

TIP Regional Meeting

Powers Administration Building

Monday, January 11, 2016

TAC Members Present

Mr. Daniel Baudouin

Mr. Richard Crenca

Ms. Bari Freeman

Mr. George Monaghan

Ms. Amy Pettine

Ms. Pam Sherrill

Providence Foundation

City of Warwick

Bike Newport

RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)

RI Public Transit Authority

RI Chapter, APA

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Mr. Benjamin Jacobs

Mr. Jared Rhodes

Ms. Karen Scott

Principal Research Technician

Chief

Assistant Chief

Meeting began: 6:00 p.m.

Public Comments

Mayor Donald R. Grebien of Pawtucket

The Pawtucket Commuter Rail Station

The Mayor spoke in favor of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station, which would begin commuter rail service to the two cities. This project is the main priority of Pawtucket, and after many years in discussion it is closer than ever to construction. The project would bring construction jobs, revitalize a number of vacant and underutilized properties, as well as serving as an alternative access point for those visiting PawSox Stadium, the Blackstone Valley National Historical Park, the historic Slater Mill, and the soon to be completed Isle Brewery Complex. Commuter rail would allow residents to access educational and job opportunities in Boston and Rhode Island. The project also includes substantial bicycle and pedestrian components that would help improve the area and make it more attractive to younger residents.

Mayor Grebien also spoke about:

- **The Roosevelt Ave/ Slater Mill Enhancement:** This project would create attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities for those accessing the Blackstone Valley National Historical Park, thus enhancing user experience and adding investment to the city's downtown core.
- **Exchange Street Streetscape:** This streetscape upgrade would improve crosswalks and pedestrian infrastructure in the up and coming Armory Arts District, including access to the Gamm Theater and Tolman High School.
- **Blackstone Valley Bikeway:** Popular and attractive segments of the bikeway exist to the south and north of Pawtucket, and the city is eager to see its portion of the route completed. In

particular, a segment from Town Landing to Exchange Street would connect the Slater Mill with the Armory Arts District in a highly visible section of the city. This amenity would help attract talented young professionals to the city.

Mayor James A. Diossa of Central Falls

The Pawtucket Commuter Rail Station

Mayor Diossa spoke in favor of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station, which would serve a very large market and provide access to employment in Providence and Quonset Point. The site chosen would help revitalize a deteriorated neighborhood with some of the poorest residents in the state. The Federal Transit Authority has already discussed accessing the station for regional AMTRAK service, which will allow residents to access the transit system without getting entangled in Providence traffic. The project would be a key amenity for millennials, who prefer not to use cars, and bring attention and love back to both cities.

The Mayor also spoke in favor of the Broad Street Regeneration Initiative. The innovative project would involve a comprehensive redesign of Broad Street's storm water runoff, safety, and aesthetic systems, greatly improving quality of life for residents. Broad Street is an important thoroughfare for 3 working class neighborhoods, containing over 3 million square feet of underutilized mill space. The state is already planning to repave the street, and has already done work on the adjoining Dexter Street, so now is the time to take a comprehensive approach to get the most out of both projects.

TAC Questions: Where is this project to be located? Is there definitely a bicycle component?

The station will be located at the Barton St. Providence and Worcester Railroad rail yard. The site is surrounded by apartment buildings, and the station will consist of simple platforms on either side of the tracks with pedestrian bridge access over the rails.

A bicycle Master Plan has already been concluded for the site, and the cities have tried to construct such preliminary sections of bike path as have been heretofore possible.

Lisa Nolan from the Southeast Lighthouse Foundation

The Southeast Lighthouse Museum Rehabilitation

Ms. Nolan spoke in favor of the Southeast Lighthouse Museum Rehabilitation, which would repair cast-iron railing and deck area that is currently in a dangerous state of deterioration at the historic lighthouse. In addition to its historic status as a popular tourist destination, the lighthouse is an operating part of the Rhode Island maritime navigation system. The current state of deterioration threatens the safety of the structure. Ms. Nolan noted that this project is already at 90% design thanks to help provided by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. The requested gap funding would allow the foundation to complete design and move to construction on this key historic landmark.

TAC Questions: Would this project be on this TIP or the next?

Response: Although this project is listed in the FY13-16 TIP, it will not be advancing unless it is included as funded project as a part of the FY17-25 TIP.

