

**RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, November 19, 2015
RIDOA, Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

DRAFT MINUTES

I. Attendance

1. Members Present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Mr. Everett Stuart, Vice Chair	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Dan Boudouin	Providence Foundation
Mr. Michael Bliss	Representing Dinalyn Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe
Ms. Meredith Brady	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. Richard Crenca	City of Warwick
Ms. Bari Freeman	Bike Newport
Mr. Ronald Gagnon	RI Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Martina Haggerty	City of Providence
Mr. Jonathan Harris	Sierra Club
Ms. Eliza Lawson	RI Department of Health
Mr. Chris Maxwell	RI Truckers Association
Mr. George Monaghan	RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)
Ms. Lillian Piccione	RI Public Transit Authority
Mr. Daniel Porter	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Timothy Scanlon	Construction Industries of Rhode Island
Ms. Pam Sherrill	RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Mr. Michael Walker	RI Commerce Corporation

2. Members Absent

Mr. Lloyd Albert	AAA Southern New England
Mr. Alan Brodd	City of Woonsocket
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. John Flaherty	Grow Smart RI
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville/RI League of Cities and Towns

3. Staff Present

Ms. Linsey Callaghan	RI Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Kimberly Crabill	RI Statewide Planning Program
Mr. Jared Rhodes, Chief	RI Statewide Planning Program
Ms. Karen Scott, Assistant Chief	RI Statewide Planning Program

4. Guests Present

Mr. Francisco Lovera
Ms. Eugenia Marks
Mr. Steven Smith
Mr. Kevin Viverios

RI Department of Transportation
Audubon Society of RI
Narragansett Indian Tribe
Pazz Corporation

II. Agenda Items

1. Call to Order

At 6:32 p.m. Chairman Shocket called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of October 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes – for action

Chairman Shocket asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 22, 2015. Ms. Brady moved to approve and the motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. There was no discussion. The following members voted aye Shocket, Stuart, Baudouin, Bliss, Brady, Cassidy, Crenca, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Harris, Lawson, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items – for discussion

There was none.

4. Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #1

- RIPTA Staff Presentation – *for action*

Chairman Shocket introduced Linsey Callaghan who introduced the Unified Planning Work Program Amendment#1. Ms. Lillian Piccione gave a presentation on the amendment request. Discussion as follows:

Mr. Cassidy asked where the money would come from to make up the shortfall. Ms. Scott explained that the Division of Planning will use contingency funds, therefore, it is not taken from a different project to be moved to this one.

Mr. Harris asked if the study is going to look at the possibility of becoming true rapid transit routes in the future. Ms. Piccione responded that it is not the scope of this particular project.

Mr. Crenca asked if VHB was the lowest qualified or lowest preferred vendor. Ms. Piccione responded that she would need to get back to him after checking the records.

Ms. Sherrill asked what the process was to apply for additional federal funding and if that was something that RIPTA is scheduled to do. Ms. Scott responded that we get a designated amount for the MPO every year and that is done by a formula that comes every fiscal year so we don't have to apply for the additional funds because for this project the added cost is coming out of the contingency fund of which 80 percent is federal and the other 20 percent comes out of RIPTA funds.

Chairman Shocket asked for a motion to submit the amendment to the State Planning Council for the approval of the amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program. Mr. Walker moved to

approve and the motion was seconded by Mr. Cassidy. There was no discussion. The following members voted aye Shocket, Stuart, Boudouin, Bliss, Brady, Cassidy, Crenca, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Harris, Lawson, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

5. FY 2013 – 2016 Transportation Improvement Program

- Amendment #6 (Minor Amendment)
- RI Department of Transportation Staff Presentation - *for discussion*

Chairman Shocket introduced Linsey Callaghan who introduced the FY 2013- 2016 Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #6 which is classified as a minor amendment. This requires a 10-day notice, final review, and decision by the TAC. A special meeting will be held on December 14th for the TAC at 6:30 p.m. for final review and approval. RI Department of Transportation is requesting an amendment to the major projects category to show the TIGER Grant Funds that have been received. Ms. Callaghan introduced Ms. Meredith Brady and Mr. Francisco Lovera from RI Department of Transportation who presented the Amendment request. Discussion as follows:

Travel Grant funds are slated for a Travel Plaza and Transit Hub Facility in Hopkinton RI.

