

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room

Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Glenn Barrington	General Mgr., Transportation Services	Jeff Hoynoski	MassDOT District 2
Mike Bolduc	MassDOT District 2	Betsy Johnson	Walk/Bike Springfield
Randy Brown	Southwick DPW	Van Kacoyannakis	Civil Engineer, VHB
Paul Burns-Johnson	PVTA Manager-Planning & Analysis	Derek Krevat	Transportation Planner, MassDOT
Dan Call	Westfield Columbia Rail Trail	Andy Krar	Town Engineer, Springfield
Mark Cressotti	City Engineer, Westfield	Nick LaPoint	Fuss & O'Neill
Jim Czach	West Springfield DPW	Mike McManus	Superintendent, Holyoke DPW
David Desrosiers	Highway Superintendent, Granby	Dan Murphy	City of Easthampton
Nick Dines	Town of Williamsburg	Doug Roberts	Superintendent, Granville DPW
Michael Dionne	MCB Construction	Charley Rose	Selectboard - Worthington
Wayne Feiden	Northampton Planning	Jason Skeels	Town Engineer, Amherst
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1	Matt Smith	Highway Superintendent, Chesterfield
Will Glebus	MassDOT District 1, Bike/Ped Co	Marvin Ward	MassBike Easthampton
PVPC Staff			
Rana Al-Jammal	Senior Transportation Planner	Dana Roscoe	Principal Planner
Andy McCaul	Senior Transportation Planner	Louise Sullivan	Admin Support
Jeff McCollough	Senior Transportation Planner		

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 June 12, 2019 meeting.

MOVED BY DAVID DESROSIERS OF THE TOWN OF GRANBY, SECONDED BY MARK CRESSOTTI OF THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING MINUTES OF THE JUNE 12, 2019 MEETING. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

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

3. 2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul referenced the handout document entitled *FFY 2019 TIP Project Status – September 2019* saying that the two projects highlighted in yellow will be advertised this week, namely:

Project ID	Municipality	Project
607474	Granby – South Hadley	Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 202
606555	Northampton	Roundabout Construction at Intersection Routes 5/10 (North King Street) and Hatfield Street

Mr. McCaul commented that he noticed that work has begun on the Huntington-Systematic Bridge Maintenance (#608928) project and he added that the Granby-South Hadley and the Northampton projects will be monitored. Mr. McCaul stated that all the target projects have been advertised. Mr. McCaul then referenced the document entitled *2020 Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Improvement Program* and he noted that some of the projects listed still need work. Mr. McCaul underscored that MassDOT's goal is to have transportation projects advertised in the first two quarters of the year. Mr. McCaul emphasized that JTC members whose TIP projects haven't been advertised by October 1st will be receiving a call.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. McCaul and he moved on to agenda item #4.

4. Valley Flyer – Expanded Rail Service for the Pioneer Valley

VVPC Principal Transportation Planner Dana Roscoe indicated the new schedule for the Valley Flyer which is being distributed at today's meeting. Mr. Roscoe reported that the Valley Flyer is having a soft launch on August 30th because some track work needs to be done. He explained that it would have been confusing to have a formal launch of the new rail service and then have to shut it down until the necessary work was completed. Mr. Roscoe said he anticipates a formal opening for the Valley Flyer sometime in the next month. Mr. Roscoe further reported that the first train left Greenfield today at 5:45 a.m. and there are four new trains a day going north and south between Greenfield and Springfield: two morning southbound trains and two evening northbound trains. Mr. Roscoe underscored that it is now possible to leave Greenfield or Northampton in the morning and be in New York City by 10:20 a.m. Then leave New York City at 6 or 7 p.m. and be back in Greenfield or Northampton on the same day. Prior to this, he said, there was one Amtrak train, the Vermonter, per day and that train continues to operate in the middle of the day. Mr. Roscoe emphasized that these additional four trips greatly expand options for using passenger rail service. He reported that MassDOT has established a goal of 24,000 new annual riders for this new service. Mr. Roscoe underscored that this passenger rail service will be provided until the fall of 2021 on a pilot basis but if the goal isn't met, the service will be discontinued.

Glenn Barrington asked about long-term parking for the passenger rail in Northampton, and Mr. Roscoe recommended parking in the Northampton Union Station garage because that state doesn't own the parking lot. Jeff McCollough asked about a discount code for the passenger rail service, and Mr. Roscoe replied that there is a 25% discount when traveling on the Valley Flyer until October 31, 2019. Betsy Johnson asked if there's been an

update to the East-West Rail study, and Mr. Roscoe replied that the most recent meeting was held a month ago. Mr. Roscoe reported that there were six options rolled out at that meeting. Four of the six options were proposing that there be bus service between Springfield and Pittsfield to which the Berkshire delegation was not receptive. Mr. Roscoe added that Representative William “Smitty” Pignatelli said that anything that didn’t include rail service to Pittsfield was unacceptable. As a result, the consultant is working to whittle the six options down to two or three to be studied in more detail. Ms. Johnson asked about the time frame and Mr. Roscoe responded that there should be a decision by the end of the year.

Marvin Ward asked how the Valley Flyer connects to the Metro-North trains in New Haven. Mr. Roscoe replied that these trains are scheduled to program with the existing Amtrak service to enable cross-platform transfers when you get to New Haven. He explained that a schedule of Metro-North options, in addition to the Amtrak options, should be available by the end of week, and that schedule will be posted in Greenfield, Northampton and Holyoke. Mr. Czach asked if a bike can be brought onboard the Valley Flyer. Mr. Roscoe responded that that bicycles are not allowed onboard the Valley Flyer at this time. However, a bicycle can be brought aboard the CT rail and Metro-North trains and a folding bicycle is allowed onboard the Amtrak trains if a reservation to do so is made in advance.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. Roscoe and he moved on to agenda item #5.

5. Complete Streets Funding Program

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Jeff McCollough explained that the concept inherent in the Complete Streets funding program is to break down barriers for senior citizens and young children. He said that Complete Streets funding is modeled after the Chapter 90 program funding. You do the required work; submit your invoices and you receive reimbursement, he said. Mr. McCollough reported that PVPC staff has been encouraging communities to enroll in the Complete Streets program. He underscored that if JTC members think their community might be interested in the program, they should contact him. Mr. McCollough emphasized that Complete Streets is a great opportunity because it will provide a community with \$400,000 dollars a year for sidewalk, crosswalk or roadway improvements.

Mr. Czach then moved on to agenda item #6

6. Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) – Current Activities

Paul Burns-Johnson, PVTA Operations Director, reported that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) has received grants in state funding for additional bus routes. Mr. Burns-Johnson reported that the PVTA has restored and expanded the P20 express service serving the Holyoke Mall and has added service for the B7 shuttle which now serves the Raymond Jordan Senior Center and the State Street corridor. Mr. Burns-Johnson added that an additional bus has been added to the G1 route to reduce overcrowding.

Mr. Burns-Johnson announced that ridership on the P20 express service has doubled and ridership on the G1 route has increased by 3%. He reported that a public hearing will be held on Monday at noon, September 16th, at Union Station regarding the Loop; and it’s expected that since there is no objection to maintaining this route, it will

become a permanent fixture for downtown Springfield as long as MGM continues to fund it. No fare will be charged for riding the Loop until 2021 when a public hearing will need to be held to discuss its continuance.

Mr. Burns-Johnson said that he doesn't anticipate any significant service reductions with this year's PVTA budget unless service changes need to be made. He stated that there will not be a fare increase this year but it is on the agenda for review in 2021. Mr. Burns-Johnson reported that the PVTA is under review for the 2020 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) which is a federal mandate requiring that a public transportation safety policy be in place for July 20, 2020. Mr. Burns-Johnson explained that this mandate also requires that the PVTA, in collaboration with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and regional authorities, must include the safety information it has in its funding plans for the future.

7. Other Business

Marvin Ward announced that the Pioneer Valley MassBike Chapter will be undertaking the updating of the western Massachusetts Rubel map which hasn't been updated since 1997. The Chapter has two professional photographers that will be collecting data from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and people who are cyclists. Mr. Ward asked that JTC members contact him if they have cyclists in their communities who might know of undocumented cycling routes. Mr. Ward said he will be attending the MassBike Chapter meetings and he will keep the JTC members informed.

Adjourn

Mr. Czach asked if anyone had any other business and there being none, he called for a motion to adjourn.

MOVED BY MIKE MCMANUS OF THE CITY OF HOLYOKE, SECONDED BY PETER FRIERI OF MASSDOT DISTRICT 2 TO ADJOURN THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING AT 10:50 A.M. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES

Relevant Documents Distributed at this June 12, 2019 JTC Meeting:

- *Joint Transportation Committee September 11, 2019 Meeting Agenda*
- *Minutes of the June 12, 2019 Joint Transportation Committee Meeting*
- *Amtrak Valley Flyer – Effective August 30th, 2019*
- *FFY 2019 TIP Project Status – September 2019*
- *2020 Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Improvement Program*
- *Complete Streets Participation Pioneer Valley Region*