

**RHODE ISLAND DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 19, 2020
THIS MEETING WAS HELD OVER TELECONFERENCE VIA ZOOM**

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **Call Meeting to Order** – Chair Cassidy called the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Ms. Callaghan reviewed the instructions on how a virtual meeting will be conducted. Following the instructions, the roll call was conducted for attendance.

2. **Roll Call**

Members Present

Mr. Michael Cassidy, Chairman,	Public Member
Mr. John Flaherty, V. Chair,	Grow Smart RI
Mr. Lloyd Albert,	AAA Northeast
Mr. Jamik Alexander,	Federal Highway Administration (Ex-Officio)
Mr. Michael Bliss,	Representing Dinalyn Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe
Ms. Jan Brodie,	The Pawtucket Foundation
Ms. Bari Freeman,	Bike Newport
Mr. David Freeman, P.E,	American Council of Engineering Companies for RI
Ms. Martina Haggerty,	City of Providence
Ms. Sarah Ingle,	Representing Gregory Nordin, RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)
Mr. James Moran,	City of East Providence
Ms. Mia Patriarca,	RI Department of Health
Ms. Mary Parella,	Child Opportunity Zone of Pawtucket
Mr. Daniel Porter,	RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Thomas Queenan,	RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT)
Mr. Timothy Scanlon	Construction Industries of Rhode Island
Ms. Karen Slattery,	RI Department of Environmental Management
Mr. Michael Walker,	RI Commerce Corporation
Mr. Raymond Watson,	Providence Cultural Equity Initiative
Mr. Michael Wood,	Town of Burrillville/RI League of Cities and Towns

Members Absent

Mr. Eric Moffett,	Seaview Railroad
Mr. Jason Pezzullo,	Cranston Planning Department

Staff Present:

Division of Statewide Planning

Meredith Brady, Associate Director
Linsey Callaghan, Assistant Chief
Michael D’Alessandro, Supervising Planning

Benny Bergantino, Principal Planner
Mason Perrone, Principal Planner
Catherine Pitassi, Executive Assistant

RIDOT
Pamela Cotter

RIPTA
Zachary Agush

FHWA
Randy Warden

Guests Present
None

3. Public Comment – There were none

Agenda Items:

Arrived After Roll Call:

Mr. Michael Bliss,	Representing, Dinalyn Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe
Mr. Timothy Scanlon,	Construction Industries of Rhode Island

4. October 29, 2020 Meeting Minutes – for action

Chair Cassidy called for a motion to approve the October 29, 2020 meeting minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) as submitted. Mr. Moran noted that he should be listed as present at this meeting and pointed out a minor typo error, a motion was made to approve the meeting minutes, with two amendments, by Mr. Flaherty and seconded by Mr. Albert. **There being no further amendments, all members present voted aye to approve the October 29, 2020 meeting minutes.**

5. Off System Bridges – for action

Thomas Queenan of RIDOT gave a brief overview - noting that Rhode Island faces a challenge to fund bridge repair. He said there are 1,186 bridges in Rhode Island, of which 16% are considered structurally deficient, and that RhodeWorks was developed to address this problem and reduce our structurally deficient bridges to less than 10%. He explained why the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is seeking concurrence from the TAC and State Planning Council, on a waiver request that would redirect \$22 million of federal funds from off-system bridges to service the needs of on-system bridges. It was noted that the \$22 million is needed to fund bridge projects already listed in the STIP and this is not additional funding for new projects. Lastly, before forwarding an official waiver request to FHWA to reduce the set aside, RIDOT is requesting the utilization of excess funding from the off-system bridge (\$22 million) to service the need for on-system bridges, while almost \$4 million will be retained for off-system bridge needs.

Documentation explaining the plan in detail was emailed to the TAC for review prior to the meeting.

Following the presentation Mr. Queenan answered the following questions:

Mr. Albert asked why don't we accelerate the pace of repair of those 26 bridges listed in poor quality requiring various levels of work, rather than extend it out for 10 years? Mr. Queenan responded that this requested waiver is being used as a matter of prioritization with our on-system bridges.

Mr. Albert also asked what the timeframe was to go from 16% structurally deficient to 10%? Mr. Queenan responded that we are making headway in reducing the amount of our structurally deficient bridge numbers but noted we need to re-assess this once budgetary issues are resolved.

Lastly, Mr. Albert asked if the waiver could only go to bridges or could it go to something else in the transportation ecosystem? Mr. Queenan responded that the preference is that it go to bridges.

Ms. Haggerty questioned the validity of the geographic location of features intersecting Memorial Boulevard in Providence, as noted on page 9 of the document, specifically item STIP ID numbers 088801 and 088901. Mr. Queenan thanked her for calling this to his attention and RIDOT will look into it.

Randy Warden, FHWA, requested that RIDOT keep their division office informed on the status of the waiver request. He also noted that FHWA agrees with the funding reallocation dedicated to on-system bridges. Mr. Queenan responded that they will keep the FHWA division office updated.

Lastly, Mr. Queenan answered Mr. Walker's question that RIDOT has previously transferred excess off-system bridge funds that could not be utilized for its intended purpose.

