

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room

Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

| Name | Affiliation | Name | Affiliation |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Glenn Barrington | UMass | Betsy Johnson | Walk/Bike Springfield |
| Mike Bolduc | MassDOT District 2 | Andy Krar | Town Engineer, Longmeadow |
| Elizabeth Botelho | City of Chicopee | Nick Lapointe | Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. |
| Gary Briere | MassBike | John Morgan | CHA Consulting, Inc. |
| Randy Brown | Southwick DPW | Dan Murphy | City of Easthampton |
| Dan Call | Westfield Columbia Rail Trail | Dawn Nims | Agawam Engineering |
| Matt Chase | VHB | Peg O'Neal | Town of Worthington |
| Michelle Chase | Town Engineer, Agawam | Krystal Oldread | PVTA Mgr. of Operations |
| Jeremy Cigal | City of Westfield | Doug Roberts | Granville DPW Superintend. |
| Jim Czach | West Springfield DPW | Charley Rose | Worthington Selectboard Chair |
| David Desrochers | Granby DPW | Jason Skeels | Amherst |
| Nick Dines | Town of Williamsburg | Matt Sokop | Springfield |
| Wayne Feiden | Northampton Planning | Marvin Ward | MassBike Easthampton |
| Peter Frieri | MassDOT District 1 | Steve Williams | Belchertown |
| Jeff Hoynoski | MassDOT District 2 | | |
| | | | |
| PVPC Staff | | | |
| Amir Kouzehkanani | Principal Transportation Planner | Dana Roscoe | Principal Planner |
| Andy McCaul | Senior Transportation Planner | Gary Roux | Principal Planner |
| Jeff McCollough | Sr. Transportation 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 February 14, 2018.

MOVED BY WAYNE FEIDEN OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, SECONDED BY MATT SOKOP OF THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2018. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES ON BOTH MEASURES.

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

3. 2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Project Update

Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul underscored that if the JTC members have a project for this fiscal year, they need to work with their consultant and their consultant needs to connect with MassDOT to ensure that the project moves forward. Mr. McCaul asked if any of the JTC members or MassDOT attendees had any questions or comments. Steve Williams asked about available funding and Mr. McCaul replied that he has no figures to report at this time but hopefully will have an answer after this month's MPO meeting scheduled for March 27th.

Mr. Williams asked if there was a contingency plan in place if the three TIP projects that MassDOT has deemed high risk aren't ready by October, namely:

- *Westfield – Route 20 Access Improvements on Court Street and Western Avenue, from Llewellyn Drive Easterly to Lloyds Hill Road (Phase 1) (Project 603449)*
- *Holyoke – Resurfacing and Related Work on Heritage Street, Front Street and Dwight Street From Maple Street to the 1st Level Canal (Project 607256)*
- *Holland – Resurfacing and Related Work on Brimfield Road, From the Brimfield/Holland T. L. To Wales Road (Project 604962)*

Principal Planner Dana Roscoe responded that the Holyoke project has right-of-way concerns with a local portion of the project but it's possible that may be eliminated; the Westfield project has potential cost overruns but Westfield officials have been meeting with District 2 officials to discuss possible state funding sources outside of the TIP; there is currently not a solution for cost overruns in the Holland project but the project's overruns may be able to be absorbed through other state funding; thus, all three projects would advance.

Jeremy Cigal of Westfield reported that the Westfield project is progressing very well because it has received 100% right-of-way approval from MassDOT; the 100% submission is going in this week; and Westfield is fine-tuning the cost with MassDOT District 2.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. McCaul for his presentation and he asked Mr. McCaul to present agenda item 4.

4. 2019-2023 TIP Scenario Development

Principal Planner Dana Roscoe called the JTC members attention to the third project listed in the document entitled *Based on FFY2018-2022 TIP*, namely the *Reconstruction of Damon Road, From Route 9 to Route 5, Including Drainage System Repairs and Slope Stabilization at the Norwottuck Rail Trail* in the City of Northampton, Project #608236. Mr. Roscoe reported that MassDOT doesn't have confidence in this project because there are some houses near the I-91 overpass that have to be removed and there are issues involved with demolishing them. However, Mr. Roscoe stated that this project is being proposed to remain on the TIP. Wayne Feiden interjected that Damon Road south is ready and he asked if the project could be split. Mr. Roscoe replied that the only alternative would be to split the project into two independent projects but Jeff Hoynoski replied that MassDOT District 2 prefers to not split the project and keep it as one project. Mr. Roscoe underscored that the hope is that this project will stay on the list.

Mr. Roscoe reported that the *Improvements and Related Work on Routes 202 and 21, from Turkey Hill Road to South Main Street* in Belchertown, Project #608412 is moving forward with no issues.

Mr. Roscoe reported that the following projects are being removed from the FFY 2019 TIP and are being moved into the FFY 2020 TIP:

- *Rehabilitation of Route 5, From I-91 to Main Street in Holyoke and from Elm Street to North Elm Street in West Springfield*, in the Cities of Holyoke and West Springfield, Project #604209
- *Improvements and Related Work on Routes 9 and 116*, in Amherst, Project #608084
- *Intersection Improvements @ Main Street, West Street, North Street, South Street and Church Street* in Ware, Project #607987

Mr. Roscoe explained that the FFY 2020 TIP was already over programmed and now with the above three projects being moved into the FFY 2020 TIP, projects in FFY 2020 will have to be bumped up into FFY 2021, FFY 2022 and FFY 2023. Mr. Roscoe further explained that the FFY 2019 was over programmed by \$10.4 million dollars but with the withdrawal of these three projects, there is now \$7 million dollars available for FFY 2019. Mr. Roscoe added that shortly there would be a discussion about proposing a project in the Town of Worthington, (not listed in the *Based on FFY 2018-2022 TIP* document), for inclusion in the FFY 2019 TIP. Mr. Roscoe asked the Worthington Town Engineer, John Morgan, what the total cost of the Worthington project is and his response was \$16 million dollars.

Michelle Chase spoke about Agawam's \$2.2 million dollar project which is eligible for FFY 2019. Ms. Chase reported that Agawam needs approximately \$500,000 more to fix old drainage pipes in order to improve the drainage area.

Mr. Roscoe reported that MassDOT District 1 stated that the Worthington Project, *Route 143 Reconstruction and Related Work*, Project #606912 can be programmed as two separate projects to reduce its current total cost of \$16 million dollars. The difficulty with that, Mr. Roscoe said, is that if \$6 million dollars is committed to Year 1, then \$10 million dollars is committed to Year 2. However, since Year 2 is already \$10 million dollars over programmed, it will then be \$20 million dollars over programmed. Mr. Roscoe suggested that an agreement be reached on an approach to Year 1 because what remains in Year 2 and what is moved out of Year 2 may determine whether or not to commit to the *Route 143 Reconstruction and Related Work* in Worthington, Project #606912 as a Year 1 project. Mr. McCaul interjected that the Worthington project is the third project listed in the multi-colored document entitled *Draft 2019-2023 Project Universe (March 2018)*. Mr. Roscoe indicated that options are being explored and will be presented to the MPO members at the upcoming March 27th MPO meeting.

Mr. Roscoe stated that another project that is not on the project listing being discussed is a Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) project. Mr. Roscoe explained that \$400,000 was committed to the PVTA last year and once again the PVTA has a \$3.1 million dollar deficit which is resulting in service cuts and fare increases. Mr. Roscoe explained if \$400,000 is committed to the PVTA this year, it would reduce its deficit by almost a half a million dollars. Mr. Roscoe explained that a TIP project needs to have a minimum cost estimate of \$25 million dollars in order to be split and phased in two parts. Therefore, the Worthington project, at a projected cost of \$16,300,000 would need to be broken into two TIP projects with the part broken off given a new project number. Steve Williams asked why the project with a new project number would have to be committed in Year 2. Mr.

Czach replied that the two projects would have to be programmed in consecutive years but Jeff Hoynoski said it would be acceptable to have a year or two between programming the two Worthington projects because Route 143 is comprised of two separate roads so there's a logical break point. Mr. Williams asked if it is possible to permit a brand new Wilbraham project and have it ready for FFY 2020. The Worthington consultant responded that the whole project is in the 75% design phase and working on 100%; the public hearing has been held; the right-of-way (ROW) is straight forward and the permitting will be ready. Mr. McCaul interjected that on TIP day, the JTC members approved the Wilbraham project as a FFY 2019 TIP project.

At this point, Peter Frieri of MassDOT District One arrived and Mr. Roscoe asked Mr. Frieri about phasing the Worthington project and programming part of it in FFY 2019. Mr. Frieri responded that District One would support phasing it. Mr. Roscoe then asked if the PRC evaluates the part of the project broken off and it receives a new project number, would that brand new project be at 75% design already. Mr. Frieri replied that the project itself will have 100% design phase this summer so it will just be a matter of creating two TIP projects out of one. Mr. Frieri stated that the project would be ready for FFY 2019. Then Mr. Roscoe asked if plus or minus \$6 million dollars is programmed in Year 1, would the remainder of the Wilbraham project be ready for Year 2; but if it was ready and couldn't be funded in Year 2, would it jeopardize the other TIP projects to have the Wilbraham project staggered by more than one year. Mr. Frieri replied if the Wilbraham project goes out to bid in FFY 2019, it will take from 6 to 8 months to move from advertising to the Notice to Proceed so even if there's a year between the two Wilbraham projects, it won't be a major issue.

Mr. Roscoe related to Mr. Frieri that District 2 had just asked Wilbraham's consultant, John Morgan, Consultant with CHA Consulting, Inc., for the Town of Wilbraham, what the price point for the two projects would be and if the project were cut into two projects, what would the price of a Year 1 project be and would it be feasible to do a \$6 million dollar Year 1 project. Mr. Frieri replied that he believed a \$6 million dollar project would be feasible. Mr. Roscoe asked Mr. Morgan for his thoughts. Mr. Morgan replied that there is a logical break point between the two roads involved in the Worthington project with one road's cost projected at \$12 million dollars and the other road's projected cost estimated at about \$4 – 4 1/2 million dollars. Mr. Morgan said that the project doesn't have to be broken at that point and that work on the \$4 million dollar portion could be lengthened increasing the estimated cost to \$6 million dollars. Mr. Roscoe indicated that if the lesser cost estimate remains at \$4 1/2 million, \$400,000 will become available and Mr. Czach said that \$10 1/2 million would be left for phase 2 of the Worthington project. Mr. Roscoe underscored that all of this is based on the Northampton advancing its \$10 million dollar project. Mr. Czach asked if options should be considered and Mr. McCaul responded that the JTC will present the Project Universe to the MPO members later this month for discussion.

Mr. Roscoe asked if the JTC members were comfortable with the *Holyoke – West Springfield Rehabilitation of Route 5, From I-91 to Main Street in Holyoke and From Elm Street to North Elm Street in West Springfield*, Project (# 604209) and the *Amherst Improvements & Related Work on Routes 9 & 116* Project (#608084) being committed to FFY 2020. The response was "yes" and Mr. Roscoe stated that no one was present representing the Town of Ware who could address the *Ware Intersection Improvements* Project (#607987). Mr. Hoynoski stated that the Ware project reached the 75% design phase a couple of months ago but there have been some ROW concerns. Mr. Morgan replied that the Ware project can be ready in FFY 2020. Mr. Roscoe moved on to the *Westfield Improvements & Related Work on Route 20, Court Street & Western Avenue, Lloyds Hill Road to High Street/Mill Street Intersection* Project (# 607773). Jeremy Cigal interjected that this project is in good shape for FFY 2020 with no ROW impacts. Mr. Roscoe took a moment to underscore that the obstacle to every TIP project is ROW and these ROW issues have to be resolved.

Mr. Roscoe moved to discuss the *Springfield Intersection Improvements at Berkshire Avenue, Cottage and Harvey Streets* Project (#608718) and Matt Sokop stated that the PVTA is running this rather small project and there's movement on it. The next TIP project to be discussed was the *Springfield Intersection Improvements at Cottage Street, Industry Avenue and Robbins Road* Project (# 608782). Mr. Sokop stated that this was also a PVTA project with Matt Chase of VHB designing it. Mr. Roscoe indicated that the PVTA is moving their facility two blocks from here so almost every PVTA bus will be running through this intersection. Krystal Oldread, PVTA Manager of Operations, reported that the PVTA will be receiving its Certificate of Occupancy in November 2019 and will have most of its operations located in Union Station by July 1, 2020. Mr. Roscoe asked if a signal timing upgrade or improvement would be proposed and Mr. Chase responded that this is question for the PVTA or the City of Springfield.

Elizabeth Botelho reported that the *Chicopee Reconstruction & Related Work on Fuller Road, From Memorial Drive to Shawinigan Drive* Project (# 604434) is doing well and Mr. Roscoe said he was pleased because Mayor Richard Kos of Chicopee is very interested in its completion. Then Mr. Roscoe took up the *Hadley Reconstruction on Route 9, from Middle Street to Maple/South Maple Street* Project (# 605032). Mr. Hoynoski reported that the project is going through some concept changes. Mr. Roscoe replied that the concept changes resulted in a cost reduction. Mr. Roscoe explained that this project's initial cost was in excess of \$21 million dollars which meant it could be programmed over two years but when the project's cost decreased, it could no longer be programmed over multiple years so it can't be programmed for FFY 2020 but it may be a FFY 2021 TIP project.

Mr. Roscoe noted that his presentation encompassed the Project Universe for the next 2 to 3 years. He further noted that the Northampton and Worthington projects are considered wild cards which allow the possibility of 2 scenarios for Year 1. For Year 2, there are more variables, but Mr. Roscoe stated that the projects of the following municipalities will be considered: Holyoke-West Springfield, Amherst, Ware, Westfield, Springfield, Chicopee and possibly Worthington. He stated that the goal is to have one or two scenarios for Year 1 and at least two to three scenarios for Year 2 and Year 3. Mr. Roscoe explained that the scenarios will be presented at the next MPO meeting on March 27th and the MPO members will be asked to vote at their April MPO meeting. At the next JTC meeting, he said, the JTC members will be asked to commit to Year 1 and Year 2 scenarios.

Mr. Williams asked if there was a long term plan to correct the PVTA's deficit. Mr. Roscoe replied that he has been asked to speak on behalf of the PVTA and that Governor Charlie Baker's budget is committing \$80 million dollars to fund all the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) this year despite having promised \$88 million. If in April, the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives support the \$88 million originally promised, the PVTA will become fiscally sound; but the \$88 million wouldn't go into effect until July1, 2018, which will mean that recent cuts in services and fare increases would be in effect for two months before they could be reversed.

Mr. Czach then moved to take up the next agenda item. (the next two agenda items were combined)

5. **FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Safety Study** and
6. **FFY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Development**

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux noted that at the last JTC meeting, there was a discussion about the unspecified safety study included in the current 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Mr. Roux said that at the February JTC meeting, he had asked for a written requests for safety studies from chief elected officials but hasn't received any responses. Mr. Roux stated that an isolated intersection or part of an intersection would be considered for a safety study in the upcoming UPWP especially a location that hasn't been looked at for five plus years and that is not scheduled for any type of improvement. Mr. Roux underscored that if there isn't a request for a safety study at the next JTC meeting in April, there won't be enough time for implementation and he will recommend that the unspecified safety study be removed from the current UPWP and the resources will be utilized for general planning activities. Mr. Czach thanked Mr. Roux for his update and he moved to take up agenda item 7.

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

Krystal Oldread, PVTA Manager of Operations, reported that the PVTA's Cottage Street facility is being constructed and will be ready for occupancy in November of this year. Ms. Oldread announced that PVTA in collaboration with MGM will be providing a fare free circulator bus route service operating Monday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. which will be fully funded by MGM for one year. Ms. Oldread also reported that the PVTA is working on improvements to their bus shelters and eight of the nine public hearings on service cuts and fare increases have been held. Ms. Oldread stated that the PVTA is in the process of mitigating some of the proposals in the northern tier based on comments received at the public hearings because its bus riders, overall, are not happy paying more for less; however, mitigation can't add back services unless additional funding is obtained. Mr. Czach thanked Ms. Oldread for her update and he moved to take up agenda item 8.

8. Other Business

- Bay State Bike Week – May 12 - 20 , 2018

Jeff McCollough, Senior Transportation Planner announced that volunteers are still being sought for bike week and Betsy Johnson announced a bicycle rodeo will be held on Chestnut Street in Springfield across from the Lincoln School on May 19th. Dan Call added that Southwick, Easthampton and Westfield have scheduled events for Bike Week.

- Move April JTC meeting

Mr. Czach announced that the next JTC Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 12th, due to a conflict. There being no other business, called for a motion to adjourn.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Czach called for a motion to adjourn today's JTC meeting at 11:30 a.m.

MOVED BY MATTHEW SOKOP OF THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, SECONDED BY DAVID DESROCHERS OF THE TOWN OF GRANBY, TO ADJOURN THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING AT 11:24 A.M. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

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

- Joint Transportation Committee March 14, 2018 Meeting Agenda
- Minutes of the February 14, 2018 Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
- *Draft 2019-2023 Project Universe (March 2018)*
- *2018 Pioneer Valley Region Transportation Improvement Program*
- *2019 -2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development Schedule*

