

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

May 31, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.
Department of Administration

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

TAC members present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Ms. Melanie Army	City of Providence
Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Dan Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Ms. Elaine Colarusso	Town of East Greenwich
Mr. George Monaghan	RI Consulting Engineers (RISE)
Mr. Robert Murray, Vice Chair	Public Member
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Ms. Pam Sherrill	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Mark Therrien	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation

TAC members absent

Mr. Alan Brodd	Town of Cumberland
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. Russ Chateaufeuf	RI Department of Environmental Management
Mr. Kevin Dillon,	RI Airport Corporation
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member
Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and Towns

Others in attendance

Ms. Meredith Brady	RIDOT
Ms. Barbara Breslin	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Mr. Kevin Viveiros	Pare Corporation
Mr. Grant Dulgarian	

Statewide Planning Staff Present

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

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2. Approval of April 26, 2012 Meeting Minutes – *for action*

Upon motion of Ms. Sherrill to approve, seconded by Mr. Murray, the April 26, 2012 meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public comment on the Agenda items.

4. Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2013 - 2016

- Presentation of draft Public Hearing and Comment Period Report – *for discussion*
- Review suggested revisions to the draft TIP – *for discussion*

Ms. Callaghan presented the draft revised report dated May 31, 2012. Mr. Schiller commented that he did not receive the printed packet of TAC materials until the day of the meeting. Mr. Rhodes stated that there have been delays with the mailings to the State Planning Council and the Technical Committee, as well as other TAC members. The mailroom started using courier service recently for larger mailings which has created problems. Mr. Rhodes has now requested that they use regular mail.

Mr. Schiller asked Ms. Callaghan to characterize the public comments on the draft TIP. She replied that most comments received were in support of projects listed in the draft TIP. Ms. Callaghan stated that a summary of the recommended TIP changes can be found in Supplement #4 which should be discussed by the TAC. Ms. Sherrill asked what the difference was between the revised Public Hearing report dated May 31, 2012 and the original one that was included in the TAC packet. Ms. Callaghan explained that the revised report includes recently received written comments from Mr. Peter Brassard and the Town of South Kingstown in support of the O'Neill Bike Path Extension in Narragansett and the URI Bike Path Connector. Ms. Callaghan added that she was made aware of written comments from the Town of North Kingstown yesterday. Therefore the town's comments are not yet included in the public hearing report however they have been summarized in a separate narrative that accounts for the subcommittee's recommendations for the projects the town has provided comments on in their letter. Ms. Callaghan stated that the town provided comments on the Tower Hill Road / Phillips Street Sidewalk project and the West Main Street 1R project that were both not recommended for inclusion in the TIP, as well as the Post Road Reconstruction project that was recommended as an unprogrammed project for future years. Ms. Callaghan continued that the Tower Hill Road / Phillips Street project was reviewed by the Bike/Ped and the Study & Development subcommittees and was not recommended for funding given the limited funding resources and anticipated high cost of construction. The desired scope of the next project, West Main Street 1R was further explained in the town's letter, however staff was still not recommending it for funding based on limited funding resources, RIDOT's high estimated construction costs, sufficient pavement condition, and RIDOT's recently completed projects in the Wickford area. Next Ms. Callaghan explained that staff would like to defer the recommendation for the Post Road Reconstruction project to the next TAC meeting scheduled for June 28th. She continued that RIDOT is meeting with the Town of North Kingstown on Monday, June 4th to discuss the scope and timing for the project, especially as it relates to the town's sewer project along Post Road. Ms. Callaghan added that she will also be in attendance and will share all relevant information with the TAC regarding the inclusion of this project in the TIP.

Following Ms. Callaghan's summary, Mr. Rhodes explained that staff is suggesting four revisions to the draft TIP as listed on the supplement. They include:

- East Providence's I-195 Taunton Avenue / Warren Avenue interchange improvement project.
- South Main Street project listed under Highway / ADA Sidewalks indicate North / South Main Street, rather than just South Main Street.
- Table 10, Advanced Construction Projects should include the name of the municipality.
- Suggested edit for page 1 of the TIP text to add reference that the FY 2013 – 2016 TIP includes over \$1.2 billion in federal and state transportation infrastructure investment in the State of Rhode Island.

He added that there are three additional comments from North Kingstown which Ms. Callaghan just summarized. Staff is recommending that two of the projects still not be recommended for funding in the TIP. There will be a meeting Monday to discuss the third project, Post Road Reconstruction. Mr. Rhodes would like guidance from the TAC on all of the proposed changes. He added that if the TAC supports the recommended changes, staff will make the changes present the TAC with a final version of the TIP to review at the June meeting.

Mr. Boudouin stated that he liked the Public Hearing Report's summary of the comments and the responses. He asked if the commenters will be notified of the response to their particular comment. Mr. Rhodes stated that in the past notification was not provided to people who issued comments however it could be done but he would like to wait until the TIP is officially adopted.

Ms. Sherrill asked if the Town of North Kingstown's work on Post Road was dependent on RIDOT's reconstruction project. Ms. Sherrill continued that she would like to see this project supported since the town has been diligently working on improving the corridor under the assumption that RIDOT would complete the roadway reconstructed. Mr. Rhodes stated that this will be discussed at Monday's meeting with North Kingstown. Mr. Rhodes added that the town's comments were received just yesterday. Ms. Callaghan stated it is not certain what will be done regarding the scope of the project, road diet, bike lane, etc. These items will have to be worked out between RIDOT and the town.

Mr. Schiller asked where in the TIP are funds included for the study of potential infill commuter rail stations. Mr. Shawver answered that this work can be under general planning funds or perhaps general transit funds. Ms. Breslin stated that planning funds do not have to be in the TIP since studies can be on whatever is desired. Rhode Island has included planning funds in the TIP for informational purposes but does not have to be listed.

Ms. Shocket asked if anyone had any other issues. Mr. Therrien stated that RIPTA anticipates that it will be receiving discretionary funds as a result of numerous grant awards they have applied for and will mean that a TIP Amendment will be needed in many instances to add the funds into the TIP. Ms. Breslin answered that the TIP cannot be amended until the grant/discretionary funds are awarded. Mr. Rhodes explained that under the current agreement, discretionary awards can be handled as an Administrative Amendment. This requires notes to the TAC. Mr. Therrien replied that this was fine with him.

Ms. Shocket asked if there was any other discussion about Agenda Item #4, the Draft TIP. Ms. Sherrill asked if the East Providence project would go in as recommended. Mr. Shawver stated it would be in the Study and Development program.

5. FY 2013 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning – *for action*

Mr. Rhodes then asked if there were any comments on Section 3 of the Draft Work Program. Ms. Sherrill asked about the prioritization process of tasks, especially the tasks already in progress. Mr. Rhodes explained that it is difficult to prioritize tasks, as all are important. Ms. Sherrill commented how there is so much weaving between tasks. Ms. Sherrill also noted that a correction was needed on Access Management (task #1040) which was listed as a medium priority on page 3-1 and as a low priority on page 3-5. Mr. Rhodes will make the correction to have the text match the medium priority. Mr. Rhodes also explained that for the sustainable initiative, there will be two new positions, a supervising planner (which is Melanie Army who is presently a TAC member) and a principal planner.

Mr. Schiller commented that a bicycle advocate mentioned to him that other states have a state bicycle plan and that Rhode Island does not have such a plan. He added that the Rhode Island biking community is anxious to have a statewide bicycle plan. Mr. Rhodes commented he probably would not be supportive of a separate bicycle plan from the State Guide Plan. Looking at what bicycle initiatives have been completed and what the current needs are could be part of Transportation Long Range Plan update. Mr. Shawver commented he would agree with Mr. Rhodes's recommendation. Mr. Shawver continued that it is difficult to establish new bicycle path priorities from a statewide perspective as municipalities often have a different position on a project. For example, the Town of Johnston does not want a bike path but the City of Cranston does and they do not want the State dictating to them on the project. Also there are various agencies such as the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission that can look at bicycle path planning from a regional perspective. Mr. Shawver recommended that the TAC continue to utilize the TIP Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee as a means to access and plan implementation of the state's bicycle projects.

Mr. Stuart commented on the Work Program's Asset Management task # 1040 to review the RIDOT Physical Alteration Permit (PAP) application process. Mr. Stuart asked if there is a proposal for a workgroup on rail related to PAPs and if there is a requirement for bonding. Mr. Shawver stated that RIDOT has a very experienced rail engineer. Mr. Rhodes stated that staff can look into if bonding is required for rail PAPs.

Mr. Baudouin asked about the State Employee Commuter Task Force listed under the Work Program. Mr. Rhodes replied that he is looking forward to signing off on the State Employee Transportation Guide Plan with the director of the Department of Administration and that the Division of Planning does not have the authority to act on the recommendations. Mr. Rhodes also replied to the request to send copies of the report to the TAC once it is complete.

Ms. Sherrill stated that according to a recent Providence Journal article that the Governor would like to move some state agencies into the old Superman building in Providence. Mr. Sherrill added that she felt locating state offices in this downtown Providence building would provide a perfect opportunity to capitalize on transit. Ms. Callaghan stated there are a variety of state offices located throughout the state that have different availability of parking for state employees therefore making it a complicated issue to recommend a single solution to reduce single occupant vehicle parking/commuting.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the Draft Unified Work Program will not be in front of the State Planning Council until June 7, 2012. He asked that any additional comments be sent to him before that time. Mr. Rhodes then continued to describe the Work Program. He stated that Section 1 is introductory content that provides an overview of the structure of the Statewide Planning Program and the context in which the work is completed. Section 2 has incorporated a lot more content this year as there is a lot more reporting on Statewide Planning's progress throughout the year. Mr. Rhodes added that much more effort was put into this section than in the past. There is a summary of accomplishment in the beginning of the section. Statewide Planning has done very well in some areas but has been held back by continued staffing vacancies in others. Overall Statewide Planning has managed to make good progress and are projected to finish the year within budget.

Mr. Rhodes continued that Section 4 identifies the sources of the funding and the staff who will be implementing the proposed FY 13 work tasks, the funding sources that are projected to be available, and the estimated cost per task. Mr. Rhodes noted that the importance of Table 4-1 which lists each of the tasks with the total cost breakdown by funding source. The total estimate personnel budget for FY 13 is \$3.2 million. The budget's funding resources include 56 percent from FHWA, 23 percent from the State, 9 percent from FTA, and 8 percent from HUD. Other funds are contractual or as grants such as the Rail Plan, Safe Routes to School, and planning challenge grants. Mr. Rhodes added that there is a new entry for Sustainable Community grants however Safe Routes to School and the planning challenge grants will not have another round of a grant solicitation in FY 2013. The funding listed is essentially to cover the grants already awarded. The proposed budget is in line with both the state and federal resources that are projected to be available over the coming fiscal year. Mr. Rhodes asked if there were any comments on Section 4. There were none.

Mr. Rhodes then asked Mr. Shawver and Mr. Therrien to discuss the appendix which covers RIDOT and RIPTA. Mr. Shawver stated that the appendix covers non-project related funds such as the bike program, highway statistics, GIS program, planning studies i.e., commuter rail and environmental studies. Other items also include historical preservation and work with the University of Rhode Island to promote engineering for students. Mr. Boudouin asked if it covered traffic congestion efforts. Mr. Shawver responded the information includes such items as traffic calming and calculating accident data.

