

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

RI Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Public Hearing & Comment Period Report
Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Approved 

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I. Introduction

In recent years the State has made significant advancements to improve and expand passenger and freight rail infrastructure and service in Rhode Island. Many of the recent accomplishments, including the completion of commuter rail stations at Wickford Junction and Warwick InterLink, and the expansion of segments of the Freight Rail Improvement Project (FRIP), have all expanded opportunities for both passenger and freight rail service in Rhode Island. As rail continues to advance there is a need to have an overarching and broad vision for the State's future rail investment priorities. The last time the State took a comprehensive look at rail was with the 1993 *Rhode Island Freight Rail Plan* and as the title implies was primarily focused on freight with limited attention to passenger rail.

In addition, the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) requires states to have a current and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approved state rail plan to be eligible for federal rail funding programs under the act. The 1993 *Rhode Island Freight Rail* fails to meet the requirements established under PRIIA. As a result, the State has developed a new State Rail Plan to meet the provisions under PRIIA, as well as to establish a blueprint for the future direction of Rhode Island's passenger and freight rail investments that best utilizes the State's scarce transportation funding resources.

The Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program (RISPP) has worked cooperatively with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), along with stakeholder involvement from the State Rail Plan Advisory Committee to develop the draft State of Rhode Island Rail Plan. The State Rail Plan Advisory Committee assisted throughout the course of the Plan's development and was comprised of representatives from state and federal agencies, public and private passenger and freight rail operators, the rail passenger association, the Transportation Advisory Committee, Rhode Island and Massachusetts regional planning agencies, as well as several other interested parties. Through the Committee's involvement, this planning process to update the State Rail Plan has provided an opportunity to bring together various agencies and organizations that have a stake in rail transportation in Rhode Island and the region. The Rail Plan has been developed to meet and exceed the planning provisions of PRIIA, articulate the vision, goals, and objectives for Rhode Island's passenger and freight rail systems, and to identify and prioritize potential passenger and freight rail projects in Rhode Island. Once adopted, the State Rail Plan will replace the Rhode Island Freight Rail Plan as State Guide Plan Element 661.

There were two public hearings to accept comments on the Rhode Island State Rail Plan. The first public hearing occurred during the morning of January 23, 2014 at 10:00 AM at the Department of Administration, Conference Room A. The second public hearing occurred on January 23, 2014 at 6:30 PM at the TAC meeting.

A legal notice was published in the Providence Journal on December 20, 2013, advertising the Rhode Island State Rail Plan's January 23, 2014 public hearings. The public hearing notice referred interested citizens, agencies, and organizations to Statewide Planning's web posting of the Rhode Island State Rail Plan December 2013 draft which was made available for download. A hard copy of the document was also made available in the Statewide Planning Program office. A copy of the public hearing notice was also direct mailed to over 1,300 interested parties. The public comment period for the draft Plan opened on December 20, 2013 and will close at the conclusion of the TAC's public hearing on January 23, 2014. Comments received at the public hearings, as well as written public comments received within the public comment period, are summarized and addressed in this public hearing report.

II. Comment Summary & Response

Name	Comment / Question	Response
Aaron Hertzberg, <i>Pawtucket Foundation</i>	Stated that he is encouraged by the idea to create an intermodal hub at the South Attleboro MBTA Commuter Rail Station.	RIDOT has been working with RIPTA, the MBTA, and the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) to provide RIPTA bus service at this station. RIPTA will begin service to South Attleboro in June 2014 with two bus routes (Route 1 and 35). The Plan also cites South Attleboro, MA Station Improvements as a high priority under the Short Range (0-5 years) Investment Program (see page 9-19) for pedestrian and RIPTA bus connections at the Station.
Steven Musen, <i>RI Association of Railroad Passengers</i>	Several grammatical comments and factual corrections were offered.	Changes were incorporated into the Plan.
	Noted that the Plan includes an Investment Program table listing future potential projects, however there are no funding set-aside for steps further action, especially for projects listed in the preliminary engineering / environmental analysis phase. Feels that cost estimates for construction should be included for projects listed in the engineering phase even if they are not implemented at this time.	The outcome of the planning analysis or preliminary engineering/environmental analysis will determine a project's feasibility and therefore the likelihood of advancing to the next phase of development. No project in the Planning Level Analysis phase or the Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Analysis phase is guaranteed to advance into construction.
Bruce Waterson, <i>Waterson Terminal Services at the Port of Providence</i>	Asked that the rail unloading project at the Port of Providence be considered as short-term instead of long term, as it is stated in the Plan. He believes this project will probably advance within the next 12 to 18 months.	The Port of Providence's rail unloading project is now identified as a high priority under the Plan's Short Range Investment Program. See page 9-20.
Peter Brassard, <i>public</i>	Stated that the Plan should place greater importance on the electrification of all tracks including passenger, freight, commuter, and track siding on the Northeast Corridor, especially between Central Falls and Westerly. It would increase connectivity between Providence and Boston and decrease pollution. The MBTA has resisted using electric trains but their policy could change in the future.	Electrification of tracks is dependent upon MBTA's advancement of such technology and use of electric multiple units (EMUs). The State Rail Plan includes support for EMUs and track electrification in the Short Range Investment Program's Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence project listed on page 9-17.
	Identifies the Pawtucket/Central Falls station as the primary infill station for the MBTA's Wickford to Boston line. In a Providence Foundation Commuter Rail feasibility study, Providence's Olneyville neighborhood was identified as another infill station location. Other potential infill stations including Cranston on Cranston St. and Elmwood at Reservoir St. also have similar potential and not that much vehicle parking would be needed around the stations.	The State Rail Plan cites the following projects in support of advancing commuter infill station development: Additional Track Capacity-Providence to Kingston; Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence; Pawtucket Commuter Rail Station; and Passenger Service from Woonsocket to Pawtucket/Providence. RIDOT is also currently studying expansion of the current commuter rail service between Providence and Wickford Junction, including in-fill stations. In-fill stations such as Olneyville and Elmwood could only be considered under the in-state shuttle service concept.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
<i>continued, Peter Brassard, public</i>	The current MBTA service is more Boston oriented. Consideration should be given to added service on weekday mornings, afternoons, and evenings, as well as weekends. Trains could also be better linked with RIPTA buses and would be competitive with automobile travel.	The State Rail Plan includes the Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence project under the Short Range (0-5 years) Investment Program for planning level analysis (see page 9-17). This project is studying the potential for added frequency and span of service by implementing an in-state rail shuttle service.
	The Rail Plan should increase ridership performance targets on commuter trains from 1% to 5%.	The ridership performance target was raised to a 2% ridership increase per year, which is consistent with RIPTA and MBTA targets.
	Proposed that as a low priority, a 4 th track between Central Falls and TF Green Airport be considered since it would positively influence land use.	In the State Rail Plan's Short Range (0-5 years) Investment Program, the project labeled "3rd Track Capacity" has been modified to "Additional Track Capacity - Providence to Kingston" as to not exclude from consideration of a fourth track (see page 9-17).
	The current limits/alignment of the Providence Street Car proposal may be too narrow. Consideration to upgrading the track and train standards to light rail standards, and studying expansion to certain routes could include adjacent cities such as Johnston, North Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Cranston.	The original planning study facilitated by RIPTA did consider these intercity connections before choosing a Providence-only preferred alternative. The Providence Street Car alignment is focused on Providence's downtown core as the area where there is the greatest concentration of activities and the highest density development in the city. The proposed first phase is being kept to a relatively short distance (about 2 miles from College Hill to Upper South Providence) to keep the project at a reasonable cost and provide the best chance for implementation. The first phase is also being designed to work within the state's broader transit system, linking to bus, Rapid Bus and commuter rail. Consideration is also being given to how possible future extensions might be incorporated.
	The Rail Plan should include fare coordination between MBTA, RIPTA, and Amtrak.	Fare coordination is included as an Implementation Action on Page 9-8.
<i>Jeffrey Hill, public</i>	Suggested adding to the Rail Plan, the opportunity for State employees to purchase a MBTA pass at the pre-tax level for commuter rail, as is currently done with the RIPTA bus service.	Comment noted. RI Dept. of Administration's Human Resources Division is currently exploring the possibility of providing MBTA commuter train passes, pre-tax for State employees.
	Consider an opportunity for free commuter rail service on air quality alert days, as is offered on RIPTA.	Comments noted. The opportunity for free commuter rail service on air quality alert days will be considered in the 2014 overall funding of the program.
<i>Barry Schiller, public & TAC member</i>	Emphasized the goal and importance of keeping all rail infrastructure in a state in good repair but pointed out that there that dedicated funds for this have not been identified.	For commuter rail track infrastructure, RIDOT has access to FTA funds for repair and replacement when appropriate.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
<i>continued, Barry Schiller, public & TAC member</i>	Since there are little financial resources for transportation, believes that any expansion of passenger rail should depend first on the existing transit system and a structure for marketing of the commuter rail service to increase utilization of the current system.	The Plan contains an Implementation Action to review the needs of commuter rail service including marketing efforts to support ridership (see page 9-8).
	Amtrak currently does not carry bicycles and current service should include bicycle accommodations.	Amtrak's policy at this time is that folding bicycles under a certain dimension are permitted onboard all trains in lieu of a piece of baggage. Bicycles may also be checked in a bicycle container on trains/stations offering checked baggage service.
	There should be a bike path between Wickford Village and Wickford Junction train station.	In 2005, RIDOT completed a feasibility report on the construction of a bike path from Wickford Village to Wickford Junction. At the time there was strong neighborhood opposition however if there is renewed interest in establishing this bicycle connection. The Town of North Kingstown could apply during the next solicitation to include this project in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
	Suggests coordination of employer van shuttles to meet the trains at Wickford Junction Station for improved passenger convenience/ridership.	The Town of North Kingstown is currently working on establishing a shuttle service from Wickford Junction to Wickford Village and the Quonset Business Park to provide better transportation access for workers and during special events such as the Wickford Art Festival and Quonset Air Show.
	Suggested honoring transit passes on both the MBTA train and the RIPTA bus	The Plan acknowledges that convenient intermodal connections can encourage transit use. Fare coordination is included as an Implementation Action on Page 9-8.
	Since the Providence train station is located directly the state capitol, state employee incentives for using the commuter rail should also be offered.	Comment noted. RI Dept. of Administration's Human Resources Division is currently working on providing MBTA commuter train passes, pre-tax for State employees. The State Commuter Task Force is also examining other opportunities to encourage state employees to use alternative transportation modes to get to and from work.
	A regional, inter-agency effort with Massachusetts, etc. regarding the rail system including freight rail is needed.	The State of RI engages in frequent discussions with CT and MA regarding the coordination of cross jurisdiction passenger and freight rail programs and projects. Also the State of RI continues to be an active participant in the Northeast Corridor Commission which brings NEC stakeholders together in a coordinated manner to develop and implement a long-term investment strategy for the NEC and to provide information about the NEC's role in economic growth and development. The Commission seeks to address the inherent challenges of coordinating, financing, and implementing major improvements that cross multiple jurisdictions.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
<i>continued</i> , Barry Schiller, <i>public & TAC member</i>	There are commuter trains from Franklin, MA to Boston however there are no public buses to get from Woonsocket to the station. Need cooperation to go across state lines with the buses.	RIPTA will begin service across state lines to South Attleboro, MA in June 2014 with two bus routes (Route 1 and 35). If this service proves successful RIPTA may consider servicing other potential transportation facilities in MA if there is RI ridership demand.
Eugenia Marks, <i>Audubon Society of RI, Coalition for Transportation Choices</i>	Stated that while the State Rail Plan is very good, suggests that there needs to be improvements to the State's intermodal connections cited in the draft. These include better bus connections and using the bicycle as a way of commuting	The Plan acknowledges that convenient intermodal connections can encourage transit use. The Plan cites numerous Chapter 9 Goals, Objectives, Policies, and/or Implementation actions listed under Infrastructure Condition, System Reliability, Congestion Reduction, Economic Vitality, and Environmental Sustainability in support of advancing intermodal travel opportunities: Also the State is working to develop better intermodal facilities, which would include bicycle accommodations, as part of the Plan's Short and Long Range Investment Program.
<i>Everett Stuart, RI Association of Railroad Passengers & TAC member</i>	Several grammatical comments and factual corrections were offered.	Changes were incorporated into the Plan.
	Page 7-1: Recommends that language be strengthened regarding the role of the tourist and excursion rail operations in RI and their contributions to the state's economy. The RIDOT owned Newport Secondary could be particularly valuable and its continued use as a tourist line, which keeps it active in the public's eye. Recommends including state policy of preserving working rail operations on the Newport Secondary. All three Aquidneck municipalities have this in their Comprehensive Plans.	Text was added to the State Rail Plan regarding the role of the tourist and excursion rail operations in RI (see Section 5.5 - Rail Passenger Excursion Service and Section 7.1 - Economic Impacts).
	Page 9-7: Recommends adding a reference to establishing a mechanism to provide for long term maintenance of RIDOT owned rail stations -- Kingston and Westerly. Explained this is not an issue of federal funding but a significant State responsibility. The station's condition and image projected is important to the State	The State's FY 2014 Budget includes dedicated line item funding for maintenance at Kingston, Westerly, and Woonsocket stations.
	Page 9-8: Performance Measure #1 lists ridership growth of 2 percent a year. Mr. Stuart believes that this is very low for the new Wickford Junction MBTA commuter rail service. The goal should be higher.	The ridership performance target was increased to a 2% increase per year, consistent with RIPTA and MBTA targets.
	Believes that Boston's North Station/South Station rail connection should be included in the long term implementation section of the RI State Rail Plan as a show of regional support.	RI will remain engaged in any discussions to advance a North Station/South Station rail connection in Boston.
<i>George Monaghan, RICE & TAC member</i>	Several grammatical comments and factual corrections were offered.	Changes were incorporated into the Plan.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
Dan Baudouin, <i>The Providence Foundation & TAC member</i>	Page 6-11 - Section 6.5, Blackstone Valley Passenger Service is a misnomer because this section also contains information about the report on a potential intrastate transit service between Woonsocket and Warwick. This facility would serve residents beyond the Blackstone Valley. Believes that it should have its own category or, at least, there should be a name change in the title to reflect more the scope of the in-state geographic coverage potential.	Section 6.5 is specific to providing passenger service to the Blackstone Valley however the limited geographic area reference in the Plan does not isolate the Blackstone Valley's link to potential intra-state service connections at Providence, Cranston, and Warwick stations.
	Page 6-14 Section 6.6, Rail Shuttle Service: Believes that the rail shuttle service, with 30 minute frequencies would benefit additional high density development in downtown Providence, particularly in the Capital Center District.	Comment noted. The City of Providence regulates density levels in the Capital Center District. In addition the City, through its land use regulations and approval process regulated the amount of available surface and structured parking provided in new developments, which is often a deterrent to the use of public transportation.
	Page 9-17: The Providence Station project should include more than the rail hazardous material issue. As currently under study by RIDOT, it also should include future capacity issues and the high likelihood for the need to expand the station due to ever growing passenger utilization.	The Providence Station & Tunnel Configuration Improvement project listed in the Short Range Investment Program (Table 9-2) includes preliminary engineering/analysis for station expansion, intermodal/bus connections, additional access/egress, parking etc. Also listed under the Short Range Program is the final engineering/design and construction for the Providence Station - Exterior Improvements.
	Stated that on the long-range investment programs, the rail shuttle service does not appear in the State Rail Plan.	Under the Short Range Investment Program (Table 9-2), a planning level analysis for Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence includes in-state rail shuttle service.
	Concerned that the Woonsocket service is listed as a low priority in the Long-Range Investment Program. Recommends that a planning level analysis be performed for the Woonsocket and in-state commuter rail service that analyzes both of these potential projects as a combined system perhaps with different implementation schedules.	Commuter rail service to Woonsocket is dependent upon construction of a station in Pawtucket; therefore it can not be a priority until Pawtucket service is established.
Pam Sherrill, <i>RI Chapter American Planning Association & TAC member</i>	Page 9-3 and Page 9-20: Stated that Plan's mention of an at-grade-crossing on Pawtucket Avenue in East Providence maybe incorrect and that it should be Ferris Avenue.	Although there is a grade-separated-crossing on Pawtucket Avenue north of Bishop Avenue, an at-grade-crossing exists on Pawtucket Avenue south of Gorham Lane. The Plan includes planned at-grade rail crossing project on Pawtucket Avenue in East Providence.
	The State Rail Plan should include mention of commuter rail service from Connecticut's Shoreline East into Rhode Island as a potential future project/service.	The Plan includes a policy to increase passenger commuter rail service, including connections to service in Massachusetts and Connecticut (see page 9-8). RIDOT also currently maintains preliminary discussions with the Connecticut Dept. of Transportation regarding the possible future extension of Shore Line East commuter rail service in to RI.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
<i>continued Pam Sherrill, RI Chapter American Planning Association & TAC member</i>	Page 9-13: The evaluation goal of Economic Vitality should include more emphasis on port development at both Quonset's Port of Davisville and ProvPort.	The Economic Vitality goal does include RI port's potential to contribute to the State's economy, including a project's potential if it were located within or near the Port of Davisville and Port of Providence.
<i>Tim Pimental, RI Airport Corporation</i>	A factual correction was offered.	The correction was incorporated into the Plan.
	Table 5-7 should be revised to include the arrival times of trains in Boston.	Table 5-7 has been revised to include train arrival and departure times in Boston.
<i>Daniel Geagan, City of Warwick</i>	A factual correction was offered.	The correction was incorporated into the Plan.
<i>Karen Shabselowitz, public</i>	Recommends that commuter rail service be extended to Kingston, Rhode Island. The population in southern Rhode Island including the University of Rhode Island students, tourists, and residents would highly benefit from this service. Another reason to support this move is access to the Boston medical community.	The State Rail Plan includes the Commuter Rail Expansion South of Providence project under the Short Range (0-5 years) Investment Program for planning level analysis (see page 9-17). This project includes studying the potential for adding commuter rail service at Kingston Station.
<i>Steven I. Castiglioni, public</i>	There should be more focus on mass transit (rail) from a Providence metropolitan area perspective including Bristol County, MA. Since Providence is the core/center of the metro region, urged that the focus be on getting commuters to and from – and through Providence.	The RI State Rail Plan does include rail connections into MA, including many potential projects listed in the Short and Long Range Investment Program which are focused to enhance service in and out of the Providence metro area.
	Connecting Providence to its Massachusetts suburbs: In order to leverage the 600,000 residents and the businesses of the Southeastern MA area with the Providence Metro, commuter rail service from Fall River and New Bedford to Providence is a prime ingredient. It is critical to the economic health of the state and metro that this connection be planned, before a Boston connection is established.	The RI State Rail Plan does include rail connections into MA, including many potential projects listed in the Short and Long Range Investment Program which are focused to enhance service in and out of the Providence metro area. In addition, bus transit service between Providence and Fall River/New Bedford could provide other transit option for the commuters.
<i>John Flaherty, Grow Smart RI</i>	Suggests that the State Rail Plan make a noted preference for NEC high-speed rail alignment options that include a stop in Providence which appear to be applicable to alignment options #1 through #13.	The State of RI continues to be active in the NEC Future's Study and advocates for continued Amtrak service to Providence.
<i>Peter Moniz, public</i>	Advocated for using the northern section of the Newport Secondary Rail line in Tiverton as a Bike Path since he believes this section of the railroad line will not be used for active railroad service in the future.	The Tiverton Bike Path is listed in the FY 2013-2016 TIP for further Study & Development. As indicated in the TIP, the path would run along the Newport Secondary Railroad right-of-way owned by RIDOT. However future potential rail service on the ROW can also not be excluded at this time.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
Peter Moniz, <i>public</i>	Stated that freight service at Quonset /Davisville should be further developed as a major distribution hub. RI should promote Quonset's location as an international container port and seek other opportunities for the establishment of regional distributions centers.	The Plan identifies the Quonset Layover / Maintenance Facility, Seaview RR Sidings in the Quonset Business Park (QBP), QBP Northeast Corridor Turnout, and Vertical Clearance Restrictions between Pawtucket and Quonsets as projects under the Short and Long Range Investment Program. These projects would support and enhance Quonset's location as an regional distribution node for the movement of freight. Future planning activities for the state including the drafting of the State Economic Development Plan and State Freight Plan will also outline policies and projects to enhance the area in and around Quonset.
	Stated that he feels that the Providence Street Car is not a viable option and further study is not needed. The infrastructure costs for this project will be costly as will its operation. There are simpler and better options such as special wheel trolley buses or double decker buses that present a different look in design and appearance than the traditional bus.	The Providence Street Car Study looked at the impact of operating enhanced bus technologies along the route. While a new bus route would help achieve desired mobility goals and better connect downtown activity centers, the permanent infrastructure investment associated with streetcars has been shown to attract significantly higher levels of economic growth.
Christina L. Valentino, <i>Univ. of Rhode Island</i>	The Plan must include strategies and resources to achieve effective intermodal connectivity. There are too few transportation connections in Kingston especially to the public transit buses. There is also inadequate parking at Kingston Station, and no pedestrian or bicycle paths between campus and the rail station.	RIPTA is studying the potential of providing bus service from the Wickford Junction commuter rail station to the URI Kingston Campus in the Fall of 2014. The FY 2013-2016 TIP identifies the URI/South County Bike Path Connector as a high priority project under the Study & Development Program. This project would provide a bike path connection from Kingston Station to URI's Kingston Campus. RIDOT is currently constructing additional parking spaces on the north side of the station. It is anticipated that another 80-100 spaces will be constructed on the south side of the station in 2015/2016.
Ed Chomk, <i>public</i>	Suggests experimental commuter rail service from Worcester to Warwick/TF Green Airport. If the service is successful at increasing passengers at TF Green Airport the next step should be to extend service from TF Green to Fall River and New Bedford in an effort to capture additional rail and air passengers.	Section 6.5 outlines potential passenger service to the Blackstone Valley. If implemented that service could potentially be extended to Worcester. In addition, bus transit service between TF Green and Worcester and Fall River/New Bedford could provide other transit option for the airport passengers.
Bob Votava, Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path	Advocated for Amtrak to meet the need of bicyclists. Stated that nationwide, most commuter trains have provisions for bikes. Amtrak should equip its cars, either retrofit existing trains or equip new cars as they are produced, with bicycle facilities.	Amtrak's policy at this time is that folding bicycles under a certain dimension are permitted onboard all trains in lieu of a piece of baggage. Bicycles may also be checked in a bicycle container on trains/stations offering checked baggage service.

Name	Comment / Question	Response
James Ball, RI Dept. of Environmental Management	Rail companies such as P&W no long have their own in-house hazmat teams so in the event of an event they would require assistance from an outside contractor. It would be valuable information to know how long it would take for their contractor to get to the scene and the contractors capability levels	Comment addressed with additional details added to the Plan regarding P&W's Hazardous Material Security Plan and emergency response actions. See page 8-5.
	Expressed concern with the security of the rail car sidings when rail cars are left unattended especially overnight or for long periods. These unattended rail cars have the potential to be vandalized or tampered with causing chemicals to be released into the environment thereby effecting public safety	Comment addressed with additional details added to the Plan regarding P&W's attendance and securement of hazardous material trains in response to FRA Emergency Order No. 28. See page 8-7.

III. Public Hearing Procedures & Presentation

The following procedural overview and informational presentation were provided at both the January 23, 2014 10:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. public hearings:

A. Public Hearing Procedures

Ms. Linsey Callaghan, Supervising Planner of the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program reviewed the hearing procedures at both morning and evening public hearings.

Ms. Callaghan stated that the hearings will be conducted as follows:

- The public hearing will be conducted in accordance with the State Planning Council rules of procedure and the Administrative Procedures Act.
- Comments will first be received from those who have signed-up on the registration forms available at the door, in the order in which they registered and after the customary recognition of elected officials.
- If someone speaks, they should identify themselves and address all comments to Ms. Callaghan.
- To ensure that all who wish to speak may have an opportunity, each speaker will be limited to an initial presentation of five minutes.
- After all who wish to speak have had an initial opportunity, those wishing to make supplemental statements will be recognized.
- After all who have registered have spoken, any others wishing to comment will be recognized.
- Written statements will be given equal consideration. They may be read into or simply submitted for the record prior to the close of this evening's public hearing which will be held before the Transportation Advisory Committee at 6:30 p.m. Comments received at the public hearings as well as written public comments received will be summarized and addressed in a public hearing report.
- Following the public hearings this morning and evening, the Transportation Advisory Committee will be asked at their February 27, 2014 meeting to recommend adoption of *Draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan* to the State Planning Council.
- If the Transportation Advisory Committee recommends adoption of Draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan at their February 27th meeting, the State Planning Council will consider the *Rhode Island State Rail Plan* for adoption at their March 13, 2014 meeting.

Following the close of the hearing, the TAC will consider the proposal and the public comment received in deliberating their final decision.

B. Statewide Planning Presentation

Ms. Scott provided a PowerPoint presentation on the development and content of the draft *State Rail Plan, State Guide Plan Element 661*:

Ms. Scott first gave an overview of the process of getting to the draft State Rail Plan. She stressed that the plan was still in draft form and open to comments from the public. The stimulus for the formation of this plan was the passage of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), passed by Congress in 2008, with the intent of improving passenger rail service in the U.S. by taking a more balance approach to state rail plans. The approved state rail plans was a requirement if a state wanted

to apply for federal rail passenger funding. As required under PRIIA, the following must be contained in the Plan:

- Identification of rail infrastructure issues
- Review and inventory of all rail lines in the state and analysis of rail within multimodal environment
- Statewide of state's passenger rail service objectives and framework for implementation of initiatives
- Statement of public financing for rail projects service in the state.

Ms. Scott explained that previous state rail plans focused on freight rail and not passenger. Therefore this plan will be a comprehensive analysis of both passenger and freight rail. As part of the development of the Plan, a State Rail Plan Advisory Committee was formed consisting of public and private sector transportation and railroad stakeholders. In drafting the Rail Plan, the goals of MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) the multiyear federal transportation authorization was incorporated into the Plan. These include: safety, infrastructure condition, system reliability, congestion reduction, freight movements and economic vitality, and environmental sustainability.

The chapters of the State Rail Plan are as follows:

- Introduction
- Development of the State Rail Plan
- Public Rail Program Activities in Rhode Island
- Rhode Island's Freight Rail System
- Rail Passenger Service in Rhode Island
- Proposed Passenger Rail Service
- Analysis of Rail Transportation Impacts
- Rail Safety and Security
- Implementation Program
- Appendix A – Inventory of Rhode Island's Rail Lines
- Appendix B – Rail Project Evaluation Score Sheet

Ms. Scott explained that a vision statement, goals, objectives, policies, implementation actions and performance measures were developed in the Rail Plan. In addition criteria for evaluating individual rail projects were developed. While the criteria were built around Rhode Island's goals and priorities for passenger and freight rail, one additional category – financial feasibility and public support was added. However, as projects move forward into full construction, they will be further evaluated according to much more detailed criteria and selected for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Ms. Scott explained the project evaluation further. The potential projects are then listed under a Short Range Investment Program (currently underway or expected within the next 5 years) and a Long Range Investment Program (expected within the next 6 – 20 years). All these projects would need much further evaluation including sources of funding to determine if they advance to construction eventually.

IV. First Public Hearing – January 23, 2014 10:00 a.m. Public Hearing

A. Attendance

Speakers (for public comment)

Mayor Scott Avedisian, City of Warwick

Mayor James A. Diossa, City of Central Falls

Mr. Barney Heath, City of Pawtucket Planning Director (representing Mayor Donald R. Grebien)
Mr. Aaron Hertzberg, Exec. Director Pawtucket Foundation
Mr. Steven Musen, Director at Large, RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Bruce Waterson, Waterson Terminal Services, Providence Port
Mr. Paige Bronk, Economic Development Manager, Town of North Kingstown
Mr. Jeffrey Hill, member of the public
Mr. Peter Brassard, member of the public
Mr. Barry Schiller, member of the public

TAC Members Present

Mr. Richard Crenca, City of Warwick
Mr. George Monaghan, RI Consulting Engineers
Ms. Lillian Picchione, RIPTA
Mr. Barry Schiller, RI Sierra Club
Mr. Everett Stuart, RI Association of Railroad Passengers

Others in Attendance

Ms. Kimberly Boghossian, Brown University
Mr. Steve Devine, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Andy Koziol, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Peter Lapolla, City of Cranston Planning Director
Mr. Steve Larrick, City of Central Falls
Ms. Susan Shanley-Szala, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Ken Orenstein, member of the public

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Ms. Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
Ms. Linsey Callaghan, Supervising Planner
Mr. Chris Witt, Principal Planner
Ms. Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner
Mr. Benjamin Jacobs, Principal Research Technician

B. Call to Order – January 23, 2014 10:00 a.m. Public Hearing

Ms. Linsey Callaghan of the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program, called the January 23, 2014 10:00 a.m. public hearing to order at 10:06 a.m. While the morning hearing was not an official meeting of the TAC, there were some members attending (see TAC member attendance listed above).

After the informational presentation by Ms. Karen Scott, Ms. Callaghan asked if there were any elected officials who wished to make comments. There were two elected officials, the Mayor of Warwick and the Mayor of Central Falls, who gave public comment (see below). Ms. Callaghan then asked if there were any others who wished to speak. Below are the speakers for the morning Public Hearing:

C. Public Comment Summary – January 23, 2014 10:00 a.m. Public Hearing

1. Mayor Scott Avedisian, City of Warwick (see written comments attached)

- Speaking for the City of Warwick and also as chairman of the RIPTA Board, Mayor Avedisian voiced his support for the draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan. He stated that more connectivity between rail and bus service is better for the mass transit system as a whole.
- Specifically supports and advocates for the following goals and actions in the Rail Plan:
 - Continued implementation of the Warwick Station Development District Master Plan to create City Centre Warwick and continued investment in pedestrian and rail infrastructure.
 - Continued expansion of MBTA commuter rail service to TF Green Airport.
 - If the three rail stations of Wickford, City Centre Warwick, and Providence with a frequent rail shuttle service that connected to Boston and linked to RIPTA service this would create an efficient transportation system for the state.
 - Strongly supports Amtrak's Northeast Regional service and Acela Express Service to Warwick.
 - Urged adoption of the State Rail Plan.

2. Mayor James A. Diossa, City of Central Falls (see written comments attached)

- Mayor Diossa emphasized full support for commuter rail service through the addition of a Pawtucket / Central Falls MBTA stop on the Boston – Providence line. The station is a top priority of his administration as the added rail service would have a transformative impact on Central Falls and Pawtucket. The station would act as a catalyst for necessary transit-oriented development in the area.
- Commuter rail service will provide high-unemployment populations with access to the employment centers of Providence and Greater Boston.
- This new station will also serve northern Rhode Island which has no commuter rail service.

3. Barney Heath, City of Pawtucket Planning Director (representing Mayor Donald R. Grebien; see Mayor Grebien's written comments attached)

- Mr. Heath read the letter from Pawtucket's Mayor Grebien indicating his comments on the *Rhode Island State Rail Plan*.
- Mayor Grebien underscored the importance of ranking the proposed Pawtucket / Central Rail Station as a high priority in the Plan.
- A commuter rail station in this location would provide important and immediate economic benefits to both Pawtucket and Central Falls. It would provide an environment for transit-oriented development and much needed transit access to jobs and educational opportunities located to the north and south.
- The station/service would also provide for people from other destinations to come to Pawtucket and Central Falls for the many great amenities available.
- Supports efforts to improve inter- and intra-state commuter rail service. Requests that intra-state service be designated as a high priority in the Plan.

4. Aaron Hertzberg, Exec. Director Pawtucket Foundation (see written comments attached.)

- As part of this united front between the two communities, Mr. Hertzberg represents the private sector which is consistently pushing for the Pawtucket/Central Fall rail station project to move forward. Commends the State for making the station a priority in the State Rail Plan.

- The Pawtucket Foundation strongly supports the restoration of commuter rail service to Pawtucket/Central Falls on the Boston-Providence MBTA line.
- The development of the station will support opportunities for transit oriented development and renovated mill spaces in the Pawtucket/Central Falls area.
- This station would connect Pawtucket and Central Falls with points south and would service as a northern terminus for intra-state service.
- Stated that he is encouraged by idea to create an intermodal hub at the South Attleboro MBTA Commuter Rail Station.
- Looks forward to continued collaboration.

5. Steven Musen, Newspaper Editor & Director at Large, RI Association of Railroad Passengers

- Stated that with limited resources available to the State of Rhode Island, a Pawtucket/Central Falls Station would give the most value compared to a station in the southern part of the state. A Pawtucket /Central Falls Station would also add more passengers going to Boston. With more passengers riding the line, fares can potentially be reduced.
- Noted that at the end of the Plan, there is an Investment Program table listing future potential projects, however there are no funding set-aside for steps further action, especially for projects listed in the preliminary engineering/environmental analysis phase. Feels that cost estimates for construction should be included for projects listed in the engineering phase even if they are not implemented at this time.
- Believes it is a good plan and meets all the federal requirements.

6. Bruce Waterson, Waterson Terminal Services at the Port of Providence

- Asked that the rail unloading project at the Port of Providence be considered as short-term instead of long term, as it is stated in the Plan. He believes this project will probably advance within the next 12 to 18 months.

7. Peter Brassard, member of the public

- Stated it would be unfortunate if certain features were not emphasized in the Plan such as greater importance on the electrification of all tracks including passenger, freight, commuter, and track siding on the Northeast Corridor, especially between Central Falls and Westerly. It would increase connectivity between Providence and Boston and decrease pollution. The MBTA has resisted using electric trains but their policy could change in the future.
- Identifies the Pawtucket/Central Falls station as the primary infill station for the MBTA's Wickford to Boston line. In a Providence Foundation Commuter Rail feasibility study, Providence's Olneyville neighborhood was identified as another infill transit station location. Other potential infill transit stations including Cranston on Cranston St. and Elmwood at Reservoir St. also have similar potential and not that much vehicle parking would be needed around the stations.
- The current MBTA service is more Boston oriented. Consideration should be given to added service on weekday mornings, afternoons, and evenings, as well as weekends. Trains could also be better linked with RIPTA buses and would be competitive with automobile travel.
- The Rail Plan should increase ridership performance targets on commuter trains from 1% to 5%.
- Proposed that as a low priority, a 4th track between Central Falls and TF Green Airport be considered since it would positively influence land use.
- As proposed, the current limits/alignment of the Providence Street Car proposal may be too narrow. Consideration to upgrading the track and train standards to light rail standards, and

studying expansion to certain routes could include adjacent cities such as Johnston, North Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Cranston.

- The Rail Plan should include fare coordination between MBTA, RIPTA, and Amtrak.

8. Page Bronk, Economic Development Manager, Town of North Kingstown

- Supports the State Rail Plan. From an economic standpoint, specifically in North Kingstown the Wickford Station is a tremendous asset.
- The Town of North Kingstown recently had a market analysis completed for Wickford Junction Station area and another one for rail implications. The Town also recently approved a zoning amendment for increased density and there are plans to build 150 dwelling units on the site which would be directly related to rail service as they are small units and geared to younger people. The Town is also working on approving zoning that would enable the area to serve as a receiving zone for transfer of development rights (TDR) for further added density development.
- Stated that the Town supports the following two concepts in the plan:
 - Expansion of commuter rail service in terms of frequency.
 - Commuter rail shuttle service with focus on Wickford Junction, Warwick, and Providence.

9. Jeffrey Hill, member of the public

- Stated that he is a resident of South Kingstown and is a State employee. Stated that he, along with other state employees and riders, is a frequent rail commuter to Providence from Wickford Junction. He appreciates the commuter rail service.
- Stated that the people he rides with come in from Richmond, Charlestown and South Kingstown. He believes there would be strong ridership if MBTA service was provided in Kingston however a parking garage would have to be built to accommodate the increased ridership.
- As a commuter, he has not heard any negative comments from using the service from Wickford Junction. When the highway was congested with commuters because of snow, they were dry and warm inside the train.
- Suggested adding to the Rail Plan, the opportunity for State employees to purchase a MBTA pass at the pre-tax level for commuter rail, as is currently done with the RIPTA bus service.
- Consider an opportunity for free commuter rail service on air quality alert days, as is offered on RIPTA.

10. Barry Schiller, (TAC Member – Sierra Club); member of the public (comments represent his own sentiments)

- Stated that the Sierra Club's meeting to discuss the Rail Plan was cancelled due to weather, the following comments represent his own sentiments.
- Stated that the Rail Plan contains many good ideas and that it should move forward.
- Emphasized the goal and importance of keeping all rail infrastructure in a state in good repair but pointed out that there that dedicated funds for this have not been identified.
- Since there are little resources for transportation, he believes that any expansion of passenger rail should depend first on the existing transit system. A structure is needed for marketing the commuter rail service to increase utilization of the current system.
- Amtrak currently does not carry bicycles and current service should include bicycle accommodations.

- There should be a bikepath between Wickford Village and Wickford Junction train station. Also suggested the coordination of employer van shuttles to meet the trains at Wickford Junction for improved passenger convenience/ridership.
- Suggested honoring transit passes on both the MBTA train and the RIPTA bus.
- Since the Providence train station is located directly the state capitol, state employee incentives for using the commuter rail should also be offered.
- A regional, inter-agency effort with Massachusetts, etc. regarding the rail system including freight rail is needed.
- The Sierra Club supports a North Station / South Station connection in Boston on the commuter rail which we cannot do on our own.
- There are commuter trains from Franklin, Massachusetts to Boston however there are no public buses to get from Woonsocket to the station. Need cooperation to go across state lines with the buses.
- Pleased that the RI Commerce Corporation (former RIEDC) is involved in the Pawtucket/Central Falls station. Agrees that the first new commuter rail service should be a Pawtucket / Central Falls rail station. For the Sierra Club, restoring the core cities is a priority. Other infill stations should be a priority since trains are already going by.
- Stated that he believes it should be a lower priority to extend the commuter rail to Kingston and the Blackstone Valley, and Amtrak service to Warwick.
- In addition, he believes it is not a priority to have a limited Providence street car service. Interested in a Challenge Grant for someone to explore street car or light rail service in Rhode Island. In the western United States voters usually have to approve a tax increase, typically a sales tax, to fund light rail.
- Noted of the need to obtain more revenue for transportation and to work together on all of the rail projects.

D. Public Hearing Conclusion

Ms. Callaghan asked if there were any other comments. Since there were none, Ms. Callaghan formally closed the hearing at 11:01 a.m. Ms. Callaghan thanked everyone in the audience. She also stated that at the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting this the evening at 6:30 p.m., there will be an additional public hearing on the *Rhode Island State Rail Plan*. Staff will compile all comments received into a public hearing report and will include responses to the issues raised during the public hearings. She added that the report will be distributed to the Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Committee, and the State Planning Council as *the Rhode Island State Rail Plan* moves towards adoption.

V. Second Public Hearing – January 23, 2014 6:30 p.m. Public Hearing

A. Attendance

Speakers (for public comment)

Ms. Eugenia Marks, Audubon Society of RI; Coalition for Transportation Choices

TAC Members Present

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair, Public Member
Ms. Meredith Brady, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Alan Brodd, Town of Cumberland
Mr. Richard Crenca, City of Warwick
Mr. David Everett, City of Providence
Mr. Ronald Gagnon, RI DEM
Mr. George Monaghan, RI Consulting Engineers
Mr. Daniel Porter, RI Airport Corporation
Mr. Barry Schiller, RI Sierra Club
Ms. Pam Sherrill, RI Chapter, American Planning Association
Ms. Dinalyn Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe
Mr. Everett Stuart, RI Association of Railroad Passengers
Mr. Michael Walker, RI Commerce Corporation

Others in Attendance

Mr. Steve Devine, RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Marsha Garcia, URI
Mr. Andy Koziol, RI Department of Transportation
Mr. Ken Orenstein, public citizen
Mr. John Preiss, RI Department of Transportation
Ms. Tia Ristano, public citizen
Mr. Al Romanowicz, public citizen
Mr. Kevin Viveiros, Pare Corporation

Statewide Planning Staff Present

Mr. Jared Rhodes, Chief
Ms. Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
Ms. Linsey Callaghan, Supervising Planner
Ms. Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner

B. Call to Order – January 23, 2014 6:30 p.m. Public Hearing

Ms. Fran Shocket, TAC Chair called the public hearing to order at 6:35 p.m. Ms. Shocket explained that Ms. Karen Scott of Statewide Planning would give a presentation.

A Presentation was given by Ms. Scott, see Section III B for summary.

Ms. Scott then turned the hearing over to Ms. Shocket. Ms. Shocket asked if there were any elected officials who wished to make comments. Since there were none, she asked if there were any others who wished to speak. Below is the Public Comment:

C. Public Comment Summary - 6:30 p.m. Public Hearing

1. Eugenia Marks, Policy Director of the Audubon Society of RI; Coalition for Transportation Choices (see written comments attached)
 - Stated that her written testimony includes information on greenhouse gas emissions which is a concern of the Audubon Society. Of course climate change adversely affects wildlife as well as humans.
 - She thanked staff for their work in developing the State Rail Plan.
 - Supports the concept of getting more people onto rail and the resulting pollution reductions because 29% of the emissions come from the transportation sector. Stated that fuel consumption for vehicles averages 27.7 passenger miles per gallon while heavy rail averages 155.3 passenger miles per gallon, and commuter rail 85.8 passenger miles per gallon (according to a 2007 report for the American Bus Association). Stated that it would be better to get more people on trains to help reduce climate change.
 - Stated that while the State Rail Plan is very good, suggests that there needs to be improvements to the State's intermodal connections cited in the draft. These include better bus connections and using the bicycle as a way of commuting.

D. Public Hearing Conclusion

Ms. Shocket asked if there were any other comments. There were no further comments, therefore Ms. Shocket formally adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:57 p.m. Ms. Shocket stated that a Public Hearing Report will be compiled by the Statewide Planning Program staff and made part of the record of these proceedings.

Following the Public Hearing, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) resumed its meeting and discussed the proposed Rhode Island State Rail Plan (see TAC January 23, 2014 meeting minutes). Ms. Shocket stated that at the next meeting on February 27, 2014, the TAC will be requested to vote on whether to recommend approval of the Rhode Island State Rail Plan to the State Planning Council.

VI. TAC Member Comments

1. Everett Stuart, Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers
 - Page 4-24: Change "Canadian Northern" to "Canadian National."
 - Page 7-1: Recommends that language be strengthened regarding the role of the tourist and excursion rail operations in RI and their contributions to the state's economy. The RIDOT owned Newport Secondary could be particularly valuable and its continued use as a tourist line, which keeps it active in the public's eye. Recommends including state policy of preserving working rail operations on the Newport Secondary. All three Aquidneck municipalities have this in their Comprehensive Plans.
 - Page 9-7: Recommends adding a reference to establishing a mechanism to provide for long term maintenance of RIDOT owned rail stations -- Kingston and Westerly. Explained this is not an issue of federal funding but a significant State responsibility. The station's condition and image projected is important to the State.
 - Page 9-8: Performance Measure #1 lists ridership growth of 2 percent a year. Mr. Stuart believes that this is very low for the new Wickford Junction MBTA commuter rail service. The goal should be higher.
 - An important proposed rail infrastructure project that will have significant value to many Rhode Island passengers is a direct rail link between North and South Stations in downtown Boston.

When built, this link will allow commuter trains from our area to pass through Boston with service to the northern suburbs and intercity Amtrak service from our area to New Hampshire and Maine. Rhode Islanders would no longer need to find their way across the city from South Station to get to North Station trains. This deep tunnel project has been in the planning stages for some years but due to other pressing transportation projects has yet to proceed. Although Massachusetts would be the lead on this project, it is important that nearby states that would benefit support this regional project. State that he believes that Boston's North Station/South Station rail connection should be included in the long term implementation section of the RI State Rail Plan as a show of regional support.

2. George Monaghan, Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE)

- Indicated various comments throughout the draft *Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014*: Suggest adding to page 1-1, 3rd line in last paragraph: "to the late 1990s and the rapid expansion of air passenger and cargo operations."
- Page 3-2: Bullet including "Northeast Corridor Commission" – capitalize "C."
- Page 4-8: 1st paragraph change "The P & W's rail network is shown in Figure 4-4, P & W Railroad Network." Change to Figure 4-6.
- Page 5-8: Table 5-5: "80 & 81" after Acela Express and Northeast Regional should be in black rather than red.
- Last line on page 5-8 should include Figure 5-3 rather than 5-4.
- Page 5-11: 2nd paragraph last line reads "10 years, as displayed in Figure 5-5;" should read "Figure 5-4." Last line of page reads Figure 5-6; should read 5-5."
- Page 6-6: 3rd paragraph take out "likely" on second line after T.F. Green.
- Page 6-14: 3rd paragraph, capitalize "c" in "Northeast Corridor."
- Page 6-15: 4th paragraph: second line question mark by "year-round."
- Page 7-9: After 1st paragraph, suggests adding: "The reduction of truckloads over the state's highway network will not only reduce congestion but will result in a positive impact on the roadway and bridge infrastructure. Heavy truck volumes have an adverse (damaging) impact on the nation's highways and bridges. Reducing heavy truck volumes on highways reduces damage to pavement and bridges, and the savings of energy and resources realized to repair or rebuild the damaged infrastructure can be applied to other needs."

3. Dan Baudouin, Executive Director of The Providence Foundation

- Page 6-11 - Section 6.5, Blackstone Valley Passenger Service is a misnomer because this section also contains information about the report on a potential intrastate transit service between Woonsocket and Warwick. This facility would not only serve Blackstone Valley but also Providence, Cranston and Warwick and thus serve a large portion of the state's population. The power of the service is that the state could have better intrastate rail service than just relying on MBTA and/or Amtrak. Frequencies, times of service, cost, and stations could all be enhanced by this system. Believes that it should have its own category or, at least, there should be a name change in the title to reflect the scope of the in-state geographic coverage potential.
- Page 6-14 Section 6.6, Rail Shuttle Service: The benefits to Warwick Station Development District and the Wickford Junction Plaza are clearly articulated. In addition, believes that the rail shuttle, with 30 minute frequencies would also benefit additional high density development in downtown Providence, particularly in the Capital Center District. Downtown is already a vibrant mixed-use district but there are plans and opportunities for growth. For example, the Capital Center District contains about 7 vacant acres that are programmed for development. Even at a

moderate FAR of 5, which is exceeded in many developed Capital Center properties, this would result in an additional 1,500,000 sq. ft. of development just in Capital Center.

- Page 9-17: The Providence Station project should include more than the rail hazardous material issue. As currently under study by RIDOT, it also should include future capacity issues and the high likelihood for the need to expand the station due to ever growing passenger utilization. The station already serves almost 1,200,000 passengers per year which exceeds original estimates when the station was built.
- Page 9-23: Stated that on the long-range investment program, the rail shuttle service does not appear in the State Rail Plan.
- Concerned that the Woonsocket service is listed as a low priority in the long-range investment program. Recommends that a planning level analysis be performed for the Woonsocket and in-state commuter rail service that analyzes both of these potential projects as a combined system perhaps with different implementation schedules. This could be an opportunity to create a high frequency rail transit service in the state which is needed in the long run.

4. Pam Sherrill, RI Chapter, American Planning Association

- Page 9-3 and Page 9-20: Stated that Plan's mention of an at-grade-crossing on Pawtucket Avenue in East Providence maybe incorrect and that it should be Ferris Avenue.
- The State Rail Plan should include mention commuter rail service from Connecticut's Shoreline East into Rhode Island as a potential future project/service.
- Page 9-13: The evaluation goal of economic vitality should include more emphasis on port development at both Quonset's Port of Davisville and ProvPort.

VII. Written Public Comment Summary (Full comments are attached to report)

1. Steven H. Musen, Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers

- Pointed out that the Federal Railroad Administration should also be listed in the credits of the Rail Plan.
- Page 1-1: Opening topic sentence should be changed to read that the Boston and Providence was the first railroad into Rhode Island followed by the New York, P & B, and P & W. Believes that freight service was co-established at the same time although cars devoted solely to freight might have occurred at a later date as described in the narrative.
- Page 1-2, corrections include: The four track mainline of the New Haven Railroad was mainly between New Haven, Connecticut and New Rochelle, New York. Rhode Island had a few stretches of three track main line but remained mostly double track. It may have had some continuous four track sections between Providence and Pawtucket.
- Page 1-2: "These laws consolidated the nation's rail system into Conrail" should be changed to: "These laws consolidate most of the region's rail systems into Conrail."
- Page 1-2: The following sentence should be modified from: "The renovations of both Rhode Island's Kingston and Westerly Amtrak stations were also completed in support of this high speed rail service by providing space for other trains to pull off the mainline, allowing Acela trains to travel through at high speeds." The statement should reflect that neither project changed a single foot of track through either station. The renovations did provide for more comfortable conditions for travelers boarding and disembarking at those stations and has led to higher passenger use. A separate project to build a full high level platforms and a third segment of siding at Kingston is currently funded to allow high speed trains to bypass slower regional and freight trains. That project is scheduled to commence construction this spring.

2. Tim Pimental, Rhode Island Airport Corporation
 - Noted that on page 5-11 (bottom): The text references of “Figure 5-6” should be changed to reference “Figure 5.5.”
 - Table 5-7 should be revised to include the arrival times of trains in Boston.
3. Daniel Geagan, City of Warwick
 - Same correction noted by Mr. Pimental above regarding the Figure 5.5 on page 5-11.
4. Karen Shabshelowitz, member of the public
 - Recommends that commuter rail service be extended to Kingston, Rhode Island. The population in southern Rhode Island including the University of Rhode Island students, tourists, and residents would highly benefit from this service. Another reason to support this move is access to the Boston medical community.
5. Dr. Steven L. Castiglioni, member of the public
 - Stated that he was the former Warwick Public Safety Commissioner however with his present job he has traveled to 70 cities over the last two years and uses mass transportation systems regularly. His comments are regarding passenger rail.
 - Providence Metro View: While this is a “statewide” plan, the rail transportation needs are metropolitan, not state, driven. There should be more focus on mass transit (rail) from a Providence metropolitan area perspective including Bristol County, Massachusetts. Since Providence is the core/center of the metro region, urged that the focus be on getting commuters to and from and through Providence.
 - TF Green Airport-Providence (PVD): The real potential and value of the Warwick Commuter Rail Train Station is getting airline travelers to and from TF Green Airport (PVD) to the Providence Train Station.
 - Connecting Providence to its Massachusetts suburbs: In order to leverage the 600,000 residents and the businesses of the Southeastern MA area with the Providence Metro, commuter rail service from Fall River and New Bedford to Providence is a prime ingredient. It is critical to the economic health of the state and metro that this connection be planned, before a Boston connection is established.
 - Priorities:
 - Providence Streetcar System (The failure to secure funding for the Providence Streetcar System was a major mistake and setback)
 - Improvements to Providence Train Station
 - Commuter Rail between Providence and Fall River/New Bedford
 - Pawtucket Commuter Rail Station (to PVD)
 - Blackstone Valley (Woonsocket) Commuter Rail Station (to PVD).
 - In all rail planning and implementation, use a Providence Metro perspective.
7. John Flaherty, Grow Smart RI
 - Explains that although the draft State Rail Plan acknowledges Amtrak’s long-term plan for developing a true high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor (page 3-7), the U. S. DOT and Federal Railroad Administration’s *NEC Preliminary Alternatives Report (2013)* includes a total of 15 options for the recommended alignment of this high-speed service, which would not necessarily follow the existing NEC alignment. It’s worth noting that options #14 and #15 would appear to completely bypass Rhode Island.

- Suggests that the State Rail Plan make a noted preference for NEC high-speed rail alignment options that include a stop in Providence which appear to be applicable to alignment options #1 through #13.

8. Peter Moniz, member of the public

- Mr. Moniz acknowledges the development of several bike paths by RIDOT and RIDEM throughout the State. He states that in the northern area of RI there exists a freight rail service with a companion bike path.
- Advocated for using the northern section of the Newport Secondary Rail line in Tiverton as a Bike Path since he believes this section of the railroad line will not be used for active railroad service in the long range future.
- Appendix A (Newport Secondary Line) in the draft Rail Plan: “Usage: there is no freight service as indicated [Freight / Tourist]. This point was pointed out in a previous section within the plan.”
- Supports mass transportation, if the results will render feasible and financial sound solutions. However, there is a need for reality planning when it comes to rail passenger service. Only when the automobile has lost its dominance will rail and even bus transportation prevail again. The State must enhance central core areas with smart growth planning strategies prior to planning for rail service.
- Stated that freight service at Quonset /Davisville should be further developed as a major distribution hub. RI should promote Quonset’s location as an international container port and seek other opportunities for the establishment of regional distributions centers.
- Stated that he feels that the Providence Street Car is not a viable option and further study is not needed. The infrastructure costs for this project will be costly as will its operation. There are simpler and better options such as special wheel trolley buses or double decker buses that present a different look in design and appearance than the traditional bus.

9. Christina L. Valentino, Vice President, University of Rhode Island

- Stated that the University strongly supports the proposed commuter rail expansion to Kingston Station. It would help implement the State’s policy of focusing and enhancing transportation infrastructure in designated growth centers.
- The Plan must include strategies and resources to achieve effective intermodal connectivity. There are too few transportation connections in Kingston especially to the public transit buses. There is also inadequate parking at Kingston Station, and no pedestrian or bicycle paths between campus and the rail station.
- URI’s campuses are located in Providence, Narragansett, Kingston, and West Greenwich. The State Rail Plan offers solutions for a more cost-effective and reliable commuter rail plan at Kingston Station to provide connections to the airport and links to the other campuses. There are also plans to convert the South Street Power Station in Providence to a shared nursing education center. This along with a proposed Providence street car service could foster an urban community atmosphere for students and faculty. It is critical that this links to the Providence Train Station.

10. Ed Chomk, member of the public

- Pages 6-11 to 6-17 - Appreciates the efforts made to expand commuter rail service in Rhode Island. Suggests expanding service into Massachusetts sooner rather than later, with the focus on increasing passenger traffic at TF Green Airport.

- Suggests experimental commuter rail service from Worcester to Warwick/TF Green Airport. If the service is successful at increasing passengers at TF Green Airport the next step should be to extend service from TF Green to Fall River and New Bedford in an effort to capture additional rail and air passengers.

5. Bob Votava, Chairman, Friends of the William C. O'Neill South County Bike Path

- Advocated for Amtrak to meet the need of bicyclists. Stated that nationwide, most commuter trains have provisions for bikes. Amtrak should equip its cars, either retrofit existing trains or equip new cars as they are produced, with bicycle facilities. Since the typical space for bikes is combined with space for wheel chairs, the space is already defined on all Amtrak trains.

6. James Ball, Emergency Response Administrator, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

- Provided comments related to Chapter 8 – Rail Safety and Security
 - Rail companies such as P&W no longer have their own in-house hazmat teams so in the event of an event they would require assistance from an outside contractor. It would be valuable information to know how long it would take for their contractor to get to the scene and the contractor's capability levels.
 - Expressed concern with the security of the rail car sidings when rail cars are left unattended especially overnight or for long periods. These unattended rail cars have the potential to be vandalized or tampered with causing chemicals to be released into the environment thereby effecting public safety.

VIII. Conclusion

This Public Hearing Report compiled by the Statewide Planning Program staff will be made part of the record of the Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014 proceedings.

Appendix A. Public Comment Period Notice

Publication: Providence Journal; Date: Dec 20, 2013; Section: Rhode Island; Page: A11



STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5870

PUBLIC NOTICE
Rhode Island State Rail Plan

The Rhode Island State Planning Council will conduct two public hearings to accept comments on the draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan.

The Rhode Island State Rail Plan draft is under consideration by the Rhode Island State Planning Council. The Rhode Island State Rail Plan contains goals, objectives, policies, implementation actions, and potential projects for the State's passenger and freight rail transportation system over the next twenty years. The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning's Statewide Planning Program, working in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, is responsible for the development of this Plan. This Plan was also developed with public and private rail stakeholder participation, as well as state and federal agency collaboration. This Plan has been prepared to ensure compliance with the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

The Rhode Island State Rail Plan is available for review at the R.I. Statewide Planning Program website at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/statewideplanning/transportation/railplanning.php> or at the Program's office, One Capitol Hill, 3rd floor, Providence, RI between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Comments on the Rhode Island State Rail Plan will be accepted at the following two public hearings:

Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.
Department of Administration
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A, 2nd Floor
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.
Department of Administration
William E. Powers Building
Conference Room A, 2nd Floor
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

All persons may present their views on the draft document in person at the public hearings, through a representative, or by filing a written statement with the Secretary of the State Planning Council. Written statements may be mailed to Karen Scott, Assistant Chief, RI Statewide Planning Program, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, or submitted at a hearing. All comments must be received before the close of the public hearings.

This meeting place is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should contact James A. Pitassi, Jr. at 222-6395 (voice) or #711 (R.I. Relay) at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting. Any individual requiring the services of an interpreter to participate in this meeting should contact Michael Moan at 222-1236 (voice) at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting. Public transit schedule information for the public hearings is available from RIPTA at (401) 781-9400 or www.ripta.com.

Kevin Flynn, Secretary, State Planning Council

Appendix B. Written Comments attached

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER

CITY OF WARWICK



RHODE ISLAND

SCOTT AVEDISIAN
MAYOR

January 23, 2014

Mr. Kevin Flynn
State Planning Council
Statewide Planning Program
Rhode Island Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island 02908-5870

Mr. Flynn:

Kevin

I am pleased to voice my support of the draft *State Guide Plan Element 661, the Rhode Island State Rail Plan*. Expansion of commuter rail service will play an increasingly critical role in connecting Rhode Island residents to employment centers; support the creation of new centers of economic activity similar to City Centre Warwick; and provide access to other modes of transportation such as the state's T.F. Green Airport and the RIPTA bus transit system.

Warwick has long worked to support the vision of a robust commuter rail system in the state by working with the Federal Highway Administration, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to create a multi-modal transit oriented development (TOD) at City Centre Warwick/T.F. Green Airport. City Centre Warwick includes the adoption of a Master Plan and zoning that provides the vision for development of office, hotel, residential, and complementary retail and restaurant uses located within a dense, transit-friendly community. Development of City Centre Warwick will enhance commuter rail ridership by establishing a prosperous center of regional commerce that capitalizes on Warwick's rich, multi-modal transit assets and significantly expands employment opportunities for Rhode Island's diverse workforce.

Specifically, I support and advocate the following goals and actions contained in the State Rail Plan:

- Continued implementation of the Warwick Station Development District Master Plan and continued investment in pedestrian and rail infrastructure at City Centre Warwick;

- Continued expansion of MBTA commuter rail service at TF Green Airport;
- Funding to explore the feasibility of augmenting MBTA commuter rail service with a rail shuttle service connecting Providence to City Centre Warwick/T.F. Green Airport;
- Funding to analyze the feasibility of Amtrak Northeast Regional Service and Acela Express Service to City Centre Warwick/T.F. Green Airport. Additional Amtrak service at T.F. Green Airport will further enhance the economic competitiveness of the State in an increasingly global marketplace.

I strongly support the vision and goals contained in the Rhode Island State Rail Plan and believe that continued investment in transit infrastructure is not only beneficial to the long-term economic success of the State of Rhode Island but will also enhance the quality of life and sense of place for both residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,



Scott Avedisian
Mayor

C: Karen Scott, Assistant Chief, RI Statewide Planning Program, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908

CITY OF
CENTRAL FALLS



STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

January 23, 2014

Ms. Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Re: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Dear Ms. Scott,

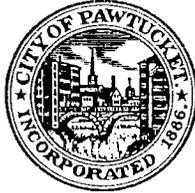
I write you now to express the City of Central Falls' utmost support for efforts to bring commuter rail service to our community through the addition of a Pawtucket/Central Falls MBTA stop on the Boston-Providence line. Helping to bring needed transportation investment to the diverse residents of Central Falls is a top priority of my administration as we look to move the city toward a brighter future. Central Falls commends Statewide Planning for declaring the project a high priority and urges the State of Rhode Island to continue their support to make sure this station is built.

MBTA service to Pawtucket/Central Falls will have transformative impact on these communities. Bringing alternative transportation options to the most densely populated part of Rhode Island will not only benefit surrounding neighborhoods, but can act as the catalyst for necessary transit-oriented development that can reposition Central Falls and Pawtucket as regional economic competitors. Perhaps most importantly, commuter rail service will provide high-unemployment populations with access to the employment centers of Providence and Greater Boston. For these reasons, we believe this station stop is the most important short-term rail project in the state.

My administration looks forward to a continued partnership with our federal, state and local leaders to ensure this commuter rail service stays on the projected timeline. We hope to be a partner in gathering community support, finding funding for the project and most importantly sharing the benefits of enhanced service.

Sincerely,

James A. Diossa
Mayor



EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, CITY OF PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND

DONALD R. GREBIEN
MAYOR

January 23, 2014

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

SUBJECT: Pawtucket Response to Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Dear Ms. Scott:

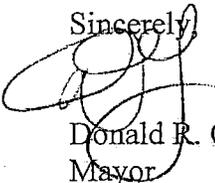
Please accept the City of Pawtucket's comments on the Rhode Island State Rail Plan. I am writing to underscore the importance of ranking the establishment of a Pawtucket/Central of Falls Committee Rail Station as a high priority in the Plan.

A commuter rail station in this location would provide important immediate economic benefits to both Pawtucket and Central Falls, not only by fostering an environment for transit-oriented development, but also by providing much needed transit access for our residents to jobs, education opportunities, located to the north and south of our community. Furthermore, a stop in Pawtucket along the bustling Northeast Corridor also provides passengers from other destinations the opportunity to enjoy the many great amenities available in our community.

Pawtucket also fully supports all efforts to improve inter- and intra-state commuter rail service, including proposed service that would re-establish a connection between Pawtucket and our neighbors to the north with Providence and points south. These vital connections provide tremendous opportunities, not only for our community, but for the State as a whole. We respectfully requests that intra-state service also be designated as a high priority in the Plan.

The Pawtucket-Central Falls Commuter Rail Station train station is an integral part in bridging this gap between existing commuter rail service and the exciting prospects of future rail transportation in the near future in our State. My administration is fully committed to making the Pawtucket-Central Falls Commuter Rail Station a reality, and we look forward to working with our partners in Central Falls and State government toward this most worthy goal.

Sincerely,


Donald R. Grebien
Mayor

CITY HALL • PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND 02860
(401) 728-0500 EXT. 281 • FAX (401) 723-8620 • TDD (401) 722-8239
E-MAIL: dgrebien@pawtucketri.com • www.pawtucketri.com



January 23, 2014

Ms. Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

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EX OFFICIO

Pawtucket Mayor
Donald R. Grebien
Central Falls Mayor
James A. Diosa

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Richard Kazarian

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Aaron M. Hertzberg

Dear Ms. Scott,

As a nonprofit advocate for downtown, riverfront and transportation enhancements in Pawtucket and Central Falls, the Pawtucket Foundation strongly supports the restoration of commuter rail service to these communities on the Boston-Providence MBTA line. My board, made up of business, nonprofit and community leaders, has consistently supported this project because of the transformational impact we believe it will have on our revitalization efforts. We commend you for declaring the project a high priority and encourage you to continue helping to guide the project through final engineering and construction.

We believe this is the most important short-term rail project in the state because it helps to service two of Rhode Island's most distressed and dense urban communities. Pawtucket and Central Falls both have unemployment rates that trend above the state average. The residents of these communities will benefit from increased access to employment and educational opportunities both north and south of the new station. Businesses will also be able to tap into employees and clients from throughout the rail corridor.

There are also significant opportunities for transit-oriented development. Residents have already started moving to renovated mill spaces in the area, and that trend is expected to increase with additional public investment. The proposed station site sits just one quarter of a mile from the core of Downtown Pawtucket with ample development opportunity. One quarter of a mile on the other side of the proposed station is over two million square feet of developable mill space. In fact, we are in the midst of forming a partnership with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Roger Williams University to study ways to maximize the development opportunity of much of this space. With smart planning and the public-private partnerships we are working to put into place, these economic development opportunities will be realized.

In addition to the importance of the Pawtucket station's role in connecting our community to the existing MBTA line, the station is also important to the future of any potential intra-state passenger rail plans. As noted by studies referenced in the plan, a Pawtucket station would serve as a transition point for Providence to Woonsocket, passenger rail service connecting major Rhode Island population, education and employment centers. The Pawtucket station could also serve as the northern terminus for intra-state service while service planning is completed throughout the Blackstone Valley.

www.pawtucketfoundation.org

We are also encouraged by the Rail Plan's focus on creating an intermodal connection for RIPTA at the existing South Attleboro train station. The creation of new connections such as this will only help to better serve Rhode Island residents and businesses.

There is no greater economic development investment than in creating effective and efficient transportation infrastructure. Our organization looks forward to continued collaboration with our federal, state and local leaders to ensure these projects progress and are completed in a timely manner. Over the next 20 years, we hope to be a partner in gathering community support, finding funding for projects, and most importantly sharing the benefits of enhanced service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron M. Hertzberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping line extending from the end of the name.

Aaron M. Hertzberg
Executive Director

Ronnie Sirota - Fwd: Re: STATE RAIL PLAN

From: Linsey Callaghan
To: Sirota, Ronnie
Date: 2/14/2014 11:44 AM
Subject: Fwd: Re: STATE RAIL PLAN

Linsey J. Callaghan
Transportation Supervising Planner
Statewide Planning Program
Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
p 401-222-6479

>>> On 12/23/2013 at 8:57 AM, in message <52FE014A.37F0.00C1.0@doa.ri.gov>, Karen Scott wrote:

Hi Steven -

Thanks so much for your very helpful comments. We understand that although we have tried our best to put together a completely accurate document, we also depend on the input of interested citizens like you to make sure that we have gotten everything just right. We appreciate the thoroughness that you are bringing to your review and welcome any more comments or corrections that you would like to suggest either before or at the public hearing.

Thanks again -
Karen

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
401-222-4411 - Phone
401-222-2083 - Fax

>>> "STEVEN H. MUSEN" <MUSENSTH@COX.NET> 12/22/2013 11:21 AM >>>
Dear Karen:

I have started to read the State Rail Plan and found a large number of incorrect but technically inconsequential mistakes just in Chapter One. Rather than wasting time at the hearing, I thought that these comments could be better handled by my sending you this E-Mail. Your committee may want to make these corrections before the hearing.

The first thing I noted was that in the credits, the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration were listed. Should not the Federal Railroad Administration get equal treatment?

The second thing was on page 1-1 when the opening topic sentence says that the state rail service dates to 1832 when the New York, Providence and Boston initiated service between Boston and New York with a combined rail and ferry service via Providence and Stonington. As you recall, the Boston and Providence was the first railroad into Rhode Island followed by the NY,P&B and P&W. I also believe that freight service was co-established at the same time though cars devoted solely to freight might have occurred at a later date as described in the narrative.

On page 1-2 several factual mistakes occur.

First the four track mainline of the New Haven was mainly between New Haven, CT and New Rochelle, NY. Rhode Island had a few stretches of three track main line but remained mostly double track. {It may have had some continuous four track sections between Providence and Pawtucket}.

Second is a big error. The script reads "These laws consolidated the nation's rail system into Conrail" when it should read "These laws consolidate most of the region's rail systems into Conrail".

Third. The sentence "*The renovations of both Rhode Island's Kingston and Westerly Amtrak stations were also completed in support of this high speed rail service by providing space for other trains to pull off the mainline, allowing Acela trains to travel through at high speeds*" is totally wrong. Neither project changed a single foot of trackage through either station. The renovations did provide for more comfortable conditions for travelers boarding and disembarking at that those station and led to higher passenger use {and therefore deserve mention in the narrative}. A separate project to build full high level platforms and a third siding at Kingston is currently funded to allow high speed trains to bypass slower regional and freight train but that project is scheduled to commence construction this spring.

As you can see these are corrections best handled informally. If I do submit a more detailed comments on January 23, 2014 I hope that they will be of a more substantive nature.

STEVE MUSEN
Newsletter Editor/Director at Large
Rhode Island Association of RR Passengers.

Peter Brassard
9 Pope Street
Newport, RI 02840
917 208 8597 cell
peterbrassard@earthlink.net

January 23, 2014

State Planning Council
Statewide Planning Program
Rhode Island Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Re: Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014

Rhode Island State Rail Plan 2014

The Rhode Island State Rail Plan is an outline that will guide Rhode Island rail development for the next 20-years. It would be unfortunate and a missed opportunity to leave out or not emphasize certain rail features that could offer future flexibility or options for expanding rail services or systems that may not be imperative or apparent today.

1. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on electrification of all tracks, including passenger, freight, commuter, and station sidings along the entire length of the Northeast Corridor between Central Falls and Westerly.

The MBTA to date has resisted using electrified trains for commuter service. This policy could change in the future, which Rhode Island should be prepared for. Electric train sets have a much higher acceleration rate, besides producing less pollution than comparable diesel train. Electrification of commuter trains between Providence and Boston would likely decrease travel times between the two cities by as much as 15-minutes, which would greatly enhance economic activity between both cities.

The Rail Plan should include a statement advocating for track electrification in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

2. The proposed Pawtucket Station has been identified as the primary infill train station along the NEC for study and is the only urban infill station proposed in a walkable high-density population area. Infill stations at Cranston, East Greenwich, and West Davisville are identified as *Potential New Stations Under Study*.

Other high-density population urban infill train stations should be a priority and identified in the Rail Plan beyond those mentioned in the current draft.

In the Providence Foundation's 2009 Rhode Island Intrastate Commuter Rail: Feasibility Study, Olneyville was identified as one such location. With adjacent neighborhoods and bus routes through Olneyville Square, an Olneyville Station located as suggested in the Providence Foundation study, would have roughly 28,000 people who would be within less than a 12-minute walk or 5-minute bus ride from that station location. This area has about a million square feet of under utilized or empty former industrial space, as well as, vacant land that is available for reuse. The need for train station parking facilities would be greatly reduced or not necessary in this type of neighborhood.

Other potential urban infill station locations with similar walkable and transit characteristics that also have high populations are Cranston Street and Elmwood/Reservoir that could be considered.

If in the future all tracks were electrified and electric train sets were used, then the possibility of urban infill train stations, such as Olneyville, Cranston Street, or Elmwood become more viable, because of the higher train acceleration would minimize the effects of more closely situated stations.

3. The current MBTA commuter rail system in Rhode Island is more a Boston oriented rail system and less a Providence or Rhode Island rail system. Consideration should be given and included in the Rail Plan to studying terminating MBTA commuter rail service from Boston at Providence Station. For local train service south of Providence, a smaller DMU or EMU Rhode Island train with weekday and weekend morning, afternoon, and evening service scheduled at regular headway times should be proposed. Transfers from Rhode Island trains to MBTA trains to Boston could be made at Providence Station.

A Rhode Island local train line with multiple stations and a consistent regularly schedule would provide mass transit service that is not possible with RIPTA's bus system, but would be competitive with automotive travel. The Rail Plan should substantially increase the performance goal of commuter rail or local rail to more than the 1% shown in the Rail Plan draft. Perhaps the goal could be 5%.

4. As a low priority proposing a fourth track on the NEC between TF Green and Central Falls should be included in the Rail Plan. Even though the construction of a fourth track may be decades away, it's critical to include this possibility in the Rail Plan, since the Rail Plan will inform general land-use decisions and RIDOT highway projects that may be adjacent to where such a track would be built.

Examples: to limit new construction immediately adjacent to the NEC on privately owned land where such a track could be located or to allow for track widening capability when RIDOT begins plans for the reconstruction of the Olneyville Viaduct.

A future fourth track would also relieve pressure on the freight system where freight trains could share northbound and southbound tracks with local passenger trains.

5. The Providence Streetcar as proposed may be too narrow in focus. The current proposal lacks a larger vision for how it would be expanded. The Rail Plan should state that in the next phase of the Providence Streetcar study consideration should given to analyze upgrading the proposed route to Light Rail standards and to study how the route or routes should be expanded to immediately adjacent cities and towns within the urban core that could include North Providence, Pawtucket, East Providence, Cranston, Central Falls, and Johnston. Most of the current proposed Providence Streetcar route could be a first phase of a larger system.
6. The Rail Plan should include an advocacy position for developing fare coordination between the MBTA, RIPTA, and Amtrak for rail commuters and transit users. This could be in the form of a specific card or by honoring tickets or transit passes between agencies with a visual inspection.

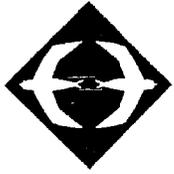
Please consider and incorporate my comments into the 2014 Rhode Island State Rail Plan.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Peter Brassard



Over 100 Years of Education, Conservation & Advocacy
Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Comments on Draft Guide Plan for Rail, Statewide Planning
January 23, 2014

Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI), an independent state organization, thanks staff and review teams for the development of this State Guide Plan on Rail. ASRI is interested in this plan for its impacts to emissions contributing to global climate change. ASRI is a member of the Coalition for Transportation Choices and has attended to and researched public transit as a means to reduce “greenhouse gas” emissions. Climate change adversely affects wild plants and animals as well as it does humans.

Supporting the statements in Section 7.2 of the Plan, we note that of the 29% of U. S. “greenhouse gas” emissions contributed by transportation, 57% comes from cars, SUVs, and small trucks (see attached “Public Transportation’s role in Responding to Climate Change,” U. S. Department of Transportation/ Federal Transit Administration).

Automobiles with only the driver average 27.7 passenger miles per gallon. Heavy rail averages 155.3 passenger miles per gallon and commuter rail, 85.8 passenger miles per gallon. These figures come from a 2007 report for the American Bus Association by M.J. Bradley & Associates, Manchester, NH and are attached. A complete copy of this is attached to the original copy of these remarks.

It is in the public interest to reduce “greenhouse gas emissions” to mitigate the flooding, sea level rise, biological interruptions, and other consequences of global climate change. Making rail travel more attractive and convenient to commuters and others will produce less emissions that contribute to elevated global temperatures.

The goals of this Guide Plan in compliance with MAP-21 objectives for “System Reliability -- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system – and Congestion Reduction - Significantly reduce congestion on the NHS” are concomitant with promoting passenger and freight rail and coordinating public transit and ground transportation to achieve these goals.

Thank you for the statement in Chapter 6 that “As articulated in Transportation 2035, the State’s Long Range Transportation Plan, one of the goals of the overall transportation system in the State is to create an intermodal system with seamless transitions between modes with aligned schedules to reduce congestion and emissions along the State’s highways.” Such a statement early in this Rail Plan might add emphasis to the intermodal facilitation that is needed to achieve greater use of rail.

In section 3.2.1, we would like to see a bullet to coordinate with RIPTA or other public transit agencies to assure adequate bus space at intermodal nodes and coordinated scheduling between bus and rail. Given that the RI DOT Director sits on the board of RIPTA this should be reasonable to accomplish.

In section 3.2.2, last paragraph, last sentence, adding “ground transportation” to the list of integrative areas to which Statewide Planning could attend in relation to Rail Guide Plan would enhance the role of public transit in delivering passengers to commuter and long-distance rail.

In section 3.3.1, the paragraph devoted to RIPTA, it would be a public benefit to recommend an action item in the narrative, such as "close coordination with RI DOT, DOA/SWP, and other agencies in the location and development of bus hubs to augment the convenience of using passenger rail."

Perhaps a series of bullets for action could be developed as there are in the subsequent paragraph on Quonset Development Corporation (3.3.3).

In the Transportation Enhancement Program/Transportation Alternatives we are pleased to see possible use of these funds that might develop commuter rail from the Blackstone Valley to the main line for transportation to Boston or Providence, and we are pleased to see the Intrastate Commuter Rail Feasibility Study cited in a later section. We hope that train station improvements in Providence will include transit as well as automobile accommodations in future Enhancement funding.

In section 4.2, the use of bike-paths as delivery ways for commuters might be made explicit as an intermodal connection on the William O'Neill Bike Path, and abandoned rail lines that connect to existing or near-future planned stations might be prioritized for development as bike paths.

In section 5.4, Commuter Rail Passenger Service Performance, an analysis of accessibility-interconnectedness to public transit, public transit information, free parking, drop-off/ kiss and run roadways, and other intermodal considerations might be useful for planning commuter rail. An item in Chapter 9 Implementation notes needed action in this area.

We are concerned that plans for a streetcar in Providence do not indicate a better connection with Providence Train Station and hope that state planners will encourage local planners to understand the high value of intermodal connection.

Thank you for the extensive analysis of potential commuter rail service, including Aquidneck Island. The defunct bridge over the Sakonnet River is a barrier within Rhode Island that needs to be addressed. We ask that a more pro-active position than the passive mention in Section 6.7 "that a bridge supporting the rail line would be constructed over the Sakonnet River," and instead substitute "coordination with MBTA and other agencies in planning a bridge to support the rail line is needed."

In Section 9-4 Congestion Reduction under Implementation Actions, an item should include "Coordinate with RIPTA for service to rail stations."

Thank you for developing this Guide Plan and the opportunity to comment.

Eugenia Marks
Senior Director for Policy



Linsey Callaghan - Comments on draft State Rail Plan

From: <evstuart@verizon.net>
To: <Linsey.Callaghan@doa.ri.gov>
Date: 1/3/2014 11:04 AM
Subject: Comments on draft State Rail Plan
CC: <Karen.Scott@doa.ri.gov>
Attachments: Stuart Edits -Draft RI State Rail Plan 12-18-2013.docx

Linsey: Thanks to you, and all the others, who have worked diligently to produce the draft State Rail Plan. Over the holidays I've taken some time to look it over again and have some suggested refinements for your consideration. Some of my items are minor and several have more substance.

Attached is a MSWORD file with the pages on which I have comments. Unfortunately it is convoluted in that I started making comments on the PDF you sent, using the Adobe "Post-It" feature, but was unable to email that file back to you as it was larger than my email allows as an attachment. Then, I saved the whole draft in WORD, deleted pages that had no comments and inserted some changes (in red font). Also, after the first page, the page numbering in the footer became messed up, so you will see I inserted page numbers in green to help identify the page.. Sorry for this mish-mash, but I think you will be able to get the intent of my comments.

You will find comments on the following pages of the draft plan: Pages: 4-24, 5-3, 5-15, 6-15, 7-5, 9-7, and 9-8

The item on page 4-24 is an example of a proposed edit that has little overall impact to the plan (change "Canadian Northern" to "Canadian National").

However, I'd like to highlight several of the changes I propose are more significant —

Page 7-1 You will see a suggestion to strengthen language about the role of the "tourist and excursion" rail operations in RI. While these may not qualify for as many FTA or FhWA funding categories, if the State Rail Plan is more than just a narrow federal funding document then I think we should give credit to their contributions the state's economy. Also, the operations on the RIDOT owned Newport Secondary could be particularly valuable in the future in they keep the line active in the public's eye until more intense rail service is established. It is always difficult to restore active rail service on lines that have trees growing up between the rails! For this reason alone I believe it should be State policy to preserve working rail operations on the line. Also, I believe all three Aquidneck Island municipalities have continued rail service in their Comp. Plans.

Page 9-7 Under "Performance Measures" you will see I suggest adding a 4th item: "Mechanism is in place to provide for long term maintenance of RIDOT rail stations."

This is largely a reference to Kingston and Westerly. RIDOT has struggled for years to find funds for basic, routine maintenance (mow lawns, pick up trash, fix broken windows, etc.) at these high visibility gateways to the state — serving many thousands of travelers each year. Recent discussions with RIDOT staff lead me to believe they are actively working on a solution that would provide a stream of dedicated funds needed for this maintenance. These stations, and the image they project for our state, are important enough that some sort of solution must be found. I strongly believe it should be elevated by being listed as one of the Performance Measures.

This is another item that is largely separate from the issue of "federal funding" in the Plan, but is a significant State element of the Plan.

Page 9-8 Performance Measure No. 1 lists a ridership growth of 2 percent per year. You will see in my edit note that this seems very low for the new South County MBTA service. I realize the Warwick & Wickford service has gotten off to a slow start on ridership, despite serious efforts by RIDOT and others to promote it. Perhaps 2% is reasonable for growth at Providence, but it has got to be higher than 2% for Warwick & Wickford or we will be setting a threshold that many will view as "a failure".

I plan on attending both the AM and PM hearings on Jan. 23rd as a TAC member. Again, thanks for all you work on this project. See you on the 23rd.
Ev Stuart

Jan. 23, 2014

To: Linsey Callaghan, RI Statewide Planning Program

From: Everett Stuart (RI Assoc. of Railroad Passengers)

RE: Additional comment on *Draft RI State Rail Plan*

An important proposed rail infrastructure project that will have significant value to many Rhode Island rail users is a direct rail link between North and South Stations in downtown Boston. When built, this link will allow commuter trains from our area to pass through Boston with service to the northern suburbs and intercity Amtrak service from our area to New Hampshire and Maine. Rhode Islanders would no longer need to find their way across the city from South Station to get to Northside trains. This deep tunnel project has been in the planning stages for some years but due to other pressing transportation projects has yet to proceed. Although Massachusetts would be the lead on this project, it is important that nearby states that would benefit support this regional project. I believe the Boston North – South Rail Link should be included in the long term implementation section of the RI State Rail Plan as a show of regional support.

The Rail Link could be incorporated in the draft plan with a few minor additions, such as:

Section 9.3

5. *Economy*, Goal 5A already states “...movement of people and freight within Rhode Island and the region.” This already opens the door for support of projects of regional significance.

Note that Objective 1. Already refer to moving people “to” and “from” RI.

I propose addition of:

“POLICY 7 -- Support regional scale rail infrastructure projects in other states that enhance rail service for Rhode Island.”

and

“IMPLEMENTATION ACTION 9 -- Encourage development of a direct rail connection between North and South Stations in Boston to facilitate travel of Rhode Islanders through to/from points to the north.”

Linsey Callaghan - From Dan Baudouin Re: Review of State Rail Plan 2014

From: "Linda Pascoa" <lpascoa@provfoundation.com>
To: "Linsey Callaghan" <linsey.callaghan@doa.ri.gov>
Date: 1/22/2014 4:28 PM
Subject: From Dan Baudouin Re: Review of State Rail Plan 2014
CC: "Jared Rhodes" <jared.rhodes@doa.ri.gov>, "Steven Devine" <sdevine@d...

Due to other commitments, I cannot attend the TAC meeting. For your reference, I am resubmitting the comments that I made on the draft rail plan last October. Let me know if you have any questions. --Dan

Daniel A. Baudouin
Executive Director
The Providence Foundation
30 Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903
401-521-3248
dbaudouin@provfoundation.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Linda Pascoa [mailto:lpascoa@provfoundation.com]
Sent: Friday, October 25, 2013 2:15 PM
To: Linsey Callaghan (linsey.callaghan@doz.ri.gov)
Cc: Jared Rhodes (jared.rhodes@doa.ri.gov); Steven Devine (sdevine@dot.ri.gov)
Subject: From Dan Baudouin Re: Review of State Rail Plan 2014

TO: Linsey Callaghan
FROM: Dan Baudouin
DATE: October 23, 2013
RE: Review of State Rail Plan 2014
Cc: Jared Rhodes
Steve Devine

Sorry that my schedule did not permit me to attend the Advisory Committee meetings.

Overall, congratulations on a good plan that covers a large and varied topic.

I do have a few comments.

1. On Page 6-10, Section 6.5, Blackstone Valley Passenger Service is a misnomer because this section also contains information about the report on a potential intrastate transit service between Woonsocket and Warwick. This facility would not only serve Blackstone Valley but also Providence, Cranston and Warwick and thus serve a large portion of the state's population. The power of the service is that the state could have better intrastate rail service than just relying on MBTA and/or Amtrak. Frequencies, times of service, cost, and stations could all be enhanced by this system. I believe that it should have its own category or, at least, there should be a name change in the title.
2. Under 6.6, Rail Shuttle Service, the benefits to Warwick Station Development District and the Wickford Junction Plaza are clearly articulated. In addition, I believe that the rail shuttle, with 30 minute

frequencies would also benefit downtown Providence, particularly the Capital Center District. Downtown is already a vibrant mixed use district but there are plans and opportunities for growth. For example, the Capital Center District contains about 7 vacant acres that are programmed for development. Even at a moderate FAR of 5, which is exceeded in many developed Capital Center properties, this would result in an additional 1,500,000 sq. ft. of development just in Capital Center.

3. On page 10-5, the Providence Station project should include more than the rail hazardous material issue. As currently under study by RIDOT, it also should include future capacity issues and the high likelihood for the need to expand the station due to ever growing passenger utilization. The station already serves almost 1,200,000 passengers per year which exceeds original estimates when the station was built.

4. On the long-range investment programs, unless I missed it, the rail shuttle service does not appear. Also, the Woonsocket service is a low priority. I would recommend that a planning level analysis or some type of study be performed that analyzes both of these potential projects as a combined system perhaps with different implementation schedules. This could be an opportunity to create a high frequency rail transit service in the state which is needed in the long run.

Great job on the study and, if you would like to discuss, just give me a call.

Daniel A. Baudouin
Executive Director
The Providence Foundation
30 Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903
401-521-3248
dbaudouin@provfoundation.com

Linsey Callaghan - FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

From: Daniel Porter <dporter@pvdairport.com>
To: Linsey Callaghan <Linsey.Callaghan@doa.ri.gov>
Date: 1/2/2014 1:21 PM
Subject: FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan
CC: Timothy Pimental <TPimental@pvdairport.com>

Linsey – Happy New Year. Some comments below from Tim Pimental to consider. thanks

Daniel Porter
Rhode Island Airport Corporation | www.pvdairport.com
Vice President - Aviation Planning
2000 Post Road | Warwick, RI 02886
TEL: 401-691-2419 | FAX: 401-691-2560
dporter@pvdairport.com



Rhode Island Airport Corporation

From: Timothy Pimental
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 12:48 PM
To: Daniel Porter
Subject: RE: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Hi Dan,

I had a chance to review the draft over the Holidays. I found two small items:

- Page 5-11 (bottom) the text references "Figure 5-6" It should be 5.5
- Table 5-7: Based on reading the text and the standards explained therein, I believe the table should be revised to include/show the arrival times of trains in Boston.

Thanks,

Tim Pimental
Manager - Air Service Marketing & Landside Operations
T F Green Airport - PVD
(401) 691-2418
TPimental@PVDairport.com

visit us on Facebook "TF Green Airport - PVD"

From: Daniel Porter
Sent: Monday, December 23, 2013 10:43 AM
To: Timothy Pimental
Subject: FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

FYI

Daniel Porter
Rhode Island Airport Corporation | www.pvdairport.com
Vice President - Aviation Planning
2000 Post Road | Warwick, RI 02886
TEL: 401-691-2419 | FAX: 401-691-2560
dporter@pvdairport.com



Rhode Island Airport Corporation

From: Dawn Vittorioso [<mailto:Dawn.Vittorioso@doa.ri.gov>]
Sent: Monday, December 23, 2013 10:40 AM
To: Dawn Vittorioso
Subject: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

The Rhode Island State Planning Council will conduct two public hearings to accept comments on the draft Rhode Island State Rail Plan.

The *Rhode Island State Rail Plan* draft is under consideration by the Rhode Island State Planning Council. The *Rhode Island State Rail Plan* contains goals, objectives, policies, implementation actions, and potential projects for the State's passenger and freight rail transportation system over the next twenty years. The Rhode Island Department of Administration, Division of Planning's Statewide Planning Program, working in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, is responsible for the development of this Plan. This Plan was also developed with public and private rail stakeholder participation, as well as state and federal agency collaboration. This Plan has been prepared to ensure compliance with the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21).

The *Rhode Island State Rail Plan* is available for review at the R.I. Statewide Planning Program website

Linsey Callaghan - rail plan

From: "GEAGAN DANIEL T" <DANIEL.T.GEAGAN@warwickri.com>
 To: <Linsey.Callaghan@doa.ri.gov>
 Date: 12/24/2013 10:55 AM
 Subject: rail plan

Hi Linsey --

I think I spotted a minor typo in the draft state rail plan (screenshot below) pages 5-11/5-12. The "as illustrated in Figure 5.6" --I think it should reference [Figure 5.5](#).

It is not a big deal -- but I figured I would pass it along.

Thanks!

Dan

The screenshot shows a PDF document with a table and a line graph. The table lists gas prices per gallon from 2003 to 2012. The line graph shows MBTA passenger boardings at Rhode Island stations from 2010 to 2012, with a significant increase from 2010 to 2011 and a slight decrease in 2012.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
→→→ Gas Price Per Gallon	1.603	1.895	2.354	2.818	2.843	3.299	2.409	2.635	3.576	3.69

Source: Rhode Island Department of Transportation and Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

The newly added service at the Warwick InterLink and Wickford Junction in 2010 and 2012 respectively shows early signs of positive growth in ridership. The ridership figures at the Warwick InterLink particularly notable with a 57 percent increase in boardings from 2011 to 2012, as illustrated in 6. The ridership from Wickford Junction is also expected to increase in popularity in the coming

Chapter 5: Rail Passenger Service in Rhode Island

Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Figure 5-5: MBTA Passenger Boardings at Rhode Island Stations, 2010 to 2012

Year	Boardings
2010	320,000
2011	500,000
2012	480,000



Karen Shabshelowitz
63 Wanda St.
Narragansett, RI 02882-3324
401-789-1994

aringkaren@cox.net

Dear Ms Scott,

I am writing to support
bringing the Commuter Rail
to Kingston.

three of my six children
went to college/graduate school
in Boston. Four of my children
worked in the Boston area
after college. It would have been
so much more convenient if the
commuter rail came into Kingston.

I believe that the population
in Southern RI including tourists
and residents would
highly benefit from this service.

Access to the Boston Medical
Community is another good
reason to support the Commuter Rail
to Kingston.
Karen Shabshelowitz

Ronnie Sirota Fwd: Rhode Island State Rail Plan - COMMENT

From: Linsey Callaghan
To: Sirota, Ronnie
Date: 1/16/2014 2:21 PM
Subject: Fwd: Rhode Island State Rail Plan - COMMENT

Ronnie,
Please summarize and add these comments into the public hearing report.
Thanks

Linsey J. Callaghan
Transportation Supervising Planner
Statewide Planning Program
Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
p 401-222-6479

>>> On 1/16/2014 at 2:17 PM, in message <52D7EABA.37F0.00C1.0@doa.ri.gov>, Karen Scott wrote:

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
401-222-4411 - Phone
401-222-2083 - Fax

>>> Steve <lioni1@aol.com> 1/16/2014 2:10 PM >>>

Ms. Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill,
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Ms. Scott,

By way of introduction, I am the former Warwick - Public Safety Commissioner. My current job with a national corporation requires that I travel to over 40 cities a year and 70 over the last two years. So, I use mass transportation systems on a regular basis, and see how they are planned and managed.

I have reviewed the Rhode Island State Rail Plan and would like to offer comments for consideration at the upcoming public hearing. Unfortunately, I am traveling, but hereby submit my thoughts via this communication.

My comments are limited to passenger rail.

Providence Metro View:

My first concern is that it appears that, while it is a "state-wide" plan, it fails to place adequate focus on mass transit (rail) from a Providence Metropolitan Area perspective. As you know, the Providence Metropolitan Area is larger than the state of Rhode Island. Economic activity, workers, and social networks are metropolitan base - not limited by state lines. That is, given that the Providence Metro includes all of the state and Bristol County, MA, the ***rail transportation needs are metropolitan, not state, driven.***

As you know, Providence is the manufacturing, commercial, economic, historic, cultural, culinary, educational, and governmental center of Southeastern New England and core of New England's second largest metro. As a state capital, New England's second largest metro, and a national destination, Providence is the "beacon" if you will. Economically, as *Providence goes, so goes the state and the larger metro.*

This is critical, in that Providence is the core/center of the metro, and I would urge that ***the focus be on getting commuters to and from- and through - Providence.***

TF Green Airport-Providence (PVD):

There is minimal current or potential for any "Warwick" Train Station serving commuters. The real potential and value lies in what was the initial purpose of the Interlink... ***getting airline travelers to and from TF Green Airport (PVD) Train Station to the Providence Train Station.***

People fly to major cities (like Providence), not suburbs or states. It is in fact, the Providence Airport, and should be referred to as the ***TF Green Airport (PVD) Train Station.***

Connecting Providence to its Massachusetts suburbs:

In order to leverage the 600,000 residents and the businesses of the Southeastern MA area of the Providence Metro, ***commuter rail service from Fall River and New Bedford to Providence is a prime ingredient.***

It is critical to the economic health of the state and metro that this connection be planned, before a Boston connection is established.

Priorities:

The failure to secure funding for the Providence Streetcar System was a major mistake and setback. ***The Providence Streetcar System should immediately place it at the top of the priority listing.***

1. Providence Streetcar System
2. Improvements to Providence Central Station
3. Commuter Rail between Providence and Fall River-New Bedford
4. Pawtucket Commuter Rail Station (to PVD)
5. Blackstone Valley (Woonsocket) Commuter Rail Station (to PVD)

I strongly urge the state to take the opportunity to create an "all roads lead to Rome" approach, using a Providence Metro perspective in all rail planning and implementation.

Sincerely,

Steve L. Castiglioni

Dr. Steven L. Castiglioni
1 Wayland Avenue
Unit 302N
Providence, RI 02906
Cell: (813)-625-8398

CC:

Martina Haggerty, City of Providence

David Everett, City of Providence

Paul Mission, Southeastern (Massachusetts) Regional Planning & Economic Development
District

Mark Therrien, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

Lillian Picchione, Rhode Island Public Transit Authority

Daniel Baudouin, The Providence Foundation

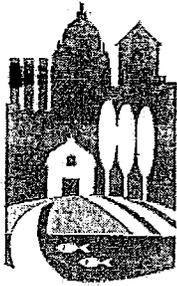
Daniel Porter, RI Airport Corporation, T. F. Green-Providence Airport

Robert Azar, City of Providence

Dr. Patrick Malone, Brown University

Daniel Beardsley, Executive Director, RI League of Cities and Towns

Stephen Devine, Chief, Intermodal Planning



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January 23, 2014

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief, Statewide Planning
Rhode Island Division of Planning
One Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908

Re: Public Hearing on Draft State Rail Plan

Dear Karen,

It was a pleasure to serve on the State Rail Plan Advisory Committee.

I believe the draft plan offers a compelling 20-year blueprint for capitalizing on Rhode Island's many assets, including its existing rail infrastructure. It also represents a thoughtful way to leverage improved mobility (both passenger and freight) as a catalyst for economic growth and enhanced quality of life for all Rhode Islanders.

There is one issue I failed to raise during our many planning meetings and so I thought it would be appropriate to raise it now in the context of the Public Hearing taking place today on the Draft State Rail Plan.

Although the plan acknowledges Amtrak's long-term plan for developing a true high-speed rail in the Northeast Corridor (page 3-7), the U.S. DOT and Federal Railroad Administration's *NEC Preliminary Alternatives Report* (2013) includes a total of 15 options for the recommended alignment of this high-speed service, which would not necessarily follow the existing NEC alignment. It's worth noting that options #14 and #15 would appear to completely bypass Rhode Island.

Grow Smart RI suggests that the State Rail Plan make a noted preference for high-speed rail alignment options that include a stop in our capital city Providence. It appears that options #1 through #13 do this.

Thank you,

John Flaherty
Director of Research & Communications

RI State Rail Plan 2014

I have a special interest in the Newport Secondary line, since I have submitted several proposals under the TIP program, which have been approved and are in the "TIP system". These submittals and pending actions from the RIDOT now expands a time frame of over a decade.

The DOT and the DEM (East Bay Bike Path) have been instrumental in developing several bike paths throughout the state as stated in the Rail plan. Also, in the northern area of the state, Blackstone-Lincoln-Pawtucket, there exists a freight rail service with a companion bike path. This is another greater use of a public recreational trail known throughout our state and southern New England.

The Newport Secondary Rail Line should be considered to consist of two sections, the Aquidneck Island (Newport), in the south and the Tiverton portion, in the north. The Newport section is used by a profit entity for tourist excursion ridership and there also dinner train operation. There are future plans to establish a public shuttle service. The Tiverton section has not seen an active rail activity for three decades, since the closing and removal of the bridge (rail) over the Sakonnet River.