There being no further discussion, **Mr. Walker made the motion to recommend to the State Planning Council to transfer \$22 million from the off-system bridge funds to the on-system bridge funds. Motion was seconded by Mr. Albert. All members present voted aye to approve.**

6. Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – Moving Forward 2040 – Chair Cassidy asked Michael D'Alessandro to present updates on the Public Comment Report and final draft of the LRTP. He began the presentation with an overview of the final process of the LRTP and where we are at this time. The public had the opportunity to provide written and oral comments during the 30-day public review period, that ended on November 9, 2020. These comments have been collected and documented in the Public Comment and Hearing Report. Copies of the Public Comment and Hearing Report were e-mailed to the TAC for review prior to the meeting. There were 24 people or organizations that submitted verbal or written comments, with most of them pertaining to bus transit, bicycling, electrification/reducing GHGs, economy/land use and gas tax/transportation funding. The Report contains all comments received and provides a response to those comments. The Report also indicates changes that were made to the draft LRTP in response to the public comments.

The final draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan *Moving Forward RI 2040* incorporates by reference the Transit Master Plan, Bicycle Mobility Plan, State Rail Plan Supplement, and Congestion Management Process Plan. Snapshots of the changes made to the LRTP due to the public comments received have been reviewed, they include;

- A recommendations page (pg. 41) was added to the final LRTP clarifying the implementation process for the next five years.
- New Shoreham was added to a few images, as it was accidentally cropped out.
- Added a strategy to “Encourage state agencies to work with towns (specifically those supporting summer tourism) ...” under the goal Support Economic Growth (pg. 38).
- Active Transportation for safer streets for pedestrian and bicyclists was added to the *Challenges and Opportunities* page.
- Added a strategy on pg. 37 to ‘encourage data sharing between agencies to support comprehensive resilience planning’.

The TAC is being asked to make a recommendation to the State Planning Council to both approve the Public Comment and Hearing Report and adopt the final draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – *Moving Forward RI 2040*. The State Planning Council will meet on December 10, 2020.

Following the presentation, several TAC members thanked and commended Statewide Planning staff and all others that have been involved in the three plus years for their efforts on a job well done in putting this LRTP together.

Bari Freeman commended staff on the amount of work put into the plan and also spoke on the record stating she had suggested that the TAC meet to deliberate on the public comments received prior to holding this meeting, and recommended this practice be considered in the future. Mr. Flaherty agreed with this process. Mr. Walker noted the process was adequate and felt the TAC would be back to discuss any future amendments to the plan. Mr. Wood commented that he is satisfied with the process and felt he had plenty of opportunity to provide input.

Associate Director Brady commented that there may be some levels of changes coming up in the future at the federal level, which might precipitate amendments to state transportation plans. Nonetheless, she appreciates everyone’s commitment and time preparing the LRTP.

There being no further discussion, **Mr. Walker made the motion to recommend to the State Planning Council approval of both the Public Comment and Hearing Report and adopt the final draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)–*Moving Forward RI 2040*. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Bliss. All members present voted aye.**

7. TAC Meeting Schedule 2021 – *for action*

The 2021 Proposed meeting schedule for the Transportation Advisory Committee was distributed for review. Ms. Callaghan noted the meetings will take place on the fourth Thursday of every month with the exception for November 18th due to the Thanksgiving holiday and no meeting will be held in December. Ms. Brady noted that meetings will continue to be virtual due to COVID 19 until further notice. **There being no further discussion, Mr. Albert made the motion to approve the 2021 meeting schedule, as submitted, and seconded by Mr. Queenan. All members present voted aye.**

8. Assistant Chief’s Staff Report – *for information*

Ms. Callaghan provided an update on new and on-going projects that the Division is currently working on, they are:

Freight

- A Freight Advisory Committee meeting was held on November 10, 2020. At the meeting, staff updated the committee on the planned update to the 2016 State Freight and Goods Movement Plan, as the Plan is approaching its 5-year expiration date in 2022. Since much of the plan is still relevant, most of its updating will be done in house. Statewide Planning is, however, planning on adding a truck parking appendix to the Plan and some of that work will need consultant support. Statewide Planning will be sure to keep the TAC involved in the update to that Plan as it further develops.
- FHWA's resource center and Statewide Planning recently completed a 6-session training session targeted to RI's municipal planners related to freight planning. There was a lot of good dialogue with the municipal participants and one of the major outcomes from the training was that we need to do more to involve the municipalities in the discussion and state planning activities related to freight.

Resiliency training

- Statewide Planning along with FHWA's Resource Center is offering a Rhode Island municipal planner targeted training focused on Resiliency training. A kick-off session was held on Friday, November 13, 2020, however, there are still 5 more sessions scheduled so if anyone is still interested please contact Linsey Callaghan at linsey.callaghan@doa.ri.gov and additional information can be provided.

E-STIP

- Statewide Planning continues to work on the E-STIP development. Weekly meetings have been held with ESRI as well as several internal meetings related to the development of the E-STIP. Next week a review of the first iteration of the STIP management software, with a presentation by PMG, will be conducted. Lastly, Statewide Planning looks forward to sharing the first glimpses of these E-STIP tools with the TAC as they are ready in 2021.

9. Public Comment

Mr. Flaherty reported that he received a copy of a letter from the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association addressed to the Governor raising concerns about the Kennedy Plaza Multi-hub plan. A copy of the letter will be emailed to the TAC members. Mr. Watson reiterated that the TAC consider RI APA's letter concerning the decrease in bus ridership.

10. Announcements – none

11. Adjournment –

Chair Cassidy asked for a motion to adjourn the TAC meeting. Mr. Walker motioned to adjourn the meeting; and seconded by Mr. Flaherty. **All members present voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, Assistant Chief

LC/cp