

Minutes of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Zoom Meeting  
Tuesday, March 28, 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
John Vieau	Mayor, City of Chicopee
Joshua Garcia	Mayor, City of Holyoke
Walter Gunn	Chair, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Nicole LaChapelle	Mayor, City of Easthampton
William Reichelt	Mayor, Town of West Springfield
Douglas Slaughter	Chair, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Rick Sullivan	President and CEO, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts
Jim Barry	Town of Belchertown Selectboard
Roger Fuller	Town of Chesterfield Selectboard

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Sandra Sheehan	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Mark Gold	Town of Longmeadow
Daryl Amaral	MassDOT Highway District 2
Ben Breger	MassDOT – Highway District 2
William Dwyer	Town of Hadley, Planning Board
Michelle Ho	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Van Kacoyannakis	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB)
Timothy Keane	Town of Longmeadow
Christopher Klem	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeffrey McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Moore	MassDOT Highway District 1
Peter Frieri	MassDOT Highway District 1
Dawn Nims	City of Holyoke
Andrew Wang	MassDOT
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Mark Berman	Town of East Longmeadow
Geoff McAlmond	Town of Ware
Allison McMordie	City of Westfield
Connor Knightly	Town of West Springfield
Margaret O’Neal	Town of Worthington
Michael McManus	McMahon Associates

**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 March 28, 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 is being recorded.

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul 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 City of Holyoke; William Reichelt, Mayor Town of West Springfield; Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor City of Easthampton; James Barry, Belchertown Selectboard; Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard; Rick Sullivan, Western Mass EDC; Mark Gold, Town of Longmeadow, Alternate for Sub-Region 4. Mr. McCaul 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 February 28, 2023

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

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 28, 2023, MEETING MINUTES OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

3. FFY 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Highway project update

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

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul stated there was over \$3 million for the Holyoke-West Springfield rehabilitation of Route 5. The retaining wall in Cummington was programmed for \$4.5 million, and the design estimates should be available soon. The Granby intersection project was programmed at \$3.5 million. The Westfield River levee project was programmed at \$5.2 million. The year two funding for the reconstruction of West Springfield Memorial Avenue was programmed at \$11 million with an additional \$500,000. The Valley Bike Share Expansion, Phase 3, was programmed at \$1.5 million. The PVTA purchase of an electric bus and support training was programmed for \$1.5 million. It was anticipated to see many updates soon, and action will likely be needed in April or May.

The first amendment in February was to identify the 612106 projects as a Pioneer Valley project, not a statewide project. The second project, 608560, had a cost increase of nearly \$2 million, which triggered a full amendment. There were no comments that had been received.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse the amendments.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE AMENDMENTS. THE AMENDMENTS WERE APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

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

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul stated that in December, two transit projects were added by MASS-DOT, one was a \$12 million project at the U-Mass garage, and the other was a \$57 million grant received to purchase electric buses, additional chargers, and staff training. To free up matching funds, PVTA had to remove 60 foot bus rehabilitation project. Andrew McCaul stated a recommendation was needed to send the amendment out for a 21-day public review period.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to send the amendment for public review.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO SEND THE AMENDMENT OUT FOR A 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED BY A ROLL CALL VOTE.  
THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

5. FFY 2024-2028 TIP Development:

- Review of the Draft List of Preferred Projects: FFY 2024-2028

PVPC Senior Transportation Planner Andrew McCaul reported that during the recent meeting, the MPO would review the JTC recommendation of the preferred list of projects and provide feedback. Andrew McCaul presented the 2024-2028 project ranking document. He stated two projects in Westfield and Granby were now being proposed to be in 2027 with statewide money. A Springfield project was not ready for 2025 and was moved to be reviewed in 2029. Andrew McCaul presented the preferred list of projects for 2024-2028. He stated anyone could send an email with any questions or concerns. In FY2024, the proposal was to fund three projects: the Wales reconstruction project, the Springfield reconstruction project, and the Worthington reconstruction project. The Springfield project had previously been flagged as having concerns about being able to stay in 2024. It was proposed to keep it there unless there is more information within the following months that shows it will not be able to be completed in 2024. There were three projects in 2025, with the recommendation to leave the projects in 2025. In 2025, an increase in the Northampton Downtown project caused the project to be split between 2025 and 2026. There were just under \$1 million for each of 2024, 2025, and 2026. In 2027, there were four projects, and the remaining target funds were \$2.2 million. In 2028, there were four new projects, with a balance target fund of \$2.5 million.

Andrew McCaul presented the proposed statewide list. In 2024, the projects included a bridge in Cummington, a school in Agawam, a bridge in Monson, a bridge in Ludlow, interstate maintenance on I-91, and elementary school improvements in Agawam. In 2025, the projects included many bridges (in Northampton, Springfield, Monson, Westhampton, Monson-Palmer, Chicopee, West Springfield, Huntington, Route 116, Hadley, Russell, and Holyoke), West Springfield interstate maintenance for I-91, elementary school improvements in Chicopee and Springfield, and the Northampton-Rocky Hill Greenway trail. In 2026, the projects included bridges in Hampton and Williamsburg, traffic signs on 291, resurfacing on routes 33 and 57, school improvements in Easthampton, and a shared-use path in Easthampton-Northampton. In 2027, the projects included bridges in West Springfield, Cummington, and Springfield, work on routes 10 and 202, intersection improvements in Holyoke, and Southampton Greenway trail construction. In 2028, the projects included bridges in Monson and Russell, superstructure replacement in Palmer, construction of the Mill River Greenway in Williamsburg, and improvements at Armory Circle in Springfield.

Andrew McCaul presented the five-year capital needs for the TIP. The draft has been submitted to transit authorities so that the list may change. In year 1, there were bus replacements, purchase of support vehicles, hybrid vehicle purchases, shop equipment, environmental compliance, bus sheltering maintenance, and bike access equipment. In addition, they proposed improvements at the North Hampton maintenance facility, expansion at the UMass facility, upgrades at the Holyoke center, electric bus chargers funded over five fiscal years, and capital planning. The total proposed expenditure for 2024 was just over \$42 million.

6. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – development update

Mr. Roux stated that the RTP page was active, and the first three chapters were uploaded to that page. He stated it was anticipated to have more chapters available in mid-April. The environmental consultant will be scheduled once a date is decided on, and that link will also be posted. The consultation will identify specific groups interested in environmental impacts on anything included in the plan. Mr. Roux stated if there was anyone who should be contacted to forward their information to him. The development of the financial constraint from 2022 was presented. The updated table will go out in the year 2050. Areas were identified where projects were intended to be funded. A focus group completed a poll to determine where individuals would like funding to go, and funding allocations were proposed based on the responses. The plan was to bring the proposed allocation to the April JTC meeting to receive their input. In response to a question, it was clarified that all items were sometimes incorporated into a single project.

Mr. Roux presented the system performance report with proposed new targets. He stated they planned to bring the new targets to the JTC in the April meeting.

7. Draft FFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Development

Mr. Roux shared the Unified Planning Work Program schedule, which listed how federal money was planned to be used. He stated they were particularly interested in safety planning and multimodal studies. Any proposed work-program requests come in writing from the communities chief elected official to include in the FFY 2024 UPWP. A draft scope for a planning task associated with increased bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries was proposed to be included in the work program. The draft will be sent out prior to the JTC meeting, and the JTC will be asked to send it out for public comment. Then, in May, the MPO would review and comment on it.

8. Updates from MassDOT District One and District Two Officials on relevant transportation issues and projects of interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Highway 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 3<sup>rd</sup>; PS&E is due May 17<sup>th</sup>; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 608073** – Westfield River Levee multi-use path construction; design is at 100%; PS&E review completed on January 18<sup>th</sup>; the drawings are resubmitted on March 21<sup>st</sup>; current ad date is September 9, 2023
- **Project 604209** – Holyoke, West Springfield rehab of Route 5; design at 100%; 100% submission including water main design review completed on December 19<sup>th</sup>; PS&E is due April 18, 2023; current ad date is June 10, 2023
- **Project 608565** – Springfield improvements on St. James; the design is at PS&E; the ad date was on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the bid opening is on March 28<sup>th</sup>
- **Project 608163** – Wales reconstruction improvements on Monson Road from Monson town line to Reed Hill Road; the design is at 75%; the DOT scope is under review, and comments are due March 31<sup>st</sup>; current ad date March 2, 2024
- **Project 608717** – Springfield reconstruction of Sumner Avenue at Dickinson and Belmont; the design is at 75%; awaiting environmental permits; 100% design is due September 2, 2023; current ad date is January 6, 2024

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

**2023 project:** The design for the Cummington retaining wall was being finalized; it was anticipated there would be a cost increase on that at the final design level

**2024 Projects:**

- **Project 609287** - Phase 2 Worthington Route 143 Reconstruction; CHA is working on the final design to be submitted in May 2023
- It was anticipated to have a 75% design submittal in late March or early April for the reconstruction of North Road and David Pond Road in Chesterfield, which was programmed for 2027.
- In June, anticipating a revised 25% design for the reconstruction of Mountain Street in Williamsburg, programmed in 2026

9. Updates from PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan on relevant transit-related issues and projects of interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

Sandra Sheehan stated there was a board meeting with the main discussion surrounding the PVTA budget for the fiscal year of 2024 and using ARPA funds for offsetting the deficit. The ridership was discussed, showing a slight increase of 6% even with no college students in the area. The Springfield area had a ridership increase of 32% as well. The design phase for the expansion of the Amherst garage is currently in the works. The design to include the

20 chargers for the Springfield facility was being worked on. Hybrid buses were being purchased instead of electric buses due to being at full capacity for electric buses. There will be eight buses arriving during the summer.

10. Other Business

Mr. Woelfel noted that the next virtual MPO meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, 2023.

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

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ADJOURN THE MARCH 28, 2023, MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:49 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION.

Respectfully submitted,  
Minutes Services

**List of Documents Distributed at the March 28, 2023, MPO Meeting**

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