Frank LeTorre of the Providence Downtown Improvement District

Mr. LeTorre is the Senior Director of the Providence Downtown Improvement District, representing all the businesses in the district. He spoke of five of the projects submitted by the city of Providence that his organization regards as priorities:

- **Multimodal Hub:** Would make the transit system more coherent and remove the strain of overcrowding in Kennedy Plaza.
- **Providence River Dredging:** The River is a key amenity and is now nearly entirely dry at low tide.
- **City Walk Bike Enhancement:** Would provide great benefits to the city by connecting the downtown to the India Point area.
- **Water Place Park Repairs:** Water Place Park is the jewel of the city, but is 30 years old and requires some repairs due to heavy use. The project would also include key upgrades to bring the park into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Program:** The sequel to an already popular and successful vehicular signage program.

Alicia Lehrer of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Ms. Leher is the Executive Director of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, and voiced her support for four program priorities submitted by her organization to the TIP.

- **Priority 1:** A proposed seven mile section of separated bike path in Providence from Providence Place Mall to Eagle Square. This route represents a gap between the rest of the bike path and the Providence downtown. Currently this route is served by dangerous on-road bikeways and is restricting the use of the bike path. The Council currently has the funding necessary for the redesign portion, but lack funding for construction. 33% of the population potentially serviced by the path has no access to a vehicle.
- **Priority 2:** A proposed three mile separated bike path in Johnston from Cricket Field to Lyman Ave. The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council has already completed a project at Cricket Field with TIP funding, this project would connect the park to the rest of the bike path. The Council has some money for design but entirely lack construction funds.
- **Priority 3:** A proposed separated bike path from Cricket Field to Almondale Ave and into North Providence. This route would allow a connection to the students at Rhode Island College. North Providence has asked for a connection to the bike path, and this route would satisfy their request. The project would also begin to connect the bike path with village centers in the western half of the state.
- **Priority 4:** A proposed separated bike path from Johnston to Massachusetts Border in Burrillville. This project is a more long term goal that is part of the effort to create a statewide bike path network.

Ms. Leher also voiced her support for the 1-95 Downtown Underpass Enhancement Project, which would make the areas under the I-95 viaduct more pedestrian friendly by adding improved lighting features and conducting pedestrian scale restriping.

TAC Questions: Is there a bike path connection on the Massachusetts side of the border in Burrillville.

Response: while there is not one currently, there is the potential for several connections in the future.

Joelle Kanter from the Providence Foundation

Ms. Kanter is program manager of the Providence Foundation, and voiced support for five of the projects submitted by the City of Providence:

- **Multimodal Hub:** Would make the transit system more coherent and remove the strain of overcrowding in Kennedy Plaza
- **Providence River Dredging:** The River is a key amenity and is now nearly entirely dry at low tide.
- **City Walk Bike Enhancement:** Would provide great benefits to the city by connecting the downtown to the India Point area.
- **Water Place Park Repairs:** Water Place Park is the jewel of the city, but is 30 years old and requires some repairs due to heavy use. The project would also include key upgrades to bring the park into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Program:** The sequel to an already popular and successful vehicular signage program.

Cliff Wood from the Downtown Providence Park Conservancy

Mr. Wood from the Downtown Providence Park Conservancy, which aims to preserve Providence's historic downtown core through the development and management of exceptional public spaces, voiced support for 5 projects:

- **Multimodal Hub:** Would make the transit system more coherent and remove the strain of overcrowding in Kennedy Plaza
- **Providence River Dredging:** The River is a key amenity and is now nearly entirely dry at low tide.
- **City Walk Bike Enhancement:** Would provide great benefits to the city by connecting the downtown to the India Point area.
- **Water Place Park Repairs:** Water Place Park is the jewel of the city, but is 30 years old and requires some repairs due to heavy use. The project would also include key upgrades to bring the park into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage Program:** The sequel to an already popular and successful vehicular signage program.

Richard Crenca, City of Warwick

Richard Crenca, Principal Planner at the City of Warwick, noted that Warwick had submitted 83 projects, 69 of which were new projects proposed by RIDOT. Eighty percent of these new RIDOT projects are to replace bridges and culverts. Eleven projects are carryovers from the 2013-2016 TIP and three are new projects proposed by the City. The three city projects are:

- **Jefferson Boulevard road improvement and repaving**
- **Post Road improvements and repaving from Airport Road to Elmwood Ave**
- **Route 2 road improvements and repaving between East Ave and Coweset Rd.**

These projects will help ensure the success of the city's City Center Redevelopment Plan by improving transportation access and multimodal infrastructure in an economically developing area.

TAC Questions: What are the limits of the City Center Redevelopment area? Is this a zoning classification?

Response: Jefferson Blvd to Post Rd, and Airport Rd to Coronado. A detailed map of the zone is included in the project submission.

All speakers having had their chance to speak, Ms. Karen Scott thanked everyone for coming and closed the session at 6:58 PM