

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

January 24, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.
Department of Administration

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

TAC members present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Mr. Lloyd Albert	AAA Southern New England
Ms. Sue Barker	Greenways Alliance
Mr. Dan Baudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Michael Bliss representing Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe
Ms. Meredith Brady representing Mr. Robert Shawver	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. Russ Chateauneuf	RI Department of Environmental Management
Mr. Richard Crenca	City of Warwick
Mr. Albert Dahlberg	Public Member
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. Barry Schiller	RI Sierra Club
Mr. Henry Sherlock	Construction Industries of RI
Ms. Pam Sherrill	RI Chapter, American.
Mr. Everett Stuart	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Dr. Robert Vanderslice	RI Department of Health
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
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. Daniel Porter	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Paul Romano	Public Member

Others in attendance

Mr. Corey Bobba	FHWA
Ms. Laurie Brayton	RI Senate Fiscal Office
Ms. Amy Pettine	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Douglas Brennen	Public Citizen

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Mr. Jared Rhodes	Chief
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 6:35 p.m.

2. Approval of November 15, 2012 Meeting Minutes – *for action*

Mr. Russ Chateaufeuf noted an error in the November 15, 2012 TAC minutes. Mr. Chateaufeuf stated that on the second to last sentence on page 2 it states that “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. Chateaufeuf said the correct reply to the question is, in most cases, repairs do not need permits; there are so many that are exempt. Some drainage repairs do need permits. Mr. Chateaufeuf further explained that State agency jurisdiction is divided between the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) which is responsible for inland areas of the State, and the Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) which is responsible for coastal areas. Mr. Chateaufeuf stated that the TAC minutes for November 15 should be amended to state: “Mr. Chateaufeuf replied it does not since it is often part of normal maintenance. In some cases the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) is the permitting jurisdiction.”

The amendment to correct the November 15, 2013 minutes was approved. Upon motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Cassidy the November 15, 2012 meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public comment on the Agenda items.

4. RIPTA’s Coordinated Plan for Public Transit-Human Services Transportation

Ms. Amy Pettine, RIPTA’s Planning Director presented the Coordinated Plan for Public Transit-Human Services Transportation which has been managed by Ms. Ann LeClerc, also of RIPTA. A copy of the draft Plan was in the meeting packet sent to TAC members. Comments from the TAC will be collected today as part of the Federal Transit Authority’s (FTA) required Coordinated Plan. Ms. Pettine explained that the Coordinated Plan for Public Transit-Human Services Transportation is a five year update and contains public comments, as well as an assessment of service which will help to create priorities and transit investments. The Department of Human Services and RIPTA completed a full scale analysis including a market analysis in 2010 which provided data for this Plan. The Plan’s findings include public transit expansions based on growth needs including the need to look at long term funding services, as well as efficiencies and increased coordination; provide more transportation options to meet a variety of needs; improved accessibility, ease of use and customer service. In addition, increased collaboration is needed to address the evolving and growing transportation demands. The comment period on the Coordinated Plan is still open.

TAC members then offered comments on the Plan. Mr. Schiller Stated that he has concerns since RIPTA is always dealing with limited resources. He further stated that the Ride program is complicated and there are many issues involved. Because of the one state / one rate pricing structure there are no incentives to keep RIPTA or Ride trips short. ADA passengers pay twice the cost and some ride free. A ride in the van from Newport to Providence is the same price as one that is one block. Also, he believes it is not a good idea to mix certain groups of people together on Ride vans as many are frail elderly and do not mix well with some of the other riders. Mr. Schiller does not expect the TAC to study this; however they should be kept informed on the issues. He feels some kind of interagency task force to look at the issues is needed. Mr. Schiller also would like to remove redundancies and make RIPTA and

Ride more efficient which the Coordinated Plan does not address with examples. Mr. Schiller also noted that it is important that the anti-tax groups buy into this program. Many of us may need the Ride service some day.

Mr. Baudouin stated there is a lot of redundancy, i.e., a lot of agencies providing a lot of transportation, and to identify these redundancies. He suggested that perhaps a study is needed on this similar to the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). Ms. Pettine stated she will bring the TAC's comments back to Ms. LeClerc who is responsible for drafting the Coordinated Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to show federal dollars coming into the state to coordinate investments. Maybe it could go deeper to include strategies with this large program (i.e., Ride program). Mr. Schiller suggested the Plan explain some of the Ride Program's financial issues even though it is not required by FTA. Mr. Walker stated that efficiencies should be included. He stated that, for example, the RI Department of Human Services or some other agency had a program which picked up people from private ambulances and was reimbursed from Medicaid that was changed to save money. Mr. Schiller also explained that in a study from five years ago, 30 percent of passenger trips were cancelled or riders didn't show. The idea is to have people who can ride buses but live too far from a fixed route, i.e., the Ride program feeding the fixed route. Mr. Therrien stated that Mr. Schiller's suggestions are not realistic because of Medicaid's rules. The Human Services Medicaid system cannot be combined with the general transit system. Furthermore, the two programs are heading towards separation in July with Human Services and ADA separating. Regarding the other issue mentioned, DHS saved \$14 million a year because of RIPTA's study of ambulance cost. Mr. Therrien explained that there are so many issues involved that a separate meeting would be needed to explain them. He does not know when DHS is separating these two sections. Mr. Therrien will be in charge of the Ride program.

5. RIPTA's Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)

Ms. Pettine gave a powerpoint presentation regarding RIPTA's Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA). She suggested that TAC members check the RIPTA website for information and public comments including many from riders. There is also information on the COA in the meeting packet. The COA is an in-depth look at RIPTA services. The goal is to make the service as efficient and easy to use as possible, as well as more convenient. Ms. Pettine explained the COA timeline, and it is expected that the project is finished in the next few months. Tasks under the scope of the COA have included extensive data collection, market review and route evaluations with emerging themes identified. Ms. Pettine noted that data from the travel demand model was included. Generally the COA's findings match up with travel demand model. A lot of stakeholder input was included with on-board passenger surveys, as well as non-riders responding to the survey. The stakeholder report is available on-line.

Ms. Pettine also explained that the report looked at a family transit of services including various performance measures. She explained that the frequency of service is based on market demand and the service level guidelines are available on-line on the RIPTA website. There is also information on fare box recovery, which is the percent of operating costs that are recouped from passenger fares. RIPTA's routes range from 20 to 40 percent fare box recovery which is industry average. For example, the Board Street bus route in Providence pays for itself because of the high amount of ridership.

Ms. Pettine's presentation included information on the evolution of a bus route. Ms. Pettine explained that as a bus route extends to service passengers at different stops the overall time for the bus to travel the route is longer. A bus route's service is a balancing act between demand and coverage. RIPTA is taking all the information collected from the COA analysis and developing two scenarios to bring to the public. During the week of February 11th RIPTA will be at 30 bus stops holding "office hours on the

street.” During the week of February 25th RIPTA staff will hold various community meetings in the evening with official presentations. The findings will then be presented to the RIPTA board in March. Changes will take about two to three years to implement.

Next TAC members provided comments on the COA. Mr. Wood inquired if the federal government requires that this analysis to be completed. Ms. Pettine replied that the federal government does not require a COA however RIPTA should examine its service on a periodic basis. Mr. Beaudouin commented that this was a great exercise. Many people use RIPTA to go to work (about one-half) of the riders, therefore it is important on the economic development side. This helps to make the case on the importance of mass transit. Mr. Chateaufeuf commented that he is curious as to what extent bus planning takes into account *Land Use Plan 2025*. Railways create demand on land use whereas buses usually react to the demand that is present. Mr. Chateaufeuf asked if there was any thought that bus routes be designed to some extent as to where the State would like growth to occur. Ms. Pettine commented that rail will be more influential on economic development and land use development than bus transit. However, RIPTA has BRT or Bus Rapid Transit on routes 99 and 11, the State’s two highest ridership routes which carry 10,000 people per day. RIPTA has put a lot of investment, \$6 million, in road improvements, signal priority work, etc. on these routes. RIPTA coordinates its projects with Statewide Planning’s various plans such as the *Land Use 2025* and Lon Range Transportation Plan and will soon include municipal comprehensive plans. Mr. Therrien added that bus rapid transit does influence land use development, whereas traditional transit is reactionary.

Mr. Bliss stated that he recently moved to Richmond and was wondering why there isn’t any bus service available. Mr. Therrien explained that due to Richmond’s low population density there is not any real demand. Therefore, the cost of passenger service is high. Flex bus service is sometimes used in communities such as Richmond. There are plans to expand the service into some of those areas but he does not know if it would ever be funded. Mr. Baudouin asked if there are any plans to change the fare structure. Mr. Therrien replied that it might be the next step to look at RIPTA’s fare structure. Mr. Schiller suggested going to the RIPTA website as there is a lot of interesting comments from the public. Mr. Therrien said that some recommendations may need a public hearing if it calls for removing bus service from an area.

6. Staff Report

Ms. Callaghan stated that on December 13th the State Planning Council approved the Long Range Transportation Plan, *Transportation 2035*. She thanked the TAC for their help and the successful approval process. The Public Hearing Report and the approved Long Range Plan is available on Statewide Planning’s website.

Ms. Callaghan updated the TAC on the State Rail Plan. Staff is currently developing the project evaluation framework that will be included in the Plan and used to determine Rhode Island’s future rail investment program. The rail project evaluation framework is based and modeled after the TIP project evaluation criteria. Staff met with RIPTA and RIDOT staff to discuss and develop the evaluation criteria that is being sent back to the consultant for further refinement.

Ms. Callaghan noted the retirement of Mr. Walter Slocomb, Principal Planner in Statewide Planning’s transportation section who had over 30 years of state service.

Ms. Sirota reported on Safe Routes to School program. For Round 1, ten SRTS programs in seven municipalities involving 30 schools have been awarded. At this time, infrastructure projects are in various stages including completed or almost completed to near construction to design. For Round 2, twelve programs in ten municipalities involving 16 schools have been awarded. Ten of the twelve infrastructure projects will use on-call consultants and have had their infrastructure kickoff meetings with the key members of the school(s)' SRTS team along with RIDOT, Statewide Planning staff, and the on-call consultants. For this round the consultants will be designing the infrastructure projects and RIDOT will advertise and manage the construction.

Ms. Callaghan reported that the next TAC meeting will include a presentation on the Strategic Highway Safety Plan and a minor TIP amendment so the meeting will include a public hearing. Ms. Callaghan also thanked everyone for coming on this cold night.

7. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any additional public comments. As a new Rhode Island resident, Mr. Douglas Brennen stated that he was interested in the plans for the East Bay Bike Path Warren by-pass and its link from Long Lane down to the Kickemuit River. He thought it would be a very worthwhile project for people not to have to cycle on Child Street but instead use a dedicated path. Mr. Brennan was referred to staff for further information.

8. Other Business – *for discussion*

- Nominations for position of Vice-Chair.

Mr. Cassidy nominated Mr. Stuart for the position of Vice Chair of the TAC. Even though Mr. Stuart was unable to attend today's TAC meeting, Mr. Cassidy said he indicated interest in this position. The TAC members voted unanimously to elect him as Vice Chair.

Ms. Shocket welcomed the new TAC members who included Mr. Richard Crenca, Principal Planner in the Warwick Planning Department; Mr. Lloyd Albert representing AAA Southern New England and Mr. Albert Dahlberg as a public member. Ms. Shocket also acknowledged that three members who resigned from the TAC this past year including Ms. Elaine Colarusso representing the Town of East Greenwich; Ms. Jane Sherman, a public member; and Mr. Robert Murray, a public member and past representative of AAA in Southern New England. In addition Mr. Corey Bobba replaces Ms. Barbara Breslin as the FHWA representative. Mr. Baudouin commented that Mr. Dahlberg is very involved with Brown University's transportation system and a leader in Rhode Island's electric car movement.

Mr. Therrien stated that Ms. Lillian Picchione will become the primary representative for RIPTA at TAC meetings instead of himself.

9. Adjournment

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mr. Bliss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.
Submitted By: Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner to Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary