

Minutes of the Tuesday, May 24, 2022 Virtual Zoom Meeting of the
Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Held by the
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104-3419

MPO Members Present:

David Mohler	Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer
James Barry	Selectboard, Town of Belchertown
Roger Fuller	Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield
Mark Gold	Selectboard, Town of Longmeadow
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Mark Moore	Massachusetts Highway, District One, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator
William Reichelt	Mayor, Town of West Springfield
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
Mark Cressotti	City of Westfield, City Engineer
William Dwyer	Town of Hadley, Planning Board
Alex Fagnand	Tighe & Bond, Project Manager
Matthew Gamelli	City of Westfield, Utility Engineer
Laura Hanson	MassDOT, District Two Office
Christopher Klem	MassDOT Planning
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Ben Murphy	Town of Monson, Highway Surveyor
Matt Peterson	Town of West Springfield DPW
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
Tom Ruta	MassDOT District Two, Assistant Project Engineer
Steve Savaria	Fuss & O'Neill, Senior Project Manager
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Derek Shooster	MassDOT, STIP Coordinator
Brad Wachholz	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Support Staff

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

David Mohler, Executive Director, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, called the May 24, 2022 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:02 a.m. Mr. Mohler 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: David Mohler, MassDOT Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning, representing MPO Chair Jamey Tesler, MassDOT Secretary and CEO; Mark Moore, MassDOT District One representing MassDOT Highway

Administrator Jonathan Gulliver; Walter Gunn, Chairman, PVPC; James Barry, Belchertown Selectboard; Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard; Rick Sullivan, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts; Douglas Slaughter, Chair PVTA. 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 April 26, 2022

Mr. Mohler called for a motion to approve the April 26, 2022 meeting minutes of the Pioneer Valley MPO.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 26, 2022 PIONEER VALLEY MPO MEETING AS PRESENTED.

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

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

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the Draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Currently out for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux noted that at our last meeting, the MPO released the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 21-day public review period. He stated that comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration and the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning and a summary of the comments were sent to MPO members. Mr. Roux noted that all comments will be addressed in the final version of the UPWP. He then asked for MPO endorsement of the FFY 2023 UPWP.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ENDORSE THE FFY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP).

Mr. Roscoe 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 Endorsement of the Proposed Amendment to the 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Currently out for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul noted that at the last MPO meeting there was a discussion about the proposed changes to the current FFY 2022 TIP. He stated that the major changes include removal of the Holyoke Project #606450; and increasing Year One funding for the West Springfield project #608374. Mr. McCaul noted that no comments were received during the 21-day public review period and the MPO is being asked to endorse the amendment. Mr. Sullivan asked if there is a plan for when the Holyoke project might come back on the TIP. Mr. Roscoe explained that some of the intersections were not eligible for federal funding and the project is being rescoped. He noted that MassDOT has committed to expedite the project but he did not have a specific timeframe.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN TO ENDORSE THE AMENDMENT TO THE 2022-2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).

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 Endorsement of the Draft FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Currently out for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

Mr. McCaul first reviewed the development schedule for the 2023-2027 TIP. He then referred to a slide summarizing Transit funding over the next 5 fiscal years totaling \$156 Million which he noted is for bus and vehicle replacement, improvements and upgrades to various facilities throughout the region, as well as keeping their current infrastructure in good repair.

Mr. McCaul next talked about the projects for the Highway side of the TIP for FFY 2023 which include funding for:

604209	Holyoke and West Springfield rehabilitation of Route 5 (Riverdale Road)
606797	Cummington retaining wall replacement
606895	Granby improvements at two locations on Route 202, School Street and Five Corners
608073	Westfield River Levee multi use path construction
608374	West Springfield reconstruction of Memorial Avenue – second half of the project
S12686	Phase 3 of Valley Bike Share Expansion
S12718	PVTA – purchase of electric bus and support training

Mr. McCaul noted that there were 18 comments on the FFY 2023-2027 TIP which were forwarded to the MPO prior to this meeting and he believed all the items will be addressed prior to the finalization of the document. He stated that two comments were related to the Northampton Complete Streets Project and they expressed concern about the proposed design and removal of parking spaces in the downtown area. Two other comments expressed concerns with the readiness of the Westfield River Levee project programmed in FFY 23, and there were 14 comments from MassDOT and Federal Highway about elements within the actual document itself. Mr. McCaul stated that the MPO is being asked to endorse the FFY 2023-2027 TIP.

A request was made for clarification from Westfield regarding the Westfield River Levee project particularly with regard to MEPA and Article 97. As regards Article 97, Westfield City Engineer Mark Cressotti stated that he had conversations with MassDOT Right of Way and appreciates their concerns. He noted that the City believes it can go through the process and get it achieved. Alex Fagnand stated that Tighe & Bond is under contract for MEPA. He noted that their original Environmental Notification Form (ENF) didn't make the cutoff with the new regulations but they are fully scoped and the project is consistent with the objectives of the new regulations. They do not have concerns with completing the process. Mr. Mohler asked if they are going to go from zero to full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and advertise this project in 2023. Mr. Fagnand stated that they have an ENF and they need to take that to an Expanded ENF (EENF) level of preparedness in addition to the Resilient MA Action Team (RMAT) Tool and the Environmental Justice (EJ) outreach component. He noted that the director had indicated that a rollover EIR is the route that this project is going to take. They need the EENF to be accepted and they feel they can get it done.

