

Minutes of the Thursday, October 29, 2015 Meeting of the
Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
held at the
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104-3419

MPO Members Present:

Steve Woelfel	Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation Planning and Chair, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Representing Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer
George Archible	Belchertown Board of Selectmen
Marcus J. Boyle	Chair, Board of Selectmen, Town of Hatfield
Richard A. Cohen	Mayor, Town of Agawam
Walter Gunn	Chairman, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Mary MacInnes	Administrator, Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA)
Richard Masse	MassDOT District Two Office (Northampton) Representing Thomas Tinlin, Acting Highway Division Administrator, MassDOT

Guests and PVPC Staff Present:

Tim Brennan	Executive Director, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
Michelle Chase	Town Engineer, Town of Agawam
Matthew Chase	Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
Mark Cressotti	Vice-Chair of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) and City Engineer, City of Westfield
Jim Czach	Chairman, Joint Transportation Committee & Town Engineer, Town of West Springfield
Tim Doherty	Director of Rail Programs, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
JT Gaucher	Town of Ludlow, Department of Public Works
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1 (Lenox)
Nicolas Garcia	Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
Laura Hanson	MassDOT District 2 (Northampton)
Yem Lip	City Engineer, City of Holyoke
Andrew McCaul	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Jeff McCollough	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Bryan Pounds	Office of Transportation Planning (OTP), MassDOT
Dana Roscoe	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Gary Roux	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Transportation Section
Paula Simmons	MassDOT District 2 (Northampton)
Louise Sullivan	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) – Support Staff
Marvin Ward	Town of Easthampton
Brandon Wilcox	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Steve Williams	Director, Department of Public Works, Town of Belchertown

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

Richard Masse, MassDOT District Two Office (Northampton) Representing Thomas Tinlin, Acting Highway Division Administrator, MassDOT, called the October 29, 2015 meeting of the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order at 10:05 a.m. and he welcomed and thanked all those in attendance. Following introductions, Mr. Masse moved to take up the next agenda item.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Pioneer Valley MPO Held on July 28, 2015

Mr. Masse asked if there were any comments, questions or corrections regarding the minutes of the previous Pioneer Valley MPO meeting which was held on July 28, 2015. There being none, Mr. Masse called for a motion to approve the subject MPO meeting minutes.

MOVED BY WALTER GUNN, CHAIRMAN OF THE PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION, SECONDED BY RICHARD COHEN, MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 28, 2015 PIONEER VALLEY MPO MEETING AS PRESENTED. THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED WITH THREE MPO MEMBERS, MARY MACINNES, RICHARD MASSE AND GEORGE ARCHIBLE ABSTAINING.

6. Overview by FHWA and FTA Officials on the Federal Certification Process Currently Underway for the Pioneer Valley Region, Including an Opportunity for MPO Member Feedback

Mr. Masse called on Brandon Wilcox, Community Planner for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to discuss the Federal Certification Process currently underway for the Pioneer Valley Region. Mr. Wilcox announced that he and Nicolas Garcia, Community Planner for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), are conducting the federal Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) certification process which began yesterday with the Pioneer Valley MPO staff members and their partners. Mr. Wilcox explained that the certification process occurs every four years and input today from MPO policy board members will assist the FHWA and the FTA in assessing how well the transportation planning process is working in the Pioneer Valley with local governments and organizations. Mr. Wilcox explained that the FHWA and the FTA will complete a review and a report which will be shared with MPO staff delineating recommendations, accommodations and/or corrective actions that can be shared with the region to enhance the transportation planning process. Mr. Wilcox indicated that part of that process involves not only the MPO staff and its MPO members, but also the state as well as transit agencies in the region. He added that a Federal Certification Process report is required every four years and this certification process report is due no later than April 2016. Mr. Wilcox added that there will be a public meeting held tonight at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. to solicit public involvement in the regional transportation planning process.

Mr. Garcia asked the MPO members to comment on what was working well with the transportation planning process in the Pioneer Valley and what their greatest challenges in the planning process are. Jeff Boyle commented that overall the transportation planning process is very well organized and it has had broad input not only from staff but from across the board members and those they represent. Mr. Boyle stated that the evaluation criteria for transportation projects has recently been refreshed and built on consensus among MPO and JTC Members. He said the planning process is transparent, the status of work underway is reported and changes are being made in a timely manner.

Mary MacInnes responded by saying that she has heard from colleagues in other regions that their MPOs haven't been supportive of their transit authorities. Ms. MacInnes underscored that the Pioneer Valley MPO has always been supportive of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) and a recent example of this is the MPO approved transfer of CMAQ funds to the PVTA for the purchase of electric buses and charging stations.

Mayor Richard Cohen commented that the transportation planning process works extremely well because of the transparency of both the MassDOT officials and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission members all working together. Mayor Cohen stated that everyone's opinion is valued and it's that kind of communication that makes this

process work so well. Mayor Cohen thanked Tim Brennan and his staff, Rich Masse and his staff and all the state officials and representatives that make this a group where all work together for the benefit of everyone.

Due to Steve Woelfel, MassDOT Director of Strategic Planning, being delayed by heavy traffic, Mr. Masse then moved to take up agenda item 7.

7. Presentation by Tim Doherty of MassDOT Rail and Transit Division on the Success of the Amtrak Service on the Recently Completed Connecticut River Line

Mr. Masse introduced Tim Doherty, MassDOT's Director of Rail Programs; Mr. Doherty stated that *The Knowledge Corridor Project* upgraded 49.3 miles of track for intercity passenger use between Springfield and East Northfield. Mr. Doherty explained that MassDOT purchased the 49.3 miles from Pan Am in 2015 and passenger service on the route began on December 29, 2014. Mr. Doherty reported that since the Vermonter was relocated from the New England Central Railroad back to its former route on the Pan Am Southern Railroad, it has attracted 72% more passengers, has reduced travel time by 25 minutes and now has stops at stations in Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, Greenfield, East Northfield, and St. Albans, Vermont.

Mr. Doherty delineated all the work that has been done on the tracks and on the Greenfield, Northampton and Holyoke stations saying that it was funded by \$83 million in Federal Rail grants and \$47 million in state bond funds along with a MassWorks grant for the Holyoke Station. Mr. Doherty stated that the increase in Pioneer Valley ridership makes a solid case for continued investment in rail infrastructure, namely, the completion of the New Haven-Springfield commuter service and high-speed train linking Springfield to Boston which is currently under study. Mr. Brennan interjected that concrete plans for expanding rail service north will wait at least until 2016 because there are challenges to be surmounted. Mr. Brennan stated that the state is also studying expanded east-west rail service through the City of Springfield and on to Boston through Worcester. Mr. Brennan added that the east-west rail feasibility study process is facing the same hurdle as the Connecticut River line cleared in 2009.

After Mr. Doherty conducted a brief question and answer period, Mr. Masse thanked Mr. Doherty for his informative presentation. MassDOT Director of Strategic Planning, Office of Transportation, Steve Woelfel, arrived and proceeded with item 3 of the agenda.

3. Review, Discussion and MPO Endorsement of the the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) Currently Out for Public Review

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Gary Roux to provide an update on the status of the Pioneer Valley region's new Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) which has been out for public review. Mr. Roux reported that when the new TEC was used earlier this year to evaluate Transportation Improvement Projects, it was discovered that two points were incorrectly awarded for a TEC factor worth only one point. Mr. Roux explained that this error caused the loss of an unassigned point that is now needed to bring the total number of allowable TEC points back to the 100 point scale. Mr. Roux noted that at the last MPO meeting, he requested that the TEC remain out for public review in order to allow the JTC members an opportunity to continue to investigate how best to award the currently unassigned point. Mr. Roux reported that the JTC members recommended awarding this point to transportation improvement projects that incorporated a health benefit which could be documented using the Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT). After further discussion, the JTC members decided by consensus that because HEAT relies on European data sets, the TEC point would be better served if it was based on the amount of time a transportation project has been on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Roux explained that the JTC recommended to award up to one point for a transportation project based on the amount of time that the project has been on the TIP beginning from the date of the project's first review under the TEC. Mr. Roux reported that no points will be awarded under the TEC for 0-3 years on the TIP; a ½ point will be awarded for 3-5 years on the TIP, and one point will be granted if the project remains on the TIP for 5 years or longer. Mr. Roux then requested that the MPO members

formally endorse the TEC with the recommended changes. Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to endorse the Pioneer Valley Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) after the extensive staff discussion and public review.

MOVED BY RICHARD MASSE OF THE MASSDOT DISTRICT TWO OFFICE, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN MARCUS BOYLE OF THE TOWN OF HATFIELD, TO ENDORSE THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA (TEC) AS RECOMMENDED BY STAFF. THERE BEING NO FURTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MOTION WAS THEN UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release the Updated Public Participation Plan (PPP) For the Required 45 day Public Review Period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Senior Principal Planner Jeffrey McCollough to discuss the updated Public Participation Plan (PPP). Mr. McCollough reported that the PVPC staff has been working in collaboration with the MassDOT Title VI staff and using their PPP Plan, entitled the *Commonwealth's Public Participation Plan*, as a guide in the updating of the Pioneer Valley PPP in order to ensure early and ongoing public participation in the development of the region's transportation plans and programs. Mr. McCollough stated that the updated PPP creates a transparent process for engagement with communities and he expects the PPP will have an extended public review period that may go beyond the required 45 day public review period.

Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the Updated Public Participation Plan (PPP) For the required 45 day Public Review Period.

MOVED BY MAYOR RICHARD COHEN OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN GEORGE ARCHIBLE OF THE TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S UPDATED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) FOR THE REQUIRED 45-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THERE BEING NO FURTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MOTION WAS THEN UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Woelfel then moved on to take up agenda item 5.

5. Review, Discussion and MPO Approval to Release the Amendments to the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Required 30-day Public Review Period

Mr. Woelfel called on PVPC Principal Planner Dana Roscoe to present an update and summary of a set of proposed amendments to the Pioneer Valley's 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that are ready to be released for public review and comment. Mr. Roscoe referred to the one page summary of the proposed amendments that the MPO received in their meeting packet entitled *2016 – 2019 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Proposed Amendments – October 2015* and he explained that the changes delineated in this document to FFY 2016, FFY 2017, FFY 2018 and FFY 2019 TIP projects occur in Part 1D which is the statewide funding category. Mr. Roscoe reported that these changes are primarily related to interstate and other statewide projects and he reviewed the following projects:

FFY 2016 TIP Projects	Proj. ID	Changes Made in the FFY 2016 TIP Projects
Hatfield – Whately Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-91	606577	Move to FFY 2017; increase cost from \$10,620,000 to \$15,731,760; and change funding from Statewide National Highway System (NHS) Preservation Program to Statewide Interstate Maintenance Program
Ludlow - Wilbraham Bridge Rehabilitation	608252	Project ID changed from 605282 to 608252
Longmeadow – Springfield – Resurfacing and Related Work on I-91	608207	Move from Statewide Infrastructure Program to Statewide Interstate Maintenance Program in FFY 2016 and reduce cost from \$13,763,520 to \$10,195,200

West Springfield – Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway Extension	603730	Cost Increase from \$3,038,060 to \$4,038,060 in STP funding
Springfield – Viaduct Deck Replacement	607731	Move Springfield- I-91 Viaduct Deck Replacement from Statewide Infrastructure Program to Regional Major Infrastructure Program and Increase cost from \$71,933,750 to \$84,493,750.

Mr. Roscoe noted that he would not read the changes made to the FFY 2017, FFY 2018 and FFY 2019 TIP projects. At this point, Mr. Woelfel called for a motion to release the Pioneer Valley region’s FY 2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments for the required 30-day public review period and stated that questions would be taken afterwards.

MOVED BY MAYOR RICHARD COHEN OF THE TOWN OF AGAWAM, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN MARCUS BOYLE OF THE TOWN OF HATFIELD, TO APPROVE THE RELEASE OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION’S PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FFY 2016-2019 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE REQUIRED 30-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD SUBJECT TO MODIFICATIONS AND CORRECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN OUTLINED BY PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC) STAFF

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any clarifying questions or debate on the subject motion. After a short question and answer period, Mr. Woelfel called for a vote on the subject motion.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR DISCUSSION, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE MPO MEMBERS PRESENT.

Mr. Woelfel moved to take up agenda item 8 as Richard Masse had led discussions on agenda items 6 and 7 earlier due to Mr. Woelfel arriving late for today’s MPO because of a traffic accident on the interstate.

8. Report from Jim Czach, the Chairman of the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC), on Important Transportation Issues and Projects Discussed Since the Last MPO Meeting Was Held on July 28, 2015

Mr. Woelfel called on Mr. Czach to report on issues and projects discussed at the last meeting of the region’s Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). Mr. Czach noted that there have been two JTC meetings since the last MPO meeting held on July 28th at which the following topics were discussed:

- Ralph Romano, Resident Engineer with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) explained the purpose of the Interstate 91 Viaduct Rehabilitation Project to the JTC members and how the project will affect traffic patterns through detours and closures of ramps and roads.
- The establishment of a Regional Freight Plan and how to recruit members to a rail-freight, steering committee that would begin meeting in November or December to solicit information on freight carriers within the JTC members’ municipalities

Mr. Brennan commented that there has been a similar rail-freight committee in the past but it proved difficult keeping the committee members convened because they didn’t understand the relevance of the committee. Mr. Roux replied that a survey will be developed with a focus on commercial truck drivers and the first rail-freight, steering committee meeting will not be intense. Mr. Woelfel interjected that MassDOT is in the process of updating its Freight Plan and will coordinate it with the efforts of the PVPC transportation staff members to develop their Pioneer Valley Freight Plan.

- Mr. Czach reported that Chapter 90 funds are being similarly spent in District One and District Two communities, namely, 90% of the funding is being spent on the resurfacing and reconstruction of road ways including police

protection and staff costs; 5% of the Chapter 90 funds are being used for design and the remaining 5% is being spent for equipment purchases.

At this point, Mr. Brennan commented that in a conversation he had with State Senator Eric Lesser, Senator Lesser expressed interest in Chapter 90 money amounts, delays, and obstacles and Mr. Brennan requested that Mr. Czach place an in-depth discussion of Chapter 90 funding on the agenda of the next JTC meeting. Mr. Czach agreed and Mr. Woelfel moved on to the next agenda item.

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

Mr. Woelfel called on Peter Frieri of the MassDOT District One office in Lenox to present District One’s updates on relevant transportation issues and projects. Mr. Frieri replied that the Town of Cummington’s FFY 2015 Retaining Wall Replacement Project on Route 9 had a bid opening which occurred on July 14th with a notice to proceed given in September and he added that construction will begin in the spring. Mr. Frieri reported that in FFY 2017, a full bridge replacement is anticipated for a municipally-owned, structurally-deficient bridge in the Town of Chesterfield for \$3.6 million. Mr. Frieri added that District One has two projects at the 25% design phase, namely, the Reconstruction of Route 143 in Worthington and the resurfacing of West Street in the Town of Goshen.

