

**PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)**  
**Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Zoom Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 10:00 A.M.**

Organization Members Present

Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT Secretary and CEO  
Paula Simmons, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Walter Gunn, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
Sandra Sheehan, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority  
Rick Sullivan, Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts  
Joshua A. Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke  
Mark Gold, Longmeadow Selectboard, Sub-Region 4  
Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard, Sub-Region 4  
Michael McCabe, Mayor of Westfield

Alternate and Ex-Officio Members

Kimberly H. Robinson, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
William Dwyer, Joint Transportation Committee

Guests

Laura Hanson, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1  
Mark Moore, MassDOT Highway District 1  
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT Highway District 2  
Timothy Keane, Town of Longmeadow  
Tom Kulig, Town of Russell  
Carolyn Misch, City of Northampton  
Chris Klem, MassDOT – OTP  
Mark Berman, Town of East Longmeadow  
Paul Burns, PVTA  
Van Kacoyannakis, VHB  
Dan McCormack, BETA

PVPC Staff Present

Andrew McCaul, Senior Transportation Planner II  
Khyati Parmar, Senior Transportation Planner II  
Gary Roux, Principal Planner/Traffic Manager  
Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner  
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner  
Jeff McCollough, Principal Transportation Planner

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

The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting on January 28, 2025, was called 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 November 26, 2024

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 26, 2024, 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 Approval to Release FFY 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment No. 3 for the Required 21-day Public Review and Comment

Andrew McCaul presented information related to two grants awards to Springfield and Longmeadow respectively. The grants are required to be included in the TIP before the money can be made available. The city of Springfield has been awarded a grant under the EPA Clean Heavy Duty Vehicle Grant program to purchase 25 zero-emission school buses, valued at over \$10 million, to replace existing diesel buses. The city of Longmeadow has received \$1.2 million in federal funds, along with matching funds from Amtrak, for passive rail crossing improvements to enhance safety and reduce train delays.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE MPO TO RELEASE FFY 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT NO. 3 FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the List of Projects to be Amended into the Statewide Resiliency Improvement Plan (RIP)

Gary Roux discussed the Statewide Resiliency Improvement Plan (RIP) projects, including the process of soliciting and scoring projects from various communities. Mr. Roux explained that MassDOT provided an opportunity to amend projects into the state RIP. Projects were solicited from communities, scored based on criteria established with the joint transportation committee, and submitted to MassDOT for consideration. Questions were raised about the inclusion of environmental justice areas in the scoring criteria. Mr. Roux clarified that the scoring criteria considered both positive and negative impacts on these areas to ensure projects do not have adverse effects and are consistent with regional scoring processes.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE LIST OF PROJECTS TO BE AMENDED INTO THE STATEWIDE RESILIENCY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (RIP). THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)

Paul Burns presented on the annual updates to the safety plan, including a review process, submission for Board adoption, and notification to MPOs. The safety plan must address relevant requirements, reflect current operations, and be suitable for managing safety, with recent updates needed due to new federal regulations. Significant updates included compliance with the National Public Transportation Safety Plan's targets, with measures set by the PVTA safety committee, despite some data limitations. Categories such as assaults, injuries, and collisions are broadly defined, with most incidents being minor, and targets are set accordingly for fixed route and paratransit systems. Safety performance measures included targets for significant events, collisions, injuries, and assaults, with separate rates for fixed routes and paratransit systems. During the discussion, concerns about pedestrian collision targets were raised, emphasizing the need to reflect operational realities, and the plan is endorsed despite initial non-compliance.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PVTA) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN (PTASP). THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the FFY 2025 PM 1 Safety Targets for the Pioneer Valley MPO

Khyati Parmar provided an overview of the transportation safety performance measures, emphasizing that the targets are set annually and the MPOs have the option to adopt state targets or set separate ones. The safety performance targets are categorized into five areas: total number of fatalities, rate of fatalities, total number of serious injuries, rate of serious injuries, and total number of fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries. Mrs. Parmar highlighted the long-term residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on safety metrics, noting that the rolling averages still include data from 2020. Despite the pandemic's impact, there have been improvements in the total number of fatalities and serious injuries in the region, with encouraging downward trends observed.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, SECONDED BY RICK SULLIVAN, TO APPROVE THE FFY 2025 PM 1 SAFETY TARGETS FOR THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

8. Review and Discussion of the FFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the FFY 2026-2030 TIP Development Schedule and Draft Project Universe

Mr. McCaul discussed the review and discussion of the Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Federal Fiscal Year 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process. The process began in early January with a letter sent to all 43 municipalities to inform them about the commencement of the project and provide a draft project universe and timeline for feedback. The UPWP and TIP development will proceed side by side, with the timelines for public review and release coinciding. Projects are evaluated using internal criteria, and a ranked list of projects will be available by February 25, allowing for a clearer picture of the next TIP. Updates on project costs, design status, and other factors will be provided, and there is a likelihood of amendments to the current TIP based on these updates. The UPWP development will follow the same schedule as the TIP, and the solicitation for potential studies to include in the work program has begun.

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

Laura Hanson provided updates on several projects for Federal Fiscal Years 2025, 2026, and 2027, including the status of submissions, needed certifications, and upcoming meetings. Projects include Longmeadow Springfield, requiring hazardous material items, right of way certificate, and environmental clearance; Holyoke, needing a STIP amendment for cost, coordination with the railroad, right of way certificate, and environmental clearance; South Hadley, with a design justification workbook sent for review and an ad date of February, 2027; Chicopee, requiring house relocation, right-of-way plan approval, and environmental clearance; East Hampton, with a 25% submission due mid-March, 2024 and an ad date of November, 2028; East Longmeadow, with submissions due in early February; and Westfield, at the 25% stage with additional traffic analysis received.

Peter Frieri discussed two bridge preservation projects programmed for Fiscal Year 2025: the Route 9 bridge over the Westfield River in Cummington, currently in final design, and the Route 112 bridge over CSX and the Westfield River in Huntington, awaiting 75% design. For fiscal years 2026 and 2027, he mentioned municipal projects: the reconstruction of Mountain Street in Williamsburg, pending 75% design, and the reconstruction of North Road and Damon Pond Road in Chesterfield, with final design and right of way plans anticipated by mid-February.

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

Sandra Sheehan provided a PVT update covering several essential points, including a December ridership increase of 12% compared to 2024 figures, which is 1% higher than in 2019, with year-to-date ridership at a 91% recovery rate. Service enhancements will be implemented this spring, including adding Sunday service to several routes and starting new services funded by MassDOT grants. There were concerns about future reliance on discretionary federal funding for zero-emission vehicles and supporting infrastructure, as well as level funding from the governor's Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

11. Other Business

Mr. Roux noted that the current law allowing virtual meetings will expire at the end of March, 2025, and updates will be provided as new information becomes available. A discussion ensued regarding recent legislative bills and the potential impact on meeting formats.

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

MOVED BY MARK GOLD, SECONDED BY WALTER GUNN, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:56 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the January 28, 2025, Meeting

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization January 28, 2025, Meeting Agenda
2. Metropolitan Planning Organization January 28, 2025, Presentation