

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

Monday, December 14, 2015  
RIDOA, Conference Room A  
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**I. Attendance**

1. Members Present

Mr. Everett Stuart, Vice Chair	RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Dan Boudouin	Providence Foundation
Ms. Meredith Brady	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member
Mr. John Flaherty	Grow Smart RI
Ms. Bari Freeman	Bike Newport
Mr. Ronald Gagnon	RI Department of Environmental Management
Ms. Martina Haggerty	City of Providence
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
Mr. Richard Crenca	City of Warwick
Dr. Judith Drew	Governor's Commission on Disabilities
Mr. Jonathan Harris	Sierra Club
Ms. Eliza Lawson	RI Department of Health
Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair	Public Member
Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe
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. Grant Dulgarian	Ecology Action of Rhode Island
Mr. Sean Henry	Town of Hopkinton
Mr. Francisco Lovera	RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Randall Rose	RI Public Transit Authority Riders Alliance
Mr. Bob Shawver	RI Department of Transportation

## II. Agenda Items

1. Call to Order

At 6:31 p.m. Vice-Chairman Stuart called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of November 19, 2015 Meeting Minutes – for action

Vice-Chairman Stuart asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 19, 2015. Ms. Freeman noted that she would like to add, for the record that under the TIP that RIDOT look at local produce to be added as a service at the transit hub proposed for Hopkinton. Mr. Walker made a motion to amend the minutes and the motion was seconded by Ms. Sherrill. There was no further discussion. The following members voted aye Stuart, Baudouin, Brady, Cassidy, Flaherty, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

3. Public Comment on Agenda Items – for informational purposes

There was none.

4. FY 13-16 TIP Amendment #6, Rhode Island Travel Plaza and Transit Hub, TIGER Grant – for action

Ms. Callaghan overviewed the TIP Amendment #6 Rhode Island Travel Plaza and Transit Hub, TIGER Grant and summarized the three written public comments received. (See Appendix A for full comments) Ms. Callaghan introduced Ms. Meredith Brady and Mr. Francisco Lovera from RIDOT to discuss the Amendment and answer questions.

Vice-Chairman Stuart opened the floor up to public comment at this time.

Mr. Randall Rose from Public Transit Authority Riders Alliance voiced that the concern of the Alliance is that this is not much of a transit hub. It is a location where the I-95 ex park and ride bus stops near exit 1 so there is one group that stops regularly but that does not make it a transit hub it will be a visitor plaza. Also, when this transit hub was proposed the RI Transit Authority (RIPTA) announced that they would add another route that would serve this location. However, the route will only be part-time. So stating that this will be a transit hub is inappropriate. Another proposal is that this transit hub will provide rural service, however, this is false advertising as RI will not be getting a transit hub. The concern is that using federal money for things that are not what they are proposed to be will then leave the state in a worse condition for opportunities to apply for federal funding in the future. Finally the Alliance feels that there should be more public involvement in the process of applying for TIGER Grants.

Vice-Chairman Stuart asked if there were any further public comments to be made on this item. There were none.

Vice-Chairman Stuart opened the floor to the TAC for consideration of the proposed TIP Amendment. Discussion was as follows:

Mr. Gagnon asked that RIDOT collaborate with RIDEM regarding the concerns for the aquifer, water levels, septic system and water source for the property.

Mr. Cassidy voiced concern that RIDOT's assurances that funds coming from a specific place for this project will actually come from that funding source by the time the project is ready to take place. Mr. Cassidy made a motion to change the language for the approval of the amendment to specifically state that funds from the transportation bonds or the transit hub bonds cannot be used to fund the state's share of this project. Mr. Baudouin seconded the motion.

Ms. Scott clarified that it is not in the TAC's purview to prohibit RIDOT from spending funds in a specific way. She further explained that what could be done is to make a motion to approve the project as presented and then recommend that it come back to the TAC for further consideration should the funding source of the match change.

Mr. Cassidy modified his motion to approve the project as presented and recommend that it comes back to the TAC for further consideration should the funding source of the match change. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baudouin.

Discussion was as follows:

Mr. Flaherty asked if the State Planning Council would have the authority to make the judgment call that the TAC does not. Ms. Scott responded that this is a minor amendment so the TAC is the deciding authority and that it will not go to the State Planning Council. However, if the TAC decided to make a minor amendment into a major amendment then it would go to the State Planning Council.

Ms. Haggerty asked if TAC could refer this to the State Planning Council as a major amendment. Ms. Scott responded yes.

Ms. Sherrill asked what the difference is in a major amendment versus a minor amendment. Ms. Scott responded that the key difference is that a major amendment would trigger an air quality re-evaluation, since we have come into air quality conformant within the last few years almost all amendments would be classified as minor amendments because we don't do air quality conformant any longer because we are already conforming.

Ms. Sherrill clarified that it has nothing to do with funding sources, the amount of construction, or the potential environmental impact of the development itself. Ms. Scott responded that when adding a new project a certain dollar threshold would qualify as a major amendment but this project does not cross that threshold.

Ms. Sherrill commented on a project in Hopkinton that she was involved in several years ago that looked at the aquifer issues and water quality issues in the area of this proposed project. She stated that it would be useful to go back and look at this information because there was a lot of public involvement. Ms. Sherrill also asked if there would be any public outreach on the project. Ms. Scott responded that the town was noticed and there were two comments from town residents. (See Appendix A)

Ms. Sherrill asked if the project grant funds are limited to just this parcel of land or could it be used to upgrade the existing rest area that is on I-95 North. Ms. Brady responded that the funds are specifically targeted to the parcel in question. RIDOT cannot update or do any commercialization at the existing rest area. One of reasons for changing the location is so that it is out of the federal right of way and not subject to federal guidelines limiting commercial establishments along the interstate.

Ms. Sherrill asked if it would be accessible from I-95 north and I-95 south. Mr. Lovera responded yes and that it would actually be accessed from Route 3.

Ms. Freeman asked what environmental impact study was done prior to the choice of this site and how the TAC was going to be assured that the groundwater concerns will be addressed to the satisfaction of this group. Mr. Lovera stated that there have been no environmental studies done on this project because it is very preliminary however RIDOT will be partnering with RIDEM to obtain the necessary permits. Mr. Walker responded that it is not the TAC's authority to decide whether or not the parcel meets the environmental muster, it is to determine how the transportation is funded. RIDEM and other environmental groups would determine the impact.

Ms. Freeman asked if it was known before the location was selected that the site had a designated groundwater protection area. Mr. Lovera responded no, it was commercial property that was for sale and seen as good location.

Ms. Freeman asked hypothetically what could happen if it is discovered that this is an area that is not a candidate because of ground water protection requirements. Mr. Lovera responded that until that is determined he does not have an answer for that.

Mr. Cassidy clarified that he is on board with this project because the rest area facilities are needed. He also wanted to clarify that if RIDOT changes the funding source it should come back to the TAC because that kind of change would affect other project funding sources.

Ms. Freeman discussed the Safe Routes to School Funds and how they were used by municipalities for Complete Streets Project and those funds depleted. My concern is using transit as a primary objective of this project could deplete later resources to transit. Ms. Brady responded that the TIGER grant itself is not targeted primarily at transit. This has some transit component but there is a need for travelers passing through the state. This is very preliminary as was stated. The funds can only be used for the development of this site.

Mr. Scanlon asked if a purchase and sales has been signed on the property. Mr. Lovera responded that it has not.

Mr. Maxwell asked if there was anything in the funding or environmental aspect that would preclude RIDOT from including trucks in this planned transit hub. Mr. Lovera responded that truck facilities were not included in the application and the application would need to be modified if that were to change.

Mr. Maxwell asked RIDOT to consider adding trucks this project so that it is a universal travel center and saves the state from duplicating services at two different facilities.

Ms. Sherrill wanted to point out that the town of Hopkinton historically has been very against a truck stop at this exit and stated that she would be very leery of supporting such a proposal. Ms. Brady responded that there are no plans to change it and include trucks. If it were, the TIGER application process would need to be changed, and then reapply for the funds.

Ms. Freeman asked if there are any other reasons that this would need to come back before the TAC. Ms. Brady responded that any change in scope of the project would be cause for it to come back before the TAC.

Mr. Flaherty commented that the selection of TIGER grant applications/projects do not seem to have much TAC involvement in the process but feels that it should. Mr. Walker commented that TIGER grants are open to several entities in the state. Typically there is not a lot of time to submit the application and obtain public comment so that is why the TAC typically sees it after the fact.

Vice-Chairman Stuart asked for a motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2013 – 2016 Transportation Improvement Program. The following members voted aye Stuart, Baudouin, Brady, Cassidy, Flaherty, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

5. FY 2017 - 2025 Transportation Improvement Program, TAC Subcommittee Appointments - for action

Vice-Chairman Stuart introduced Ms. Scott who distributed the TAC TIP Subcommittee appointments that included the meeting dates where members will discuss, review, and rank the proposed projects.

Vice-Chairman Stuart asked for a motion to approve the appointments as distributed. The motion was made by Ms. Brady and seconded by Ms. Sherrill. The following members voted aye Stuart, Baudouin, Brady, Cassidy, Flaherty, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

6. Staff Report – for information

Ms. Callaghan gave the following staff report:

Freight Plan

Project Update

The Freight Plan Committee met last week.

At the meeting the Committee received an update on more detailed findings of the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) data which summarized truck origins and destinations in Rhode Island for a 2 week period in March 2015.

The added level of truck data revealed that Providence, including the Port of Providence, as well as Quonset, and areas along I-95 and Rt. 146 had the highest truck traffic in the state. Next ATRI will provide data and maps of truck traffic for the remaining quarters of 2015.

The Committee reviewed Statewide Planning and RIDOT's prioritized list of highway and bridge projects for the Freight Plan. The Committee reviewed the list and criteria to determine if the rankings made sense and if any projects were missing. The Committee had some recommendations on additional projects to include and rescoring of some of the projects around the airport and Jefferson Blvd area.

## Next Steps

The Consultant will draft a list of port, rail, and air freight infrastructure project recommendations for the Plan.

They will also draft a list of freight policy recommendations.

## 7. Additional Public Comment

Mr. Randall Rose from Public Transit Authority Riders Alliance clarified his earlier comments that there is a concern that when grants are applied for on transit grounds they should actually benefit transit users. The concern is that when there are many federal grant applications submitted for transit, there is an effect of crowding out other projects that could benefit transit users.

## 8. Announcements

Vice-Chairman Stuart ask for any announcements.

Mr. Stuart shared that Mr. Bob Shawver who was a member of this committee for many years is retiring from RIDOT. Mr. Shawver has been a dedicated public servant, who was at Department of Environmental Management and now the Department of Transportation.

Ms. Brady shared that there will be a coffee hour in Mr. Shawver's honor on Monday December 21<sup>st</sup> in the RIDOT lobby at 9 a.m. There will also be a dinner on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Brady stated that she has worked with Mr. Shawver and will miss him very much. Ms. Brady further stated that it has been a real joy to work with him and thanked him for his guidance, leadership and mentorship as well.

Mr. Shawver thanked everyone for making his career enjoyable, in particular the TAC.

Mr. Baudouin made a motion to pass a resolution to commend Mr. Bob Shawver for his dedication to the TAC. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brady and Mr. Flaherty. The following members voted aye Stuart, Baudouin, Brady, Cassidy, Flaherty, Freeman, Gagnon, Haggerty, Maxwell, Monaghan, Piccione, Porter, Scanlon, Sherrill and Walker. There were no nay votes, abstentions or recusals.

Mr. Baudouin asked if anyone had received a copy of the new Federal Transportation Act. Ms. Brady responded that the American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials is putting something together and will share it once she receives it.

## 9. Adjourn

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

## Appendix A

11 December 2015

Dear Director Alviti,

I am writing to voice my opposition to RIDOT Travel Hub with the proposed location in Hopkinton, RI. I have lived in Hopkinton for 15 years and am familiar with the traffic patterns on I-95 and Rt. 3. Living close to Westerly, my family has visited the beaches extensively and I have used the both Amtrak and Commuter Rail in Rhode Island and Connecticut.

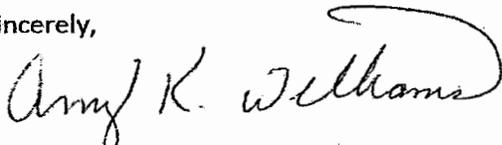
Not only do I disagree with several of the underlying assumptions and justifications used as support of this project but this project proposes placement of gasoline tanks in a Wellhead Protection Area within a Primary Groundwater Protection Zone. Gasoline service stations are not an allowed use within this zone. If this project was not a state project, it would have required vetting by the Hopkinton Planning and Zoning Boards where the concern of possible ground water contamination would have been raised. Hopkinton is a rural community that relies predominately on well water for drinking. Our state approved regulations are intended to protect Hopkinton's natural resources while balancing the need for development.

The Transit Travel Hub will not reduce the traffic going to Westerly beaches from Connecticut. The closest and busiest route to the Westerly Beaches is off Exit 92 in CT. Route 2 connects directly to 78 and is the most direct route. It is true that at high peak times the parking in Westerly can be scarce but perhaps Westerly needs to address its parking demand in Westerly, not in Hopkinton above a pristine aquafer.

The Transit application spends several paragraphs discussing the need for a travel rest stop. I disagree with the concept that there is no rest stop within one hundred miles from Connecticut to Massachusetts. There is a rest stop right before exit 92 in Ct that is six miles away from this proposed site. Additionally, if there needs to be a rest stop for north bound traffic going into Providence, it would seem more economical and environmentally prudent to reopen the rest stop in between exits two and three in RI. The infrastructure is in place and the facility could be used again for the travel brochures and gateway into Rhode Island. Additionally, the placement of the rest stop at this location would be more logical for Newport information as it is at exit three that people would exit to 138 east to Newport.

I am opposed to the placement of gasoline stations onto a Primary Groundwater Protection Zone with the inherent risk of contaminating a pristine water source. And as a long-time local resident, I don't believe the proposed transit travel hub will address the identified problems or provide the described benefits.

Sincerely,



Amy K. Williams

Amy K. Williams

Hopkinton Resident



## Callaghan, Linsey (DOA)

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**From:** William Clark <WClark@portsmouthri.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 01, 2015 11:29 AM  
**To:** Callaghan, Linsey (DOA)  
**Subject:** NEW PLAZA

What a waste of time, money and land.

Why not reactivate the dormant travel plaza a few miles away?

### ***Bill Clark***

**Director of Business Development**

Town of Portsmouth

2200 East Main Road

Portsmouth, RI 02871

[wclark@portsmouthri.com](mailto:wclark@portsmouthri.com)

401-643-0382

401-683-6804 fax



13 December 2015

Director Peter Alviti, Jr., PE  
Rhode Island Department of Transportation  
Two Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Rhode Island Travel Plaza and Transit Hub  
*Letter of Opposition*

Director Peter Alviti, Jr., PE:

In reference to this proposed project, please find this correspondence respectfully submitted to register my opposition to the proposal.

As a longtime resident of Hopkinton, specifically in proximity to the site of this proposal, I would submit the following observations:

1. Reviewing the evaluation criteria that identify safety in support of the proposal, we have an existing travel facility within only a few miles of this site that has been closed for years. Reopening that existing facility would address issues of 'drowsy driving'. As far as opening that facility just for trucks, note that there is an existing 'truck stop' virtually 'across the street' from this site on the southbound travel section of I-95;
2. Reviewing the evaluation criteria that identifies safety in support of the proposal, I would submit that if there needs to be a 'mode shift' to high occupancy vehicles traveling through the congested crash prone sections of I-95 into Providence that they be located closer to that municipality;
3. Reviewing the evaluation criteria that identifies the state of good repair in support of the proposal, I can personally assert that the existing park-n-ride facilities near this proposed site are NOT full on a regular basis as I travel by them several times each day;
4. Reviewing the evaluation criteria that identify economic competitiveness in support of the proposal, I am uncertain as to why the Westerly Comprehensive Plan, together with issues in that community, is being cited in this section. If the town of Westerly wishes to have such a facility in their community, I suggest you consider relocating the project into that community;

*"Providing Quality Services Since 1980"*

National Society of Professional Land Surveyors  
Canadian Institute of Geomatics  
Rhode Island Society of Professional Land Surveyors  
Soil and Water Conservation Society International Erosion Control Association

13 December 2015

Director Peter Alviti, Jr., PE

RE: Rhode Island Travel Plaza and Transit Hub  
*Letter of Opposition*

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5. Throughout the document, many other communities are cited as being beneficiaries of such a facility (Providence, Newport, Westerly, and Warwick). I might respectfully suggest that you consider relocating the facility closer to/within those communities;
6. Reviewing the section entitled "Quality of Life"; I see nothing here that indicates that the residents of Hopkinton are going to enjoy a higher quality of life. Instead, I only see references to how the residents of other communities are going to benefit from this facility being located in my community;
7. Reviewing the section entitled "Environmental Sustainability", I see nothing contained therein that notes that this facility is over/within overlay of one of the State's most pristine and abundant aquifers. I fail to see how the marginal benefits of this proposal could possibly supersede the potential for contamination of that most significant natural resource;
8. Lastly, reviewing the section entitled "Required Approvals", I see nothing contained therein that suggests that this project will be reviewed by the local planning and zoning boards. I would consider this an affront to the community in that these boards, and their regulations, should be satisfied by any proposed project, regardless of origin. Neither the State of Rhode Island, nor the federal government, should be above submitting to our local regulations.

In closing, I see nothing beneficial coming from this proposal. Instead, I see my community being burdened with a significant potential threat to our natural resources just that surrounding communities can enjoy less traffic congestion.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments in this regard. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Alfred W. DiOrio, PLS, Inc.

Alfred W. DiOrio, PLS, CPESC  
President and Principal Surveyor

Cc: Hopkinton Planning Board [Email]  
Hopkinton Town Council/Town Manager [Email]  
Senator Elaine J. Morgan [Email]

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Soil and Water Conservation Society    International Erosion Control Association