

Minutes of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, December 20, 2022

MPO Members Present:

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
Joshua Garcia	Mayor, City of Holyoke
Walter Gunn	Chair, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
William Reichelt	Mayor, Town of West Springfield
Paula Simmons	MassDOT, District Two, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator
Douglas Slaughter	Chair, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Rick Sullivan	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Daryl Amaral	MassDOT District Two Office, Acting State Aid Engineer
Pat Beaudry	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Manager of Public Affairs
Ben Breger	MassDOT
Mark Cressotti	City of Westfield - Resident
Justin Daigle	MassDOT District One Office
William Dwyer	Town of Hadley, Planning Board
Timothy Keane	Town of Longmeadow
Christopher Klem	MassDOT Planning
Connor Knightly	Town of West Springfield
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeffrey McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Dan McCormack	BETA Group, Inc.
Allison McMordie	City of Westfield
Jack Narron	MassDOT
Dawn Nims	City of Holyoke
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
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Lynn Shell	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Admin Support Staff
Derek Shooster	MassDOT, STIP Coordinator

Note: Because this meeting was held via Zoom, not all those present are included as some participants were only identified by a phone number and no name was available.

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

Stephen Woelfel, Director of Strategic Planning, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, called the December 20, 2022 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:01 a.m. Mr. Woelfel first reviewed the virtual meeting format and he noted that the meeting is being recorded.

PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe took roll call and the following MPO members responded that they were present: Steve Woelfel, representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler; Paula Simmons, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator; Walter Gunn, Chair PVPC; Douglas Slaughter, Chair PVTA Advisory Board; Joshua Garcia, Mayor City of Holyoke; William Reichelt, Mayor Town of West Springfield; Rick Sullivan, Western

Mass EDC. Mr. Roscoe confirmed that this roll call constitutes a quorum.

2. MPO Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held Remotely on October 25, 2022

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the October 25, 2022 meeting minutes of the Pioneer Valley MPO.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MAYOR JOSHUA GARCIA, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 25, 2022 MEETING MINUTES OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the PVMPO Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) Currently out for the Required 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period

PVPC Senior Planner Andrew McCaul noted that the PVPC has been working with the JTC and the MPO on a series of recommendations to make sure that the PVMPO Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) is up to current state and federal standards as well to address some scoring redundancies. He noted that at their last meeting, the MPO released a series of proposed TEC amendments for a 21-day public review.

Mr. McCaul reported that some questions were raised by MPO and JTC members therefore PVPC took three projects from the 2023-2027 TIP and ran them through the new criteria to see how the proposed amendments would impact projects. Those three projects include Chesterfield #608886, South Hadley #608785, and Springfield #608717. Mr. McCaul first discussed the Chesterfield project in which under the proposed scoring experiences a one-point increase under Livability due to a change in the language. He noted that the South Hadley project would experience a 2-½ point decrease which is directly related to the redundancy issue in the criteria. Finally, he stated that the Springfield X project experiences a two-point reduction. Mr. McCaul stated that PVPC discovered that the proposed scoring changes have some short-term minor impacts on the projects. He noted that PVPC has removed some of the redundancies and they have made changes to ensure that the criteria meet current federal and state standards. He stated that PVPC feels that the new criteria as it is implemented will result in some positives for the projects.

Mr. McCaul noted that the PVPC did not receive any comments during public review. He stated that the comments from MPO members included a question about urban versus rural impact, and he felt that the proposed changes open up some additional points for rural communities. Another question was about how the TEC could reflect rural roadway access to employment. Mr. McCaul stated that Functional Classification takes this into consideration, and he noted that not all rural roadways are eligible for federal funding. Finally, he stated that as regards one of the definitions within the TEC, District 2 questioned whether the criteria should include a language change regarding service facilities and retail establishments. Mr. McCaul noted that the JTC recommended including all three and the proposed criteria now reads “improves connections between housing, employment, service facilities or retail establishments.” Mr. McCaul stated that the MPO is being asked to endorse the PVMPO TEC.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse the PVMPO TEC along with the minor changes summarized by Mr. McCaul. He also noted for the record that Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle had joined the meeting.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE PVMPO TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA (TEC) INCLUDING THE CHANGES AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Roscoe then took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release the Update to the Annual Title VI Report for the Required 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Jeffrey McCollough noted that every year the MPO reviews updates to the Title VI Program. He stated that this year involves a more comprehensive overhaul of both our Title VI and Language Access Plans which is required by the MPO as a recipient of federal funds. He then shared several documents on the screen including a map indicating low-income populations in our region and he noted that PVPC updated the data layers for minority and low-income populations. Mr. McCollough stated that PVPC layered all the projects on the TIP

onto those minority, low-income populations and looked at the distribution of funding, noting that 48.98% is going to minority populations and 46.68% is going to low-income populations. Mr. McCollough then shared a document entitled Language Access Plan Update 2023 which lists the languages spoken in our region and he noted that PVPC would like to make sure that all our vital documents are accessible to these languages. Finally, he noted that PVPC created a website where this information is accessible: <http://PVMPO.PVPC.org/civil-rights-title-vi/>

Mr. McCollough stated that the MPO is being asked to release the update to the Title VI and Language Access Plans for the required 21-day public review and comment period. Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to release this document for public review and comment.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MAYOR WILLIAM REICHEL, TO RELEASE THE UPDATE TO THE ANNUAL TITLE VI AND LANGUAGE ACCESS PLANS FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD.

Mr. Roscoe took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

5. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release the Proposed Amendment to the FFY 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Required 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period

Mr. McCaul first discussed the transit amendment which involves updating the project description to UMass Transit Maintenance Building Renovation from Northampton Maintenance Building Renovation. He also noted that there is an increase in funding for PVTA (5339) Bus and Bus Facility from \$3,600,000 to the awarded amount of \$11,800,000, and there is an increase in the 5339 Low/No grant from \$32,300,000 to the approved award of \$55,700,000. Mr. McCaul then reviewed a chart indicating the amounts that PVTA is looking at spending during each year of the TIP. He also stated that PVTA is deferring rehabilitation of their articulated buses to free up \$160 million in RTCAP money to help support matching funds. Mr. McCaul noted that PVPC believes that all the funding is in place to be able to release this document for public review.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the proposed transit amendment to the FFY 2023 TIP for the 21-day public review period.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED TRANSIT AMENDMENT TO THE FFY 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AS PRESENTED, FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD.

Mr. Roscoe took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

Mr. McCaul explained that the highway amendment to the TIP is to increase Statewide HSIP funding for Springfield Project #608565 from \$6,766,702 to \$9,086,046. He noted that a cost increase has triggered the need for an amendment, adding that this does not impact our local money.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MAYOR WILLIAM REICHEL, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY AMENDMENT TO THE FFY 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AS PRESENTED, FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD.

Mr. Gunn noted this is a 33% increase that will flow over to the TIP and he asked if the TIP needs to be reviewed more often due to inflation. Derek Shooster, MassDOT, STIP Coordinator, stated that this project is programmed with statewide target money, and he clarified that this is not affecting the Pioneer Valley regional target. He noted that there is no concern at this time regarding project costs increases like this one adversely affecting the state's ability to pay for more projects. Mr. Woelfel added that the state is constantly looking at the costs with the Highway Division, and in the new year there will be the readiness days with the MPOs. He stated that there are some projects that they are tracking, and he offered to provide quick updates at the meetings going forward.

Mr. Roscoe took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – Development Schedule and Public Outreach Update

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux discussed the RTP schedule update. He noted that PVPC has completed the focus groups and public outreach and is beginning the process of summarizing the information and developing draft content which he anticipated bringing to the MPO next month. He added that PVPC staff is developing a web page to display updated content. PVPC will continue to provide draft chapters and updates, with a goal of a draft release in June 2023 and endorsement in July 2023. Mr. Roux discussed the Focus Group Poll results which he shared on the screen, and he then referred to the RTP layout and talked about each of the various RTP chapters.

7. PVMPO Federal Certification Review: Update

Mr. Roux invited Andrew Reovan, Federal Highway Administration, to talk about the PVMPO Federal Certification Review. Mr. Reovan stated that they are looking at February 8th for conducting the on-site certification review for Pioneer Valley MPO. They will have a public meeting with the JTC later in February and they will be developing a report of their findings. He noted that at this stage they conduct their document review to look at the planning process which is a chance to see if there are opportunities for the MPO going forward. He stated that they will be sending advance questions to MPO and PVPC this week and looking for responses by the second week of January. Mr. Roux noted that the date of the on-site review is actually February 1st. He stated that PVPC will also make everyone aware of the public meeting component when the date is finalized, and an agenda will be posted.

8. PVMPO FFY 2024-2028 Performance Measures: Timeline

Mr. Roux talked about the 2024-2028 Performance Measures which he shared on the screen. He reviewed the targets required to be adopted by the MPO, including PM1 Safety Measures; PM2 Pavement Bridge Performance Measures; and PM3 System Performance Measures. He noted that the PM1 targets are set and there will be a presentation for the JTC and MPO at their January meetings. He stated that traditionally the PM2 and PM3 are set every 2 to 4 years and he noted that ideally, the statewide targets will be brought before the MPO at the February meeting. Mr. Roux stated that the MPO has chosen to adopt the statewide targets because the state does the reporting which puts less burden on MPO staff. He then reviewed the anticipated Performance Measures Timeline.

9. 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, MassDOT District Two, provided the following updates:

- **Project 605126** – Ware Bridge replacement; advertised September 10th; bid opening was November 15th; contract was awarded on December 13th for \$11.1 million
- **Project 606895** – Granby improvements at 2 locations on Route 202, School Street and Five Corners; design is at 100%; 100% review comments were completed October 3rd; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 608073** – Westfield River Levee multi-use path construction; design is at 100%; PSNE is due December 29th; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 608163** – Wales reconstruction improvements on Monson Road from Monson town line to Reed Hill Road; design is at 75%; 100% is due March 17, 2023; right-of-way plans due January 13th; current ad date March 2, 2024
- **Project 608717** – Springfield X reconstruction of Sumner Avenue at Dickinson and Belmont. Design is at 75%; awaiting environmental permits; ad date is June 1, 2024

Justin Daigle, MassDOT District One, provided the following updates:

- **Project 606797** - 75% design submitted December 9th for the Cummington retaining wall replacement on Route 9; review comments are due January 2023; GZA Incorporated is providing geotechnical design consulting
- **Project 609287** - Phase 2 Worthington Route 143 Reconstruction; CHA is working on the final design submittal
- **Project 607675** - Replacement of 2 municipal bridges in Williamsburg over the Mill River; in April 2022 VHB

submitted revised 25% design for MassDOT review; MassDOT is reviewing a follow-up right-of way and utilities submission by VHB; 25% design public hearing will be scheduled after 25% design approval by MassDOT

- **Project 612031** - District One Design Section is working on preliminary design for the resurfacing of Route 112 in Worthington
- **Project 607231** – Reconstruction of Mountain St., Williamsburg; 75% design scheduled for submittal in June 2023
- **Project 608787** – Mill River Greenway in Williamsburg currently under preliminary design by VHB; a formal 25% design submittal anticipated in 2023
- **Project 608886** –reconstruction of North Rd. and Damon Pond Rd. in Chesterfield; 75% design due in January 2023

10. Updates from PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit-Related Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported that PVTA is promoting Try Transit during the holidays thanks to the Massachusetts legislation funding of prepaid fares until December 31st which means that no fares or passes are needed to activate the PVTA transit system. She noted that PVTA is also in the process of obtaining public participation on the proposal to expand the Dial-A-Ride services which are specifically for seniors in all of the communities that are members of PVTA. Finally, Ms. Sheehan reported that PVTA has a new updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) which they are in the process of implementing.

11. Other Business

Mr. McCaul reviewed the draft TIP and UPWP Development Schedule which he shared on the screen, and he noted that he will email the schedule to MPO members immediately following today's meeting.

Mr. Woelfel noted that the next virtual MPO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24, 2023.

There being no other business to conduct, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to adjourn.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MAYOR JOSHUA GARCIA, TO ADJOURN THE DECEMBER 20, 2022 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:53 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Shell, Senior Administrative Assistant
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents Distributed at the December 20, 2022 MPO Meeting

1. MPO Agenda: December 20, 2022
2. October 25, 2022 MPO Meeting Minutes