

Minutes of the Tuesday, February 22, 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:**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Steve Woelfel     | Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Representing MPO Chair James Tesler, Acting Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer |
| James Barry       | Selectboard, Town of Belchertown  |
| Jim Czach         | Chairman, Joint Transportation Committee  |
| Roger Fuller      | Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield  |
| Joshua Garcia     | Mayor, City of Holyoke  |
| Walter Gunn       | Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)   |
| Nicole LaChapelle | Mayor, City of Easthampton  |
| William Reichelt  | Mayor, Town of West Springfield   |
| Paula Simmons     | MassDOT District Two Office Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver  |
| 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             |
| Patrick Beaudry      | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Public Affairs         |
| Tina Cote            | Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA)                         |
| Mark Gold            | Town of Longmeadow Selectboard                                     |
| Peter Frieri         | MassDOT, District One Office                                       |
| Chris Klem           | MassDOT Liaison  |
| Andrew McCaul        | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section |
| Mark Moore           | Massachusetts Highway, District One                                |
| Andrew Reovan        | Federal Highway Administration                                     |
| Dana Roscoe          | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section |
| Kimberly H. Robinson | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Executive Director     |
| Gary Roux            | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section |
| Sandra Sheehan       | Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)             |
| Derek Shooster       | MassDOT STIP Coordinator, – Office of Transportation Planning      |
| Louise Sullivan      | 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**

Steve Woelfel, Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Representing Jamey Tesler, Acting Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, called the January 25, 2022 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Woelfel asked for a roll call from the MPO members present with following members responding: Paula Simmons, MassDOT District Two, Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver; Rick Sullivan, President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts; William Reichelt, Mayor of West Springfield; Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor of Easthampton; Douglas Slaughter, Chair, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority; Roger Fuller, Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield; James Barry, Belchertown Selectboard Member; Jim Czach, Chairman of the Joint Transportation Committee; Joshua Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke; and Walter Gunn, Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe confirmed that this roll call constitutes a quorum.

Following the roll call, Mr. Woelfel moved to take up the minutes of the previous MPO meeting held on January 25, 2021.

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

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on January 25, 2022.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY NICOLE LACHAPELLE, MAYOR, CITY OF EASTHAMPTON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25, 2022 PIONEER VALLEY MPO MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Woelfel requested a roll call and each of the MPO members in attendance responded affirmatively.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY THE MPO MEMBERS PRESENT.

**3. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the Proposed FFY 2022 Highway Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments Currently Out for the Required 21 day review period**

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul explained that at the January 25th MPO meeting, the MPO members released a Highway Amendment for public review because of a name change for a District Two project from *Systematic Bridge Maintenance at Various Locations* to *Chicopee/Holyoke Bridge Preservation along I-391*. Mr. McCaul He further added that the cost has been updated from \$1,540,000 to \$8,835,544 during the public review period. Mr. McCaul explained that because this project is fully within our Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) region, the project will appear in the Pioneer Valley MPO TIP but it is outside of PVPC's discretionary target funding. Mr. McCaul added that a comment received from a Chicopee resident during the public review period regarding the resident's vision of improvements for Interstate 391 has been forwarded to the MPO.

Mr. McCaul asked that the MPO members endorse the proposed FFY 2022 Highway Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments and Mr. Woelfel called for a motion.

MOVED BY WILLIAM REICHEL, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF WEST SPRINGFIELD, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSED FFY

**2022 HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS WITH THE UPDATED COST AS PRESENTED BY PVPC STAFF**

Mr. Woelfel requested a roll call and each of the MPO members in attendance responded affirmatively.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY THE MPO MEMBERS PRESENT.

**4. Review and Discussion of the Draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development**

Principal Planner Gary Roux presented a brief update of the FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) saying that that the UPWP shares the same development and endorsement schedule as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and both run from October 1st of this year to September 30th of next year. Mr. Roux explained that the UPWP is the annual work program anticipated for the next fiscal year with a focus on updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). He noted that the draft UPWP will be presented for endorsement at the May MPO meeting. Mr. Roux indicated that anyone who has a small planning study that they would like to have included in the UPWP should contact him. Mr. Roux stated that a letter will be required from a municipality's chief elected official for the submission of a study or project for consideration in the FFY 2023 UPWP.

**5. Update on the Current Status of Highway Projects Programmed in the FFY 2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul displayed a spreadsheet which reflected the current status of highway projects programmed and being funded in the FFY 2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) listed in a Quarterly Report by quarters as indicated below.

| Quarter | Project ID | Description  |
|---------|------------|--|
| 1       | 608473     | South Hadley Resurfacing on Route 116  |
| 2       | 608577     | Easthampton Improvements/Related Work on Route 141   |
| 3       | 608374     | West Springfield Reconstruction of Memorial Avenue ( Route 147) - <i>funded over 3 yrs.</i>  |
| 4       | 609515     | Northampton Bridge Street Roadway Reconstruction   |
| 4       | 608719     | Amherst - Belchertown Norwottuck Trail   |
| 4       | 605126     | Ware Bridge Replacement  |
| 4       | 606450     | Holyoke Traffic Signal Upgrades and Related work along High and Maple Streets – This project will not be able to be funded. The PVPC, the City of Holyoke, and MassDOT will discuss moving this project into an appropriate funding year with further discussions at the March JTC and MPO meetings. |

**6. Review and Discussion of the 2023 -2027 TIP Development Schedule and Updated Universe of Projects**

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul displayed the distributed 2023 – 2027 TIP Development Schedule and noted that the tasks highlighted in the red section reflecting January 12, 2022 – February 10, 2022 have all been achieved. Mr. McCaul explained that today, the 2023-2027 TIP Project Universe will be reviewed and MPO members will be asked for comments or questions. On March 9th, the JTC will identify a preferred list of projects which the MPO will review on March 22nd. On April 13th, the JTC performs a final review of the 2023-2027 TIP based on MassDOT project updates and MPO comments. Also on April 13th, the JTC will recommend that the MPO review and release the draft 2023- 2027 TIP and the draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 21 day public review. The MPO on April 26th reviews and releases the draft 2023-2027 TIP and the draft UPWP for the 21 day public review period from April 27th through May 17th. There will be a TIP public hearing on May 11th and on May 24th, the MPO will review then endorse the 2023-2027 TIP and the 2023 UPWP.

Mr. McCaul displayed the distributed spreadsheet entitled *Regional Target Comparison* and he proceeded to explain that it reflects the amount of Target funding for each year: 2022 – 2027, and it compares the 2022-2026 TIP with the 2023-2027 TIP showing the difference in the funding. The last two columns of the spreadsheet delineate the programmed amount for each year (2022-2026) and the available amount based on the 2022-2026 TIP. Mr. McCaul underscored that these amounts do not include cost increases for TIP projects currently programmed in the FFY 2022-2026 TIP.

Mr. McCaul displayed a spreadsheet entitled *Draft 2023 – 2027 Project Universe (February 2022)* saying that the Technical Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scores have been updated and the TIP projects that were flagged on “TIP Days” are highlighted in yellow on the spreadsheet (these highlighted projects are listed below).

| Project ID | Description   | Mr. McCaul’s Comments                           |
|------------|---|---|
| 608727     | Holland Resurfacing and related work on Brimfield Rd. | Project not advancing at this time              |
| 606450     | Holyoke Traffic Signal Upgrades at 15 Intersections   | Temporary removal from list recommended         |
| 608413     | Northampton Rocky Hill Greenway Trail                 | Consultations ongoing with City & MassDOT       |
| 609286     | Northampton Downtown Complete Streets                 | Highest scoring project but status questionable |
| 608785     | South Hadley Reconstruction of Main Street            | Project continues to be monitored               |
| 608157     | Springfield McKnight Community Trail Construction     | ROW/pipeline impact concerns                    |
| 608163     | Wales Reconstruction and Improvements on Monson Rd.   | Design/ROW needs not deliverable till 2024      |

7. Update by PVPC Executive Director Kimberly H. Robinson on Economic Development Opportunities for the Pioneer Valley region

PVPC Executive Director Kimberly H. Robinson explained that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) has been designated by the EDA as an Economic Development District for the Pioneer Valley region and as such, the PVPC has received \$400,000 in funding under the CARES Act from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Ms. Robinson reported that the PVPC has been partnering with Rick Sullivan of the EDC of Western Massachusetts, the Community Foundation and the Healing Racism Institute to strategize economic development in a more inclusive manner which has led to scenarios that will be included in a roadmap to be completed by June 2022. Ms. Robinson announced that the PVPC is focused on inclusivity and on providing assistance to all communities especially rural, small, and mid-size communities. She underscored that the strategy results will be shared in future MPO meetings and she is always available for any questions.

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

Mr. Woelfel called on Daryl Amaral of the MassDOT District Two office in Northampton to present District Two’s updates on relevant transportation issues and projects. Mr. Amaral reported on the following TIP projects:

| Proj. ID | Municipality     | Project                                | Report delivered by Daryl Amaral of MassDOT District Two Office       |
|----------|------------------|--|---|
| 606450   | Holyoke          | Traffic Signals - 15 Intersections     | Consultant retained by MassDOT to develop safety improvements         |
| 608374   | West Springfield | Memorial Ave. Reconstruction           | 100% design, environmental cleared and advertisement date is June 4th |
| 608577   | Easthampton      | Union St. to High St., Rt. 147         | PS&E comments completed January 11th. Ad date is March 12, 2022       |
| 606895   | Granby           | Improvements at 2 locations on Rt. 202 | 75% design and advertisement date is May 13, 2022                     |
| 608163   | Wales            | Reconstruction/Improve Monson Rd.      | 75% design and 100% design submission due March 4th – ad date: May 27 |

Mr. Woelfel then called on Peter Frieri of the MassDOT District One office in Lenox to present District One’s updates on relevant transportation projects within its jurisdiction. Mr. Frieri reported that District One currently has three TIP projects programmed in FFY 2022 – 2026:

| Project ID | Municipality | Project  | Report delivered by Peter Frieri of MassDOT District One Office    |
|------------|--------------|--|--|
| 606797     | Cummington   | Retaining Wall Replacement on Route 9  | 25% design submittal being prepared and will be presented soon     |
| 609287     | Worthington  | Phase 2 of Route 143 Reconstruction  | MassDOT recently received final design for western half of project |
| 612031     | Worthington  | Resurfacing of Route 112 (6 mi.) from roundabout to the Huntington Town line | Preliminary design work is upcoming in the next year               |

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Frieri and Mr. Amaral for their updates and he then moved on to the next agenda item.

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

PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan reported a ridership of 325,000 for the month of January which was lower than the ridership in December attributable to the Omicron COVID. Ms. Sheehan noted that ridership is still at 2019 levels. She further reported that the PVTA is working on its new fiscal year budget which is due by May and it will be sharing its cost of operations with PVPC staff. She added that the PVTA will be taking delivery of 12 transit buses and additional electric buses as listed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

10. Other Business

Mr. Roscoe announced that JTC Chairman Jim Czach is moving on from the City of Holyoke and will no longer be eligible to serve on the JTC. Mr. Roscoe indicated that there will be a recruitment process, and he expressed his gratitude for Mr. Czach’s service to the PVPC, the City of Holyoke and the Town of West Springfield.

Mr. Woelfel announced that the 2022 MassDOT Transportation Innovation Conference is scheduled for May 24-25, 2022, and he noted that the next virtual MPO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 22, 2022. There being no other business, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO ADJOURN THIS FEBRUARY 22, 2022 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION’S MPO.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE FEBRUARY 22nd MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:45 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Sullivan, Administrative Assistant Specialist  
 Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

**List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the February 22, 2022 MPO Meeting**

1. *Pioneer Valley Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Agenda: February 22, 2022*
2. *Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting: January 25, 2022*
3. *2023 -2027 TIP and 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development Schedule*
4. *2023 -2027 TIP Project Universe (February 2022)*