

Department of Administration
Division of Statewide Planning
Rhode Island State Planning Council/Metropolitan Planning Organization
Thursday, August 29, 2019
Department of Administration, Conference Room A
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendance

Members Present

Mr. Michael DiBiase, Chairman	Director, Department of Administration
Ms. Nicole Verdi, Vice Chair	Representing Rosemary Powers, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Ms. Meredith Brady	Secretary, Associate Director, Division of Statewide Planning
Mr. Peter Alviti	Director, Department of Transportation
Mr. Scott Avedisian	Chief Executive Officer, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Mr. Robert Azar	Representing Bonnie Nickerson, Director, Providence Department of Planning & Development
Mr. Robert Ballou	Representing Janet Coit, Director, Department of Environmental Management (DEM)
Mr. Roy Coulombe	Public Member
Ms. Carol Grant	Commissioner, Office of Energy Resources
Mr. Carlos Machado	Ex-Officio, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Ms. Susan Mara	Representing Jeanne Boyle, Rhode Island League of Cities & Towns, President's Designee
Mr. Thomas Mullaney	Department of Administration, Budget Office
Ms. Amy Rainone	Representing Rhode Island Housing
Mr. James Rajotte	Representing Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, Director, Department of Health (DOH)
Mr. James Riordan	Public Member
Mr. Peder Schaefer	Representing Brian Daniels, Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns
Mr. Mike Walker	Representing Stefan Pryor Secretary of Commerce
Mr. Jeff Willis	Representing Grover Fugate, Executive Director, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council
Mr. Scott Wolf	Public Member - Environmental Advocate

Members Absent

Ms. Lisa Bryer	Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island League of Cities & Towns, Local Government Representative
Ms. Jeanne Cola	Non-Profit Community Development Representative
Mr. Marcus Mitchell	Small Business Representative
Ms. Anne Nolan	Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission
Ms. Sandy O'Connor	Governor's Designee (Resigned)

Division of Statewide Planning Staff: Linsey Callaghan, Michael D'Alessandro, Nancy Hess, Josh O'Neil, and Catherine Pitassi

Guests Present: Tom Queenan, Chief Program Development, RIDOT, and Representative Teresa Tanzi

Agenda Items

1. Call to Order – Chairman DiBiase called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.
2. Public Comment on Agenda Items – Three persons addressed agenda Item 3 c. Kathleen Gannon, RI Bicycle Coalition asked the Council to consider all the written comments received in opposition to Major Amendment #19 and the comments by elected officials. Mike Eng, RI Bicycle Coalition, felt the Council should not cut any TAP program funds with this Amendment. Representative Teresa Tanzi urged the Council to invest in more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as investments help reduce carbon emissions. She believes in investments in bridge sufficiency, but not at the expense of bike and pedestrian investments. John Flaherty, Grow Smart RI, stated that Grow Smart RI is against the Major Amendment and urged Council members to vote no.
3. Items for Action (Votes Required)
 - a. Approve minutes from July 23, 2019.- **A motion was made by Jim Riordan to approve the July 23, 2019 minutes as submitted, seconded by Scott Willis.** All members voted aye.
 - b. Presentation and Vote to Approve -Public Hearing Report and Approval of Final Plan Update to Ocean State Outdoors, State Guide Plan Element 152 (continued from 6.13.19)

NOTE: James Riordan recused himself from this topic.

Nancy Hess summarized the importance of this Plan update in ensuring continued National Park Service and other federal funding availability for Rhode Island. A public hearing was held on July 17, 2019, there were 10 attendees and 5 others provided written comments on the Plan. All responses supported the adoption of the Plan as detailed in the Public Hearing Report. A question ensued as to whether bike paths were included in the Plan. The Plan contains an action for coordination with the forthcoming bicycle mobility, Transit Master, and Long-range Transportation plans.

A motion was made by Peter Alviti to adopt the Ocean State Outdoors, State Guide Plan Element 152, as submitted and recommended by staff; seconded by Thomas Mullaney. All members present voted aye. There were no nay votes.

NOTE: James Riordan returned to the meeting.

