

**PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)**  
**Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Zoom Meeting**  
**Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 10:00 A.M.**

**Organization Members Present**

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP  
Paula Simmons, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Walter Gunn, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
Joshua A. Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke  
Mark Gold, Longmeadow Selectboard, Sub-Region 4  
Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard, Sub-Region 4  
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor of Northampton  
Rick Sullivan, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts  
Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority

**Alternate and Ex-Officio Members**

William Dwyer, JTC Chair, Town of Hadley  
Anthony Jones, Federal Highway Administration  
Joshua Barber, Federal Highway Administration

**Guests**

Laura Hanson, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Mark Moore, MassDOT Highway District 1  
John Broderick, Town of South Hadley  
Mark Berman, Town of East Longmeadow  
Michelle Chase, Town of Agawam  
Miranda Briseño, MassDOT  
Aaron Vega, City of Holyoke  
Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Carolyn Misch, City of Northampton  
Dan McCormack, Toole Design Group  
Dianne Rossini-Smith, City of Easthampton

**PVPC Staff Present**

Andrew McCaul, Senior Transportation Planner II  
Gary Roux, Principal Planner/Traffic Manager  
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner

1. **Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Opening Remarks**

Derak Krevat welcomed everyone in attendance of The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting be held virtually on February 25, 2025. Mr. Krevat called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was noted.

2. **Approval of the Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Held on January 28, 2025**

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on January 28, 2025.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 28, 2025, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. 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 FFY 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment No. 3 Currently out for the Required 21-day Public Review and Comment

Mr. McCaul noted that at the last MPO meeting, two awards for new funding were presented for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for fiscal years 2025 to 2029. The city of Springfield received over \$10 million for 25 clean heavy-duty buses, and Longmeadow received funds for passive rail crossing improvements. These awards were outside the standard regional funding. The document was released for a 21-day public review, with no comments received, and the MPO is now seeking endorsement for the amendments.

Mr. Krevat called for a motion to endorse the amendment as presented.

MOVED BY MARK GOLD, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ENDORSE THE FFY 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT NO. 3 AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

### 5. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan

Sandra Sheehan provided an overview of the PVTA's Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan, emphasizing the annual reevaluation of assets, including rolling stock, facilities, communication equipment, and operations software. The evaluations are based on Useful Life Benchmarks (ULB) for revenue and non-revenue vehicles, with guidelines from the PVTA and MassDOT. Specific ULBs were mentioned for different vehicle types, such as 12 years for 35- to 40-foot buses and 10 years for minibuses.

Walter Gunn noted that the document seemed more like a current snapshot rather than a comprehensive plan. Mrs. Sheehan confirmed that the plan is updated annually, and the information in the document is used to guide the TIP for the region. Mrs. Sheehan provided examples of how specific assets, like buses and facilities, are evaluated and included in the TIP based on their condition. W. Gunn clarified that the document should be seen as a report rather than a plan, with the actual plan being what is included in the TIP.

Mr. Krevat asked about the facilities' condition ratings, specifically what it means when a facility is over 100% of its useful life. Mrs. Sheehan provided historical context for some of the facilities, mentioning that the PVTA maintenance and operations facility for paratransit is very old, dating back to 1901. Mr. Krevat then asked for a motion to approved the PVTA TAM Plan.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PVTA) TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT (TAM) PLAN. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

### 6. Review and Discussion of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) FFY 2024 Vulnerable Roadway Users Studies

Gary Roux reported that the PVPC initiated a Vulnerable Road User Studies program to address the increase in fatalities and serious injuries among vulnerable road users. The program identified three locations for further study and made recommendations for improvements. The first location studied was the intersection of Nonotuck, Elm,

Federal, and South Main Street in Northampton. Recommendations included new signs, enhanced sidewalk connectivity, and traffic calming measures. The unusual alignment of the intersection and reports of speeding were noted, mainly since Elm Street serves the high school, leading to significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The second location was in Ludlow, focusing on the intersection of Windsor and East Streets and the East Street school area. Recommendations included improved school zone markings, pedestrian access, and traffic signal installation. The study also addressed concerns surrounding pickup and drop-off procedures, school parking, and general access along the East Street corridor.

The third location was in Springfield at the intersection of Locust, Belmont, Fort Pleasant, and Mill Streets. Recommendations included discouraging mid-block pedestrian crossings and considering a roundabout. The intersection's complexity and the need to address the culvert over the Mill River were noted.

Reports for the studied locations were finalized, and new locations are being solicited from communities for the next phase of the program, with a deadline of March 3, 2025. The program is related to the Safer Streets and Roads for All grant, which includes developing a regional safety action plan and a demonstration project for traffic signal compliance. The Safe Routes to School Signs and Lines program was suggested as a resource for shorter-term improvements around school zones. There were suggestions to send additional notices to chief elected officials to inform them about the opportunity for their communities to participate in the program.

7. Review and Discussion on the Development of the FFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Study Solicitation

Mr. Roux discussed the development process of the new Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which outlines transportation tasks for the federal fiscal year from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026. G. Roux invited transportation study proposals and mentioned upcoming discussions with the Joint Transportation Committee and updates at the March MPO meeting. A draft document will be released in April 2025, with a final endorsement in May, 2025. The budget is expected to increase by approximately 1.5%, totaling \$1.75 million in transportation funds.

8. Review and Discussion on the Development of the FFY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the updated Project Universe

Mr. McCaul provided updates on various transportation projects, including funding allocations and potential changes in project timelines. Updates from municipalities and project proponents were solicited, and meetings with MassDOT and municipalities were held to ensure accurate information. TIP days were conducted to discuss concerns and restore projects. It was noted that three projects in red are currently funded for federal fiscal year 2025, and efforts are being made to ensure they are advertised and implemented.

Mr. McCaul listed projects funded by the Surface Transportation Block grant, Safe Routes to School, and pedestrian and bicycle improvement projects, with funding identified for most projects in the 2025 to 2029 TIP. Six projects were highlighted based on updated information, with three projects not meeting the current advertisement date and three projects anticipated to be ready for advertisement earlier than scheduled. Changes in project timelines, especially moving projects from 2025 to 2026, could have a domino effect, pushing other projects further out and impacting funding allocations. Funding scenarios for the new TIP will be discussed in March 2025, with targets and funding projections for 2026 to 2030 provided. The goal is to fully fund Year 1 to avoid losing target money for the region.

9. Update of Current MPO Membership

Mr. Roux provided an update on the current membership status of the Pioneer Valley MPO, focusing on local representation. The two representatives from MassDOT, the chairs of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, and R. Sullivan from the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts are mandated members. The PVTA is currently electing a new chair, with S. Sheehan serving as the interim representative. Local representation is divided into five sub-regions with two-year terms. Sub-Region 1 includes Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke, with a rotational system of mayors. Sub-Region 2 is represented by the mayor of Westfield, and Sub-Region 3 by the mayor of Northampton. Sub-Region 4 is represented by M. Gold from Longmeadow, and Sub-Region 5 by R. Fuller from Chesterfield.

There is ongoing interest in filling alternate membership positions for sub-regions 4 and 5. Efforts are being made to finalize these positions.

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

District One provided updates on several bridge preservation and reconstruction projects. In the federal fiscal year 2025, two bridge preservation projects are programmed: one on Route 9 over the Westfield River in Cummington, currently in the final design phase, and another on Route 112 over CSX and the Westfield River in Huntington, with a 75% design review underway. In 2026, the Mountain Street reconstruction in Williamsburg is at 75% design review, and in 2027, Chesterfield's North Road and Damon Road reconstruction is awaiting PS&E submission for final design review.

District Two provided updates on several projects. Project 612097 involved Springfield Interstate Maintenance on I-91, advertised on December 28, 2024, with a low bid of \$8,732,343 from Eurovia Atlantic. Project 612-065 pertains to Agawam resurfacing on Route 57, also advertised on December 28, 2024, with a low bid of \$10,668,376 from Palmer Paving. Project 610768 is for West Hampton Bridge Maintenance, advertised on December 14, 2024, with a bid opening on March 11, 2025. Project 608413 involved Northampton Rocky Hill Greenway Multi-Use Trail, advertised on December 14, 2024, and awarded to JT&L Corporation with a bid of \$1,681,686.

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

Mrs. Sheehan reported a significant increase in ridership and shared updates on service enhancements and construction projects. January 2025, ridership increased by 38% compared to last year, and February showed a 20% increase. The PVTA is currently at a 91% recovery rate. The PVTA has improved service frequency, added weekend service on some routes, expanded area coverage, and plans to expand Sunday service on several routes by the end of March 2025. They are also adding new routes like the X94 to facilitate connections between towns without going to Union Station. Construction activities are ongoing at the UMass Transit garage and Springfield Cottage Street facility to accommodate more vehicles and install bus chargers for the electric fleet.

## 12. Other Business

Mr. Roux updated the MPO members on the current open meeting law allowing remote meetings, noting preparations for either remote or in-person meetings in April 2025. Mr. Gunn mentioned a hybrid option under Massachusetts general law, allowing remote participation if the chair and a quorum is present at the meeting location.

There being no further discussion, a motion was called to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY RICK SULLIVAN, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 11:01 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

### List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the February 25, 2025, Meeting

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization February 25, 2025, Meeting Agenda
2. Metropolitan Planning Organization February 25, 2025, Presentation