

Minutes of the Tuesday, October 27, 2020 Virtual 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	Deputy Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Representing MPO Chair Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
Richard Masse	MassDOT District Two Office Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
David Narkewicz	Mayor, City of Northampton and Chair of the PVTA Advisory Board
William Reichelt	Mayor, Town of West Springfield
Sandra Sheehan*	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
John Vieau	Mayor, City of Chicopee

*denotes non-voting member

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Rana Al-Jammal	Senior Planner Specialist
Mark Cressotti	City Engineer, City of Westfield
Peter Frieri	MassDOT, District 1 Office
Douglas Hall	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Data Manager and Analyst
Laura Hanson	Assistant District Projects Engineer, MassDOT, Highway Division (District 2)
Peter Kuusisto	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transit Planner
Derek Krevat	Regional Planning Coordinator, MassDOT Planning
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Amelia Morrissey	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transit Planner
Bryan Pounds	Transportation Planner and STIP Coordinator, MassDOT
Kimberly H. Robinson	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Executive Director
Andrew Reovan	Community Planner and PVPC Liaison with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Louise Sullivan	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Support Staff
Richard Sullivan	CEO and President, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

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, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Representing MPO Chair Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of

Transportation and Chief Executive Officer, called the October 27, 2020 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:01 a.m. Mr. Woelfel then asked for a roll call from the MPO members present as follows: Richard Masse, MassDOT District Two, Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver; David Narkewicz, Mayor of Northampton and PVTA Advisory Board Chair; Walter Gunn, Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor of Easthampton; William Reichelt, Mayor of West Springfield; and Richard Sullivan, CEO and President, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts. 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 26, 2020.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held on September 22, 2020.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on September 22, 2020.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 22, 2020 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 Approval to release Proposed Amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Required 21-day public review period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to discuss the release of the proposed amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Roscoe noted that a 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Program Grant was received by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) which needs to be included in the FFY 2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Roscoe asked that the FFY TIP be released for the required 21-day public review period. He stated that comments received during the public review period will be shared at the next MPO meeting, and the MPO members will be asked for their endorsement. Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to release this transit amendment for a 21-day public review period.

MOVED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE 2021 PIONEER VALLEY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PVPC STAFF

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

Mr. Woelfel then asked Derek Krevat, Regional Planning Coordinator for MassDOT Planning, to take up agenda item #4.

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Endorse the new State Targets for PM3 Air Quality Standards for the Springfield Urbanized Area

Derek Krevat, Regional Planning Coordinator for MassDOT Planning, stated that the MPO is required to adopt federal performance measures that are set by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. Krevat explained that approval for endorsement is being requested for Performance Measure, PM3, which is one of the three categories of Performance Measures required by the FHA. He noted that the other two categories are Safety Measures, PM1, and Pavement Conditions and Bridge Performance, PM2. Mr. Krevat explained that Performance Measure PM3 refers to the amount of emissions and the air quality estimated to be reduced through projects funded by the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program (CMAQ).

Mr. Krevat stated that the City of Springfield is classified as a Maintenance Area for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter. He explained that as a result, PM3 is relevant to the Pioneer Valley because the *Springfield Intersection Improvements at Cottage Street, Industry Avenue and Robbins Road* Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project is funded by CMAQ which requires that the project's emissions reductions be reported.

Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to approve the new State Targets for PM3 Air Quality Standards for endorsement.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO ENDORSE THE NEW STATE TARGETS FOR PM3 AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR THE SPRINGFIELD URBANIZED AREA

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

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

5. Presentation by PVPC Data Manager Doug Hall on the Transportation Impacts of COVID-19 on the Pioneer Valley region

PVPC Data Manager Doug Hall began his presentation with two PowerPoint slides illustrating the number of Massachusetts confirmed COVID-19 cases since the lowest case count back in June and the number of Springfield COVID-19 cases confirmed from July 15th to October 21st, 2020. Mr. Hall reported that new COVID-19 cases nearly doubled in the last 14 days in Springfield which prompted Mayor Domenic Sarno to say that the City is in a very dangerous time.

Mr. Hall reported that 75% of Massachusetts residents think it will be six months or more before life is back to normal; and 4 in 10 residents think it will take more than a year to return to normal. Mr. Hall underscored that as long as the pandemic persists, the Massachusetts economy will struggle. He noted that in the month of August 2020, the Massachusetts labor force was down 7.3% from what it was in August 2019. He indicated that COVID-19 has adversely affected transportation in the Pioneer Valley, namely, trips taken, transit, air travel and alternative modes of transportation. Mr. Hall cited as an example that between October 2019 and October 2020, weekly trips decreased over all by 30% in Hampshire County and by 38% in Hampden County with a greater reduction in longer trips.

Mr. Hall pointed out the effect of the pandemic on post-secondary education: enrollment is down from 2019 levels at the community colleges with Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) down 15%; Holyoke Community College (HCC) down 14% and Greenfield Community College down 8%. Similarly, monthly Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) ridership is down from 2019 levels. Mr. Hall reported that last month in September, PVTA ridership declined 68% probably because most students were attending classes remotely. He added that the Springfield area PVTA ridership was 55% of 2019 levels and air travel dropped 76% in May. Mr. Hall noted that travel decline has decimated revenue sources for the Commonwealth Transportation Fund which is down 16.4% partially due to motor vehicles sales taxes being down by 7.5%; and gasoline revenue being down by 23%.

Mr. Hall concluded his presentation by discussing the impact of COVID-19 on where people may choose to live in the near future and the possibility that the Pioneer Valley may see a net population gain. He remarked that the Coronavirus may prompt migration out of American cities and increase substantially the number of workers working from home.

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any questions or comments for Mr. Hall. There being none, Mr. Woelfel moved on to the next agenda item.

6. 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 Laura Hanson of the MassDOT District Two office in Northampton to present District Two's updates on relevant transportation issues and projects. Ms. Hanson reported on three transportation projects that have been advertised and have an upcoming bid opening scheduled:

- *Chicopee Traffic Signal Improvements and Ramp Resurfacing at I-90, Interchange 6* (Project #606599) Bid Opening 11/17/20
- *Granby-South Hadley Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 2020* (Project #607474) Bid Opening 10/27/20
- *Northampton Bridge Replacement over U.S. Route 5 and Bridge Replacement over Hockanum Road and Improvements to I-91 Interchange 18* (Project #606552) Bid Opening 12/1/20

Ms. Hanson reported that three transportation projects have had a recent bid opening and are waiting for the Award to the Contractors:

- *Chicopee Reconstruction and Related Work on Fuller Road from Memorial Drive to Shawinigan Drive, Bid opened on 10/20/20*
- *Northampton Intersection Improvements at King Street, North Street and Summer Street and at King Street and Finn Street* (Project #607502) Bid opened on 9/29/20
- *Springfield Intersection Improvements at Berkshire Avenue, Cottage and Harvey Streets* (Project #608718) Bid opened on 10/6/20

Ms. Hanson presented FFY 2021 project updates as follows:

- *Hadley, Route 9 from Middle Street to Maple and South Maple Street* (Project #605032). Project is at 100% design and PS&E is due November 24th.
- *Springfield Intersection of Cottage Street, Industry Avenue, and Robbins Road* (Project #608782). PS&E design was received on 9/25/20 and MassDOT completed reviews on 10/5/20.
- *Westfield, Route 20 (Phase II) from Court Street & Western Avenue/Lloyds Hill Road to High and Mill Streets* (Project #607773). The 100% submission was received and reviews will be sent to Boston in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Woelfel next 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 on District Two's TIP transportation improvement projects as follows:

- *Route 143 Reconstruction and Related Work – Phase 2* in the Town of Worthington (Project #606912) is at 75% design and 100% design will be completed in 2021. *Phase 1* of the project will be 25% by the end of the year and the balance will be completed next year.

7. 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 was in attendance but couldn't deliver her update due to a microphone malfunction.

8. Other Business

Mr. Roscoe welcomed Andrew Reovan as the new PVPC Liaison with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Mr. Roscoe also announced that the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations is awarding Tim Brennan their lifetime achievement award today at their annual conference.

Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY DAVID NARKEWICZ, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO ADJOURN THIS OCTOBER 27, 2020 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S MPO. THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THIS OCTOBER 27th MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:48 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission