

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room

Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

| Name | Affiliation | Name | Affiliation |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Mike Bolduc | MassDOT District 1 | Thomas Morneau | Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. |
| Randy Brown | Southwick DPW | Dan Murphy | Easthampton |
| Dan Call | Westfield Columbia Rail Trail | Dawn Nims | Town of Agawam Engineering |
| Michelle Chase | Town of Agawam Engineering | Jim Reidy | South Hadley |
| Jeremy Cigal | Westfield DPW | Josh Rickman | PVTA |
| Jim Czach | West Springfield DPW | Jason Skeels | Amherst DPW |
| Andrew Krar | Town of Longmeadow | Peter Vancini | Town of Longmeadow |
| Kate Maszeal | MassDOT District 1 | Marvin Ward | MassBike Easthampton |
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| PVPC Staff | | | |
| Rana Al-Jammal | Senior Transportation Planner | Gary Roux | Principal Planner |
| Andy McCaul | Senior Transportation Planner | Louise Sullivan | Admin Support |
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1. Introductory Remarks

Jim Czach opened the JTC meeting at 10:22 a.m. and he asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Mr. Czach asked for a motion to approve the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) minutes of June 14, 2017.

MOVED BY JEREMY CIGAL OF THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, SECONDED BY JIM REIDY OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2017. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

Mr. Czach then moved to take up agenda item 3

3. Update Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting – July 25, 2017

PVPC Senior Planner Andy McCaul explained that at the July 25th MPO meeting, the current 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) were released for the required 21-day public review period. At the next MPO meeting scheduled for August 22nd, Mr. McCaul stated that the MPO members will review the comments received on these two documents and consider them for endorsement. Mr. McCaul added that the proposed TEC scoring changes involving Environmental Justice and Title VI were discussed at the MPO and will be discussed later at today's meeting.

Mr. McCaul reported that PVPC Executive Director, Tim Brennan, presented an update on the current status of passenger rail in the Pioneer Valley region. Mr. Brennan reported that Connecticut should have their new passenger rail service operational in early 2018 with the anticipation that nine trains will be coming into the City of Springfield. The goal of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Mr. McCaul said, will be to extend 4 trains a day (2am and 2pm) north to the Town of Greenfield all trains will stop in Holyoke and Northampton as well.

4. FFY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

PVPC Senior Planner Andy McCaul reported that several TIP projects experienced cost increases as they advanced through the 100% Design stage to the plans specifications and estimates (PS&E) phase. Mr. McCaul announced that the *Improvements to Lower Westfield Road on I-91 (Interchange 15)* (606903) Project in Holyoke had an approximate cost increase of \$600,000 as the cost increased from \$1,704,004 to \$2,337,883. Mr. McCaul also announced that the *Agawam-West Springfield Bridge Replacement, Route 147 Over the Westfield River and Intersection & Signal Improvements at 3 Locations* (605384) Project increased from \$29,349,426 to \$31,866,245 along with a cost increase for the *Chesterfield Bridge Replacement, C-12-009, Ireland Street Over West Branch Bronson Brook* Project (607549) from \$3,341,440 to \$4,015,406. Mr. McCaul said that the TIP projects will continue to be monitored and he encouraged the JTC members to contact him if they had any questions.

Mr. Czach then called on PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to speak about the Transportation Evaluation Criteria.

5. Review Current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux announced that the current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) was discussed at the last MPO meeting held on July 25th and the TEC is currently out for public review. Mr. Roux explained that two documents included in today's handouts: the document entitled *Approved TEC Scoring Summary* (which illustrates the criteria that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) staff has been using to evaluate TIP projects for the past three years) and the document entitled *Proposed TEC Scoring Summary* were distributed at the July 25th MPO meeting. Mr. Roux reported that the most recent federal certification review resulted in the recommendation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that Title VI be incorporated into the TEC scoring. Mr. Roux stated that the last column in the *Approved TEC Scoring Summary* document is entitled *Environmental Justice* and as a result of the recommendation, that column in the *Proposed TEC Scoring Summary* document now reads *Environmental Justice and Title VI*.

