

**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	RIPTA 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 the RIPTA Riders Alliance voiced the concern of the Alliance that not much of this proposal constitutes a transit hub. It is located near where the I-95 former park and ride bus stops near exit 1, so there is already an existing RIPTA stop. This proposal is however not really for a transit hub, it will be a visitor's plaza. Stating that this will be a transit hub is inappropriate. Another claim 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 funds for projects 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, but closed, 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 to that question.

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's 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 are 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 agreement 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 to 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 grant 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 they 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 which 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 the RIPTA 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 to advance transit, there is an effect of crowding out other potential 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 21st in the RIDOT lobby at 9 a.m. There will also be a dinner on Monday, January 25th.

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.