

Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2015
 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
 60 Congress Street, 2nd Floor Large Conference Room
 Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Matt Chase	VHB	Laura Hanson	MassDOT District 2
Mark Cressotti	City of Westfield	Connor Knightly	Springfield DPW
Jim Czach	West Springfield DPW	Nick LaPoint	Fuss & O'Neill
David Desrosiers	Granby DPW	Bob Peirent	East Longmeadow DPW
JT Gaucher	Town of Ludlow		
Dick Grannells	Southwick DPW		
PVPC Staff			
Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Amir Kouzehkanani	Principal Transportation Planner	Dana Roscoe	Principal Planner
Jeff McCollough	Senior Transportation Planner	Gary Roux	Principal Planner
		Louise Sullivan	Admin Support

1. Introductory Remarks

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

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Czach was not able to request a motion to approve the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) minutes of the previous meeting held on July 8, 2015 because there was not a quorum present at today's meeting.

3. New Pioneer Valley Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – Timeline and Checklist

Jeff McCollough, PVPC Senior Transportation Planner, explained that the PVPC will be revamping its Public Participation Plan (PPP) which establishes the process for public involvement in and awareness of the planning and programming activities of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. Mr. McCollough underscored that the PPP affects every endeavor in the PVPC Transportation Department including all the communities' current transportation projects and it is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). He indicated that the changes to the PPP over the next few months will be "sudden and dramatic" and he called the attention of the JTC members to the document distributed at today's meeting entitled *PVMPO/PVTA Title VI and LEP Public Participation Checklist*. Mr. McCollough stated that a survey would be placed online on the PVPC website to elicit information from communities regarding their interactions with the PVPC transportation staff and to identify potential barriers to inclusive participation.

Mr. McCollough reported that a newly updated database is being used to involve more stakeholders and community organizations in this revision of the PPP along with greater outreach to those community members who speak a different language. Mr. McCollough stated that the PVPC staff is receiving assistance from MassDOT lawyers and is referencing MassDOT's revised Public Participation Plan which was submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on June 20, 2014 and also MassDOT's current draft revision of it. Mr. McCollough indicated that the PVPC's revised PPP will be presented to the MPO on October 29th and the hope is to have it adopted by the end of this year with public endorsement in January 2016.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. McCollough for his presentation and asked PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to address agenda item #4

4. Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)

Mr. Roux reported that the Pioneer Valley Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) has been out for public review and that the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) members approved the JTC members' recommendation that the unassigned Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) point be awarded for documenting health benefits derived from a transportation project using *HEAT*, a Health Economic Assessment software program. Mr. Roux stated that concern regarding the suitability of HEAT was expressed at the last JTC meeting because HEAT hasn't yet been retrofitted for use in the United States and because it only assesses walking and bicycling activities at this time. Furthermore, Mr. Roux noted that in order to use it to assess walking and bicycling, the number of people walking and/or bicycling needs to be identified along with the projected number of lives that could be saved through these two activities. However, Mr. Roux said using the HEAT assessment tool is problematic because the data will be based on European statistics. For that reason, Mr. Roux said that he is hesitant to recommend the use of HEAT in the proposed TEC because using will mean more work for the communities, it will be difficult to police and because it may never be retrofitted for assessment in the United States.

Mr. Roux called the JTC members' attention to print outs of the slides of an informative PowerPoint about HEAT, to the document entitled *Proposed TEC Scoring Changes*, and to the document entitled *HEAT Estimate* which delineates the economic value of cycling and its benefit-cost ratio. Mr. Roux asked the JTC members to review these documents and think about what they might recommend regarding the assignment of the extra point in the TEC. A short discussion then ensued in which Dick Grannells, David Desrosiers and Mark Cressotti made suggestions. Mr. Roux indicated that he will email these suggestions to all the JTC members and Dana Roscoe stated that the TEC agenda item will be retained and will appear on next month's JTC meeting agenda.

Mr. Czach thanked Mr. Roux for his presentation and asked him to address agenda item #5

5. Regional Freight Plan – Discussion

Mr. Roux explained that there's always been a Pioneer Valley Regional Freight Plan as a part of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) but it needs to be enhanced. Mr. Roux said that new thoughts are needed regarding the long-term movement of goods in the region. He explained that MassDOT is beginning to update the Massachusetts State Freight Plan by documenting the necessary major improvements that need to be made to the I-91 Viaduct, problematic bridges, underpasses and other major roads. Mr. Roux explained that because we don't receive input from the trucking industry, a survey is being created for independent truckers to obtain information regarding the need for more truck stops and rest areas in addition to the everyday problems and challenges the truckers face. He added that a steering committee needs to be established that can begin work in

October or November and he asked the JTC members for recommendations and suggestions that could be included in its development.

A brief discussion then ensued in which freight companies and distribution centers were named and the question of how to get the right people involved was discussed. Mr. Czach asked the JTC members to forward their ideas, comments and any pertinent information to Mr. Roux.

Mr. Czach called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to address agenda item #6.

6. Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Mr. Roscoe reported that two important action items at the MPO meeting on July 28th were the FYY 2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the FFY 2016 – 2019 TIP. Mr. Roscoe explained that the orphan section of Boston Road in Wilbraham (project ID #607869) that had originally been programmed in the FFY 2015 TIP could not advance and the Hadley Route 9 Sidewalk Project (project ID #608023) was chosen in its place to fill the funding gap but the Hadley project couldn't advance due to right-of-way issues which left unallocated funding; however, due to cost increases in the Springfield-North End at Brightwood Project (Project ID #605222) and in the Hadley Intersection Improvements Project (Project ID #604035), along with the removal of the Hadley-Route 9 Project (Project ID #608023), a balance of \$887,221 in unallocated funding was flexed to the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) for the purchase of electric buses.

Mr. Roscoe explained that the Pioneer Valley MPO and the PVPC will receive \$20 million dollars a year for the next four years and that not all of that \$20 million has been programmed so there are funding opportunities for projects that can move through the transportation planning process in the next few years. Mr. Czach interjected that it may be advantageous for communities to have their transportation projects ready either as TIP projects, as municipal Chapter 90 projects or as municipal bonded projects.

Mr. Czach called on PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to address agenda item #7

7. Final 2016 Update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Mr. Roux announced that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was endorsed at the last MPO meeting held on July 28th and it is now finalized and available for download along with the RTP Executive Summary on the www.pvpc.org website. Mr. Roux added that the RTP is up-to-date and it incorporates all the comments that were received during the public review periods and public meetings.

Mr. Czach the called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to address agenda item #8.

8. PVMPO Federal Certification Review has been scheduled for October 28 and 29, 2015 at PVPC

Mr. Roscoe explained that every three years, representatives of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) come to the PVPC and review everything to make sure that the PVPC is abiding by all the mandated federal requirements. Mr. Roscoe stated that the FHWA and FTA representatives will be at the PVPC on October 28th and 29th and as part of their review, they've requested that a MPO meeting be scheduled for October 29th. Mr. Roscoe noted that in the past they've sent a list of 100+ questions for which they request written responses from PVPC staff before their arrival. Mr. Roux indicated that

a draft agenda will be sent to the PVPC transportation staff which will include items for which they've requested more information.

9. Other Business

Mr. Roscoe reported that MassDOT has hired HDR, Inc. consultants to examine the Boston-Springfield rail service and the Boston-Springfield-Montreal rail service. He added that HDR is coming to do a public hearing at the PVPC next Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Desrosiers announced that he is going to contact the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) to protest the MassDOT Complete Streets program because it is not structured in the way Chapter 90 programs are structured and as a result, small towns won't be able to complete the required paperwork for the MassDOT's Complete Streets program as well as the large towns who have full-time planners. As a result, he said the larger towns will have a greater chance to receive the available grant money.

Mr. McCollough announced that the 2015 Moving Together Conference entitled *Healthy Transportation, Healthy Communities*, will include a workshop on MassDOT's Complete Streets Program presented by Lou Rabito, MassDOT Complete Streets Engineer, and Eileen Gunn, Sustainability Manager, Office of Transportation Planning. Mr. McCollough reported that the 2015 Moving Together Conference will be held on Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, 50 Park Plaza at Arlington Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

Laura Hanson added that Lou Rabito's and Eileen Gunn's workshop entitled *MassDOT's Complete Streets Program: Funding* on November 4th will be held in the Georgian Room from 2:45 p.m., to 4:00 p.m. To register for the conference, go to <http://www.movingtogetherma.org/>

Mr. Czach explained that he created a survey to determine how Chapter 90 funds are being spent by communities and he contacted the MassDOT District 1 and District 2 offices regarding resurfacing, equipment purchases, engineering designs and salaries. Mr. Czach stated that both District 1 and District 2 reported that 88 – 90% of their Chapter 90 funds are being spent on resurfacing reconstruction with the remaining 10 – 12% split between engineering design and equipment purchases

10. Adjourn

Mr. Czach adjourned today's JTC meeting at 11:28 a.m.

Relevant documents distributed at this meeting:

- *Joint Transportation Committee September 9, 2015 Meeting Agenda*
- *Minutes of the July 8, 2015 Joint Transportation Committee Meeting*
- *PVMPO/PVTA Title VI and LEP Public Participation Checklist*
- *Heat Estimate - HIA Background Information*
- *HEAT - Health Economic Assessment Tool PowerPoint*
- *Moving Together 2015: 2015 Concurrent Workshop Sessions*
- *The Proposed TEC Scoring Changes to the PVPC Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)*