

**Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Committee Zoom Meeting
August 23, 2022 – 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.**

MPO Members Present:

James Barry	Belchertown
Joshua A. Garcia	Mayor, City of Holyoke
Mark Gold	Selectboard, Town of Longmeadow
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Derek Krevat	MassDOT, representing Jamie Tesler, Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
Mark Moore	MassDOT, District One
Paula Simmons	MassDOT, District Two, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator
Sandra Sheehan	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Administrator
Rick Sullivan	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
Stephen Woelfel	Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Daryl Amarald	MassDOT District Two Planner
Patrick Beaudry	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Public Affairs
William Dwyer	Hadley
Matt Gamelli	MassDOT, District Two Office
Shatoyia Jones	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Admin Assistant
Van Kacoyannakis	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)
Christopher Klem	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Connor Knightly	West Springfield
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeffrey McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Matt Peterson	West Springfield Department of Public Works
Andrew Reovan	Federal Highway Administration
Kimberly H. Robinson	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Executive Director
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Doug Slaughter	
Andrew Wang	MassDOT Planning
Joseph Yoo	MassDOT

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1. Chairman’s Call to Order, Welcome and Opening Remarks

Stephen Woelfel called the August 23, 2022 Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Dana Roscoe initiated the roll call. The following MPO members responded that they were present: Stephen Woelfel, James Barry, Paula Simmons, Walter Gunn, Sandra Sheehan, Rick Sullivan, and Joshua A. Garcia.

2. MPO Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO held Remotely on July 26, 2022

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the July 26, 2022 meeting minutes of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN; SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Mr. Roscoe initiated roll call. MPO members in attendance was in concurrence.

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the Proposed Amendment to the FFY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Andrew McCaul reported that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) presented a slide to the MPO in July regarding a series of transit projects that had been awarded, including the FTA 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Senior & Individuals with Disabilities, which aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options.

Mr. McCaul stated that a total of just under \$2 million had been allocated to six projects and that two other items were also included: *FFY 2022 Highway Amendment* to Project #609517 Longmeadow – Blueberry Hill Elementary School Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Improvements and *FFY2022 Highway Adjustment* to Project #605126 Ware – Bridge Replacement.

FTA Program	Transit Agency	Project Description	Federal Funds	RTACAP	MAP	Local Funds	Total Cost
5310	Springfield Partners for Community Action	OPERATING ASSISTANCE	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$150,000
5310	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority	MOBILITY MANAGEMENT	\$108,240	\$0	\$0	\$27,060	\$135,300
5310	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority	OPERATING ASSISTANCE	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$300,000
5310	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority	BUY REPLACEMENT VAN	\$804,286	\$0	\$201,068	\$0	\$1,005,354
5310	Town of Ware	Quaboag Connector	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$300,000
5310	Hilltown Community Development Corporation	OPERATING ASSISTANCE	\$8,888	\$0	\$0	\$8,888	\$17,776
6 Projects							\$1,908,430

Mr. McCaul noted that there was only one comment received on the proposed amendment out for public review related to Project#609517 Longmeadow – Blueberry Hill Elementary School SRTS Improvements, which was proposed to be moved from FFY 2023 to FFY 2022. Mr. McCaul stated that MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning determined that completion of the project would not be done in FFY 2022 and recommended that the project be left in FFY 2023.

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Mr. McCaul added that the MPO has already approved the FY2022 Highway Adjustment for Project #605126 Ware project and requested that the MPO approve the TIP Amendment minus the Longmeadow project.

Mr. Woelfel asked Paula Simmons for any additional comments on the project. Paula stated that the Longmeadow project was scheduled to advertise late in FFY 2022, but upon receiving an e-mail from Boston, that the advertisement would not be possible.

Mr. Woelfel asked Mr. McCaul if the transit and highway amendments were both included in the TIP. Andrew confirmed that they were asked to include both amendments in the TIP amendment for 2023 with an ad date of September 2022. Upon public review, it was determined that the Longmeadow project would not make the ad date and was determined to stay in FY2023.

Mark Gold asked for clarification on the projects being discussed regarding calendar year FY2022 and FY2023. Mr. McCaul clarified that the Longmeadow project was originally intended to be moved in FY2022 with an ad date of September 2022, but it is currently scheduled for FY2023, which starts October 1, 2022. Andrew stated that upon public review, MassDOT determined that the Longmeadow project would not be able to make the September 2022 ad date and suggested that the project remain in FFY2023.

Derek confirmed that the goal in moving the project up had to do more with funding than construction timelines.

Upon hearing no further comments or questions, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to drop Project #609517 Longmeadow – Blueberry Hill Elementary School Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Improvements from the 2022 TIP Amendment.

MOTIONED BY WALTER GUNN; SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN.

Mr. Roscoe initiated the roll call. MPO members in attendance was in concurrence.

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIES.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the remaining FY2022 TIP Amendment projects.

MOTIONED BY WALTER GUNN; SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN.

Mr. Roscoe initiated the roll call. MPO members in attendance was in concurrence.

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIES.

4. Pioneer Valley MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) – 2022 Update

Jeffrey McCollough reminded the MPO that the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is the blueprint for MPO public engagement and is central to the development of the Unified Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Mr. McCollough shared a brief overview of the prior outline for public engagement meetings and noted that it is critical to adopt policies and programs (i.e. virtual formatting) into the plan that would make public engagement stronger while advancing staff training. Mr. McCollough proceeded to summarize PPP additions which includes incorporating virtual meetings, advancing staff training and incorporating new planning tools and updating MPO policies, requirements and resources (i.e. MassDOT engage tool)—all of which will contribute to the elimination of 40% of population barriers: language, time, transportation and technology. Mr. McCollough requested that the MPO approve a PPP release for public review for August 23, 2022 with a 45-days review period.

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Walter Gunn asked if the virtual formatting policy contradicts state open meeting laws, as the state has not yet acted upon approving a policy for hybrid meetings. Jeffrey responded that PVPC held off updating the PPP until the state policy for hybrid meetings was officially implemented, but the deadline for the UPWP is quickly approaching. Mr. McCollough stated that because of the approaching deadline, the current PPP updates offer an opportunity to include a virtual component with an anticipation for revisiting the document and revising the plan upon state hybrid formatting implementation. Mr. McCollough confirmed that the PPP update for virtual formatting is currently in compliance with state open meeting law requirements.

Upon no further questions or comments, Mr. Woelfel asked for MPO approval for the PPP release for public comment on August 23, 2022 with a 45-day review period.

MOTIONED BY WALTER GUNN; SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN.

Mr. Roscoe initiated the roll call. MPO members in attendance was in concurrence.

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIES.

5. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) –Update Schedule

Gary Roux reported that the MPO last endorsed the RTP in July 2019 and is required to update the plan at least every 4 years, as well as consider long-range planning opportunities for projects and studies through the year 2050. He noted that it is important to remember that the planning for the RTP is correlated to projects in the TIP. As a result, every project being considered must align with the financial constraints of the RTP to be eligible for federal funding. Mr. Roux proceeded to report that preliminary outreach is currently in progress for mid-September with a focus on tables at local farmer's markets in Springfield, Westfield, Amherst and Northampton with intention to identify two more communities to inform residents about PVPC and components of the plan. Mr. Roux also reported the establishment of four focus groups meetings as well as setting environmental justice and air quality conformity goals in partnership with environmental consultation and state partners. These preliminary activities will help staff develop the vision of the RTP and analysis to be discussed throughout the development of the RTP with endorsement in July of 2023.

6. Pioneer Valley Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) –Review Current Criteria for Compliance with the Bilateral Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Mr. Roux reported that the MPO adopted changes earlier this year in January to the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) with an intention to revisit criteria in the fall to see how it corresponds in compliance with new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), as well as determine how point allocation differs between current and prior projects with other metropolitan areas regarding Federal Planning Emphasis Areas and FAST ACT Planning Factors. Mr. Roux stated that PVPC intends to have changes to recommend to the MPO prior to the end of the calendar year and that the MPO will need to release any proposed changes public review. Any additional changes will need to be implemented prior the beginning of the 2023 calendar year to be ready for the development of the FFY 2024 to FFY 2028 TIP.

7. Updates from MassDOT District One and District Two Officials on Relevant Transportation Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

Daryl Amaral, District Two, reported the status of various projects for FY2022 – FY 2024:

- **FY2022** - *Project #60874 West Springfield Reconstruction Memorial Avenue Route 147* (ad date June 4, 2022; bids opened July 19, 2022 with bid amount \$27 million from Ludlow Construction)
- **FY2023** - *Project #606895 Granby Improvements -- RTE 202 School Street and Five Corners* at 100% design which was submitted August 19, 2022 and currently under review for comments due October 3, 2022 with an ad date of September 9, 2023

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- **FY2023** – *Project #608073 Westfield Levee Multi-Use Pathway Construction* at 100% design which was submitted August 17, 2022 and currently under review for comments due September 14, 2022 with an ad date of September 9, 2023
- **FY2024** – *Wales Reconstruction Improvements on Monson Road from Monson Town Line to Reed Hill Road* at 75% design with 100% submission due October 19 with current ad date being March 2, 2024
- **FY2024** – *Project #608717 Springfield Reconstruction of Sumner Avenue at Dickinson Street and Belmont Ave* (also known as “The X Project”) at 75% design with 100% submission due September 16, 2022 with a current ad date of January 6, 2024

Peter Frieri, District One, reported that for FY2023, the MPO endorsed a retaining wall replacement of 450 feet on Route 9 and is anticipating a revised design submission in Fall 2022. He also reported that status of two projects for FY2024 – FY2026:

- **FY2024** - *Reconstruction of Route 143 in Worthington* currently in Phase 2 with the final design anticipated for October 2022
- **FY2024** - *Replacement of Two Municipal Bridges in Williamsburg, Bridge Street and South Main Street* with a revised 25% design submitted in April 2022 and a public hearing to be scheduled after 25% design approval is obtained
- **FY2025** – *Reconstruction of Route 112 in Worthington from the Huntington Town Line to the New Rotary 6 miles North*, a surfacing project in preliminary design phase
- **FY2026** – *Reconstruction of Mountain Street in Williamsburg* for a revised 25% design for a narrower cross-section of 24 feet approved in February 2022
- **FY2027** – *Mill River Green-way Bikeway in Williamsburg* with a hydraulic geo-tech instructional type study received from DHD with 25% design anticipated in 2023

Mr. Frieri also reported an anticipation of 75% design for *Chapel Engineering for the Reconstruction for North Road and Damon Pond Road in Chesterfield* in October 2022 with a design public hearing held June 2022.

8. **Updates from Pioneer Valley Transport Authority (PVTA) Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit-Related Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members**

Sandra reported that PVTA recovered 64% of ridership from pre-pandemic levels and are making minor adjustments to routes to increase efficiency, with PVPC virtual public hearings to be held on September 29, 2022 for temporary labor-related staffing adjustments and ridership improvements. Sandra also reported that the PVTA was selected to receive \$54 million in funding for bus expansions and transit station improvements and is currently working with PVPC to request MPO amendments in September to allocate funding for electric bus expansion and staff training, as well as transit facility improvement with any remaining funding to be used towards efforts to fully electrify transit facilities.

9. **Other Business**

Mr. Woelfel stated that the next MPO meeting date is September 27, 2022.

Mr. Gunn asked if the MPO had any candidates interested in assuming the role of JTC Chairperson. Dana stated that there is a candidate interested and will be discussed further at the next JTC meeting.

Chris Klem reported that MassDOT is launching a second survey regarding the state-wide long-reach transportation plan *Beyond Mobility* inspired by their various funding programs and offers the public an opportunity to share their transportation priorities while considering budget trade-

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offs. He requested that the MPO take the survey, as well as share with friends and family. Rick Sullivan requested that the link be sent to him to be included in the newsletter.

Mr. Woelfel stated that right after Labor Day meetings should be fully hybrid, and upon no further questions from MPO members and guests, Mr. Woelfel requested a motion to adjourn.

MOTIONED BY RICK SULLIVAN; SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN. APPROVED BY ALL MPO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE.

The August 23, 2022 meeting was adjourned by Stephen Woelfel at 10:30 a.m.

Prepared by Shatoyia Jones, PVPC Admin Assistant – 08.24.2022