The Tiverton section should be use *immediately* as a Bike Path, as this section of the RR line will not be used for as an ACTIVE RR service in the long range future of rail planning. There are many sound reasons for this.. I feel that the DOT has not been robust in furthering the use (bike path) of this section of the INACTIVE RR line.

Putting it in use as a bike path has the advantage of preserving the line for public passenger service in the long run. The ROW needs to be protected from encroachment and deterioration due environmental factors such as overgrowth of vegetation, poor drainage causing flooding and the effects of global warming causing shore line erosion. The reality is that the infraction of neglecting the RR facility over the decades has rendered the physical structure to be of little value. There will be the need to completely rebuild it if it is ever to be used for passenger service. This expenditure and that of a new bridge will be prohibitive, when compared to the future usage and that of other viable alternatives modes of transportation that should be take into consideration.

+++++

Comments as to appendix A (Newport Secondary Line)

Usage: there is no freight service as indicated [Freight/Tourist]. This point was pointed out in a previous section within the plan. Also---

It really should be listed as a partial use of the overall RR line

+++++

Other comments about the plan:

My position as to rail passenger service: I do support mass transportation, if the results will render FEASIBLE and FINANCIAL sound solutions that are related to transportation.

There is a need for REALITY planning when it comes to rail passenger service. For a hundred years now the automobile has had an overkilling impact on American mass mobility to move locally and nationally. It has led to urban sprawl and provides each of us an independent means for travel of where and when we want to move about. Only when the automobile has lost its dominance will rail and even bus transportation prevail again.

Thus, I believe that before planning for rail service, other aspects of community planning for living and work locations must take place first. There is need to need to enhance central core areas and to establish local corridors for working and living environments within the state. Other words, SMART GROWTH planning has to take place and be established in place.

Freight Service: This is a good example. Quonset and Davisville should be further developed as a major distribution hub. The State should promote its location as international container port and seek other opportunities for the establishment of regional distributions centers.

Providence Trolley Service: This is not a viable option. One can realize that without doing a study.

To return to an infrastructure of this form will be costly as to construction and operation. There are simpler and better options to "do something" for the Providence downtown area. Such as special wheel trolley busses, that presents a different look in design and appearance. For example would be a double decker busses.



Peter Moniz

83 Captains Circle

Tiverton, RI 02878

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Christina L. Valentino
Vice President

January 23, 2014

Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Re: **URI Comments on the State Rail Plan**

Dear Ms. Scott:

With campuses located in Providence, Narragansett, Kingston, and West Greenwich, the University of Rhode Island (URI) continues to play an important part in the State's economic development strategy. The university is home to over 16,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and nearly 3,500 faculty and staff, and in FY2012 had revenues of nearly \$469 million. As a Land Grant and Sea Grant institution the university is rooted in its mission to help Rhode Island grow while conserving precious natural resources. In 2007, URI signed onto the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), pledging to reduce the campuses' green house gas emissions as well as create a campus that can serve as a model and living laboratory of sustainability practices. The Climate Action Plan and the Strategic Plan for Campus Sustainability, both developed by the URI President's Council on Sustainability, outline strategies that would help move the university in the direction of campus sustainability, including transportation and community relations projects. The State Rail Plan offers solutions for a more cost-effective and reliable commuter rail plan at Kingston Station that would reduce congestion along the I-95 and Route 1/Route 4 corridors that surround the Kingston campus, provide more direct connections to T.F. Green Airport, and add system capacity without expanding the local road network. Improved commuter rail service between Kingston and Providence aligns perfectly with the campus's goals to link its four campuses through cost-effective and sustainable transportation modes. Most importantly, the availability of convenient and affordable passenger rail service would enhance URI's ability to link research, education, and business consultancy services to incubate and accelerate new businesses.

The University's Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Continuing Education and several other departments are housed at the historic Shepard Building in the heart of downtown Providence.

Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
January 23, 2014
Page 2

In addition to the Continuing Education program, plans are moving forward with the expansion of URI's nursing and health-related research facilities in Providence. The proposed joint venture with Rhode Island College and Brown University will convert the South Street Power Station to a mixed-use facility that will house a shared nursing education center. The State Rail Plan's proposed Providence street car service (page 6-8) has the potential to create a transportation option that would foster an urban community atmosphere for our students, staff, and faculty. It is critical, however, that the street car system also include a viable link to Providence Train Station, so intermodal connections can be conveniently made for URI commuters to/from Kingston to URI's Providence facilities.

While a large portion of the University of Rhode Island's community commutes to main campus in Kingston, the number of students, faculty, and staff commuting south to campus from distances of 25 miles or greater reflects a need for more efficient alternate modes of transportation. In the fall of 2013, approximately 200 faculty and staff, and 2,300 students commuted to Kingston from Providence and other points north along the Rail corridor. A majority of these commuters drive by car and drive alone. Of those numbers, an estimated 120 faculty and staff and 1,200 students commute from the city of Providence. These numbers will increase with the expansion of URI and Rhode Island College's nursing and allied health programs in Providence.

The State of RI Land Use Plan 2025 identifies Kingston as one of Rhode Island's future growth "Centers" (page 4-21, figure 121-04(2)); this highlights the importance of government investment in public transportation facilities. The draft State Rail Plan notes that the Kingston Station is in the top 50 Amtrak stations for ridership out of the total 500 stations nationwide (page 6-2). Boarding at the Kingston Station has nearly doubled in the past nine years, and Rhode Island Public Transit (RIPTA) ridership to URI's main campus has nearly tripled. This demonstrates that Kingston commuters have the potential to utilize convenient and affordable public transportation systems, thus minimizing private automobile transportation in the future. But for Kingston to become a successful population "Center", a comprehensive transportation infrastructure plan is crucial.

The Ohio Department of Transportation conducted an analysis of the economic development impacts of commuter rail expansion, which found that in terms of public costs, commuter rail is less expensive to both construct and maintain than building additional highway capacity (Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail Project analysis). Successful commuter rail service reduces congestion - which road expansion does not (vehicle miles traveled increase at about a 1 to 1 ratio when additional road capacity is constructed). Additionally, studies show that commuter rail consumes less energy than vehicular travel, which includes both private automobiles and public transit buses. Commuter rail expansion is the most cost-effective transit for lower

Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
January 23, 2014
Page 3

density population areas like the South County area. Economic impacts of commuter rail expansion include increased employment and business opportunities in the surrounding area with multiplier effects including increased tax revenue. Land value studies have shown that property values increase when commuter rail access is expanded. Non-market benefits include increased access for employees, students and disadvantaged groups as well as a stimulation of community development in the area affected.

The recent High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program grant of \$26.2 million (Rail Plan, page 3-8) to upgrade the Kingston area rail system by adding a third rail will better accommodate passenger trains on convenient schedules, and will provide the critical rail infrastructure for market-based commuter rail service in the future. However, this investment alone will not improve the local problems hampering the Kingston Station and the viability of increased URI commuter use. For the project to effectively translate into expanded passenger service, additional improvements will be needed for intermodal connectivity. While there is a coordinated RIPTA connection between URI and Kingston, more frequent and affordable commuter service via a new commuter rail system would necessitate increased RIPTA service or even an additional, exclusive shuttle system between Kingston Station, the main campus, and the Narragansett Bay campus.

In addition to coordinating service plans with RIPTA, the university requests that the final report list these associated transportation infrastructure projects as high priorities to accompany the third rail improvements:

1. Additional park and ride spaces at the Kingston Station. The current lot with under 200 long-term parking spaces at Kingston Station is consistently filled to capacity.
2. New and more frequent public transportation to/from the URI campus to the Kingston Station or a commuter rail spur to the west edge of the URI campus.
3. Completion of the planned Bike Path connection from the URI campus to the O'Neil Bikeway leading to the Kingston Rail Station.

In summary, the University of Rhode Island strongly supports the proposed commuter rail expansion to Kingston Station. The commuter rail expansion would greatly benefit the University and the State of Rhode Island by better connecting Rhode Island citizens, communities, centers of learning, and economic growth opportunities. The Kingston connection would be a signature achievement in implementing the State's policy of focusing and enhancing transportation infrastructure in designated growth centers, both for sustainable and economic development purposes. The new rail connection would increase business and

Karen Scott, Assistant Chief
RI Statewide Planning Program
January 23, 2014
Page 4

employment opportunities in the South County area and would enhance local and state tax revenue. Providing reliable and efficient transportation options for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the URI campus and local communities would help the University and the State achieve sustainability goals while driving economic growth.

In order for the commuter rail expansion to achieve optimal performance and provide the greatest benefit, the expansion must include strategies and resources to achieve effective intermodal connectivity. Our current transportation infrastructure at URI and in Kingston includes too few connections to the public transit buses, inadequate parking at Kingston Station, and no pedestrian or bicycle paths between campus and the Station.

The introduction of a real and effective commuter rail system in Rhode Island represents a tremendous opportunity for Rhode Island and the University system in terms of economic growth, workforce mobility, the connecting of business and academic centers, energy efficiency and environmental protection. The University of Rhode Island stands ready to work with state leaders to make this critical vision a reality.

Sincerely,



Christina L. Valentino, Vice President
The University of Rhode Island
Division of Administration and Finance

c: David M. Dooley, President
Kerrie Bennett
J. Vernon Wyman
Thomas Frisbie-Fulton
Marsha Garcia

Ronnie Sirota - Fwd: RI State Rail Plan Draft comment

From: Linsey Callaghan
To: Sirota, Ronnie
Date: 1/24/2014 8:50 AM
Subject: Fwd: RI State Rail Plan Draft comment

Linsey J. Callaghan
Transportation Supervising Planner
Statewide Planning Program
Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
p 401-222-6479

>>> On 1/24/2014 at 8:40 AM, in message <52E22940.37F0.00C1.0@doa.ri.gov>, Karen Scott wrote:

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
401-222-4411 - Phone
401-222-2083 - Fax

>>> Edward Chomka <chomkae@suttonschools.net> 1/23/2014 8:08 PM >>>
Hi,

Re: RI State Rail Plan Draft pages 6-11 though 6-17

I appreciate the efforts you are making to expand commuter rail service in Rhode Island. My main comment would be to expand service into Massachusetts sooner rather than later, with the focus on increasing passenger traffic at TF Green Airport.

For example, the current proposals include possible commuter rail service to Woonsocket, but that same rail line extends well past Worcester. The Worcester Airport might presently have one airline providing some air service, but that airport has constantly struggled to support regular service. Many people I've spoken to who live in the Worcester area prefer flying from Warwick instead of Boston. The infrastructure in Warwick would now support increased traffic arriving by rail.

If an experimental commuter service from Worcester to Warwick proved successful, then I would also explore doing the same thing with Fall River and New Bedford. There is a large untapped population who would fly out of TF Green if given easy mass transit options to and from the airport.

Thanks for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Ed Chomka

Please be advised that the Attorney General has ruled that communication via electronic mail in the public domain is not confidential and is considered a matter of public record. Furthermore, all communications (including this one) will be retained for 10 years.

FRIENDS OF THE WILLIAM C. O'NEILL SOUTH COUNTY BIKE PATH
481 POST ROAD
WAKEFIELD, RHODE ISLAND 02879
401-783-8886 email bobvotava@mac.com

January 20, 2014

To: The Rhode Island Committee For Rail Improvements
From: Bob Votava, Chairman FSCBP

With the growing use of passenger rail, both Amtrak and commuter systems, cyclists are are growing component of need. Nationwide, most commuter trains have provisions for bikes. Amtrak must meet the need of cyclists.

Amtrak must equip it's cars, either retrofit existing trains or equip new cars as they are produced.

At one time on the east coast, Amtrak ran a baggage car in the evening and bikes were allowed on this particular train. The East Coast Greenway Alliance worked diligently with Amtrak to obtain this provision. The baggage car is no longer used on Amtrak.

Since the typical space for bikes is combined with space for wheel chairs, the space is already defined on all Amtrak trains. No seating is lost.

Please contact our elected officials to implement this accommodation for bikers.

Thank you.

Linsey Callaghan - Re: FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

From: Karen Scott
To: Millar, Scott
Date: 1/10/2014 2:20 PM
Subject: Re: FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan
CC: Callaghan, Linsey

Thanks for the feedback Scott -

I will be sure we address these issues as part of the public hearing report.

Thanks -
Karen

Karen Scott
Assistant Chief
Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
401-222-4411 - Phone
401-222-2083 - Fax

>>> "Scott Millar" <scott.millar@DEM.RI.GOV> 1/10/2014 2:14 PM >>>

Hi Karen,

I reviewed the rail plan and thought it was well done. I received some comments on the rail plan that I wanted to pass along to you. (see below) If I receive anything further from DEM staff I'll let you know

Thanks

Scott

From: James Ball
Sent: Friday, January 10, 2014 1:53 PM
To: Scott Millar
Subject: FW: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Scott,

I looked at the RI State Rail Plan, Section 8, Rail Safety and Security. The information in the Section looks



accurate. The only concerns I would have are as follows:

1 The rail companies like P&W no longer have their own in-house hazmat teams so they would require assistance from an outside contractor. It would be valuable information to know how long it would take for their contractor to get to the scene and what are the capabilities of their contractors.

2. The other concern would be with the security at the rail car sidings where rail cars are left unattended overnight or for longer periods of time. These rail cars could potentially be vandalized causing the release of chemicals to the environment and impacting public safety.

I hope this information it helpful.

Jim

James Ball

Emergency Response Administrator

RIDEM

Office of Emergency Response

235 Promenade Street, Suite 438

Providence, RI 02908

Phone: 401-222-1360 ext. 7129

Fax: 401-222-1025

From: Rayna Maguire
Sent: Thursday, January 02, 2014 9:56 AM
Subject: Rhode Island State Rail Plan

Please see below – if you have any comments, please forward them to Scott Millar.

Thank you.

~ **Rayna**
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