Ms. Haggerty asked what current RIPTA ridership is at this location. Mr. Lovera responded that he would need to get back to the TAC with this information.

Ms. Haggerty asked if the Department of Transportation has done a ridership projection on what kind of numbers they anticipate. Mr. Lovera stated that they did not.

Mr. Scanlon asked Mr. Lovera to show on the map where 200 cars would be able to park on the site-map provided in the presentation. Mr. Lovera clarified which areas are identified for parking spots and which areas are identified parking areas for the buses.

Mr. Cassidy asked where the \$3 million dollars in state required match was coming from. Ms. Brady responded that when the FY 2013 – 2016 TIP was adopted back in 2012 DOT had a certain amount of money that was available to us as our state match for federal funds. Through the subsequent years the General Assembly has put forward a program called Highway Maintenance Account which provides us with state match funds instead of bond funds. We were already making that transition when the FY 2013 -2016 TIP was put together. In addition, when Article 21 passed two years ago they increased the amount for vehicle registration fees which currently go to the general fund and are now gradually being transitioned into this Highway Maintenance Account and some of those funds are going to be available to match other federal projects. We won't just have the \$40 million dollars that we need to match the existing federal funding obligations, there is some additional funding available from RI Capital Plan Funds or from registration fees that could be used for this match. The funds are not currently programmed for bridges or pavement, it is funding that has been made available as surplus in registration fees that we receive. So we did not program it in the beginning of the FY 2013 - 2016 TIP when we started this process. We have approximately \$20 million dollars that wasn't programmed and we have not done an amendment to the TIP for the excess funds and we have not added extra projects because as you know the federal funding process has been slow in terms of allowing us to plan for getting our projects out the door. We also have something available to us called toll credits, so even though we are not currently tolling we are talking about any entity in the state, such as the Turnpike and Bridge Authority through the Newport Bridge tolls which allows us to do projects at 100 percent federal instead of using state funds for the match because they are giving us credit for the money that is already been expended. For example, the money that is being used to pay for repairs to the Newport Bridge that is being collected through

tolls. Ms. Brady stated that it is a fairly complex system but she would be happy to talk to anyone who is interested in more detail. We are confident that we will have the funds for a match. There are a couple of different mechanisms that DOT can use. Right now we are planning on using registration fees that are available as the \$3 million dollar match.

Mr. Cassidy asked if that was included in the amendment, in so far as, that is where the funds are coming from. Ms. Brady responded that it is.

Mr. Cassidy asked where the \$400,000 annual operating expense would be coming from. Mr. Lovera responded that the intent is that the businesses that are going to be operating there will create revenue that will fund this expense.

Mr. Cassidy asked if there would be an additional expense that would require state funds to operate this new facility. Mr. Lovera responded that the intent is for the revenue to be generated by the businesses.

Mr. Stuart shared that the news media covered RIDOT's award on the TIGER Grant and one thing that was brought up was that there is a national chain of truck service plazas known as Love's and that they have been proposing a truck service plaza for the same interchange. There was a hint in the paper that maybe RI Department of Transportation could work cooperatively with that project rather than having two new service plazas. Mr. Stuart asked if there would be an opportunity to reduce the amount of public investment in this public/private partnership in that manner. Mr. Lovera responded that this plaza and the intent for it is to receive passenger cars not trucks. RI Department of Transportation has not been approached by this company. It will up to the town to issue the permits required for the truck travel plaza to happen.

Ms. Freeman asked how similar this project is to other rest stops along the I-95 corridor, and if there is anything new or different about it. Mr. Lovera responded that this is a concept for now so we are open to suggestions. The intent is to have similar services to those on I-95 in Connecticut.

Ms. Freeman asked if DOT were looking at new transit connections to Newport from this location. Mr. Lovera stated that there are no current plans for RIPTA to provide additional service to Newport from this area.

Mr. Cassidy asked who is going to manage the visitor center. Mr. Lovera responded that it is too early in the process to have that information.

Mr. Maxwell asked why no trucks and was it a restriction in the grant or is that part of the design. Mr. Maxwell also stated, to build something like this and not attract trucks is really something that should be looked at. Mr. Lovera responded that the intent is not for trucks per se. The Department of Transportation has a conceptual project to re-open the welcome center between exits 3 and 4 as a truck stop.

Ms. Sherrill congratulated Mr. Lovera on acquiring the Grant and then asked if this location was the same as the existing park and ride lot or if it was on the other side of the highway. Mr. Lovera responded that it is in the southeast corner of the interchange and the park and ride is in the northeast corner.

Ms. Sherrill asked what the current land use was there. Mr. Lovera responded that the land is for sale and is zoned commercial use.

Ms. Freeman asked if the area was forested. Mr. Lovera was not sure on that.

Ms. Picchione asked what kind of connection was set up for bicycles. Ms. Picchione asked if any thought or consideration has been given to bicyclists and how they would get there and become part of a multi-modal center. Mr. Lovera stated that there would be a connection for bicycles to Route 3.

6. FY 17 – 25 Transportation Improvement Program

- TIP Solicitation Package – *for action*

Ms. Karen Scott overviewed the TIP Solicitation Package and identified the TACs role in forming sub-committees so that when the project lists come back from the municipalities the actual projects can be determined. We are anticipating that the actual sub-committees will meet approximately 1 – 2 times for about 1 – 2 hours each time. The sub-committees will receive a full packet to review. Discussion as follows:

Mr. Harris asked if there is a group that will look at a cohesive system. Ms. Scott responded that the sub-committee process is Phase I. They will then bring their findings to the TAC who will then determine the actual projects.

Ms. Freeman asked what the difference is in a recreational trail and a bicycle trail. Ms. Scott responded that a recreational trail is a program that has been historically run out of DEM that is looking at off road trail systems which comes from a separate funding source.

Ms. Freeman asked if they are trails that are specifically hiking trails without bicycle paths, where bicycle paths are actually multi-use paths that include pedestrians and other users. Ms. Scott responded yes.

Ms. Freeman suggested that we clarify the categories for bike trail or bike way.

Ms. Haggerty asked Ms. Scott to clarify where on-road bike lanes would fit in to the categories. Ms. Scott responded that they would be considered bike paths as a similar mode.

Mr. Stuart asked how TAC members should respond to the call for sub-committees. Ms. Scott responded that Statewide Planning will send out an email, give members time to think about it, and then have members respond to Kim with your choices via email.

Mr. Baudouin asked about the Federal Transportation Act being debated, are there any categories that have been eliminated. Ms. Brady responded that the legacy enhancements has been eliminated. It has become transportation alternatives. There are two bills now being conferenced together. Ms. Picchione also responded that there was an expectation is not eligible for the high-density funds.

7. Staff Report – *for information*

Ms. Callaghan gave the following staff report:

Freight Plan - Project Update

- The Freight Plan Committee met yesterday.

- At the meeting the Committee received an update on the preliminary findings of the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) data which summarized truck movements in and out of Rhode Island for a 2 week period in May 2015.
- Key points from the data reveal that the Providence metro area has the highest percentage of trips with 27% of all outbound truck movements and 29 percent of inbound truck movements. The Warwick area showed the next highest truck movements with 19 percent in both origin and destination.

The Committee also started to prioritize highway projects including roadway and bridge for the Freight Plan. However this is a lengthy task so staff is going to do some work on prioritizing the projects and have the results for the Committee to review at their next meeting in December.

8. Additional Public Comment

Ms. Eugenia Marks from the Audubon Society of RI pointed out that the proposed travel center is within the sole source aquifer for the Wood Pawcatuck water shed. It was approved by the EPA in 1988, showing that the only source of drinking water within that watershed is the watershed itself. Ms. Marks asked that TAC take careful consideration as to whether there is adequate funding for an environmental impact study which is required and whether there will be protective infrastructure in place to guard against any oil or gasoline leaks at the plaza.

9. Announcements

Chairman Shocket ask for any announcements.

Mr. Stuart stated that Eugenia Marks is retiring and wanted to thank her for her years of service for the transportation and the health impact that she has made.

Mr. Baudouin put forth a motion to thank Kevin Flynn for his years of service to the TAC and to the State of Rhode Island. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cassidy. The following members voted aye Shocket, Stuart, Baudouin, Bliss, Brady, Cassidy, Crenca, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Harris, Lawson, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

Ms. Picchione wanted to update the TAC on Newport Gateway project. The project has moved from conceptual design to design development.

10. Adjourn

Chairman Shocket asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Baudouin made the first motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bliss. The following members voted aye Shocket, Stuart, Baudouin, Bliss, Brady, Cassidy, Crenca, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Harris, Lawson, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.