

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

MPO Members Present:

Derek Krevat	Office of Transportation Planning, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) representing MPO Chair Gina Fiandaca, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer
Roger Fuller	Town of Chesterfield
Joshua Garcia	Mayor, City of Holyoke
John Vieau	Mayor, City of Chicopee
Mark Gold	Town of Longmeadow
Walter Gunn	Chair, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
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
Leah Sirmin*	Federal Transit Administration

(* denotes non-voting member)

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Kimberly H Robinson	Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator Pioneer Valley Transit Authority
Rana Al-Jammal	Senior Planner Specialist
Daryl Amaral	MassDOT District Two Office, Acting State Aid Engineer
Ben Breger	MassDOT Highway District 2
William Dwyer	Town of Hadley, Planning Board
Christopher Klem	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP)
Carl Jackson	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeffrey McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Moore	MassDOT Highway District 1
Dawn Nims	City of Holyoke
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Mark Berman	Town of East Longmeadow
Dawn Scaporotti	Town of Goshen
Jim Czach	VHB
Connor Knightly	Town of West Springfield
Allison McMordie	City of Northampton
Peri Hall	Town of Goshen
Alexis Hosea-Abbott	MassBike
Bailey Pennington	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT - OTP
Peter Frieri	MassDOT Highway District 1
John Broderick	Town of South Hadley
Geoff McAlmond	Town of Ware
Khyati Parmar	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Cassandra Ostrander	MassDOT
Van Kacoyannakis	VHB
Andrew Wang	MassDOT

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

Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, representing MPO Chair Gina Fiandaca, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and CEO, called the July 25, 2023 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Krevat first reviewed the virtual meeting format, and he noted that the meeting is being recorded.

Carl Jackson took roll call and the following MPO members responded that they were present: Derek Krevat, representing MPO Chair Gina Fiandaca; William Reichelt, Mayor Town of West Springfield; Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor City of Easthampton; Mark Gold, Town of Longmeadow; Douglas Slaughter, Chair PVTA Advisory Board; Mark Moore, representing Highway Administer Jonathan Gulliver; Mayor John Vieau, City of Chicopee; Walter Gunn, representing the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Mayor Joshua Garcia. 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 June 27, 2023

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to approve the June 27, 2023 meeting minutes of the Pioneer Valley MPO.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE JUNE 27, 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 Amendments to the FFY 2023 – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – currently out for 21-day public review and comment

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that the draft amendment for the FFY2023 TIP was released by the MPO at the June meeting for the public comment period. There were 12 comments received, all of which were regarding the Northampton Downtown Complete Streets Project which was programmed for FFY 2025. Ten of the comments were emailed to the MPO members and the other two were available as well. The highway-side amendment consisted of the increased cost of Granby Improvements. It was proposed to endorse the amendments to the MPO.

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to endorse the proposed amendments to the FFY 2023 TIP to the MPO.

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

It was asked if the comments regarding the Downtown Complete Streets Projects were related to the current amendment. Mr. Roux stated that the current amendment involved the cost increase of Granby and was not directly related to the Downtown Complete Streets Project. Mr. Jackson then took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that there was an amendment for the Community Transit Grant Program and there were no comments received.

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to endorse the proposed amendments to the FFY 2023 TIP to the MPO.

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

Mr. Jackson then took roll call and each MPO member in attendance responded affirmatively.

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

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the Proposed Amendment to the FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) currently out for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that the amendments involved \$160,000 grant along with a budget

modification to move \$20,000 into direct costs for the purpose of buying new traffic counting supplies and computers. There were no comments received.

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to endorse the proposed amendments to the FFY 2023 UPWP to the MPO.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FFY 2023 UPWP.

Mr. Jackson 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 Endorsement of the Draft FFY 2024 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) currently out for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that the plan was released by the MPO at the June meeting. He reminded everyone that there was a website on which the plan as a whole and its individual chapters could be viewed. He reported that there were virtual and in-person events and virtual office hours held to answer any questions. He stated that he believed all comments could be satisfactorily addressed.

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to endorse the draft FFY 2024 RTP.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE DRAFT FFY 2024 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP).

Mr. Jackson 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 Proposed Transit Amendment to the FFY 2023 TIP for the required 21-day public review period

PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux reported that there were other projects that required adjustments. The projects were not included in the initial release that was out for the 21-day public review period. After a discussion with MassDOT, it was decided to release the amendment/adjustment for an abbreviated 15-day review period. If there were no comments received, there would be no need to endorse the amendments at the August meeting. Mr. Roux

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to release the proposed amendment to the Transit TIP for public review.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FFY 2023 TRANSIT TIP FOR THE ABBREVIATED 15-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD, AND IF THERE WERE NO COMMENTS THE AMENDMENTS WOULD BE CONSIDERED ENDORSED.

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

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

7. Update on the Current Status of the 2023 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Planning Certification Review

Leah Sherman provided an update on the Federal Certification Review findings for 2023. She reported that it was a review of the planning process, MPO, state DOT, and transit providers. It was required to be done for transportation management areas at least every four years. The components included ongoing oversight, federal actions taken, desk review, public input, site visits, and federal determination. The possible outcomes included full certification, conditional certification, partial certification, or withholding of certification and funding. There were no corrective actions during the review and so a full certification was granted. The commendations involved public outreach and involvement and the Complete Streets program. Cassandra Ostrander reported that recommendations included

adding additional detail in the end-of-year report to assess how the year's accomplishments align with established goals in the UPWP; in the TIP, include a clear comparison of anticipated revenues for expenditures for transit along with highways; integrate freight and delivery needs more directly into Complete Streets planning and project development work; seek creative and new ways to reach and engage environmental stakeholders; consider targeted outreach to environmental groups, including Federal and State land agencies, as part of RTP development and TEC updating processes; ensure RTP's system performance report includes baseline data and performance trends over time for federal measures; and that the TIP should include a forward-looking assessment of the anticipated effects of projects being programmed toward achieving the MPO's adopted targets.

Mr. Roux clarified that there was no vote required and this was for information. He stated that they were happy with the certification process in general.

8. Presentation: Massachusetts Department of Transportation – Vehicle Census Dashboard

Michael Melancio shared his screen to explain the Vehicle Census Dashboard. There were different tabs presenting the total vehicle count, the percentage of the total count that were zero-emission or hybrid vehicles, daily vehicle miles traveled, the percentage of daily vehicle miles traveled by zero-emission or hybrid vehicles, average mileage per day, and average mileage per day for zero-emission or hybrid vehicles. The second page allowed users to select certain municipalities, dates, vehicle types, and vehicle use. The third page showed the total number of registrations at single points in time. The fourth page showed the total number of vehicle miles traveled by a full year. Mr. Melancio reported that the data was available for users to download and do their own analyses if desired.

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

Peter Frieri, MassDOT District One, provided the following updates:

2023 project: The retaining wall replacement on Route 9 and Cumington would be advertised shortly.

2024 Projects:

- **Project 609287** - Phase 2 Worthington Route 143 Reconstruction; PS&E is expected to be submitted in August
- **Project 607675** - Replacement of 2 municipal bridges in Williamsburg over the Mill River; they are hosting a large virtual public hearing on July 27th at 6 pm
- MassDOT is wrapping up its 90-day review of the 75% submittal for the reconstruction of North Road and David Pond Road

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

- **Project 606895** – Granby improvements at 2 locations on Route 202, School Street and Five Corners; design is at PS&E review comments were completed June 9th; 100% was accepted on February 8th; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 608073** – Westfield River Levee multi-use path construction; design is at PS&E; PS&E review completed on June 9th; right-of-way was approved for acquisition in March; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 604209** - Holyoke, West Springfield rehab of Route 5 – design at PS&E; comments were completed on July 7th; right-of-way certification was issued March 24th; current ad date is July 29, 2023
- **Project 608847** – Wales Bridge Replacement Project; the project was advertised on June 24th and the bid opening is July 25th
- **Project 608163** – Wales reconstruction improvements on Monson Road from Monson town line to Reed Hill Road; design is at 75%; revised 75% is due September 29, 2023
- **Project 608717** – Springfield reconstruction of Sumner Avenue at Dickinson and Belmont. Design is at 100%; review was completed on June 15th; the right-of-way comments were sent to the designer on May 5th; the PS&E is due on October 17th
- **Project 608881** – Longmeadow Resurfacing on Longmeadow and Congress; the design is at 100%; 100% review comments were received on May 5th; awaiting updates from the project manager
- **Project 609065** – Holyoke resurfacing work; design at 75%; 75% was received on April 4th; comments were completed on July 5th

- **Project 609286** – Northampton Downtown Complete Streets corridor and intersection improvements; design is at 25%; design hearing held on April 26th; 75% due on October 2nd

Mr. Garcia asked if there were recent updates on the High and Maple Project. It was reported that the status would be looked into. This item will be placed on the next agenda.

10. 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 reported that ridership continued to steadily increase. In June 2023, there were 400,000 passengers which was up by 50,000 from the previous year. It was expected for the ridership for the year to be above 6.7 million passengers. She reported that they were currently in the process of accepting the delivery of eight buses, which increases the percentage of electric buses to 11% of the fleet. There was an ad campaign scheduled to begin in August for available jobs. There was a small increase in the workforce, and it was planned to reinstate the frequency of the service that was reduced in the fall semester.

11. Other Business

The August meeting would be canceled unless there were comments received. The next meeting will be held on September 26th.

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

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ADJOURN THE JULY 25, 2023 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:06 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Shell, Senior Administrative Assistant, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents Distributed at the January 24, 2023 MPO Meeting

1. MPO Agenda: July 25, 2023
2. June 27, 2023 MPO Meeting Minutes