Jim Barry asked if Mr. Sullivan could talk about the comments received on the Northampton Complete Streets. Mr. Sullivan stated that if the City of Northampton has not raised similar objections, he is fine with it.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY MAYOR REICHEL, TO ENDORSE THE FFY 2023-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).

Mr. Roscoe took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively. Mr. Mohler stated that he wanted to point out for the record that although he is voting yes, he remains concerned about the readiness of the Westfield project. Mr. Moore also stated that we need to be diligent on the Westfield project.

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

6. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the 2020 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) Currently out for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

Mr. McCaul stated that the CPT-HSTP was put on pause due to COVID and it will be updated to reflect current demands of our transit system. He noted that the MPO is being asked to endorse the document as a process to move on to the next rendition. He explained that the document identifies gaps in the system as well as strategies to fill those gaps and provides access to additional grant money. Mr. McCaul noted that no comments were received.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE 2020 COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CPT-HSTP).

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

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

7. Beyond Mobility – MassDOT’s 2050 Statewide Long-Range Plan

Christopher Klem, MassDOT Planning, gave a presentation on Beyond Mobility which he noted is MassDOT’s statewide long-range transportation plan that will document the most pressing transportation priorities between now and 2050. He talked about the purpose and desired outcomes as well as the process and timeline which includes 4 different phases: assessment; visioning; evaluation; recommendations. Mr. Klem talked about how people can get involved which includes a short survey and he asked everyone to help spread the word about the survey. Mr. Sullivan asked Mr. Klem to send him a one-pager with the link so that he could put it in their newsletter.

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

Peter Frieri, MassDOT District One, provided the following updates:

- **Project 606797** - MassDOT completed design review of the combined 25/75% design for the Cummington retaining wall replacement on Route 9. Design is being performed by MassDOT District One Design Section and on schedule for 2023 advertisement.
- **Project 609287** - Phase 2 of Worthington’s Route 143 Reconstruction Project - received 100% design in December 2021 and completed design review in March 2022. Final design is on schedule for submittal in October 2022.
- Programmed in 2024, VHB is designing the replacement of two bridges in Williamsburg over the Mill River. A public information meeting was held in February 2020 and VHB submitted a revised 25% design earlier this month.
- **Project 612031** - 6 mile Resurfacing Project, Route 112 in Worthington was programmed. District One Private Development and Design Section will be designing this project.
- **Project 607231** - Later this summer they anticipate receiving a revised 25% design for reconstruction of Mountain Street in Williamsburg. In February 2022, the Secretary of MassDOT approved a narrower cross-section so they are currently working on a re-submittal.
- **Project 608787** - They anticipate an initial design submittal on the Williamsburg Greenway from VHB.
- **Project 608886** - On June 8th there will be a live virtual design public hearing for the reconstruction of North Road and Damon Pond Road in Chesterfield. The link can be found online at MassDOT Public Hearings.

Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District Two, provided the following updates:

- **Project 608374** – West Springfield reconstruction Memorial Ave., Route 147; Design is at PS&E; Environmental is cleared; PS&E reviews have been completed for specifications section on May 6th; current ad date is June 4, 2022
- **Project 608577** - Easthampton improvements and related work on Union Street from Payson Ave. to High Street; advertised March 12th; bid opening date April 20th; awarded April 27th to low bidder Ludlow Construction; Notice to Proceed was issued on May 17th
- **Project 606895** - Granby improvements at two locations on Route 202, School Street and Five Corners; Design at 75%; 100% is ready to submit when permits are obtained which are expected mid-June. Ad date is May 13, 2023
- **Project 608163** - Wales reconstruction improvements on Monson Road from Monson town line to Reed Hill Road; Design is at 75%; 100% submission is due July 11, 2022; current ad date is March 2, 2024

9. 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 March ridership is up 80% from 2021 but it is still only 70% of pre-pandemic levels. She noted that some of the systems have higher ridership than others. The G73E Brennan Express from Springfield to Northampton via Holyoke has surpassed monthly ridership. Staffing continues to be an issue but they have implemented some programs that include a media campaign which has worked well. They have seen an increase in the use of Bus Plus. Lastly, Ms. Sheehan reported that the PVTA Advisory Board approved the FY 2023 budget but they may need to adjust the budget when the numbers come out for the final state budget.

10. Other Business

Mr. Mohler noted that the next virtual MPO meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2022. There being no other business, Mr. Mohler called for a motion to adjourn.

MOVED BY MAYOR REICHELT, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 24, 2022 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:35 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Shell,
Administrative Assistant I Specialist
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents Distributed at the May 24, 2022 MPO Meeting

1. MPO Agenda: May 24, 2022
2. April 26, 2022 MPO Meeting Minutes
3. Beyond Mobility Power Point Presentation