

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

November 15, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

Department of Administration

APPROVED MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

TAC members present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Ms. Meridith Brady representing Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Alan Brodd	Town of Cumberland
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. Russ Chateaufneuf	RI Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Elaine Colarusso	Town of East Greenwich
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. David Everett representing Mr. Robert Azar	City of Providence
Mr. George Monaghan	RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)
Ms. Lillian Picchione representing Mr. Mark Therrien	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Daniel Porter	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member
Mr. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Ms. Jane Sherman	Public Member
Ms. Pam Sherrill	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and Towns

TAC members absent

Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Dan Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Mark Carruolo	City of Warwick
Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health

Others in attendance

Mr. Peter Brassard	
Mr. Grant Dulgarian	Ecology Action for RI
Ms. Eugenia Marks	Audubon Society/ Coalition for Transportation Choices
Ms. Mary Shepard	Public Member CMAQ

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Ms. Karen Scott	Assistant 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 6:34 p.m.

2. Approval of September 27, 2012 Meeting Minutes – *for action*

Upon motion of Ms. Sherman to approve, seconded by Mr. Monaghan, the September 27, 2012 meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were no comments from the public on any of the agenda items.

4. Long Range Transportation Plan 2035 Update

Ms. Shocket called the long range transportation plan, *Transportation 2035*, public hearing to order at 6:35 p.m.

*See attached Public Hearing Report which includes the presentations and comments by speakers.
Ms. Shocket adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:20 p.m.*

The TAC proceeded to consider the public hearing comments. Mr. Chateaufeuf had a question on the *Transportation 2035* adoption process and how the public comments regarding changes would be incorporated into the Plan. Ms. Callaghan answered that according to the current timetable, the Plan will be revised to incorporate the TAC and public comments however the revised document is not scheduled to go back to the TAC unless they are uncomfortable with the suggested changes. She suggested that the TAC could vote to recommend approval of *Transportation 2035* to the State Planning Council subject to the recommended changes. Ms. Callaghan continued that the Plan would then go on to the Technical Committee and the State Planning Council in December. However, if the TAC would like the Plan to come back before them it would push the approval process back by a month but it could be done. The Technical Committee and the State Planning Council would then do its review in January. Ms. Shocket added that any grammatical changes would not have to come back to the TAC for review. Mr. Chateaufeuf clarified he was referring to all comments but grammatical revisions could be an exception. Ms. Shocket stated that individual TAC members could attend the other committee meetings.

Mr. Chateaufeuf pointed out an error on page 4-4: \$10 should be \$10 million. In addition, Mr. Chateaufeuf pointed out a reference in the Plan regarding drainage improvements which are different than storm water improvements. He asked if funding for drainage improvements would also be used for storm water abatement. If not, the reference should be changed from drainage improvement to storm water improvement. There is a separate section on drainage issues. Ms. Scott stated she will speak to RIDOT Traffic Safety to determine the accuracy and what use as the reference. Mr. Chateaufeuf also pointed out the reference identifying \$2 million for drainage issues and whether the funding would be on-going and if it would be used for storm water abatement. Ms. Brady stated that the funding is specifically for drainage improvement although it will help storm water management as well. Ms. Brady stated there was a request made last year which was not funded however there is a recommendation for it to be funded this year. The \$2 million would be for every year. This would enable the amount of catch basins cleaned to double. Mr. Chateaufeuf stated that cleaning catch basins improves water quality, as well as safety. Mr. Romano asked Mr. Chateaufeuf if RIDOT has to apply for a permit to repair the drainage structures. Mr. Chateaufeuf replied it does not since it is part of their jurisdiction.

Mr. Schiller commented that he is concerned about receiving the public comment the same night as when the TAC has to approve the Plan. He stated that the public has some good comments which can be considered by staff before the Plan goes to the State Planning Council. The good comments include better driver license procedures, a look at infill commuter rail stations, increased regional cooperation between Massachusetts and Rhode Island, improved commuter and transit fare structures since the two still do not permit transferability between services, Ms. Shepard's suggestion regarding reduced vehicle speeds in high density downtown areas within greater congestion, and Ms. Marks' suggestion regarding pedestrian safety especially related to passengers getting off of transit vehicles. Therefore, Mr. Schiller stated that the report should go back to the TAC first to decide if it is worthwhile to go to the other committees. Mr. Schiller also suggested that maybe there can be a place in the Plan where items to consider in the future could be listed.

Ms. Scott pointed out that staff has worked hard not to have the public hearing on the same day when the TAC votes. However, due to time constraints the approval process has been consolidated. Ms. Scott added that staff could certainly postpone the approval of *Transportation 2035* if something substantial came up that needed a full TAC discussion. Ms. Scott believes that the public comment can either be incorporated or cited in the report where the changes have been made into the Plan. Other comments can be forwarded to appropriate state agencies if it is not appropriate for inclusion in *Transportation 2035*. Mr. Schiller stated that he is satisfied with the process but believes there should be a provision where some issues could be discussed more in the future as it requires more thought than we have now. He is prepared, however, to approve the *Transportation 2035* draft tonight.

Ms. Sherman commented that on page 5 -45 Transit, T 2-B, the reference to study additional sites for commuter rail does not include Providence. She feels Providence should be considered among the communities to be considered and evaluated. Ms. Callaghan stated that this section was not revised. Ms. Scott said she will see where this reference can fit in *Transportation 2035*.

Mr. Chateaufeuf commented that he was not advocating for any delay in the approval of *Transportation 2035*. Mr. Schiller asked if TAC members were going to see the public comments before the State Planning Council's review. Ms. Scott replied that staff would be happy to send it out. Mr. Brodd stated that the drainage improvement question Mr. Chateaufeuf asked about earlier is also addressed by the requirement for municipalities to operate under best management practices with respect to design and maintenance of drainage structures. The municipalities must clean their catch basin annually and anything to improve the amount the State cleans would be an improvement. Mr. Brodd also noted that he disagrees with Mr. Dulgarian's earlier comment during the public hearing that RIDOT should install variable message signs displaying estimated travel times before major highway entrance ramps to assist drivers make proactive decisions and utilize alternative routes. Mr. Brodd stated that he has had several occasions where the message signs have enabled him to change his route to avoid congestion.

Mr. Brodd moved that the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend approval of *Transportation 2035*, with amendments according to the public hearing comments, to the State Planning Council.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Schiller and approved unanimously.

5. Other Business – for discussion

Ms. Scott stated that Ms. Sherman has decided that she will no longer be serving as a member of the TAC. Ms. Scott thanked her for her years of service. The TAC wished her well and will miss her contributions.

6. Staff Report

Ms. Callaghan stated that most of staff’s efforts have been focused on the long range transportation plan update. However she did share that the Congestion Management Task Force was looking at the RIDOT physical alteration permit (PAP) process for areas of improvement both at the state and municipal level. The hope is to have better coordination between all involved in a PAP.

Ms. Lillian Picchione, of RIPTA, reported on RIPTA’s Draft Coordinate Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan which is currently available for public comment and can be found on the RIPTA website under the project heading. Federal regulations require the development of a transit public services plan. Ms. Picchione stated that there will be a public hearing for the draft plan on December 11 from 2 – 4 p.m. RIPTA can also present the Plan at the next TAC meeting in January if the TAC is interested. Dr. Drew stated that she would be interested. Mr. Schiller asked if RIPTA could also report on the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) which is reviewing all of RIPTA’s services. Ms. Picchione stated that people can also look online for information on the COA and offer their comments. Dr. Drew asked if the COA process involves looking for people from the disability community to comment on the quality of the services. Ms. Picchione stated that it would be included in the Coordinated Plan. Dr. Drew would like to know if RIPTA is receiving a strong response. Ms. Picchione stated that she will have to look into the response rate. Mr. Schiller asked to what extent the para-transit is feeding the fixed routes and requested that RIPTA to explain the analysis in January.

Mr. Schiller distributed TAC member Sue Barker’s newsletter entitled Trail Mix (RI Greenways). Mr. Schiller also noted that Mr. Steve Devine of RIDOT is working on a marketing plan for the commuter rail service and that volunteers are distributing schedules.

7. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Shocket asked if there was any additional public comment. The TAC gave Ms. Sherman a round of applause.

8. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Brodd, seconded by Mr. Schiller, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Ms. Shocket wished everyone a happy holiday.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary