submitted a copy of the 2011 draft version of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) *Regional Transportation Plan*, Chapter 12: Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation.

3. Bill Legare, Valley Transportation Company

Mr. Legare offered no formal comments on the TIP Amendment but referenced TIP items 5316 Job Access/Reverse Commute Carryover and 5317 New Freedom Carryover as programs Valley Cab Company already participates in by providing handicap accessible taxis.

### ***III. Conclusion***

Ms. Shocket adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:57 p.m.

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) resumed its regular meeting following the close of the public hearing. The TAC subsequently approved the proposed major amendment.

#### IV. Public Notice

## V. Written Comment