

PIONEER VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Tuesday, May 28, 2024

Organization Members Present

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| Stephen Woelfel | Deputy Director of Planning | MassDOT |
| Paula Simmons | District 2 Engineer | MassDOT Highway District 2 Mayor Michael |
| Walter Gunn | Chairman of PVPC | Longmeadow |
| Douglas Slaughter | Chair, PVTA Advisory Board | Amherst |
| Joshua A. Garcia | Mayor | City of Holyoke |
| Michael McCabe | Mayor | Westfield |
| Gina-Louise Sciarra | Mayor | Northampton |
| Roger Fuller | Selectboard Member | Town of Chesterfield |
| Mark Gold | Select Board Member | Longmeadow |
| Richard Sullivan | Economic Development Council | Western Massachusetts |

Ex-Officio (Non-voting)

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| Joshua Barber | Federal Highway Administration | |
| Cecelie Cochran | Federal Highway Administration | |
| Sandra Sheehan | Administrator (Ex-Officio) | Pioneer Valley Transit Authority |
| William Dwyer | JTC Chair | Hadley |

PVPC Staff Present

Andrew McCaul, Senior Transportation Planner II
Carl Jackson, Principal Planner / Traffic Manager
Gary Roux, Principal Planner / Transportation Manager
Dana Roscoe, Principal Planner
Kimberley Robinson, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Jeff McCollough, Principal Planner

Guests

Chloe Soto, City of Chicopee Mayor's Office
Chris Klem, MassDOT – OTP
Derek Shooster, MassDOT OTP
Daryl Amaral, District Planner, MassDOT Highway District 2
Ben Breger, Assistant District Planner, MassDOT Highway District 2
Peter Frieri, Project Development Engineer, MassDOT Highway District 1
Derek Krevat, Manager of MPO Activities, MassDOT Highway District 2
Linda Leduc, Director of Public Works, Belchertown
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton DPW
Jacqueline, Resident of Northampton
Mark Berman, East Longmeadow DPW
Butch Jackson, Road-Com Wales
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT

1. Call to Order, Welcome, and Announcement of Quorum

The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting on May 28, 2024, was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was noted.

2. Approval of the April 23, 2024, Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Minutes

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE APRIL 23, 2024, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the Amendment to the FFY 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

A. McCaul presented the proposal that the MPO released for a 21-day public review due to a cost increase of over a million dollars for a bridge project in Cummington. The bridge project is a statewide line item and does not use the discretionary dollars of the MPO. The MPO did not receive any comments on the amendment, and Mr. McCaul asked the MPO to recommend a motion to endorse it.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE FFY 2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) CURRENTLY OUT FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the Draft FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Gary Roux presented the final version of the funding for the tasks and categories that comprise the federal fiscal year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). He summarized the comments received from the staff and MassDOT and the changes made to the draft document accordingly. The comments included clarifications, corrections, and additions to the document. He then asked the MPO to endorse the UPWP, which has an effective date of October 1, 2024.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE DRAFT FFY 2025 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) CURRENTLY OUT FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the Draft FFY 2025-2029 TIP Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Mr. McCaul presented the summary tables for the transit and highway projects that are planned to be funded by in the federal fiscal year 2025 to 2029 TIP. He highlighted the new funding source of carbon reduction funds for the transit projects, as well as the adjustments in the numbers and descriptions of some projects to ensure accuracy and compliance. The document included the language that is mandated by federal law and state policies, and it changes slightly from year to year. The document also addresses MassDOT's comments regarding language and performance measures. Mr. McCaul asked for a motion to endorse the draft federal fiscal year 2025 to 2029 TIP, which will be compiled with the other TIPs throughout the state and submitted to MassDOT for approval from the federal highway and federal transit.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO ENDORSE THE DRAFT FFY 2025-2029 TIP CURRENTLY OUT FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval to Release the Proposed Amendment to the FFF 2024 TIP for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Mr. McCaul explained that the TIP is a four-year plan that identifies the region's priority transportation projects and allocates federal and state funds to them. The MPO Board voted unanimously to approve the new TIP, which includes 48 projects totaling \$236 million. He shared the reasons and solutions for the significant cost increases of two local

projects in Wales and Springfield, which are funded by regional discretionary dollars and statewide sources. The Wales project, which involves the reconstruction of Munson Road, had a cost increase of \$10 million due to additional work on two culverts and unit cost price increases. The Springfield project, which involves the improvement of the X intersection, had a cost increase of \$13.5 million due to additional work, hazmat issues, utility agreements, and unit cost price increases. MassDOT was able to identify statewide funding sources to cover the cost increases to the "X" project which allows the Wales project to be fully funded with regional discretionary dollars.

Mr. McCaul asked for a recommendation to release the proposed amendment to for the required 21-day public review period. The amendment reflects the updated costs and funding sources of the Wales and Springfield projects, as well as the Worthington project that was amended earlier. Some members expressed concerns about the cost increases, environmental impacts, and utility agreements of the projects and requested more information from MassDOT.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE FFF 2024 TIP FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

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

D. Amaral of District Two reported on the progress of seven projects in District Two, ranging from reconstruction, resurfacing, bridge replacement, and complete street improvements. The projects are at various stages of design, advertisement, bid opening, and NTP issuance. He listed the dates of plan revisions, PSNE submissions, right-away approvals, bid openings, and NTP issuances for each project. Some projects have met their deadlines, while others are awaiting updates or revisions. The nearest deadline is June 18, 2024, for the bid opening of the bridge replacement project in Monson. He also provided the names of the towns, roads, and intersections where the projects are located. It also briefly describes the scope and purpose of each project, such as reconstruction, resurfacing, intersection improvements, or center city connection.

P. Frieri of District One provided updates on MassDOT projects for the federal fiscal year 2021. MassDOT has two projects scheduled for advertisement in 2021: The reconstruction of Route 143 in Worthington and the bridge preservation in Cummington on three bridges. He shared that MassDOT has two bridge replacement projects in 2025: one in Huntington for Route 112 over Pondbrook and one in Russell Blandford Stage Road over Stage Brook. District One MassDOT is tracking two municipal projects: The reconstruction of Mountain Street in Williamsburg in 2026 and the reconstruction of North Road and Damon Pond Road in Chesterfield in 2027.

9. Updates from PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit-Related Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

S. Sheehan reported that the PVTA Advisory Board approved the fiscal year 2025 budget based on the governor's level of funding for the regional transit authorities. The budget does not include any cost associated with the union negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement. However, PVTA is hopeful that the state's final budget will be higher and can absorb those costs. The system-wide ridership for fixed routes and paratransit increased by 24% and 15.2%, respectively, from last April 2023. The recovery rates are at 80% and 71%, respectively. PVTA will celebrate its 50th anniversary during fiscal year 2025 with various events. The first event will be to provide fare-free service during June, July, and August 2024 to thank the passengers.

10. Other Business

The date of the next Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting will be held on June 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

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

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICHARD SULLIVAN, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 28, 2024, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:33 A.M. THE MOTION CARRIED.