Mr. Therrien stated that there is no specific category for planning funds for RIPTA. Therefore, they use a portion of the formula funds for planning projects. Mr. Therrien added that RIPTA's recent planning efforts have involved a lot of public participation. He continued that there were over 50 people for a recent meeting about rapid transit on Broad Street, as well as a good turnout of about 30 people for a recent meeting regarding Hope Street. Mr. Schiller added that these public participation numbers are very positive especially when reporting to the federal government.

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any other questions or comments. Mr. Murray then moved that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) recommend to the State Planning Council approval of the revised draft FY 2013 Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Stuart and approved unanimously by the TAC.

6. Staff Report – *for discussion*

Ms. Callaghan gave the staff report:

- The contract with VHB the consultant that handles the air quality analysis expires June 30. Staff is working to extend the contract for another two years.
- The Rail Plan is moving along. The consultant presented staff with a revised format that staff will review.

7. Additional Public Comment

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

Mr. Grant Dulgarian thanked the TAC and staff for responding to his previous comments at the Public Hearing last month. There were three comments he wanted to clarify. Mr. Dulgarian's first comment was for page 8 of the TIP in which he clarified that he was referring I-195 over the East Providence / Providence line rather than I-95 as referred in the report. His second comment was in reference to page 50, and how the response to the comment was the same the response to his first comment. He stated the he does not feel that it seems to correspond to his request to regulate billboards. Ms. Callaghan answered that the control of outdoor billboards and advertising was not eligible for Transportation Enhancement funding. Mr. Shawver stated that page 50 is just listing what the program funds and not the regulation under Rhode Island General Laws, which the TAC cannot change. Mr. Dulgarian's third comment was in reference to page 65, where he believes the TIP should include steps to increase RIPTA ridership. Mr. Therrien replied that RIPTA's ridership has nothing to do with the TIP. He added that there are no federal funds dedicated for the bus route that services Miriam Hospital. Mr. Therrien continued that if RIPTA buses routes have low ridership, they will be discontinued. Mr. Therrien suggests that Mr. Dulgarian come to a RIPTA board meeting to discuss any specific routes of concern. Mr. Rhodes stated that the text on page 65 of the TIP is not defining what routes will be included. Ms. Shocket added that the TAC does not micromanage RIPTA and that Mr. Dulgarian's questions should be directed at RIPTA. Mr. Schiller commented that there are bigger issues involved and that Miriam Hospital has expanded parking into the neighborhood. He felt there should be a discussion of how parking management relates to achieving the goal of promoting transit. Mr. Schiller feels the TAC should have a discussion at how parking management can help achieve the transit goals. The rest of the TAC did not agree, as this was not a direct focus of the TIP and tabled the discussion.

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any other comments and there were none.

8. Other Business – *for discussion*

Mr. Stuart thanked Mr. Baudouin who had taken the lead to put together a committee regarding the Providence Train Station which has been inadequately maintained over the years. Mr. Stuart stated that there will be a meeting on Monday, June 4 at 3:30 p.m. which will be co-hosted by the Coalition for Transportation Choices. Steve Devine of RIDOT and VHB the consulting firm who drafted plans for the station will also be present. Mr. Stuart also stated that on behalf of the RI Association of Railroad Passengers he wanted to thank all staff regarding their diligent work on the TIP.

Mr. Therrien stated that RIPTA is undergoing a Comprehensive Operations Analysis of its bus system and asked if any TAC members would be interested in participating in the process. Mr. Therrien stated that he anticipates there will be four to six meetings between now and January 2013. Mr. Therrien asked if the TAC could appoint a representative to participate or if a

member would like to volunteer. Mr. Therrien added that he anticipates participation by Ms. Callaghan or Ms. Scott from Statewide Planning, Steve Devine from RIDOT, as well as Mr. Walker of RIEDC on this effort will be participating. Ms. Elaine Colarusso volunteered to represent the TAC.

9. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Murray to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Sherlock, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Submitted By: Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner to Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary