

Minutes of the Tuesday, November 24, 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
Roger Fuller	Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Richard Masse	MassDOT District Two Office Representing Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Rick Sullivan	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Patrick Beaudry	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Public Affairs
Paul Burns	Director of Transit Operations, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Mark Cressotti	City Engineer, City of Westfield
Peter Frieri	MassDOT, District 1 Office
Laura Hanson	Assistant District Projects Engineer, MassDOT, Highway Division (District 2)
Derek Krevat	Regional Planning Coordinator, MassDOT Planning
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Moore	MassDOT Project Development Engineer
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

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; Walter Gunn, Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Springfield; Richard Sullivan, CEO and President, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts; Roger Fuller, Selectboard Member, Town of Chesterfield; 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 October 27, 2020.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held on October 27, 2020.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on October 27, 2020.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 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 COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY THE MPO MEMBERS PRESENT.

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Endorse Proposed Amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Currently Advertised for the Required 21-day public Review Period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to discuss the endorsement of proposed amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Roscoe noted that there was an announcement at the last MPO meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) having received funding for the purchase of transit equipment and for facility upgrades. He noted that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) recently received the *Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone* (HOPE) Grant for \$680,000.

Mr. Roscoe called the attention of the MPO members to the displayed slide illustrating the proposed transit amendments: *Acquire Mobile Fare Collection Equipment* (RTD0009465) and *Acquisition of Bus Support Equipment/Facilities* (RTD0009464).

Mr. Roscoe reported that these two transit amendments have been out for the required 21-day public review and no public comments have been received. He recommended moving forward with the endorsement of these proposed amendments. Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to endorse the proposed amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2021 PIONEER VALLEY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).

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

Mr. Woelfel then asked Mr. Roscoe to take up agenda item #4.

4. 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

PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe displayed the slide listing the four proposed amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) needing approval to be released for the required 21-day public review period. Mr. Roscoe stated that these four bridge projects are statewide funded projects which have no impact on the regional target. Mr. Roscoe reported, as noted below, that the last two bridge projects are being removed from the 2021 TIP.

- FFY 2021 Add Monson/Palmer Bridge (697688) Park St/Boston Rd EB over Quaboag River for \$10,207,987
- FFY 2022 Reduce Northampton I-91 Bridge (606552) AC Funds from \$10,293,810 to \$3,370,385
- FFY 2023 Remove all AC Funds (\$9,861,497) for Northampton Bridge (606552)
- FFY 2024 Remove all AC Funds (\$4,474,545) for Northampton Bridge (606552)

Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to approve the release the proposed amendments to the 2021 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the required 21-day public Review Period.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2021 PIONEER VALLEY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD.

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

Mr. Woelfel called on Mr. Roscoe once again to discuss the next agenda item.

5. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Endorse Proposed Changes to the PVPC Federal Self-Certification Documentation

PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe explained that the PVPC Federal Self-Certification is conducted annually and the PVPC Federal Self-Certification Document was distributed to all the MPO members in today's meeting packet. Mr. Roscoe reported that the PVPC Federal Self-Certification was conducted in May but since then there has been a language change in 23 CFR, part 230, regarding implementation of an equal employment opportunity program regarding federal and federal-aid highway construction contracts. Given this change, Mr. Roscoe gave his assurance that the MPO members are being asked to endorse the most recent language changes in the updated PVPC Federal Self-Certification Document. Mr. Roscoe stated that in normal times, the Self-Certification document would be endorsed by each and every member of the MPO; however given remote meetings, the endorsement will only be signed by the Deputy Director of the Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Representing the Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation.

Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to endorse the updated PVPC Federal Self-Certification Documentation.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS, TO APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PVPC FEDERAL SELF-CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION.

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

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

6. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Endorse Proposed Targets for the PVTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)

Mr. Roscoe reported that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) presented the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) to the MPO members six months ago, and one of the PTASP requirements is that the MPO members adopt the PTASP targets that were shared at that time.

Mr. Woelfel called on Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA), to discuss the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). Mr. Burns stated that the PTASP FY 2020 targets through June 30, 2021 as approved by the PVTA Advisory Board are:

- Fatality Rate .0058 per million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or fatalities,
- Rate of incapacitating injuries .0437 per million VMT.
- Target fatalities 0
- Target for incapacitating injuries 0

Mr. Roscoe explained the goal is to move both highway and transit into more performance-based planning by establishing ideal performance measures for the PVTA. Mr. Woelfel then called for a motion to endorse the Proposed Targets for the PVTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP).

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY RICH MASSE, MASSDOT DISTRICT ONE OFFICE, TO APPROVE THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE PROPOSED TARGETS FOR THE PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PVTA) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN (PTASP).

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

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 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 two transportation projects that have had a recent Bid Opening and are waiting on the Award to the Contractor:

- (1) *GRANBY- SOUTH HADLEY- RESURFACING AND RELATED WORK ON ROUTE 202, FROM LYMAN STREET, SOUTH HADLEY TO PLEASANT STREET, GRANBY (607474)* -This Project was originally advertised 9/14/19 with a Bid Opening on 10/27/2020 (Ludlow Construction).

- (2) NORTHAMPTON- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT KING STREET, NORTH STREET & SUMMER STREET AND AT KING STREET & FINN STREET (607502) Bid was opened on 9/29/20 (Morias Concrete Service).

Ms. Hanson also reported on two transportation projects that have recently been awarded to the Contractor and are waiting for the Notice to Proceed:

- (1) *CHICOPEE- RECONSTRUCTION AND RELATED WORK ON FULLER ROAD, FROM MEMORIAL DR. (RTE 33) TO SHAWINIGAN DR. (604434)* Bid was opened on 10/20/20 and was awarded on 11/10/20.
- (2) *SPRINGFIELD- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT BERKSHIRE AVENUE, COTTAGE AND HARVEY STREETS (608718)* Bid Opened on 10/6/20 and Awarded on 11/16/20.

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 that there have been no major updates since last month's MPO meeting. He stated that the *Route 143 Reconstruction and Related Work – Phase 2* Project in Worthington (606912) is at 75% design and 100% design phase will be completed in 2021. *Phase 1* of the project will be 25% design by the end of the year and work is being done to assist other transportation projects in achieving the 25% design phase.

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 underscored that the PVTA is working to keep its drivers and riders safe. Ms. Sheehan reported that the PVTA has instituted a new fare payment system that is contactless because riders are able to use their smartphones to make a payment through the use of the MassDOT BusPlus app. Ms. Sheehan further reported that the PVTA has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. PVTA's weekly ridership is only 67% of last year's weekly ridership level. Ms. Sheehan noted that the PVTA remains committed to providing efficient and cost-effective transit to the Pioneer Valley that meets the needs of the more vulnerable. She reported that the PVTA will be working with the PVPC and MassDOT on operational analysis and on balancing short term challenges with ridership while taking into consideration how riders' service needs will change in the future. In closing her presentation, Ms. Sheehan commented that the PVTA is considering a new fare policy for fiscal year 2022 and is performing an equity analysis to determine if fares should be increased or remain the same.

Mr. Roscoe asked Ms. Sheehan what impact the draft state budget will have on the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and the PVTA. Ms. Sheehan replied that the House of Representatives has a \$92.5 million dollar budget with \$87 million of it to be distributed to the RTAs using the old formula. She noted that \$3.5 million is to be distributed under the new formula which takes into consideration ridership, population, and the square miles of the area being served. Ms. Sheehan indicated the Senate budget has \$94.5 million: allocating \$92.5 for the RTAs and \$3.5 million to be distributed in discretionary funding. She noted that the PVTA is a recipient of the CARES Act and any deficit will be offset by CARES funds so no changes in transit service are anticipated.

8. Other Business

Currently, Mr. Roscoe reported, there are cost increases in the Amherst, the Hadley, the West Springfield and the Westfield TIP projects. Mr. Roscoe emphasized that because the regional target was programmed to the penny, these increased costs cannot be accommodated within the existing target. He reported that the JTC members met in

November and will meet again in December to decide how to proceed with these cost increases which will affect fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023 and likely 2024.

Mr. Roscoe indicated that he is providing a hyperlink to Masstrails Grant funding provided by MassDOT which has a February 1, 2021 submittal deadline.

Mr. Roscoe explained that if there's a MPO meeting in December, it will be on December 22nd. 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 WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN, PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, TO ADJOURN THIS NOVEMBER 24, 2020 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S MPO. THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THIS NOVEMBER 24th MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:35 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission