

PIONEER VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024

MPO Members Present:

Stephen Woelfel, Deputy Director of Planning, MassDOT, representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, MassDOT Secretary and CEO
Paula Simmons, District 2 Engineer, representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Division Administrator
Joshua A Garcia, Mayor – City of Holyoke
Michael McCabe, Mayor – City of Westfield
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor – City of Northampton
Douglas Slaughter, Chair – PVTA Advisory Board
Walter Gunn, Chair - PVPC Executive Committee
Mark Gold, Select Board Member – Longmeadow
William Dwyer, JTC Chair – Hadley (Ex-officio)
Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Administrator (Ex-Officio)
Joshua Barber, Community Planner – Federal Highway Administration (Ex-Officio)

Guests Present:

Mark Moore, Project Development Engineer – MassDOT Highway District 1
Peter Frieri, Planning Engineer – MassDOT Highway District 1
Daryl Amaral, District Planner – MassDOT Highway District 2
Ben Breger, Assistant District Planner – MassDOT Highway District 2
Chris Klem, OTP, Regional Planning Coordinator – MassDOT
Derek Krevat, Manager of MPO Activities, – MassDOT
Linda Leduc, Director of Public Works – Belchertown
Margaret O’Neal, Executive Assistant – Worthington
Aaron Vega, Director of Planning – City of Holyoke
Andrew Wang, Transportation Program Manager – MassDOT Planning
Van Kacoyannakis, VHB

PVPC Staff Present:

Kimberly H Robinson, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Andrew McCaul, Senior Transportation Planner II
Jeff McCollough, Principal Planner
Gary Roux, Principal Planner
Dana Roscoe, Principal Planner
Khyati Parmar, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and

The January 23, 2024, Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Woelfel. Roll call was taken, and a quorum of at least five members was noted.

2. Approval of the November 28, 2023, Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Minutes

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MICHAEL MCCABE, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 23, 2023, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Endorse the Proposed Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Governing the PVMPO, Currently for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

MassDOT requested a formal comment on the proposed changes to the MOU on page six, Section VII (b), under "Operation of the MOU". The amendment will read as follows: "The Secretary of the MassDOT, or their designee, shall chair the MPO. In the event that the Chair or their designee is not available, the Vice Chair shall have the authority to conduct the MPO meeting".

MOVED BY MARK GOLD, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) GOVERNING THE PVMPO, CURRENTLY FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release Proposed Amendment#2 to the FFY 2024 TIP for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Amendment No. 2 to the fiscal year 2024-2028 transportation Improvement Program, including project add dates and cost increases, was presented. Two projects, Worthington reconstruction and Amherst Hadley resurfacing, have cost increases that will be addressed through funding adjustments. The carbon reduction program money provided by MassDOT for PVTA's electrification program is also discussed, as well as transit funding awards.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO THE FFY 2024 TIP FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval to Release Proposed Amendment No. 1 to the FFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Amendment No. 1 to the current unified planning work program to add a new task related to the electric vehicle charging assessment and deployment plan was presented. The cost of the plan would be \$60,000, with \$48,000 coming from unspent planning funds and a \$12,000 match from MassDOT. The plan will update a previous study done in 2017 and prioritize areas for public charging stations. It will be completed by September 2024.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MARK GOLD, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE FFY 2024 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the FFY 2024 PM1 Safety Targets

Ms. Parmar provided a presentation about safety performance targets that need to be set annually by MassDot and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). PVPC plans to adopt MassDOT's targets for their region as well. These targets include reducing fatalities and severe injuries on roads over time. The presentation showed data on total fatalities, serious injuries, non-motorized fatalities/serious injuries, and known motorist fatalities/serious injuries both at the state level as well as specific to the Pioneer Valley MPO region. Questions were raised about whether data exists correlating accidents with investments for complete streets or road diets, seeking to assess the effectiveness of past planning efforts. It was noted that further analysis might need to be conducted using regional crash data available through regional safety planning efforts.

MOVED BY MICHAEL MCCABE, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO APPROVE THE FFY 2024 PM1 SAFETY TARGETS AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

8. Update, Proposed 2020 Urbanized Area

Mr. Roux provided an update on the proposed 2020 urbanized area update, with some areas being included and others not based on conservation land and the unlikelihood of development.

9. Review and Discussion of the Proposed FFY 2025-2029 TIP Development Schedule and the Draft Project Universe

Mr. McCaul discussed the schedule for the transportation planning process, including the submission of the project universe and the evaluation criteria review in February. In March 2024, the MPO will provide feedback on the project ranking, and in April 2024, the MPO will release the document for public review and provide final endorsement for approval in May 2024. Mr. McCaul provided an update on the project universe, including the status of 48 projects valued at \$400 million.

10. Safe Street and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Awards

Mr. Roux provided an update on the Safe Streets for All grant, including a \$1.25 million award for the region. This is \$1 million from the federal highway with a \$250,000 match by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

11. Updates from MassDOT District One and District Two Officials or Relevant Transportation Issues and Projects of Interest to the PVMPO Members

Mr. Amaral from District Two provided updates on several projects in different stages of design and completion. District One provided updates on various projects, including bridge preservation and reconstruction projects.

12. Updates from PVRTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit-Related Issues and Projects of Interest to the PVMPO Members

Ms. Sheehan shared PVRTA's ridership recovery and service adjustments. She also mentioned construction updates, such as the electrification of the Cottage Street facility and the UMass garage expansion design completion. Lastly, she highlighted ridership recovery at 86% and service adjustments, including improved frequencies and weekend service, with a focus on equity and fairness.

13. Other Business

The date of the next Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting will be held on February 27, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The innovation conference registration was noted open, and the conference will be from April 30 to May 1, 2024, in Worcester at the DCU center. Members were urged to take advantage of the early bird rate ending February 21, 2024.

14. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY MARK GOLD, TO ADJOURN THE JANUARY 23, 2024, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:48 A.M.

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at this January 23, 2024, MPO Meeting:

- Metropolitan Planning Organization January 23, 2024, Meeting Notice and Agenda
- November 28, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- List of Participants