

Minutes of the Tuesday, October 26, 2021 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
Roger Fuller	Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
Paula Simmons	MassDOT District Two Office Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
David Narkewicz	Mayor, City of Northampton
William Reichelt	Mayor, Town of West Springfield
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Rick Sullivan	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
John Vieux	Mayor, City of Chicopee
James Barry	Selectboard, Town of Belchertown

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Rana Al-Jammal	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Daryl Amaral	MassDOT District 2 Office, Acting State Aid Engineer
Patrick Beaudry	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Manager, Public Affairs
Christopher Bouchard	DPW Director, Town of South Hadley
Mark Cressotti	City Engineer, City of Westfield
Peter Frieri	MassDOT, District 1 Office
Mark Gold	Selectboard, Town of Longmeadow
Rachel Grosso	Transportation Planner, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Michelle Ho	Senior Project Manager, MassDOT
Derek Krevat	Transportation Planner, MassDOT
Chris Klem	MassDOT Liaison
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Moore	Sr. Project Development Engineer, MassDOT Highway Division
Gus Norrbom	MassDOT Planning
Andrew Reovan	PVPC Liaison with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Kimberly H. Robinson	Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Marc Strange	Director, Planning & Development, Town of Agawam
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 May 25, 2021 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:04 a.m. Mr. Woelfel then asked for a roll call from the MPO members present as follows: 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; David Narkewicz, Mayor of Northampton; Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor of Easthampton; Roger Fuller, Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield; John Vieux, Mayor of Chicopee; and Sandra Sheehan, Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA). 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 May 25, 2021.

2. MPO Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held Remotely on May 25, 2021

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on May 25, 2021.

MOVED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR, CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 2021 PIONEER VALLEY MPO MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Woelfel requested a roll call and each of the MPO members in attendance responded affirmatively with the exception of two abstentions: Paula Simmons and James Barry

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

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Resolution of the Status of MPO Members and Alternates

PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe related that the geographic area shared by the City of Westfield and the Towns of Agawam, West Springfield and Southwick was previously represented by Richard Cohen, then Mayor of Agawam, with William Reichelt, Mayor of West Springfield, as Alternate. Mr. Roscoe explained that when Richard Cohen left office, Mayor Reichelt became a MPO member which left an opportunity for an Alternate member. Mayor Donald Humason, Jr. of the City of Westfield and Mayor William Sapelli of the Town of Agawam both expressed interest in becoming an Alternate. PVPC staff polled the four communities and there were two votes for Mayor Humason and two votes for Mayor Sapelli.

Mr. Roscoe stated that the appointment of an Alternate now lies with the MPO. Mr. Woelfel requested that the Federal Highway Administration be asked to suggest a solution. Mr. Roscoe responded that PVPC staff will have a conversation with Federal Highway and that the appointment of an Alternate will be discussed at the next MPO meeting.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Roscoe for his presentation and he moved on to discuss the next agenda item.

4. Update Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of Proposed FFY2022 Transit Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Adjustments

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul stated that each year the JTC members develop a transit Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in collaboration with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). He reported that with the beginning of FFY2022 on October 1, 2021, it became apparent that two administrative adjustments were needed to ensure that 5339 and other non-federal funding would be available in the Transit TIP. Mr. McCaul indicated that a state match of \$97,679, which was entered into MassDOT's budgeting software as State Contract Assistance instead of RTA Capital funding, and \$16,900 in RTA Capital funding provided by MassDOT needed to be inserted before October 1, 2021. He stated that these were administrative adjustments to the Transit TIP that need MPO approval. Mr. Woelfel then asked a motion to approve the transit amendment as described by PVPC staff.

MOVED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR, CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO APPROVE THE TRANSIT AMENDMENT OF TWO ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AS DESCRIBED BY PVPC STAFF TO ENSURE THAT \$97,679 AND \$16,900 IN RTA CAPITAL FUNDING CAN BE ACCESSED IN THE TRANSIT TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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.

5. Update by PVPC Staff on the Status of Adjustments Made to the FFY2021 Unified Planning Work Program

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that on August 7, 2021, PVPC staff requested an adjustment of the FFY2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) from the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning which was approved on August 18th. Mr. Roux explained that the adjustment consisted of the transfer of \$7,500 from UPWP Task 2.3: GIS, Mapping and Graphics to Direct Costs. He stated that the transfer qualifies as an adjustment because it consisted of a budget modification to an already programmed task of less than 10 percent of the current total approved budget. Mr. Roux added that the additional Direct Cost dollars were used to purchase equipment upgrades for the transportation section.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Roux for his presentation and he called on PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul to discuss the next agenda item.

6. Update by PVPC Staff on the Status of All Projects Advertised in the FFY2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul announced that it is required that all TIP projects be advertised by the end of each fiscal year. Mr. McCaul explained that all TIP projects are monitored as they move through MassDOT's design process. He reported that the Hadley Reconstruction on Route 9 (605032) Project was the last project to be advertised on September 11th and now all TIP projects have been advertised. Mr. McCaul briefly mentioned other notable projects that were advertised in the spring:

Project #607773 - WESTFIELD IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED WORK ON ROUTE 20, COURT STREET & WESTERN AVENUE, LLOYD'S HILL ROAD TO HIGH STREET/MILL STREET INTERSECTION (PHASE II) - This project was advertised in March and awarded in May.

Project #608084 - AMHERST IMPROVEMENTS AND RELATED WORK ON ROUTES 9 & 116, FROM UNIVERSITY DRIVE TO SOUTH PLEASANT STREET - This project was advertised in April and awarded in June.

Project #608782 - SPRINGFIELD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT COTTAGE STREET, INDUSTRY AVENUE AND ROBBINS ROAD - This project was advertised in March and awarded in May.

Project #606552 - NORTHAMPTON BRIDGE REPLACEMENT was also advertised and funded over multiple years with a total cost of 60 million dollars.

Mr. McCaul remarked that Highway and Transit TIP goals for this year have been achieved, and he thanked the MassDOT officials for their assistance and Mr. Woelfel moved on to the next agenda item

7. Update by PVPC Staff on Changes that FHWA is requesting for the MOU Governing the MPO

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that at a recent meeting, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) presented the Annual List of Obligated Projects that must be published on MassDOT's website, <http://pvmmpo.org>, by the MPO in collaboration with MassDOT and the PVTA by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Roux noted that federal regulations require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which includes provisions governing the development of this annual listing of projects. Mr. Roux reported that the Pioneer Valley MPO's MOU, dated February 2020, indicates that this information is not included. Therefore, Mr. Roux underscored that PVPC staff will work with MassDOT to develop the appropriate language necessary for the MOU to address this requirement. He added that this MOU will be presented to the MPO for endorsement at a later date.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Roux for his presentation and he called on PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul to discuss the next agenda item.

8. Update by PVPC Staff on Proposed Changes Currently under Consideration for the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andy McCaul indicated that every three years, PVPC Staff members review the PVPC's Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) to ensure that the TEC meets all federal and state requirements. Mr. McCaul reported that during 2019 – 2021, PVPC staff reviewed 39 TIP projects that had three years of scoring. Mr. McCaul displayed a zoom slide illustrating the results: the project with the highest increase in points was the Holyoke (606450) Resurfacing and Signal Improvements at 15 Intersections; 20 projects showed an increase in points; 2 projects had a decrease in points; and 17 projects had no changes. Mr. McCaul explained that as projects move through the design process, their awarded points increase.

Pointing to a table entitled *Average Points by Criteria – Rural vs. Urban*, Mr. McCaul pointed out that urban projects score on average ten points more than rural projects. Mr. McCaul displayed a document entitled *2019 – 2021 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) Review* that illustrated the eight TEC criteria along with each one's subcategories which delineate how TEC points are awarded. He displayed a chart entitled *Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Points Urban vs. Rural (2019-2021)* which further illustrated how the number of TEC points awarded is impacted by a project's geographic location. Finally, Mr. McCaul displayed a chart entitled *2019-2021 Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) – Project Type* which delineated the criteria classified by project type: bicycle/pedestrian, intersection improvements and basic road improvements. Mr. McCaul stated that intersection projects score the highest because they incorporate safety measures, air quality impact and other modes of transportation.

Mr. McCaul then displayed the document entitled *Proposed TEC Scoring Summary* and he indicated the highlighted proposed changes showing the removal of the Health Impact Assessment and its point being assigned to Disadvantaged Communities under Environmental Justice and Title VI. Mr. McCaul explained that once the proposed changes to the TEC are approved by the JTC members and guidance is obtained from MassDOT, there will be further review of the TEC and the TEC Evaluation Criteria form in 2022.

Mr. McCaul then displayed the 12 – page, TEC Evaluation Criteria form which delineated the 8 TEC categories and their subcategories. Mr. McCaul proceeded to discuss those categories that had proposed changes highlighted in yellow. Mr. McCaul pointed out language changes in Category 1 to the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and in Category 2 to a targeted development site. He stated that a project partly serving (25% - 50%) a targeted development site will be awarded ½ a point while a project serving greater than 50% of a targeted development site will receive one point. The proposed change in Category 4 is to increase from a ½ point to one point a project receives for serving an area that is targeted as a Priority Protection Area (PPA) in the Valley Vision Map. Mr. McCaul reported that changes to Category 5 regarding the number and severity of collisions assists rural areas.

Mr. McCaul announced that a new criteria has been added to Category 8, Environmental Justice, which is based on a recently released memo from the federal government. He explained that the memo defines 13 criteria to use in order to categorize a community as a disadvantaged community which will award TEC points. Mr. McCaul commented that he believes Environmental Justice will become a performance measure in the near future.

Mr. McCaul stated that action by the MPO is not needed at today’s meeting. He explained that the JTC members will be asked to review these proposed changes and provide feedback before the November 10th JTC meeting. At their November meeting, the JTC members will be asked to recommend the TEC for review and a 21-day public review release by the MPO members at their November 23rd meeting. Mr. McCaul indicated the goal will be to obtain approval from the MPO of the proposed TEC by December or January the latest so that the updated version of the TEC can be utilized for the next TIP development process. Mr. McCaul added that a longer term project will be establishing a working group with the JTC members to potentially modernize and further update the TEC.

9. 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 seven TIP projects:

Proj. ID	Municipality	Project	Report delivered by Daryl Amaral of MassDOT District Two Office
606450	Holyoke	Traffic Signals - 15 Intersections	75% design due October 28; public hearing held on August 18th
608374	West Springfield	Memorial Ave. Reconstruction	under public review
608577	Easthampton	Union St. to High St., Rt. 147	PS&E received on October 21st and currently under review
605126	Ware	Bridge Replacement over Ware River	100% review completed on October 20th; PS&E due November 16th
608473	South Hadley	Resurfacing Route 116	Awaiting Right-of-Way (ROW) and environmental clearances
609515	Northampton	SRTS -Safe Routes to School - Bridge St.	Design public hearing held on June 2nd; PS&E due November 13th
608719	Amherst	Norwottuck Rail Trail Resurfacing	25% submission approved for public hearing on October 13th; design public hearing scheduled for November 18th

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	Cumington	Retaining Wall Replacement on Route 9	Currently evaluating design options and working on 25% design submittal
609287	Worthington	Phase 2 of Route 143 Reconstruction	Anticipating 100% design submittal in November 2021
612031	Worthington	Resurfacing of Route 112 from roundabout to the Huntington Town line	Approved in March 2021 and preliminary design work is upcoming

Mr. Frieri stated that District One wishes to update the MPO regarding three additional Municipal TIP projects not currently programmed but active in the design stage:

Project ID	Municipality	Project	Report delivered by Peter Frieri of MassDOT District One Office
608787	Williamsburg	Construction of the Mill River Greenway	25% design submittal expected in early 2022
607231	Williamsburg	Reconstruction of Mountain Road	Design public hearing was held in June
608886	Chesterfield	Reconstruction of North & Damon Pond Roads	Design public hearing held on June 2nd; PS&E due November 13

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

10. 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 that the PVTA, just as other businesses in the region, is struggling with labor shortages and has been unable to provide some of its services. Ms. Sheehan explained that the PVTA in collaboration with the PVPC and other operating entities has been evaluating existing bus routes based on ridership and performance with the goal to analyze and evaluate options that can be managed with the existing PVTA staff while minimizing the impact to ridership. Currently, there is a shortage of 25 drivers, 35 part-time Umass drivers and 6 paratransit drivers. Ms. Sheehan further reported that temporary schedule changes and adjustments to routes in Northampton and Springfield have been identified, and these changes will be presented to the public. After approval, these changes will begin on November 1st in Northampton and on December 1st in Springfield.

Ms. Sheehan noted that 122 driving hours have been reduced along with 15 jobs. She reported that the PVTA used to hire only individuals who had their CDL license but now, the PVTA will pay for individuals to obtain their CDL licenses. She added that the hope is to increase the number of PVTA employees.

11. Other Business

Mr. Woelfel announced that the virtual Moving Together Conference is scheduled for December 7 to December 9, and will include shared roadway infrastructure, mobility equity, site visits and safe, sustainable mobility. Mr. Woelfel stated that the cost of the conference is \$50.00 and speakers for the conference are being sought. Mr. Roscoe asked if attendance was limited and Mr. Woelfel replied that it is unlimited and approximately 100 people have registered. Mr. Roscoe stated that the next MPO meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 23, 2021.

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 DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO ADJOURN THIS OCTOBER 26, 2021 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S MPO.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, OCTOBER 26TH MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:00 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the October 26, 2021 MPO Meeting

1. *Pioneer Valley Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting Notice and Agenda: October 26, 2021*
2. *Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting: May 25, 2021*
3. *Draft 2022 – 2026 TIP*
4. *Draft FY2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)*
5. *TIP Comments*
6. *Evaluation Criteria*
7. *TEC Scoring Summary*