

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room

Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Price Armstrong	Sr. Transit Analyst, PVTA	Wayne Feiden	Northampton Planning
Glenn Barrington	University of Massachusetts	Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Kate Bavelock	Commun. Engage. Specialist - CDC	Jeff Hoynoski	MassDOT District 2
Mike Bolduc	MassDOT District 2	Betsy Johnson	Walk/Bike Springfield
Gary Briere	MassBike	Derek Krevat	Transportation Planner, MassDOT
Dan Call	Westfield Columbia Rail Trail	Nick LaPoint	Fuss & O'Neill Inc.
Matt Chase	VHB	Mike McManus	Superintendent, Holyoke DPW
Michelle Chase	Town Engineer, Agawam	Dan Murphy	City of Easthampton
Mark Cressotti	City Engineer, Westfield	Danny Rebelo	Sr. Proj. Engineer, Beta Group, Inc.
Jim Czach	West Springfield DPW	Doug Roberts	Superintendent, Granville DPW
Hector Velez	Engineer, Springfield DPW	Matt Smith	Highway Superintendent, Chesterfield
Nick Dines	Town of Williamsburg	Marvin Ward	MassBike Easthampton
PVPC Staff			
Rana Al-Jammal	Senior Transportation Planner	Jeff McCollough	Sr. Transportation Planner
Patrick Beaudry	Mgr. of Public Affairs	Brian Pigeon	Transit Planner Specialist
Amir Kouzehkanani	Principal Transportation Planner	Dana Roscoe	Principal Planner
Andy McCaul	Senior Transportation Planner	Gary Roux	Principal Planner
		Louise Sullivan	Admin Support

1. Introductory Remarks

Jim Czach opened the JTC meeting at 10:20 a.m. and he asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Czach asked for a motion to approve the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) minutes of the October 10, 2018 meeting.

MOVED BY MARVIN WARD OF MASSBIKE EASTHAMPTON, SECONDED BY MARK CRESSOTTI OF THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 10, 2018 MEETING. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

Mr. Czach then moved to take up agenda item 3.

3. Safe Routes to School Project Development – Update

Mr. Czach introduced Derek Krevat, MassDOT Transportation Planner, who stated that going forward he is replacing Gabe Sherman as Project Manager for the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP). Mr. Krevat commented that Cassandra Gascon Bligh presented an overview of the *Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)* at the October MPO meeting and today he will be providing an update. Mr. Krevat stated that SRTS is a federally funded program that was established in 2005 as part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Mr. Krevat explained that the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program works with schools, communities, students, and families in Massachusetts to encourage safety while elementary and middle school students are walking or biking to school. Mr. Krevat explained that infrastructure project funding for the SRTS Program is mostly comprised of larger projects with costs ranging from \$100,000 to a million dollars. He stated that there is a new online application for the SRTS program that uses the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT) software. MaPIT will sketch the SRTS projects and do the geoprocessing. Mr. Krevat stated that the application period begins on November 1st and will be open for 45 days. He explained that a SRTS Selection Committee will review the project and after a competitive process, the chosen municipality and school will fill out the application forms. Mr. Krevat indicated that for a school to be eligible for SRTS funding, it must partner with the SRTS program for at least six months and demonstrate commitment to the program. He added that a MassDOT consultant will be available to assist applicants from municipalities with their applications. Mr. Krevat explained that sidewalk improvements, pedestrian crossings including painted lines and bicycle facilities are eligible for funding but pavement maintenance, school bus improvements and vehicle travel lane improvements are not eligible.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. Krevat for his update then he moved on to agenda item 4.

4. 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects

PVPC Senior Planner Andy McCaul called the JTC members attention to the document entitled *2019 Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Improvement Program*. Mr. McCaul noted that there are six communities that have TIP projects on this list: Springfield, Agawam, Belchertown, Ware, Holland, and Worthington along with a PVTA P21 Express project. Mr. McCaul underscored that those JTC members whose municipalities appear on this list will be contacted and asked for a project update. He stressed that the necessary due diligence be done so that these projects can be advertised for funding in fiscal year 2019.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. McCaul for his presentation and he moved on to agenda item #5.

5. 2020 Regional Transportation Plan – Infrastructure Focus Group

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux stated that initiating the update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) requires a conversation delineating what the plan is about and why it's important. Mr. Roux told the JTC members that their vision of the needs, goals and strategies of the RTP as they relate to infrastructure is needed in preparation for the RTP update. Mr. Roux explained that today the Infrastructure Focus Group is convening along with the monthly JTC meeting and in early December, a Transit Focus Group and an Environmental and Sustainability Focus Group will meet.

Mr. Roux stated that freight providers in the region will be contacted in order to receive their feedback on their needs. He added that federal law requires that a conforming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) be developed and

published every four years. Mr. Roux underscored that Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects that do not originate from a conforming RTP cannot be considered for the TIP. Mr. Roux underscored that the RTP is the overarching document not only for the TIP but also for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He added that ideally the RTP advances transportation planning for the region for the next 20 years.

Mr. Roux explained that the RTP outlines the direction of transportation planning and improvements for the Pioneer Valley through the year 2040. It provides the basis for all state and federally funded Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects and planning studies. Mr. Roux stated that the draft 2020 will be an update to the current RTP which was last published in 2016. Mr. Roux then showed a short video in which several people were asked 3 questions. These 3 questions will be posted on the PVPC.org website and a hyperlink to the questions will be sent out in order to obtain responses from a larger group of people.

1. What is regional transportation?
2. Given a list of 4-5 projects, which is the most important to you?
3. What is your preferred mode of transportation?

Responses given by the individuals interviewed in the video consisted of the following:

- A new Massachusetts turnpike exit should be constructed between Exits 2 and 3
- Adequate funding is needed for the regional transit system
- Improved connectivity and amenities are needed for both bicyclists and pedestrians
- Adequate funding is needed for the maintenance of roadways
- The TIP process is too long and cumbersome
- Enhance passenger options of connecting Springfield to Boston

Mr. Roux stated that the RTP vision statement, RTP goals, long-term, infrastructure needs and how to develop strategies to meet those needs will be discussed in the RTP focus groups.

Mr. McCall called the attention of the JTC members to the handouts entitled *Infrastructure Needs, Infrastructure Strategies, Problem Statements and Infrastructure Focus Group Comment Sheet*. Mr. McCall stated that today the Infrastructure Focus Group is being held commensurate with the JTC meeting and it will be followed by a Transit Focus Group and an Environmental Focus Group to be held in December. Mr. McCall underscored that comments on the RTP especially comments on the needs and the strategies to address those needs are being requested along with participation in the focus groups. The comments received and all the information obtained from the focus groups will be compiled, he said. Mr. McCall asked that all comments be submitted by November 30th.

Mr. McCall indicated that the RTP is a four-year plan required by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) that identifies existing needs and future needs. He explained that the RTP is financially constrained; demonstrates air quality conformity; includes construction projects and planning studies; and must cover a minimum of 20 years. He added that the RTP was last updated in July 2015 and needs to be endorsed by 2019.

Mr. McCall read the RTP Vision Statement as follows:

The Pioneer Valley region strives to create and maintain a safe, dependable, environmentally sound and equitable transportation system. We pledge to advance performance based strategies and projects that promote sustainable development, healthy and livable communities, provide for the efficient movement of people and goods and advance the economic vitality of the region.

Mr. McCall read Goal 4: *Coordination – To collaborate the efforts of the general public with local, state and federal planning activities*. Betsy Johnson asked if it's just planning activities or project implementation activities because MassDOT can be working on a bridge project while a local community is doing part of the work on a roadway and there's a gap in between so she said better coordination is needed. Mr. Roux replied that this is a good point because one of the federal goals is to improve project implementation.

Mr. McCall referred the JTC members to the www.pvpc.org website for the remaining nine RTP Goals which are:

- Goal 5 - **Energy Efficient** - *To promote the reduction of energy consumption through demand management techniques and increase the use of energy efficient travel modes.*
- Goal 6. **Cost Effective** - *To provide a transportation system that is cost effective to maintain, improve and operate.*
- Goal 7. **Intermodal** - *To provide access between travel modes for people and goods while maintaining quality and affordability of service.*
- Goal 8. **Multimodal** - *To provide a complete choice of adequate travel options that are accessible to all residents, visitors and businesses.*
- Goal 9. **Economically Productive** - *To maintain a transportation system that promotes and supports economic stability and expansion.*
- Goal 10. **Quality of Life** - *To provide and maintain a transportation system that enhances quality of life and improves the social and economic climate of the region.*
- Goal 11. **Environmental Justice** - *To provide an equitably accessible transportation system that considers the needs of and impacts on low-income, minority, elderly and disabled persons.*
- Goal 12. **Land Use** - *To incorporate the concepts of Sustainable Development in the regional transportation planning process and integrate the recommendations of the current Regional Land Use Plan into transportation improvements.*
- Goal 13. **Climate Change** - *To promote and advance transportation projects that reduce the production of greenhouse gasses, such as CO₂, and advance new energy technologies consistent with the Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan.*

Jeff McCollough asked if in the Goal 11: *Environmental Justice*, “*people of color*” can replace the word, *minority*. Mr. McCaul urged the JTC members to write down any comments they may have regarding the RTP Vision or Goals and he pointed to PowerPoint slide #7, the first of two slides listing the RTP Needs. Mr. McCaul stated that these are the infrastructure needs of the 2016 RTP which are now subject to revision and updating.

Regarding the first need, Need 1. *Reduce the number of fatal and personal injury crashes for both pedestrians and vehicles in the region*, Ms. Johnson commented that the Needs should work from the positive and assets rather than from a negative needs perspective. Mr. McCall made note of Ms. Johnson's comment and then read Need 2: *Improve coordination and information exchange between emergency service providers and transportation agencies*. Mr. McCall asked if this was still relevant or should it be stated differently. Ms. Johnson asked if there are rural areas in the state that can't be reached because of inadequate cellular service. Mr. McCaul replied that this need is not about reaching 911 but how the data is transmitted to the state. Ms. Johnson and Marvin Ward both responded that the meaning of Need 2 is not clear. Mr. McCaul responded that he has marked half of these 23 RTP Needs as needing updating. Dan Murphy asked if this Need is primarily about accessing crash data and Mr. Roux replied that it's more focused on reporting bicycle and pedestrian data.

Mr. McCall then read Need 5: *Reduce the number of roadway departure crashes*. Mr. Ward commented that this doesn't make sense as a separate item, and Ms. Johnson asked for a definition of *roadway departure*. Mr. Roux replied that *roadway departure* will be changed to *lane departure* as terminology is constantly evolving and maybe this Need should be combined with another RTP Need. Mr. Ward replied, "That's a good idea, but we're not the people to do it." Mr. McCall noted that Need 5 is redundant and maybe needs to be merged into Need 1

Mr. McCall asked if the following four needs could be merged:

Need 8: *Increase opportunities for non-motorized transportation use.*

Need 9: *Incorporate traffic calming measures where appropriate.*

Need 10: *Maintain and expand the regional bike network connectivity.*

Need 13: *Provide opportunities for bicycle access to other modes of transport.*

Mr. Ward commented that traffic calming measures belong with safety in eliminating fatal crashes. Ms. Johnson suggested adding a single statement listing the engineering design elements and solutions that improve safety for pedestrians. Mr. McCall then read Need 14: *Incorporate ITS technologies to improve traffic flow on major regional roadways*. Mr. McCall said that with the advancement of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), should these self-driving and assisted driving vehicles be mentioned in this need? Mr. Feiden replied that ITS vehicles should be included. Mr. McCall then read Need 16: *Improve connections between different modes and the highway network*. Mr. McCall stated that this need is already being covered and there being no comments, he moved on to Need 17: *Reduce the regional reliance on trucking for the primary transportation of goods*. Mr. McCall said that this need may be removed because it doesn't mention rail. Ms. Johnson suggested a positive statement but Mr. Ward stated that Need 18 already covers the need. Mr. McCall moved on to Need 21: *Improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system*. Mr. McCall noted that this need expresses the purpose of the entire RTP document and because it's very vague, he proposes to have it removed. Mr. McCall asked the JTC members if anything is being missed. Mr. Czach commented that there should be more mention of the importance of bridge maintenance. Ms. Johnson said lightning isn't mentioned and should be integrated into the overall planning because it's related to bicycle and pedestrian safety. Mr. Ward suggested adding *service to Bradley Airport* to Need 12: *Increase opportunities for enhanced air passenger service in the Pioneer Valley*. Mr. McCall reminded the JTC members to send in their comments, suggestions and changes before the November 30th deadline.

Mr. McCall stated that all 23 RTP Needs listed on the two PowerPoint slides being displayed will need to be addressed in the next 20 years by strategies and he read the first strategy: *Increase the deployment of cameras and other security devices and measures*. Mr. McCaul noted that this refers back to when the University of Massachusetts Amherst used to have cameras set up to provide real time travel information but this no longer exists. Mr. Feiden suggested merging RTP Strategy 17: *Include ITS equipment as part of transit and roadway improvement projects* with Strategy 18: *Support ITS projects to foster deployment of ITS technology*. Mr. McCaul then proposed merging Strategy 9: *Enhance directional and guide signs to/from the regional highway system* with Strategy 13: *Improve directional signage from the national highway network to major freight centers and destinations* which will result in one strategy. Mr. McCall stated that there is a proposal to eliminate Strategy 20: *Expand use of permeable pavements on sidewalks, paths, car-parks, and minor roads* and just retain Strategy 21: *Encourage use of materials such as pervious concrete, porous asphalt, paving stone, brick, tile, and gravel where appropriate and reduce use of concrete and other impervious pavement materials*. Ms. Johnson suggested combining Strategy 7: *Advance and promote the principles of pavement management* with Strategy 23: *Invest in the repair and maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure* but she underscored that painting should be included because painted crosswalks and signs need repainting.

Ms. Bavelock expressed concern about walkability in rural towns and Mr. Czach asked that there be a strategy that advances *Complete Streets* principles. Nick Dines stated that *Complete Streets* turns the equation around and demonstrates how vehicles can accommodate other forms of transport such as bicycles. Mr. Feiden asked that roundabouts and transit be added to Strategy 4: *Improve geometrics and upgrade traffic signal control equipment to improve safety* and Strategy 8: *Conduct parking studies for downtown areas*. Mr. Ward said to also include the implementation of parking areas for bicycles in Strategy 8.

Mr. McCall pointed to the *Problem Statements* PowerPoint slide saying that after the focus groups have been held, these *Problem Statements* will be revisited and all submitted comments and suggestions will be reviewed. Mr. McCall then read a series of RTP problem statements to be considered for inclusion in the 2020 RTP as follows:

- *There are insufficient resources to support the maintenance requirements of the regional transportation system.*
- *Residents desire expanded regional passenger rail service.*
- *There is a need for innovative, cost-effective solutions independent of the regional transit authorities to provide services to rural areas.*
- *A new intermodal facility is necessary to support and enhance ongoing transportation services in the City of Northampton.*
- *Increased and comprehensive resources and policies to improve sustainability in the transportation sector are necessary if the region is to meet its fair share of GHG reductions to comply with the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act.*
- *The regional transportation infrastructure does not sufficiently accommodate the needs of the trucking industry.*
- *The built environment for bicycling and walking is hampered by significant barriers that include; narrow road and bridge cross sections, disjointed off-road trail networks, a lack of sidewalks, and maintenance issues.*

After only a few comments on the *Problem Statements*, Mr. McCall moved on to the last PowerPoint slide entitled *What's Next?* Mr. McCall stated that the milestones and completion dates are shown in the table below. Mr. McCall once again asked the JTC members to send in their comments and suggestions regarding the update to the 2020 RTP.

Mr. Czach thanked everyone for coming and indicated that Mr. Roux will be emailing information about the other upcoming focus groups.

Milestone	Completion Date
Focus Groups	November-December 2018
RTP Vision and Goals	December 2018
Existing Conditions	January 2019
Performance Measures	February 2019
Future Forecasts	March 2019
Needs, Strategies and Projects	March 2019
Environmental Consultation	End of March 2019
Draft RTP Problem Statements	March 2019
Financial Plan/Conformity/EJ	April 2019
Final RTP Problem Statements	April 2019
Draft RTP	May 2019
30 day Public Comment	June/July 2019
Plan Endorsement	By July 23, 2019

7. Other Business

Ms. Johnson announced that the first meeting of different local pedestrian advocacy organizations will be held on December 1st from 10 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

10. Adjourn

MOVED BY MARVIN WARD OF MASSBIKE EASTHAMPTON, SECONDED BY DAN MURPHY OF THE CITY OF EASTHAMPTON TO ADJOURN THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING AT 11:46 A.M. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

Relevant Documents Distributed at this November 14, 2018 JTC Meeting:

- *Joint Transportation Committee November 14, 2018 Meeting Agenda*
- *Minutes of the October 10, 2018 Joint Transportation Committee Meeting*
- *2019 Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Improvement Program*
- *Infrastructure Needs*
- *Infrastructure Strategies*
- *Transportation Infrastructure Focus Group*
- *Problem Statements*
- *RTP Vision Statement (Current)*