



Department of Administration
Division of Statewide Planning
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TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES

February 17, 2022 @ 5:30PM
Via Zoom Web Meetings

1. Call to Order: Linsey Callaghan called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

Mr. Michael Walker, Chair	Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Mr. John Flaherty, Vice Chair	Grow Smart Rhode Island
Ms. Linsey Callaghan Assistant Chief	Division of Statewide Planning
Mr. Randy Warden	Federal Highway Administration (Ex-Officio)
Mr. Michael Wood	Town of Burrillville
Mr. Gregory Nordin	RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)
Ms. Martina Haggerty	City of Providence
Ms. Pamela Cotter	RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT)
Mr. Timothy Scanlon	Construction Industries of Rhode Island
Ms. Chelsea Siefert for Steven J. King, P.E.	Quonset Development Corporation
Ms. Karen Slattery	RI Department of Environmental Management
Mr. David Freeman, P.E.	American Council of Engineering Companies for RI
Mr. James Moran	City of East Providence
Ms. Rachel Calabro for Mia Patriarca	RI Department of Health
Ms. Betty Robson	J.F. Moran / JWU
Ms. Bari Freeman	Bike Newport
Mr. Robert Rulli	Warren Planning Department
Mr. Dan Porter	RI Airport Corporation
Ms. Mal Skowron	Green Energy Consumers
Ms. Diana Gugliotta	AAA Northeast
Ms. Lori Caron Silveira	Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority
Mr. Kyle Bennett	United Way of Rhode Island
Mr. Michael Cassidy	Public Member

Members Absent

Ms. Meghan Grady	Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island
Ms. Dinalyn Spears	Narragansett Indian Tribe

Staff Present:

Division of Statewide Planning

Meredith Brady, Associate Director
Linsey Callaghan, Assistant Chief
Michael D'Alessandro, Supervising Planner

Benny Bergantino, Principal Planner
Mason Perrone, Principal Planner
Roberta Groch, Assistant Chief

RIDOT

Ken White, Principal Financial Analyst
Ethan Lapointe, Economic and Policy Analyst

RIPTA

Zachary Agush, Capital Planner
Sarah Ingle, Director – Long Range Planning

FTA/FHWA

Mr. Carlos Machado, FHWA
Leah Sirmin, FTA
Jennifer Carrier, FHWA

3. Public Comment

- Doug Victor – Mr. Victor asked for access to the agenda.
- Liza Burkin – Ms. Burkin asked to clarify if this is the time to comment about Minor Amendment #2. Ms. Burkin indicated that there should be more ability for oral comment on this agenda item as there was only 14 days' notice to review a 400-page document tied to \$750 million dollars in spending. She said she felt there was nothing minor about the Amendment #2. In addition, she believes Minor Amendment #2 needs to have a climate analysis for every single project. She said that this money will have impacts on climate, equity, housing, health, and education which are all interconnected, and its spending cannot be fast-tracked. The public needs more opportunity to comment on this and RIDOT needs to coordinate better with the EC4.
- Christian Roselund – Mr. Roselund seconded Ms. Burkin's comment about public input and the amount of impact the spending of these funds will have on the public. There needs to be a better process with this significant amount of spending.
- Evan Moorman – Mr. Moorman was in agreement with Ms. Burkin and Mr. Roselund regarding the lack of public input and transparency. He also made a point that the STIP and the Amendment are not tied to climate goals or GHG emissions and that responding to climate issues is important in the STIP and its Amendments.
- Jonesy Mann – Mr. Mann encouraged the committee to think about the magnitude of STIP Amendment #2, the public engagement process, and suggests the TAC should deny this amendment.
- Derek Shooster – Mr. Shooster, STIP Coordinator for Mass DOT, said that the projects proposed for RIDOT that program funds in 2022 for PROTECT and Carbon Reduction may need more detailing from FHWA as guidance is not totally clear at this point.