Mr. Woelfel next called on Laura Hanson of the MassDOT District Two office in Northampton to present District Two’s updates on relevant transportation projects within their jurisdiction. Ms. Hanson reported on the following District Two projects, namely:

ID #	Project Name	Status
605066	Northampton – Intersection Improvements at Route 5 and Conz Street	Bid opened on October 6, 2015 and awarded to Gomes Construction
607207	Pelham/Amherst – Reconstruction of Amherst Road (Phase II)	Bid opened on August 11, 2015 and awarded to C & A Construction Company
604035	Hadley Signal and Intersection Improvements at Routes 9 and 47	Advertised on September 19, 2015; Current bid opening scheduled for January 5, 2016
605222	Springfield, North End and Brightwood Infrastructure Improvements	Advertised on September 12, 2015; Current bid opening scheduled for December 1, 2016

Mr. Woelfel thanked Mr. Frieri and Ms. Hanson for their District One and Two project updates and he moved to take up the next agenda item.

10. Updates from Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Administrator Mary MacInnes on Relevant Public Transit Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

Mr. Woelfel called for a report and update from Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Administrator Mary MacInnes. Ms. MacInnes reported that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) has secured City Point Partners as Owner's Project Manager (OPM) for the new operations maintenance facility in the City of Springfield and the state has approved the use of the construction management approach. Ms. MacInnes added that the PVTA anticipates having a contract signed with the construction manager by December 2015 and has already signed a contract with Wendel Associates to do the final design.

Ms. MacInnes announced that the Westfield PVTA Transit Pavilion is at 100% design and has attained *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Status*. Ms. MacInnes explained that after relocating the remaining

tenants in the building that was purchased to house the Pavilion, the next steps are tax abatement and the demolition of the building. She added that a no-cost land transfer has been obtained from the City of Westfield with construction to begin next year.

Ms. MacInnes noted that the PVTA will be receiving its electric buses in June and is moving forward with its Bus Rapid Transit Study. Ms. MacInnes reported that all the data has been collected and is being reviewed. She added that asset management software training will begin next month and the PVTA will be submitting its five-year capital plan this Friday along with a 25-page detailed justification of every PVTA transit project.

Mr. Woelfel then moved to take up the final agenda item.

11. Other Business

Mr. Woelfel asked if there was any further business for the MPO members to address. Mr. Brennan announced that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is scheduling "Capital Conversations," a series of community meetings to solicit input on potential transportation projects to be included in the agency's upcoming five-year Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2017-2021. Mr. Brennan reported that a Capital Conversation meeting was held on October 26th and another meeting is scheduled on Thursday, November 5th at 6:00 p.m. at the Springfield City Hall. Mr. Brennan underscored that these meetings are important because MassDOT and Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack are using these meetings to identify and prioritize five years of capital projects, and projects that don't appear in that Five-Year Capital Investment Plan probably won't be addressed. Mr. Brennan noted that the PVPC staff is listing what they believe to be the top ten transportation projects of regional significance that would have an effect on multiple states or municipalities. He strongly urged the MPO members to attend the November 5th Capital Conversations meeting and advocate for their priority projects.

There being no further business for the MPO members to address, Mr. Woelfel announced that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for January 2016 and he called for a motion to adjourn the October 29th MPO meeting

MOVED BY SELECTMAN GEORGE ARCHIBLE OF THE TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN, SECONDED BY SELECTMAN MARCUS BOYLE OF THE TOWN OF HATFIELD, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 29, 2015 MEETING OF THE PIONEER VALLEY REGION'S MPO. THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE MPO MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:15 A.M. WITHOUT OBJECTION

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy W. Brennan, Executive Director
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the October 29, 2015 MPO Meeting

1. Agenda: *Pioneer Valley Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting Notice and Agenda: October 29, 2015*
2. *Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting: Wednesday, July 28, 2015*
3. *2016- 2019 Pioneer Valley Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Proposed Amendments – October 2015*
4. *Pioneer Valley MPO Transportation Improvement Program (FY2016 -2019)*
5. *Transportation Project Evaluation Criteria – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Sections 1 – 8*
6. *Proposed TEC Scoring Changes (Draft)*