

Mobility Innovation Working Group

Meeting Minutes for October 22, 2020, 4:30 PM-6:30 PM

Attendees: Colleen Quinn (Governor's Office), Katja Hamler (Governor's Office), Nicole Verdi (Governor's Office), Joseph Masino (Governor's Office), Wayne Weikel (Alliance for Automotive Innovation), Carrie Gill (Office of Energy Resources), Hank Webster (Acadia Center), John Flaherty (Grow Smart RI), John McCoy (Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance), Linda George (Division of Public Utilities and Carriers), Lloyd Albert (AAA Northeast), Meghan McGuinness (National Grid), Meredith Brady (Division of Statewide Planning), Rachel Calabro (Department of Health), Pamela Cotter (Department of Transportation), Terry Gray (Department of Environmental Management), Scott Avedisian (Rhode Island Public Transit Authority), Greg Nordin (Rhode Island Public Transit Authority), Ashley Brown (Spin), Amelia Rose (Ground Work Rhode Island), Stephen Silveira (Consultant Team), Eric Weis (Cogent, Consultant Team), Holly Parker (Less Road Traveled, Consultant Team), Kevin Tedesco (AECOM, Consultant Team), Allison Velleca (AECOM, Consultant Team), Jay Duncan (AECOM, Consultant Team), Stephen Gazillo (AECOM, Consultant Team)

1. Colleen Quinn (Chair of Mobility Innovation Working Group) welcomed everyone to the Public Comment Meeting and explained that the meeting presents an opportunity for members of the public and Working Group to provide input on the development of the Mobility Strategy and the underlying priorities.
2. Public Comment
 - a) Kristine Keeney (East Coast Greenway Alliance)
 - The transportation system is made up of multiple modes and biking and walking should be considered equally with other modes. Active transportation is much more affordable than other modes. Investment in active transportation infrastructure is a fraction of other modes. Policy changes alone can make a big impact. Folks with mobility challenges can and should be accommodated.
 - b) Karen Glitman (Center for Sustainable Energy)
 - Point of sale electric vehicle (EV) incentives which promote affordability; auto dealer incentives; EV infrastructure program is needed to support EVs; marketing, education and outreach; data collection (inform program changes and track outcomes); and transparency (dashboard to display how funds are being spent).
 - c) Mal Skowron (Green Energy Consumers Alliance)
 - Drive Green program: Has helped hundreds of people transition to EVs; up front rebates are essential to making vehicles affordable to lower income people.
 - Rhode Island should accelerate the transition of state fleet to EVs; equity should be priority for electrification strategy; align EV goals with active transportation and transit (rebate for electric bikes and electrify transit vehicles); make sure that state regulators and quasi-public agencies are aligned with electrification goals.

- d) Scott Miller (Charge Point)
 - There aren't a lot of incentives for private or municipal entities to install fleets. The state should also investigate supporting depots in which multiple entities that are geographically close share maintenance/charging space.
- e) Ben Mandel (CALSTART)
 - Need to reign in diesel emissions that have a disparate impact on low income communities and communities of color. Number of models of zero emission vehicles is expanding rapidly. Rhode Island should consider adopting CA Clean Trucks Policy.
- f) Zach Kahn (Tesla)
 - Provide incentives for only fully zero emission vehicles; apply vouchers to sales, leases, and used vehicles; provide incentives to low- and moderate-income group; adopt sales tax incentive; adopt CA Clean Truck Regulation; use clean diesel funds on zero emission vehicles; utility rate reform needed in Rhode Island.
- g) Julia Gold (National Grid)
 - National Grid has a charging infrastructure program (Charging Station Demonstration Program), Fleet Advisory Services (universities, transit providers) and Smart Charge Off-Peak Charging Rebate Program (working with customers to incentivize off-peak charging).
 - It is critical that RI address transportation needs and changes holistically; cross sector collaboration is important; and infrastructure needs to be supported.
- h) Kathleen Gannon (Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition)
 - Active transportation must be considered by this group; EVs are important but supporting mode shift to bikes is quicker than EV transition. Building bike infrastructure piecemeal does not have as significant an impact as building a whole network; Paris has seen 50% in bike use in a year due to investment in bike infrastructure. Even a small shift from car to bike use makes a huge impact in GHG emissions. RI should have a mosaic of solutions (along with EVs).
- i) Bari Freeman (Bike Newport)
 - Biking offers low costs and high returns. The objective of the Mobility Innovation Working Group is to build statewide mobility strategy that reduces emissions and creates affordable alternatives—biking accomplishes both. Rhode Island travel is largely shorter distances that could be traveled by bike. Bike facilities bring economic investment to the state. Recently completed statewide survey (administered by Bike Newport) regarding biking data should be available soon.
- j) Paul Marshall
 - Rhode Island needs to shift capital and infrastructure towards sustainability and focus on what is attainable. Priorities should be public transit investment and active transportation infrastructure—encourage mode shift from single occupancy vehicles by disincentivizing cars.

k) Lilly Picchione (Transportation Planner)

- Bicycle and pedestrian improvement should be top priority followed by transit and land use policy (facilitates active transportation and TDM); all reduce vehicle miles traveled and support equity and reduce vehicle emissions. Public messaging should be more of a focus. Climate change is a public health threat and should be presented as such.

l) Albert Dahlberg

- Need to turn EVs from grid liability to a grid asset. How? Rate reform; smart charge program is not enough but a step in the right direction; create conditions for vehicle to grid (VTG) technology; using EVs as a storage asset. Equity has been a clean transportation issue historically; should be equitable access to benefits of electrification; diesel freight is very problematic and addressing pollution in disadvantaged communities can be very effective.

m) Amelia Rose (Groundwork Rhode Island)

- Youth employment program (Green Team): Inventoried non-working walk lights—felt pedestrian infrastructure was generally unsafe; there should be shade at bus stops—better amenities to get people to use the bus; public education campaign would be an effective way to address climate change.

3. Working Group Member Presentations

a) Meredith Brady (Associate Director, Division of Statewide Planning)

- Presented information on Long Range Transportation Plan: Soliciting public comments for plan until 11/9/20.
- Need to balance all the needs of the system because all modes are not available to everyone and there should be clean transportation options for everyone.
- There are plans for other modes that are folded into LRTP (Transit Master Plan, Bicycle Mobility Plan, Congestion Management Plan).
- Information is available at <http://www.planri.com/>

b) Hank Webster (Acadia Center)

- RI should prioritize investments in disadvantaged communities; establish Community Advisory Boards with real authority; prioritize transit and activity mobility before other investments.
- Rhode Island isn't transitioning to EVs as quickly as other states, should put programs in place used by other states; expand charging stations; school buses could be used as battery storage during summer; electrify ports and airports; prioritize clean transportation workforce development; and consider additional investment opportunities (like broadband expansion).

c) Linda George (Administrator, Division of Public Utilities and Carriers)

- As ratepayer advocate, the DPUC is well-versed in the challenges and opportunities surrounding utilities mandate to provide safe and reliable service but also the obligation to ensure that the costs of that service are just and reasonable.
- Will work with National Grid and all stakeholders on a framework to develop a successor electric transportation program- will include lessons learned from National Grid's

evaluation report. Any proposed successor plan will require PUC approval should consider incentives, infrastructure, analysis of costs and benefits, and the impacts of COVID-19 on current and successor programs.

- Looking for people to participate in ratepayer advisory board which provides a forum at the Division to discuss state energy policies, laws and regulations and energy justice issues.

4. Closing Remarks

- Colleen thanked everyone for tuning in and providing valuable input.
- Katja Hamler (Governor's Office) encouraged members of the public to send additional written comment, by e-mail, to Katja (katja.hamler@governor.ri.gov) and Colleen (colleenquin@gmail.com).