4. [January 27, 2022 Meeting Minutes – for Action](#)

- TAC Vote - *for Approval*
- Motion to amend the meeting minutes: Correction from Bari Freeman in Section 7, under TAC Roles and Responsibilities, the last bullet. Ms. Freeman asked that where she speaks about 'subcommittees' that the minutes be expanded after "Ms. Callaghan responded by saying that we are likely not ready for the next meeting to have this discussion.", with the following sentence added: "Ms. Brady offered that it would be on the agenda for March."
- Motion to Approve as amended by John Flaherty, second by Bari Freeman. Mike Walker and Mike Cassidy abstain. Minutes are approved without objection.

5. [U.S. Department of Transportation: Rhode Island Metropolitan Planning Organization 2022](#) Federal Certification Review - Providence RI Transportation Management Area (*New*) = *for Information*

- Presentation by Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration Staff
 - The Division of Statewide Planning, as staff to the Rhode Island State Planning Council, is currently undergoing a Certification review by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This review happens every 4 years and was last conducted in 2018. This review is to ensure that the Division of Statewide Planning, as staff to the MPO, is carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process and acting in accordance with federal requirements. Planning processes under review include the congestion management process, civil rights and public participation, regional coordination, freight planning, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) development and administration, long-range transportation planning, unified planning work program, and performance-based planning and programming. The onsite (virtual this time) review occurred on February 8, 9, and 10th. FHWA and FTA staff were present at the SPC's February 10th meeting and the TAC's February 17th meeting tonight. FHWA and FTA also solicited written and online feedback on the MPO's Planning Process.
- Public Comments on Federal Certification Review
 - Greg Gerritt – Mr. Gerritt asked that FHWA/FTA not recertify the MPO. DOT does not listen to public comment. “Bicycle and Pedestrian funding is taken for widening of highways despite the fact that it's clear and the fact that widening highways does not reduce congestion.” In addition, he said that we need to eliminate and reduce transportation by automobiles to achieve climate goals.
 - Kathleen Gannon – Ms. Gannon, a resident of Providence and board chair for the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition. She said that she believes the public engagement process is broken and that the letters and public statements she has given have not been utilized. She said that “just meeting the letter of the law, the process as implemented fails to honor the spirit and intent of the law.” She continued by stating that the process is disingenuous and that there should be more opportunities to participate. She said that the TAC should help the public understand transportation issues -- people want roads and safe bridges, but they also want lower emissions and cleaner air and water; they want active transportation options; they want safety for everyone; and they want to address serious social inequities. Lastly, she said that the comments are not considered, and they do not impact the decisions.
 - Barry Schiller – Mr. Schiller said that the state of public participation has some serious problems. He also identified strengths in the RIPTA process such as their ATAC meetings, board meetings, outreach, etc. stated that there are issues on the RIDOT side. He got specific referencing STIP #5204, RIDOT multi-hub. He said, that the MPO did not play any role in this until the end and it remains in the STIP today. Lastly, he said that FHWA/FTA should recommend a process to RIDOT for ongoing discussions with stakeholder groups.
 - Patricia from RI Transit Riders – Said that the Act on Climate and Transit Master Plan were both adopted by the State with substantial public input. RIDOT is not allocating enough to transit in the STIP.
 - Liza Burkin – Ms. Burkin stated that public participation is done at bare minimum in the State and that we need to do better to include the public in this process and partner with advocacy communities.
 - Christian Roselund – Mr. Roselund urged FHWA/FTA to not recertify the MPO. He said that RIDOT does not conform to good business regarding public participation and that the comments at TAC are largely ignored. He concluded by stating we are not meeting the spirits of public participation, even if we are meeting the laws.
 - Lilian Picchione – Ms. Picchione, who formerly worked at RIPTA, said she was often frustrated by lack of a feedback process. She said that while the Board process at RIPTA helps encourage public engagement, the mechanisms for public feedback don't exist as much with RIDOT. She said when it comes to the road and bridge projects, she doesn't see a clear feedback loop by the time something reaches the TAC.
 - Peter Moniz – Mr. Moniz believes he is a victim of the public input process to the STIP. He said that for 20 years he has advocated for a bike path in Tiverton and it has not happened. He wants to see more efficient spending resulting in positive impacts.
 - Doug Victor – Mr. Victor requested that the chat becomes active again, as it was disabled due to offensive speech by a public participant. He said that the residents of Providence have not been adequately

represented, that the neighborhood voices need to be sought out, and encouraged federal government to deny the RIDOT plan.

- Grant Dulgarian – Mr. Dulgarian concurred with the statements provided by Barry Schiller and discussed transit options.
- TAC Discussion on Federal Certification Review
 - Martina Haggerty – Ms. Haggerty asked FHWA for more detail as to why Rhode Island has one Statewide MPO versus several smaller MPOs throughout the State.
 - Ms. Sirmin said that this is a local decision, but the regulation could be found here: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-I/subchapter-E/part-450/subpart-C/section-450.310>
 - John Flaherty – Mr. Flaherty said that Barry Schiller’s comments rang true to him and said that quarterly roundtables with RIDOT officials could be a helpful way to discuss transportation options moving forward.
 - Rachel Calabro – Ms. Calabro seconded what Mr. Flaherty discussed. She said that transportation has a wealth of activists that we’re lucky to have and that it is unfortunate that Transportation Planning is so arcane and nebulous that it resonates in neighborhoods and elsewhere around the State. Lastly, she said it is important to encourage the TAC to engage the public prior to agenda items being up for a vote.
 - Bari Freeman – Ms. Freeman said that many issues tonight that have been brought up that resonated with her. She mentioned how difficult she felt it was to hold a public meeting and then vote on something without being able to gather and discuss what had been heard. In addition, she reiterated the suggestion of a subcommittee being discussed further as a possible way to ensure more equitable involvement from the community. In conclusion, she said she would write down her thoughts and forward them to Randy and the Team.
 - Mal Skowron – Ms. Skowron said that FHWA/FTA looks for needs of the region long term and that there she is not aware of any larger effort to coordinate transportation planning with neighbors moving forward as Rhode Island has just passed mandatory greenhouse gas emission reduction laws the last two years. She finished by asking “To what extent are neighboring States engaged to better coordinate?”
 - Ms. Sirmin clarified that the MPO region was what was meant during that discussion, but there are opportunities to coordinate between states as well.
 - Mike Walker – Mr. Walker thanked Mr. Warden and Mr. Machado and said that he appreciates that they make the time to be here and looks forward to hearing the comments and corrective actions as they make us better. He said the TAC and SPC are both diverse groups. Lastly, he summarized by saying that while the comments on the public participation were discouraging, the public comments have been allowed and responded to.

6. [State Transportation Improvement Program – Amendment #2 – for Action](#)

- RIDSP – Overview Presentation
 - The Minor Amendment has been requested by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA). Ms. Callaghan provided an overview of the transportation planning process and plans in Rhode Island. In her presentation, she outlined the STIP timeframe, sources and uses (fiscal constraint) and priority areas along with the prioritization process and thresholds found in the STIP Memorandum of Agreement. Ms. Callaghan described where the IIJA money is to be spent and a comparison with existing formula funding.
 - Ms. Brady presented information on the Act on Climate and what RI as well as other MPOs are doing about GHG emissions tracking.
 - Mr. D’Alessandro summarized the public comment letters received as part of Amendment #2.
 - Ms. Callaghan finished the presentation with a timeline for STIP Amendment #2 adoption -- the amendment was made available to the public for a 12-day public review period from February 3 to February 14, 2022. Written comments could be submitted via the online public comment form. A Public Comment Report is provided as part of the TAC’s review of Amendment #2. The Report documents all the public comments received related to the STIP Amendment #2, along with staff’s responses to the comments. The TAC has approval authority over Minor Amendments and the TAC will

be requested to take action on the proposed Minor Amendment #2. After the TAC takes action, the Minor Amendment #2 materials will be forwarded to the Governor's Office for concurrence and then to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

- Presentation from RIDOT
 - Mr. Ken White provided a detailed presentation on Minor Amendment #2. Mr. White's presentation identified IJJA funding and programs, discussed how IJJA funds are being deployed in RI, explained strategies the RIDOT used to develop Amendment #2, and described how Amendment #2 implements IJJA Policy Directives and objectives of major state plans such as the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Bicycle Mobility Plan, Congestion Management Plan, and Transit Master Plan. Mr. White summarized by saying Amendment #2 adds FHWA IJJA funding to the STIP, invests in achieving and maintaining a state of good repair, supports reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improves environmental resiliency, implements all 8 IJJA policy directives, and advances key state objectives.
- Presentation from RIPTA
 - Greg Nordin presented for RIPTA. Mr. Nordin described RIPTA's changes to the STIP being the addition of two discretionary grant awards (1. 5339 Low or No Emission Vehicle Grant, and 2. RAISE Planning Grant) and a shift of money between line items to add funds to RIPTA's ZEV pilot project (Preventative Maintenance).
- TAC Discussion on Amendment #2
 - Bob Rulli – Mr. Rulli believes that work still needs to be done to better prioritize everyone on the roads and there is an issue with RIDOT's Director disparaging cyclists on the radio.
 - Mike Wood – Mr. Wood said the meeting process should be reorganized for these types of action items to make better use of everyone's time, and that informational presentations regarding the Amendment should have been provided earlier in the agenda.
 - John Flaherty – Mr. Flaherty disagreed with the premise of this amendment being minor. He said the magnitude of this amendment is much more significant, and that there is a need for analysis along with review by EC4. He asked why our neighbors in CT and MA are in no rush to push through IJJA funding, but we are. Before asking four final questions Mr. Flaherty said that he does want to see the money put to work but that the proper analysis cannot be skipped over.
 - Regarding the Rules and Standards: SPC shall execute memoranda of understanding – Was the 'Memorandum of Agreement - Procedures to Amend and Modify the STIP' ever voted upon by the SPC?
 - Ms. Callaghan indicated the SPC did not vote on the MOA but that the Chair of SPC signed the MOA, as has been practice.
 - Regarding Rules and Standards: Solicitation of project proposals – When was the last STIP solicitation?
 - Ms. Callaghan clarified that the last solicitation was held for FFY 2018 – 2027 STIP and there was ample solicited project backlog to program available funding in the FFY 2022 – 2031 STIP. Mr. Flaherty indicated that he did not believe available funding was a precursor for STIP solicitations. Ms. Brady indicated that prior STIPs had followed the same practice, based on the demand for available funding.
 - On January 4th the White House sent communications to all states urging them to appoint their own infrastructure (water, broadband, energy, transportation) coordinator – is there one in RI?
 - Staff has not been made aware of a Governor-appointed infrastructure coordinator.
 - Mr. Flaherty's last question went back to Major vs Minor, specifically STIP #3350: the Missing Move. He said the existing STIP has total cost of \$45M, however, the updated amendment has this tabbed at \$103M. Under the criteria, is this change significant enough to constitute a major amendment?
 - Ms. Callaghan responded that the funds are in the outyear and MOA does not restrict how much outyear funding can be added.

- Mr. Flaherty wants to clarify these details as he reads the MOA differently.
- Mal Skowron – Ms. Skowron started off by saying she wanted to echo Mr. Flaherty’s concerns. She also said that she does not feel that using funds to further climate change goals deprioritizes maintaining a state of good repair because we need both. She added that receiving presentations earlier would be helpful as the document was 500 pages and a lot to get through prior to the meeting. She concluded by saying that the STIP needs to be updated in such a way that the greenhouse gas methodology being used by the State is more transparent.
- Martina Haggerty – Ms. Haggerty said she was disheartened by the lack of care and due diligence with respect to obtaining meaningful input from community members and municipalities. She said that equity and climate resilience need to be addressed. She concluded by asking if the RIPTA portion of the amendment could be separated from the RIDOT portion and voted upon?
 - Ms. Callaghan indicated that they can be isolated.
- Pam Cotter – Ms. Cotter discussed the methodology behind project prioritization and that climate change is taken into account along with federal guidance. She said that the STIP is a living document and further adjustments will be made. She said there was \$500M of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the original plan and that guidance for PROTECT and other items come from discretionary grants. She concluded by saying that failure to approve the amendment would create a lack of opportunity to use FFY2022 funds in time. Furthermore, the State in compliance with the rules but she won’t argue - there is room to do more, but RIDOT works very hard to meet every law here.
- Bari Freeman – Ms. Freeman said that this amendment is not minor and that it can be delayed to make needed changes. She also quoted comments made by the RIDOT Director in the media on Thursday morning, which were not well received. She felt that “prioritizing carbon reduction does not translate to forcing people to ride bicycles”; and she inquired about what experts have been engaged as a resource? She said that statewide, 10% of households do not have access to a car and that the STIP needs to consider everyone. She concluded by saying that we can still deploy this as a minor amendment with further change.
- Mike Cassidy – Mr. Cassidy said that he was disappointed with the most recent STIP, that everything became tagged as active transportation. He also said that it was hard to figure out how much money was going toward bikeway projects, since they are bundled into road and bridge projects. He said that we should figure out the percentage of the money that goes into bikeway projects to determine whether the categorization as a minor amendment is valid.
- TAC Vote - *for Approval*
 - Mr. Flaherty made a motion to advance RIPTA portion of Minor Amendment #2, second by Ms. Haggerty.
 - Ms. Cotter made a motion to amend Mr. Flaherty’s motion to approve Minor Amendment #2 in its entirety, second by Mr. Scanlon.
 - Ms. Cotter’s motion to vote on Minor Amendment #2 in its entirety carries.

Mike Walker	Yes	Chelsea Siefert	Yes
John Flaherty	No	James Moran	Yes
Rachel Calabro	No	Greg Nordin	Yes
Lori Caron Silviere	Yes	Daniel Porter	Yes
Michael Cassidy	No	Betty Robson	Yes
Pam Cotter	Yes	Robert Rulli	Abstain
David Freeman	Yes	Timothy Scanlon	Yes
Bari Freeman	No	Mal Skowron	No
Dianna Gugliotta	Yes	Karen Slattery	Yes
Martina Haggerty	No	Michael Wood	Yes

- Vote to approve Minor Amendment #2: Motion carries. Amendment #2 passes.

Mike Walker	Yes	David Freeman	Yes
John Flaherty	No	Bari Freeman	No
Rachel Calabro	No	Dianna Gugliotta	Yes
Lori Caron Silviera	Yes	Martina Haggerty	No
Michael Cassidy	No	Chelsea Seifert	Yes
Pam Cotter	Yes	James Moran	Yes
Greg Nordin	Yes	Timothy Scanlon	Yes
Daniel Porter	Yes	Mal Skowron	No
Betty Robson	Yes	Karen Slattery	Yes
Robert Rulli	Abstain	Michael Wood	Yes

7. Assistant Chief's Staff Report – *for Information*

- Staff efforts have been focused on the Federal Certification Review and STIP Amendment.
- Work is underway on the update to the State Freight and Goods Movement Plan. Staff had hoped to kick off the Freight Plan update with the TAC at this meeting, however, in the interest of time, we deferred it until the March meeting.

8. Public Comment

- Liza Burkin – Ms. Burkin thanked everyone who voted 'no'. She agreed with Ms. Freeman that a climate analysis could have been done quickly. Climate change needs to be taken seriously.

9. Announcements

- None.

10. Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn from Mr. Cassidy, second by Mr. Moran. Meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.