Mr. Roux explained that now that Environmental Justice and Title VI scoring has been split in half, instead of a project receiving one point, for example, from Environmental Justice for reducing and limiting disproportionate impacts on an Environmental Justice (EJ) community, now Environmental Justice can receive a ½ point and Title VI can receive a ½ point. Mr. Roux underscored that when TIP projects meet Title VI requirements, they likewise often meet Environmental Justice requirements. Mr. Roux stated that if there's a negative 5 for creating an EJ or Title VI burden, rather than split the negative 5, a -5 will be award for EJ and a -5 will be award for Title VI. Mr. Roux cautioned that if there's any type of discrimination occurring in a TIP project, it might not be wise to advance the project in the TIP because of possible litigation. Mr. Roux stated that the proposed changes to the TEC will be brought before the MPO members at their August 22nd meeting for endorsement. Mr. Roux indicated that the goal is to have the new TEC in place prior to the next scoring of TIP projects in February 2018.

Mr. Czach again called on PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to discuss the next agenda item.

6. Review and Discuss TEC Scoring Trends

Mr. Roux called the JTC members attention to four of today's handouts which were prepared by Mr. McCaul:

- *2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Average Score All Projects*
- *2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Average Score Rural and Urban*
- *2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria Analysis - % Receiving Points Urban vs. Rural*

- *Average Points by Criteria - Urban and Rural*

Mr. Roux referenced the last document listed above, *Average Points by Criteria – Urban and Rural* saying that Mr. McCaul broke down the scoring for each of the 8 overarching criteria shown in the first column by points awarded to projects in rural communities and points awarded to projects in urban communities. Mr. Roux noted that the federal designation of “urban” and “rural” is being used in the TEC. He explained that if a community has a percentage of its area designated as urban, it’s considered “urban.” For example, Mr. Roux said, the Town of Granby is half urban and half rural, and while most people consider it a rural community, it’s considered urban on the TEC because of that federal designation. Mr. Roux explained that the most prominent discrepancy in average points is seen in the *Mobility* and *Smart Growth* TEC categories because of where minority and low income populations are located. Mr. Roux said there are some low income populations in rural areas but there is a larger concentration of them in urban areas.

Mr. Roux asked the JTC members to refer to the document entitled *2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) Average Score All Projects* in order to determine which categories have been receiving a low number or no TEC points. Mr. Roux pointed out that *Health Impact Assessment* within the *Quality of Life* TEC criteria has never had any TEC points awarded for it. Mr. Roux noted that MassDOT had indicated a while back that the *Health Impact Assessment* would play a prominent role in the TEC but this has not been the case because the JTC members’ TIP projects are not likely to require a Health Impact Assessment. Mr. Roux also pointed to *Provides Services to a TOD, TND or Cluster Development District* as having a scarcity of points with its score of 0.04 and *Reduced Impervious Surfaces* with its score of 0.05. As a result, Mr. Roux said it may make sense to reexamine how points are awarded in some of these categories to determine if they need to be redefined.

Mr. Roux then referred to the document entitled *2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria Analysis - % Receiving Points Urban vs. Rural*. Mr. Roux indicated that in the *System Preservation* category, no rural community project in the last three years has received points for *In a Congestion Management Process Area* and this is true also about *Enhances or Preserves Greenways and Blueways* within the *Quality of Life* category which also shows 0% in the *Rural Average* column but shows that 30% of the TIP projects in the urban communities are receiving TEC. Mr. Roux suggested that perhaps some of these categories need reworking. He said that Mr. McCaul will be doing an analysis by type of project and discussion of the TEC will continue at the next JTC meeting. Mr. Roux underscored the importance of achieving a top quality TEC model to ensure the selection of the best TIP projects in the region.

7. Linking TEC to the 10 Planning Factors Included in the Fixing Americas Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

Mr. Roux reported that the most recent federal certification review also resulted in a request from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the Pioneer Valley Transportation Evaluation Criteria be linked to the *10 FAST Act Planning Factors*. Mr. Roux reminded the JTC members of their discussion at the June 14th JTC meeting when they were told that a blank spreadsheet entitled *Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – FAST Act Planning Factors Matrix* would be emailed out to them to use for allocating TEC points for each of the ten Planning Factors. Mr. Roux indicated that no spreadsheets were returned and no comments were received from the JTC members. However, Mr. Roux reported that he and Mr. McCaul were able to link the transportation evaluation criteria to the ten planning factors and thereby satisfy the FHWA’s recommendation.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. Roux for his report

8. JTC Recommendations Regarding the Expansion of JTC Voting Ranks and Representation on the Committee to include a Person or Organization chosen or appointed to act or speak for Pedestrian and/or ADA issues in

the Pioneer Valley Region as Relevant to Transportation Planning and Project Programming Process (as noted in the PVMPO Certification Review)

Mr. Roux reported that at the June 14th JTC meeting, expanding the JTC voting membership to include a member of the pedestrian community and/or a member of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) community was discussed. Mr. Roux indicated that on June 14th, the JTC members proposed to expand the JTC voting membership to include representation from these communities on a trial basis. Based on this, Mr. Roux announced that Jeff McCollough has been soliciting potential nominees, but a list of nominees is not available at this time. Mr. Roux requested that if JTC members wish to nominate someone, they provide Mr. McCollough or Mr. McCaul with the person's name along with a short biography of why the person would be an appropriate addition to the JTC. Staff will continue to update the JTC on potential nominees.

9. Top Crash Locations by Municipality – (Safety Compass)

Mr. Roux called the JTC members attention to the document entitled *Pioneer Valley Safety Compass Status Update*, staff is proposing to call the document the "Safety Compass." Mr. Roux explained that this is a one-page updated summary of the work completed to the Top Crash Locations for each community. Mr. Roux reported that an analysis of 25 of the 43 communities has been completed to date and a more detailed, draft report will be released in September. PVPC will also provide the GIS crash data file to each community on a flash drive.

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

Joshua Rickman, PVTA Director of Operations and Planning, reported that after the elimination of several bus routes, the PVTA will be doing outreach and looking forward to next year in the hope of returning to the same level of funding that was anticipated for this year. Mr. Rickman stated that if the PVTA is underfunded again, there will likely be more service cuts. Mr. Rickman reported progress is being made in the construction of the new Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility on Cottage Street in Springfield with completion expected in the winter of 2019. Mr. Rickman reported that the PVTA is meeting with MGM officials discuss a trolley or an electric bus that will run to and from Union Station to the MGM Springfield Casino.

Mr. Czach commented that more funding is needed for the PVTA because the elimination of bus routes has adversely affected some people who now have to travel four hours to get to their jobs. Mr. Rickman added that the PVTA is one of the most efficient transit authorities and has the most affordable fares in the state and the cut-back in bus routes was driven by the need to address an operating budget deficit.

11. Other Business

Mr. Czach stated that he presented a potential *TIP Development Process Design Scale* at the last JTC meeting in June but no one has submitted any comments. Mr. Czach said that he would ask Mr. McCall to email the design scale out again to the JTC members and if there is no feedback, he will drop his proposal of creating a design scale to assist in determining the design status of a TIP project. Mr. Czach stated that he would appreciate comments in writing and he encouraged anyone who has a question or comment to contact him.

12. Adjourn

Mr. Czach called for a motion to adjourn today's JTC meeting.

MOVED BY JIM REIDY OF THE TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY, SECONDED BY MARVIN WARD OF MASSBIKE, TO ADJOURN THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (JTC) MEETING AT 11:25 A.M. ALL IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED, THE MOTION CARRIES.

Relevant documents distributed at this August 9, 2017 JTC Meeting:

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| Joint Transportation Committee August 9, 2017 Mtg. Agenda | Minutes of the June 14, 2017 Meeting of the JTC |
| Pioneer Valley Safety Compass Status Update | TEC Scoring Approved Scoring Summary |
| TEC Scoring Proposed Scoring Summary | 10 FAST Act Planning Factors |
| 2017 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Proposed Amendments – July 2017 | |
| 2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Average Score All Projects | |
| 2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Average Score Rural and Urban | |
| 2016-2018 Transportation Evaluation Criteria Analysis - % Receiving Points Urban vs. Rural | |
| Average Points by Criteria - Urban and Rural | |