

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 2014
 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
 60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room
 Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Marie Angelides	Longmeadow Select Board	Heather Hannon	MassDOT District 1
Alex Bublik	Northampton DPW	Yem Lip	Longmeadow DPW
Mark Cressotti	City of Westfield	Matt Smith	Chesterfield DPW
Jim Czach	Springfield DPW		
PVPC Staff			
Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Rana Al-Jammal	Sr. Planner Specialist	Andrew McCaul	Transportation Planner
Chris Curtis	Chief Planner/Section Manager	Jeff McCollough	Senior Transportation Planner
Patty Gambarini	Sr. Environmental Planner	Dana Roscoe	Principal Planner
Amir Kouzehkanani	Principal Transportation Planner	Gary Roux	Principal Planner
Dmitriy Mayboroda	Transportation Planner II	Louise Sullivan	Admin Support

1. Introductory Remarks

Jim Czach opened the meeting at 10:25 a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Czach was not able to ask for a motion to approve the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) minutes of November 12, 2014 because there was not a quorum so Mr. Czach tabled the approval of the minutes until the January JTC meeting.

Mr. Czach then asked Principal Planner, Gary Roux, to address agenda item #3.

3. 2016 Update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Mr. Roux announced that two documents were distributed at today’s meeting: an outline entitled *2016 Update: Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation Plan Outline* and an updated vision statement contained on page 1 of the *2016 Update to the Regional Transportation Plan for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization*. Mr. Roux stated that the vision statement was based on staff comments and comments from the focus group meetings which were recently completed. Mr. Roux reported that the two words appearing in bold and underlined below were added to the 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. Roux explained that the PVPC transportation staff members have been working on their specific, existing conditions sections in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and have identified the areas that need to be updated or changed. Mr. Roux stated that the *2016 Updated Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation Plan Outline* reflects these potential updates and changes. Mr. Roux explained that the hope is to have the first 9 chapters of the RTP, which comprise half the RTP, updated in time for the January JTC meeting so that it will be easier to review the content in May when the proposed draft 2016 RTP is ready.

Mr. Roux reported that an automated PowerPoint presentation explaining the RTP and its importance is being created with a target date for review by the JTC members set for January. Mr. Roux stated that the plan is to encourage communities to place the RTP PowerPoint on their community websites and to make it available to local cable access stations. Mr. Roux noted that he would have more information on the development of the 2016 RTP at the next JTC meeting in January.

Mr. Roux indicated that last month the JTC members were asked to prioritize the local and statewide Performance Measures that were discussed at the October and November JTC meetings but the response to this request was poor. Mr. Roux underscored that feedback from the JTC members regarding performance measures is critically important and especially valuable information for use in the evaluation of Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) projects. Mr. Roux urged the JTC members to take the time to rank the performance measures and submit their responses.

Mr. Czach moved on to the next agenda item and introduced PVPC Senior Environmental Planner, Patty Gambarini.

4. Local Green/Complete Street Policies

Ms. Gambarini explained the difference between a *complete street* and a *green street* by saying that a *complete street* is designed to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities, and that a *green street* is designed to limit environmental impacts by reducing the amount of stormwater making its way into combined sewer pipes. A *green street*, Ms. Gambarini said, is a street right-of-way (ROW) that accommodates traffic, pedestrians and bicycles while integrating a system of stormwater management that utilizes trees, porous paving, bioswales and rain gardens. Ms. Gambarini stated that a *sustainable complete street* is a *complete street* that is designed to minimize adverse environmental effects such as drainage and stormwater runoff. Ms. Gambarini added that a *living street* is a street designed primarily for pedestrians and cyclists where there is a lower speed limit so that children are able to play safely.

Ms. Gambarini pointed to a slide in her *Complete and Green Streets* PowerPoint that illustrated the need to balance traffic speed, stormwater drainage and sewers with pedestrian safety, bikes, aesthetic character of roadways and stormwater capture. Her next PowerPoint slide entitled *Anatomy of a Complete Green Street* reflected an 80' right-of-way (ROW) comprised on each side of stormwater planters with trees capturing flow from the roadway, two 11' driving lanes, 6' bike lanes on each side and an 8' parking lane on one side.

Ms. Gambarini noted that the next slide entitled *Streetscape along Blue Island Avenue* (in Chicago) reflects a green street profile that has a more urban setting. She said what is illustrated on this slide is similar to what New York City is trying to achieve, namely, capturing one inch of stormwater all over the city to keep it out of the combined sewer system. Ms. Gambarini noted that the next slide is a page taken from the *Springfield Complete Streets Implementation Guide*. Ms. Gambarini reported that complete street roadway design provides synergy with energy efficiency, waste management, water management, and air quality.

5. EP Storm Water Phase II Regulations

Ms. Gambarini reported that the 2014 Draft Massachusetts Small **MS4**¹ General Permit is currently available for public comment until December 29, 2014. Ms. Gambarini stated that the three of the requirements from the MS4 Stormwater Permit are as follows:

1. No net increased loading to impaired waters (water not meeting water quality standards)
2. Retain the first one inch of stormwater runoff from all impervious surfaces on new and re-developed sites or provide that same level of pollutant removal through biofiltration on the first one inch from all impervious surfaces.
3. Require municipalities to inventory, priority rank and report on MS4 owned properties retrofitted with BMPs (Best Management Practices) designed to reduce frequency, volume, and pollutant loads

Ms. Gambarini also reported that there have been changes made to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Water Management Act Regulations (310CMR 36.00) that were developed during a process called the *Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI)*. Ms. Gambarini indicated that permit renewals are coming up in 2016 for the City of Westfield and in 2017 for the City of Chicopee where modeling has shown that streams in these cities are impacted adversely by ground water withdrawals that have resulted in inappropriate fish populations.

Ms. Gambarini pointed to a map of the United States on her next PowerPoint slide that reflected locations where there has been an increase in downpours based on climates studies that have been done over the past 60 years. She then accessed a short film clip entitled *The Magnificent Bioswales & Stormwater Treatment Along the Indy Cultural Trail* which illustrated how the City of Indianapolis is handling its stormwater runoff at ground level with 8 mile separated biking and walking route loops through the heart of its downtown.

Ms. Gambarini then introduced PVPC Chief Planner, Chris Curtis, who stated that Green Infrastructure (GI) can be achieved in the Pioneer Valley through the following:

- Incremental change, project by project
- Grants and loans for demo projects
- Incentives for GI in transportation projects and review criteria
- Municipal green streets and GI policies
- Regulations to incentivize GI in private development

Mr. Curtis delineated the new criteria that is relevant to Green Infrastructure and sustainable transportation:

- Promotes green infrastructure or LID practices to reduce stormwater impacts
- Reduces impervious surfaces
- Improves storm resilience
- Incorporates stormwater BMPs (Best Management Practices)
- Protects or enhances environmental assets

Mr. Curtis underscored that communities can earn more points and make their proposed transportation projects more competitive by having a project that promotes green infrastructure through reducing stormwater overflow, reducing impervious surfaces, incorporating best management practices and/or enhancing environmental assets.

¹ Polluted stormwater runoff is commonly transported through **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems** (MS4s), from which it is often discharged untreated into local waterbodies.

Mr. Curtis directed the attention of the JTC members to the 2-page document on green paper distributed at today's meeting entitled *City of Northampton* which delineated the City of Northampton's *Green Streets and Infrastructure Policy*. Mr. Curtis summarized this policy by saying:

- Stormwater is the key source of pollution in our waterways
- Green streets can be a cost effective solution in reducing stormwater overflows and flooding
- Improve water quality by filtering stormwater
- Reduce costs for gray infrastructure maintenance
- Create attractive streetscapes to improve livability
- Provide help with MS4 permits
- Promote the use of green streets and infrastructure in:
 - Road reconstruction
 - New road development
 - Stormwater projects
 - New and redevelopment projects

Mr. Curtis reported that the key provisions of the Northampton Green Streets Policy are to:

- •Incorporate **GI**² in all city-funded development, re-development and enhancement projects
- Ensure regulations that require and incentivize GI features in all development
- Promote coordination and communication between city departments regarding implementation

Mr. Curtis concluded his presentation by saying that the PVPC can provide assistance to communities in the implementation of Green Infrastructure by:

- Implementing the new Transportation Review Criteria (TEC) which the MPO may endorse in January 2015
- Providing technical assistance to communities on GI policies and regulations
- Collaborating on grants for GI demo projects

Mr. Curtis concluded his presentation by urging the JTC members to contact him or Ms. Gambarini with any ideas they may have for a Green Infrastructure project in their communities.

6. Other Business

PVPC Transportation Planner Andy McCaul announced that Dave Durocher drafted the document distributed at today's meeting entitled *Objections to Proposed Draft New EPA Storm Phase 2 Regulations* for purposes of discussion and possible action. Because Mr. Durocher was not present, Mr. Czach interjected that community representatives have voiced concern regarding how retaining the "first inch" of rainfall will adversely impact transportation projects. Mr. Czach stated that a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delineating concerns regarding the new stormwater regulations has been suggested but the EPA strongly recommends that proposed solutions accompany the comments which are due to the EPA by December 29th. Mr. Czach indicated that he is going to need help drafting a letter. He suggested emailing a draft letter to the communities in order to solicit their comments on the letter or holding a meeting at the PVPC in which everyone present will cooperatively write a letter. Mark Cressotti suggested copying the local legislators on the letter that ultimately goes out. Mr. Czach stated that he will send an email to Mr. McCall requesting assistance in the drafting of the letter to the EPA and Mr. McCall will contact the JTC members to discover how they wish to proceed.

² Green Infrastructure

7. Adjourn

MOVED BY MATT SMITH OF THE TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD, SECONDED BY MARK CRESSOTTI OF THE CITY OF WESTFIELD, TO ADJOURN THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF DECEMBER 10, 2014.

This JTC meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Relevant documents distributed at this meeting:

- Joint Transportation Committee December 10, 2014 Meeting Agenda
- *Minutes of the November 12, 2014 Joint Transportation Committee Meeting*
- *Draft PVMPO Performance Based Planning and Programming Framework*
- *2016 Update Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation Plan Outline Regional Transportation Plan Outline*
- *Chapter 1 - 2016 Update to the Pioneer Valley Regional Transportation Plan*
- *City of Northampton: Green Streets and Infrastructure Policy*
- *Objections to Proposed Draft EPA Storm Phase 2 Regulations*