- c. Presentation & Vote to Approve - Public Hearing Report and Approval of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) – Amendment #19 – Major Amendment (continued from June 23, 2019) – Meredith Brady introduced Linsey Callaghan and Michael D’Alessandro. Linsey Callaghan gave an overview of the STIP Ozone Conformity Determination for the relevant National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Amendment #19 will still allow the State to meet federal air quality conformity requirements as required by the Clean Air Act. She noted the STIP now has a new Appendix which addresses the new performance-based planning requirements of the FHWA and explains the process by which the adopted state performance targets guide investments decisions in the STIP.

Mike D’Alessandro summarized the Public Comment report. Comments were received from 200 individuals, including 11 elected officials, 16 advocacy groups, and 100 comments from the public. Most of the comments were in opposition to the proposed TAP program cuts. There were also several letters from town elected officials in support of adopting the Amendment.

Peter Alviti, Director RIDOT, gave an overview of the Amendment as he felt clarification on its content was needed. The 10-year STIP includes \$200 million in both TAP program projects as well as bridge and road projects that enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Roughly \$20 million per year is included for bicycle infrastructure which is more than twice the historical average for this type of investment. There are two sources of funding; TAP program funds and major road and bridge projects with bike and pedestrian components. Project examples are the Providence River Pedestrian Bridge bicycle and pedestrian enhancements, the 6/10 project includes a shared use path and two pedestrian bridges, and the Henderson Bridge. The project management process considers projects in their totality, so some bike and pedestrian projects are outside of the TAP program. Finally, the Transportation Advisory Committee voted to support this Major Amendment and the Council should approve the Amendment.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the Major Amendment. **A motion was made by Peter Alviti to approve the Public Hearing Report and Approval of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) – Amendment #19 – Major Amendment, as submitted and recommended by the TAC; seconded by Mike Walker.** Mike Walker asked that the motion be amended to include adoption of the new Performance Based Planning Appendix as well as the Air Quality Conformity report as part of the Major Amendment. Peter Alviti accepted the amendment.

Discussion ensued. Scott Wolf stated his opposition the Major Amendment but commended the Governor for supporting major investments in bridge repair, but these investments should not smother bike and pedestrian investments. Approval is not in line in his opinion with the public opposition expressed in public comments in the Public Hearing Report.

James Rajotte applauded the public engagement for the Major Amendment and believes the Amendment strikes a balance with investments in bridge safety and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. He urged increased investments in safer roadway design to reduce pedestrian fatalities.

Robert Ballou agreed that there is an appropriate balance with this Amendment and DEM supports this Amendment as proposed.

James Riordan expressed support of the bridge investment strategy but stated that he believes there is still more bike and pedestrian planning and investments with a focus on pedestrian safety needed.

Robert Azar stated that Providence appreciates RIDOT's significant investments in the City which have resulted in safer bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The City will push for even more bike and pedestrian funding in the future. He supports this Amendment.

Chairman DiBiase then asked for a roll call vote on the motion:

Roll Call: Alviti-Aye, Avedisian-Aye, Azar-Aye, Ballou-Aye, Brady-Aye, Coulombe-Aye, Dibiase-Aya, Grant-Aye, Mara-Aye, Mullaney-Aye, Pappas-Aye, Rainone-Aye, Rajotte-Aye, Riordan-Aye, Schaefer-Aye, Verdi-Aye, Walker-Aye, Willis-Aye, Wolf-No. The vote was 18 in favor and 1 opposed.

4. Associate Director Report

- a. MPO Recertification Corrective Action: Amendments to R.I. General Law § 42-11-10 (e), Membership of Statewide Planning Council (continued from 7.23.19) - Meredith Brady updated the Council that she is working with the Governor's Office and the League of Cities and Towns to confirm some exiting appointments and to fill

the new elected official's appointments. She asked for recommendations to be forwarded to her for the environmental advocate/ justice and chamber of commerce or economic development interest representatives.

There will be no meeting in September and the Division of Statewide Planning will be moving to the Foundry building on September 9th.

5. Announcements

Amy Rainone of RI Housing announced that a series of stakeholder meetings will be held on the Strategic Housing, Consolidated, and Analysis to Impediments Plans next week. A meeting on Regulatory Concerns and Barrier's to Development on September 3, 2019 may be of interest to Planners.

6. Adjournment – **A motion by Robert Ballou to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Roy Coulombe.** All members present voted aye. There were no nay votes. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meredith Brady, Associate Director
Secretary

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