

Minutes of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, April 25, 2023

MPO Members Present:

Stephen Woelfel Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), representing MPO Chair Gina Fiandaca, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer

Paula Simmons MassDOT, District Two, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator

Joshua Garcia Mayor, City of Holyoke

Walter Gunn Chair, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)

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

Jim Barry Belchertown

Alternate / Ex-officio MPO Members Present:

Mark Gold Town of Longmeadow

Andrew Reovan FHWA

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Sandra Sheehan Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Administrator

Daryl Amaral MassDOT Highway District 2

Ben Breger MassDOT Highway District 2

Van Kacoyannakis VHB

Derek Krevat MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP)

Andrew McCaul Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section

Mark Moore MassDOT Highway District 1

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)

Ben Murpny Town of Monson

Chris Klem MassDOT – OTP

Mark Berman Town of East Longmeadow

Bill Dwyer Town of Hadley

Mark Moore MassDOT Highway District 1

Peter Frieri MassDOT Highway District 1

Michael McManus McMahan

Ben Berger MassDOT Highway District 2

Geof McAlmond Town of Ware

Andrew Wang MassDOT OTP

Michelle Ho MassDOT OTP

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 Gina Fiandaca, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and CEO, called the April 25, 2023 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Woelfel first reviewed the virtual meeting format and noted that the meeting was 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 Gina Fiandaca; Paula Simmons, representing Jonathan Gulliver MassDOT Highway Division Administrator; Walter Gunn, Chair PVPC; Douglas Slaughter, Chair PVTA Advisory Board; Joshua Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke; Jim Barry; 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 March 28, 2023

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve March 28, 2023, meeting minutes of the Pioneer Valley MPO.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 28, 2023, MEETING MINUTES OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the proposed amendment to the FFY 2023 Transit TIP is currently out for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul presented the TIP Revisions Report. He stated that a line item was removed to ensure matching funds. The MPO released the amendment at the March meeting, and no comments were received.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse the proposed amendments to the FFY2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE FFY 2023 TRANSIT TIP.

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

4. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval to release a proposed FFY 2023 TIP – Highway Amendment for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul stated that this was the highway side of the TIP. The proposed amendment was to remove a line item for \$1.458 million for the Valley Bike Share, and the proposed action will result in the line item being placed in year 25 of the draft 24 to 28 TIP. The second item was a cost increase of about \$500,000 on a bridge in Holland. It was proposed to move the line item from the TIP because several projects were increasing in price. It was agreed that the bridge would be delayed slightly. Finally, a proposed cost increase of \$500,000 was proposed for the Wales Bridge Replacement on Holland Road.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the proposed FFY2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments for public review.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED FFY 2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW.

It was discussed that the lead signer of the contractor was the City of North Hampton, and the company responsible for Bewegen filed for bankruptcy in Canada, so North Hampton was trying to negotiate an interim agreement to allow bikes to be on the road in May. It was asked how it would be funded if this was removed from the TIP. It was reported that the operations and maintenance were always separate, so this action acknowledges that the system will not be added today. Still, it will be considered when it is more defined what is happening with the program. It was discussed that most cities where these programs were successful had a significant private entity backing to fund the programs. In Springfield, there has never been a commitment from a single entity, and each municipality has subsidized it.

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 Draft FFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux stated that the proposed UPWP would run from October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024. The draft document was sent to the MPO. He reported that the first two pages were the executive summary and gave a brief overview. In Table 1, there were proposed fundings. There were two funding sources, the first which was federal planning funds and section 5303 transit money from FTA, and the second was through the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority. The RTP planning tasks advanced recommendations and goals of the regional transportation plan. The items included: complete streets planning, bike and pedestrian safety study, regional freight planning, regional congestion management process, regional pavement management system, regional performance measures assessment, regional safety and planning studies, transit system surveys and route implementation, regional transit planning, paratransit planning assistance, climate change implementation that will involve electric charging vehicles, and green streets and infrastructure. The ongoing transportation planning will include updating the land use and housing work, supporting scenic byways, and providing local technical assistance for up to three days when requested. Just over \$2 million was programmed for FFY2024. Table 1 shows how the money was put into the appropriate tasks. At least 2.5% of the planning funds were required to be spent on activities to implement Complete Streets Planning, and Table 2 shows how this would be advancing. The 2.5% target was exceeded. Task 3.2 recognized the rise in severe injuries and fatalities in the region. The intent was to work with the JTC and MPO to review all Walk audits, utilizing the Crash Portal, work with the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Complete Streets Subcommittee, work with the JTC, develop a data collection plan and perform it, and present a final report for the JTC and MPO in September 2024.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the draft FFY 2024 UPWP for the 21-day public review period.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE DRAFT 2024 UPWP FOR THE 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD.

Mr. Gunn asked if the \$25,000 line for the local technical assistance was additional. Mr. Roux stated that the line item was in the work plan and was usually used to attend a public meeting or review a project.

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. Review Discussion and MPO approval to release the Draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul reported that the top item included non-federal money. In year one, there was just over \$62 million; in year two, there was \$250 million; in year three, there was \$80 million; in year four, there was \$444 million; and in year five, there was \$103 million. In 2027, there will be \$200 million for the North End Bridge and another \$100 million for a bridge in Springfield. The target funds were under \$33 million for year one, \$32.3 million for year two, \$39 million for year three, \$31.5 million for year four, and \$39.7 million for year five. The total money available was \$4.6 million. On the transit side, there were proposed expenditures of \$41.4 million for year one, \$64.4 million for year two, \$39.5 million for year three, \$29.8 million for year four, and \$37.7 for year five. In year two, it went up because of the 5339 money received that would be spent over multiple years.

In year one, 2024, three projects were proposed to be funded: the Wales-Reconstruction and improvements, the reconstruction of Sumner Avenue in Springfield, and the reconstruction of Route 143. There was \$947,000 available. In year two, the projects were Longmeadow, Holyoke, and Northampton, and the Valley Bike Share Expansion, Phase 3. The Longmeadow project cost had increased so that the Northampton project would be constructed over multiple construction seasons and funded over the seasons. There were also bridge investments, school improvements, and other projects. In year three, 2026, there was the Williamsburg reconstruction, South Hadley reconstruction, Chicopee intersection improvements, and the Northampton Project. In year four, 2027, the remainder of the Williamsburg reconstruction project, Easthampton, East Longmeadow, and Westfield intersection

improvements were completed. It was reported that there was a \$6 million cost increase for the Chesterfield project. Section 2A contained \$100 million for the Springfield Bridge project and additional money for other projects. 2028 will include Easthampton improvements, Longmeadow resurfacing, Southampton reconstruction, and Monson resurfacing. There were further investments in bridges and other projects, including the Mill River Greenway. It was discussed that once the Chesterfield project cost was updated, it would be out of constraint by \$6 million, and it was recommended to release the document as is and accept comments on how to address the issue. Options for solving the issue included talking to Chesterfield, figuring out how to construct the project with the money available, removing the project and moving it to 2029, or waiting to see if there was some other movement that would open the \$6 million opportunity.

It was agreed upon that it would be put out for public review.

Mr. McCaul reported that the transit side was developed and was nearly identical every year. He presented the document.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP for the 21-day public review period.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE DRAFT FFY 2024-2028 TIP FOR THE 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW 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.

7. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – Development Update

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that it was expected to have more chapters out over the next few weeks. The financial constraint chapter draft will be presented to the MPO at the May meeting. There was a draft version of the safety chapter on the website. It was expected to release a draft version of the congestion chapter soon. An environmental consultation was scheduled for May 3rd from 1 to 3 pm. There was also an online interactive map that allowed projects to be viewed. It was discussed that the meeting would address comments and questions, but comments and questions were accepted outside of the meeting in writing or by email. Mr. Roux presented the map and showed the different layers that can be seen. Mr. McCaul discussed that some off-ramp analysis was done, and the map presented the congested ramps. The performance measure and the TTI score were also used. Mr. Roux presented the RTP discretionary funding poll results, and it had been proposed to reduce the roadway maintenance projects to 62.5%, but some concerns were raised, so it was increased to 65%.

There was a consensus to move forward with the 65% for roadway maintenance projects.

Mr. Roux presented the system performance report. He reported that eight targets still made sense, but nine targets needed to be modified. For some of the proposed targets, the date needed to be extended. For example, bike facility miles were suggested to increase the total regional bike facility mileage by 10% by 2030 over the 2020 mileage. The new proposed target for GHG emissions was to adopt the transportation sector GHG sub-limits from the June 2022 EEA determination letter. The new proposed target for the weight and height-restricted target was to maintain a downward trend in regional restricted bridge totals. For the park and ride lot use, the new proposed target was to increase use by 5% over the 2019 average occupancy by 2030. For the sidewalk infrastructure, the new proposed target was to increase the total regional sidewalk mileage by 10% by 2030 over the 2018 mileage. Everyone was on board with the proposed targets.

8. Review discussion and MPO endorsement of the required annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Self Certification

Dana Roscoe reported that the MPO acknowledged annually that the TIP and the long-range plan comply with state and federal requirements in 11 specific points.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse the GHG self-certification.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE GHG SELF-CERTIFICATION.

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

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

9. Review discussion and MPO endorsement of the required annual Self-Certification of the 3C Planning Process

Mr. Roscoe stated this focused on broad federal requirements. He reported that the certification review was completed, and no findings were received.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse self-certification of the 3C planning process.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE GHG SELF-CERTIFICATION.

Mr. Andrew Reovan said he would send the report and certification letter soon. The MPO did receive two commendations and a few minor recommendations.

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

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

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

Pete, MassDOT District One, provided the following updates:

2023 project: On March 31s, District 1 submitted a combined 100% PS&E for the Cummington Retaining Wall. The Submittal is currently under review by MassDOT.

2024 Projects:

- **Project 609287** - Phase 2 Worthington Route 143 Reconstruction; CHA is working on the final design to be submitted in May 2023
- **Bridge Project in Williamsburg:** It was initially programmed for 2024 but was now considered in 2026.
- **Chesterfield North Road and Damon Pond Road:** The 75% design was received, and that will be reviewed soon.

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

- **Project 606895** – Granby improvements at 2 locations on Route 202, School Street, and Five Corners; the design is at 100%; review comments were completed October 3rd; PS&E is due May 17th; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 608073** – Westfield River Levee multi-use path construction; the design is at 100%; PS&E review completed; the right-of-way for proof was on March 24th; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 604209 - Holyoke**, West Springfield rehab of Route 5 – design at 100%; 100% submission including water main review completed; PS&E is due by the end of the week; current ad date is June 10, 2023
- **Project 608580** – Non-target project; Springfield improvements on St. James at Tapley Street; ad date was on April 15th; bid opening scheduled for May 16th, 2023
- **Project 608163** – Wales reconstruction improvements on Monson Road from Monson town line to Reed Hill Road; design is at 75%; draft comments were received and under review; current ad date is March 2, 2024
- **Project 608717** – Springfield reconstruction of Sumner Avenue at Dickinson and Belmont. Design is at 75%; awaiting environmental permits; 100% design is due at the end of the week; current ad date is January 6, 2024
- **Project 608881** – Longmeadow-Springfield resurfacing and intersection projects, Route 5, and Congress Street; the design is at 100% and received on April 5th; the comments are due May 5th; the current ad date was January 18th,

2025

- **Project 608065** – Holyoke resurfacing, city center connection; the design was at 75% and was received on April 4; comments were due July 5th; the current ad date was February 2nd, 2025
- **Project 609286** – North Hampton downtown; the design was at 25%; the design public hearing was scheduled on April 26th

11. 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 presented that the February ridership figures showed further increases. It was 9% higher than the previous year, with a 50% increase in the North Hampton and Springfield routes. In addition, four routes in the Amherst area exceeded pre-pandemic times. The preliminary figures from March showed a continued increase. She reported they were currently working on finalizing the fiscal year 2024 budget. PVTA was currently taking delivery of 20 budgets. The design activities were continued for the UMass transit garage and the electrification of the Springfield garage at Cottage Street.

12. Other Business

It was noted that it was Andrew Reovan’s last meeting, and he was thanked for his work.

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

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY DOUG SLAUGHTER, TO ADJOURN THE APRIL 25, 2023, MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:07 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,
Minutes Services

List of Documents Distributed at April 25, 2023, MPO Meeting

1. MPO Agenda: April 25, 2023
2. March 28, 2023, MPO Meeting Minutes