

Minutes of the Tuesday, July 25, 2017 Meeting of the
Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
held at the
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104-3419

MPO Members Present:

Stephen Woelfel	Deputy Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Representing MPO Chair Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer
Richard Cohen	Mayor, Town of Agawam
Jim Czach*	Chairman, Joint Transportation Committee & Town Engineer, Town of West Springfield
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Charles Kaniecki	Chairman, Southamptton Board of Selectmen
Richard Masse	MassDOT District Two Office (Northampton) Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, Acting Highway Administrator
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Doug Slaughter	Town of Amherst Selectboard
Rick Sullivan*	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

(* denotes non-voting members)

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Rana Al-Jammal	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Tim Brennan	Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Daniel Call	City of Westfield
Michelle Chase	Town Engineer, Town of Agawam
Mark Cressotti	Vice-Chair of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) and City Engineer, City of Westfield
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District One Office (Lenox)
Jeff Hoynoski	MassDOT District Two Office (Northampton)
Amir Kouzehkanani	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeff McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1 (Lenox)
Jeffrey Neece	Superintendent, Department of Public Works, City of Chicopee
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gabe Sherman	Project Manager, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP)
Matthew Sokop	Springfield Department of Public Works
Louise Sullivan	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Support Staff

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

Steve Woelfel, Deputy Director of Strategic Planning at the Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), representing Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), called the July 25, 2017 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:02 a.m. Mr. Woelfel then welcomed and thanked all those in attendance and called for introductions from meeting attendees.

Following introductions, Mr. Woelfel moved to take up the minutes of the previous MPO meeting held on May 23, 2017.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held on May 23, 2017

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on May 23, 2017.

MOVED BY RICHARD COHEN, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN OF THE PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC), FOR THE MPO, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE May 23, 2017 PIONEER VALLEY MPO MEETING AS PRESENTED. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS THEN APPROVED BY THE MPO MEMBERS PRESENT WITH ONE ABSTENTION BY RICHARD MASSE.

Mr. Woelfel then moved to address the next agenda item.

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval To Release Proposed Amendments to the Current 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to review a series of proposed amendments to the Pioneer Valley region's current, FFY 2017 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Roscoe stated that there are three proposed changes to the highway component of the Pioneer Valley region's current, FFY 2017 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that can be summarized as follows: (1) a cost increase to the *Improvements to Lower Westfield Road on the I-91 (Interchange 15) Project* in Holyoke (606903) from \$1,704,004 to \$2,337,883; (2) a cost increase to the *Agawam – West Springfield Bridge Replacement Project* which encompasses the bridge on *Route 147 over the Westfield River and Intersection and Signal Improvements at 3 Locations Project* (605384) from \$29,349,426 to \$31,130,586; and (3) a cost increase to the *Bridge Replacement, Bridge C-12-009, on Ireland Street over the West Branch of the Bronson Brook Project* in Chesterfield (607549), from \$3,341,440 to \$3,878,165. Mr. Roscoe reported that the cost increases to these three projects do not impact any other TIP projects; fiscal constraint is maintained; and the Pioneer Valley regional funding target is not impacted. Mr. Roscoe noted that these three cost increases are the only changes that are being proposed to the highway component of the FFY 2017 TIP for a 21-day public review. Mr. Roscoe stated that these changes will then be considered for endorsement at the August 22nd MPO meeting and the three projects are targeted to be advertised in September.

At this point, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the release this series of proposed amendments to the Pioneer Valley region's current, FFY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the required 21-day public review period.

MOVED BY RICHARD COHEN, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY RICHARD MASSE, OF THE MASSDOT DISTRICT TWO OFFICE, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE PROPOSED SERIES OF AMENDMENTS TO THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S CURRENT, FFY2017 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD, AS OUTLINED BY PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC) STAFF

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any questions or discussion on the subject motion.

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

Mr. Woelfel then moved to take up agenda item #4.

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release Proposed Amendments to the Current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) for the Required 21-day Public Review Period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to discuss several proposed amendments to the current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC). Mr. Roux stated that two applicable handout documents entitled *Approved TEC Scoring Summary* and *Proposed TEC Scoring Summary* are included in today's MPO meeting packet. Mr. Roux explained that the most recent federal certification review resulted in recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regarding the scoring criteria for *Environmental Justice*. Mr. Roux stated that *Environmental Justice* has always incorporated *Title VI*; however, the FHWA and FTA Review Team members have recommended that *Environmental Justice* and *Title VI* of the Civil Rights Act be considered to be separate categories in the TEC scoring of TIP projects. Mr. Roux asked the Pioneer Valley MPO members to refer to the document entitled *Approved TEC Scoring Summary* which illustrates the criteria that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) staff has been using to evaluate TIP projects over the past three years. Mr. Roux noted that the far right column of this document is entitled *Environmental Justice*, however, Mr. Roux then called the MPO members attention to the handout document entitled *Proposed TEC Scoring Summary* in which the title of the highlighted column to the far right has been revised as recommended by the FHWA and FTA Review Team and is now entitled *Environmental Justice and Title VI*.

Mr. Roux further explained that one point is awarded to a project if it helps to reduce adverse impacts on a community's environment; two points are awarded if a project is improving public transit for low-income and minority populations; and five points are subtracted if a project causes an Environmental Justice burden. Mr. Roux underscored that when a given TIP project improves in meeting Title VI requirements, it likewise improves Environmental Justice. Mr. Roux went on to explain that a half point is awarded if Environmental Justice population limits are being reduced; a half point is awarded for reducing impacts for a Title VI community; one point is awarded if public transit is improved for either Environmental Justice or Title VI populations; and 5 points up to 10 points can be taken away if a TIP project creates a burden to compliance with either Environmental Justice or Title VI requirements. Mr. Roux underscored that there will not be any change to the scoring of any projects currently in the universe of projects. Mr. Roux requested that the MPO members vote to release the proposed revised *Current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)* for a required 21-day public comment period.

At this point, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the release of the Pioneer Valley region's proposed revised *Current Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC)* for a required 21-day public comment period.

MOVED BY RICHARD COHEN, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY RICHARD MASSE, OF THE MASSDOT DISTRICT TWO OFFICE, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S *CURRENT TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA (TEC)* FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any questions or discussion on the subject motion.

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

Mr. Woelfel then moved to take up agenda item #5.

5. Update from PVPC Executive Director Timothy Brennan on the Current Status of Passenger Rail Projects in the Pioneer Valley Region

Mr. Woelfel next called on PVPC Executive Director Timothy Brennan to present an update on the current status of efforts to increase passenger rail service on the Knowledge Corridor within the Pioneer Valley. Mr. Brennan began by saying that as a result of the re-opening and \$95 million dollar restoration of Union Station, there is increased interest in securing additional passenger rail service for the Pioneer Valley region. Mr. Brennan stated that for the past three years, an ongoing project has been pursuing the expansion of passenger rail service on the Knowledge Corridor north of the City of Springfield in order to better serve the Cities of Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield. Mr. Brennan explained that Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation, had previously indicated to the public and the Pioneer Valley MPO a willingness to collaborate in this endeavor with two understandings: (1) the expansion of passenger rail service north of Springfield to serve the Cities of Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield would be recognized as a pilot service for approximately three years, during which time this expansion of passenger rail service will need to prove it is capable of generating the anticipated and necessary ridership to justify its operating cost; and (2) funding resources will need to be found to absorb the cost of the pilot service's annual operating deficit. Mr. Brennan reported that this project has now successfully gone through a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) consultation process which means that the project is now deemed eligible to receive CMAQ funding but such a future funding commitment will require review and approval by the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Mr. Brennan indicated that the short-range goal of passenger rail service expansion is to add two daily, roundtrip trains in the morning and two daily, roundtrip trains in the evening between Springfield and Greenfield. Mr. Brennan stated that the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) have been working in concert with the Rail and Transit Division of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to obtain a definitive and reliable cost estimate from Amtrak for this passenger rail service expansion. Mr. Brennan reported that the Amtrak cost estimate has been repeatedly delayed but a conference call to discuss this need for a cost estimate is tentatively scheduled with MassDOT's Rail and Transit Administrator Astrid Glynn for early next month and hopefully this cost estimate will be forthcoming by then.

Mr. Brennan noted that another longer-range passenger rail project is establishing an east-west rail connection which would link Boston, Worcester, Palmer, Springfield, Hartford and New Haven as well as subsequently re-establishing a rail connection with Montreal. Mr. Brennan indicated that the final Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI), rail study which was released in June 2016 and with the help of Congressman Richard Neal, recommends infrastructure improvements in order to implement eight round-trips per day between Boston, Worcester, Palmer, Springfield, Hartford, New Haven, and eventually a rail connection with Montreal. Mr. Brennan explained that the first step in implementing these NNEIRI rail improvements is to have them in an updated version of the Massachusetts State Rail Plan which is scheduled for completion by the end of 2017. Mr. Brennan reported that all the regional planning agencies in the Commonwealth recently received a list of all potential rail projects across the Commonwealth from MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning for review and comment. Mr. Brennan noted that three projects of regional interest and importance include:

- the expansion of north-south passenger rail service from Springfield to Greenfield
- the east-west rail connection linking Boston, Worcester, Palmer, Springfield, Hartford, New Haven, and eventually Montreal
- a freight upgrade to the Massachusetts portion of the New England Central Railroad corridor to elevate the tracks carry weight up to the modern standard of 286,000 pounds

Mr. Brennan noted that MassDOT is seeking initial feedback from all the regional planning agencies on the Commonwealth's universe of rail projects by August 2, 2017. In addition, Mr. Brennan reported that a draft version of an updated Massachusetts State Rail Plan is scheduled for release by October 2017 and that two public meetings are being planned by MassDOT, one of which will be held at the PVPC in Springfield. Mr. Brennan also noted that an announcement was made yesterday which sets a launch date of May 2018 for the

Connecticut Department of Transportation's new Hartford Line commuter service which will connect New Haven to Hartford with an estimated 19 round-trips a day and 12 round trips a day between New Haven and Springfield. Mr. Brennan added that there is a press release in today's meeting packet with additional details about the Hartford Line which is entitled *Governor Dannel Malloy Announces TransitAmerica Services and Alternate Concepts Selected as Service Provider for the Hartford Line Rail Service between New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield to Launch May 2018.*

Mr. Brennan noted that the PVPC has a cross-border partnership with Greater Hartford and New Haven in Connecticut called the New England Knowledge Corridor. Mr. Brennan explained that each year the New England Knowledge Corridor presents a "State of the Region" Conference. He reported that this year's conference is scheduled to be held at Union Station in Springfield on Wednesday, October 18, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Mr. Brennan announced that the theme of this upcoming conference is transportation assets that serve as an economic stimulus. He indicated that Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation, and her counterpart, James Redeker, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation will be in attendance. Mr. Brennan added that Robert Puentes, President and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation, will be the keynote speaker and several members of Congress from both Massachusetts and Connecticut will also be participating in the program. Mr. Brennan said a Save the Date card has already been sent out and an online registration form will be ready around Labor Day.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Brennan for his presentation and he then moved to take up the next agenda item

6. Report from Jim Czach, the Chairman of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC), on Important Transportation Issues and Projects Discussed Since the Last MPO Meeting was Held on May 23, 2017

Mr. Woelfel called on JTC Chairman Jim Czach to report on issues and projects discussed at the last meeting of the Pioneer Valley region's Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). Mr. Czach reported that at the last JTC meeting held in June, the proposed amendments to the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) document were discussed and as were taken up and reviewed earlier in today's MPO meeting. Mr. Czach stated that there may be another review of the TEC and if any further clarifications are needed, it will again be presented to the MPO members for their final approval. Mr. Czach reported that a request made by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that the TEC needs to be linked to the Ten Planning Factors encompassed in the federal "FAST Act" and this was a topic discussed at the June JTC meeting. Mr. Czach encouraged comments and suggestions from the MPO members in order to further refine a modified version of the TEC to be used in the Pioneer Valley region.

Mr. Czach noted that MassBike was added as a voting member to the JTC years ago as a result of a certification review and now there's a recommendation from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to add a JTC representative from the region's Americans with Disability Act (ADA) community as well as a representative from the region's pedestrian community. Mr. Czach explained that as a result of their discussion, the JTC members have proposed to expand the JTC voting membership to include these new JTC representatives on a trial basis and to offer full JTC membership status after a full year assessment of how this expansion is working.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Jim Czach for his report on behalf of the JTC and he then moved to take up the next agenda item

7. 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 Peter Frieri of the MassDOT District One office in Lenox to present District One's updates on relevant transportation issues and projects. Mr. Frieri reported that District One has two projects in the current FFY 2017 TIP. Mr. Frieri reported that the *Bridge Replacement at Ireland Street over the Bronson Brook Project in Chesterfield (Project 607549)* has not yet gone out to bid but the project has reached the 75% design stage and the structural design plans for it are currently under review. Mr. Frieri also reported that on April 4, 2017, the 100% design plans were approved by MassDOT for the municipally designed *West Street Reconstruction (Project 605150)* in the Town of Goshen with the right-of-way meeting to be scheduled in August.

Finally, Mr. Frieri added that the Town of Worthington is funding design plans for a major Route 143 reconstruction project, which is not yet programmed in the region's TIP. This Route 143 project reached the 75% design stage as of May 1, 2017 and these plans are currently under review by MassDOT.

Mr. Woelfel next called on Mike Bolduc of the MassDOT District Two office in Northampton to present District Two's updates on relevant transportation projects within District Two's jurisdiction. Mr. Bolduc reported that the *Center Street Reconstruction Project (605011) in Ludlow* has reached the 100% design stage on May 12, 2017; the PS&E is due this week; and this project will be advertised by MassDOT in August. Mr. Bolduc stated that *Improvements to Lower Westfield Road in Holyoke at Route I-91 (Project 606903)* has reached the 100% design stage, has completed its right-of-way process as well as environmental permitting and the PS&E. Mr. Bolduc reported that the *Amherst-Hadley Route 9 Sidewalk Construction Project (608023)* has received its PS&E, completed its right-of way process and its environmental process. He reported that the *Congamond Road Reconstruction Project (604033) in Southwick* has reached the 100% design stage, received its PS&E, has been environmentally cleared and has gone through its right-of- way process. He also reported that the *Agawam-West Springfield Bridge Replacement on Route 147 Project (605384)* reached the 100% design stage in March of 2017 and its PS&E is currently under review. Mr. Bolduc stated that the *Mill Street Bridge Replacement Project in Amherst (Project 607528)* reached its 100% design stage; received its PS&E and is scheduled to be advertised next month. Mr. Bolduc concluded his report saying that the *Chicopee-Springfield Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on Route I-291 Project (608211)* was advertised in December, awarded on July 11 and the contractor selected for this project is waiting for a notice to proceed.

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Frieri and Mr. Bolduc for their District One and Two project updates and he moved to take up the next agenda item.

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

Mr. Woelfel called for a report and update from Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Administrator Sandra Sheehan. Ms. Sheehan reported that the PVTA held 22 public hearing in June and the PVTA Advisory Board voted last week to reduce or eliminate PVTA bus service on up to 20 bus routes in order to partially close an estimated \$1.38 million budget gap in FY 2018. Ms. Sheehan stated that the PVTA is balancing its budget with a series of service cuts and a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant which will be used to operate the Purple P21 Route, which is an express service that utilizes an electric bus. Ms. Sheehan also reported that the PVTA has asked to use restricted funds from its reserve fund and has announced that its service changes will need to go into effect on August 27th and September 5th respectively.

9. Other Business

Mr. Woelfel asked if there was any further business for the MPO members to address at today's meeting. Mr. Brennan noted that now that the region's TIP for FFY 2018 is completed, MassDOT needs to take up the region's priority request that the EDC of Western Massachusetts become a voting member of the Pioneer Valley MPO.

Mr. Roscoe announced that the next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, August 22nd beginning at 10:00 a.m. There being no further business, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to adjourn the July 25th, 2017 Pioneer Valley MPO meeting.

MOVED BY RICHARD COHEN, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY CHARLES KANIECKI, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTHAMPTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 25, 2017 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S MPO. THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE JULY 25TH MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:00 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the July 25, 2017 MPO Meeting

1. *Pioneer Valley Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting Notice and Agenda: July 25, 2017*
2. *Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting: Wednesday, May 23, 2017*
3. *Approved (current) Transportation Evaluation Criteria Summary*
4. *Transportation Evaluation Criteria Summary – PVPC Proposed June 2017*
5. *2017 Pioneer Valley Region MPO Transportation Improvement*
6. *2017 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Proposed Amendments – July 2017*
7. *Governor Dannel P. Malloy Announces TransitAmerica Services and Alternate Concepts Selected as Service Provider for the Hartford Line Rail Service between New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield*