

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 13, 2024, 10:00 A.M.

Committee Members and Guests Present:

Alexis Hosea-Abbott, MassBike
Andy Krar, Springfield DPW
Betsy Johnson, Walk/Bike Springfield
Carmen Rosado, Stavros CIL
Connor Knightly, West Springfield DPW
Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2
Dawn Nims, MassDOT District 2
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Nicholas Dines, Williamsburg Greenway
Paul Burns, PVTA
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
Stuart Beckley, Town of Ware
Thomas Ruta, MassDOT Highway District 2
Tori Halloran, Safe Routes to School
William Dwyer, Town of Hadley
Ben Breger, Bowman
Jim Czach, VHB
Kien Ho, BETA Group

PVPC Staff Present:

Jeffrey McCollough, Principal Planner
Gary Roux, PVPC Traffic Manager
Dana Roscoe, Principal Planner/Transportation Manager
Andrew McCaul, Senior Transportation Planner
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Carl Jackson, Principal Transportation Planner

1. Call to Order

The November 13, 2024, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Joint Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair William Dwyer, who welcomed everyone in attendance. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Dwyer asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2024, JTC meeting.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY BETSY JOHNSON TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 9, 2024, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Review, Discussion, and Recommendation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to Endorse Amendment No. 1 to the FFY 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Andrew McCaul presented the proposed amendments to the JTC's FFY 2025 programed projects. The FFY 2025 includes a variety of projects, the Rocky Hill Greenway in Northampton, bridge work in Hadley, Cummington, Westhampton, and Huntington, resurfacing work on Route 57 in Agawam, and interstate work on I-91 across multiple locations. The amendment includes cost increases for three highlighted projects and adjustments to project descriptions. One notable project is the VRU project in Districts 1,2,3 which includes 3 location in Hatfield is funded statewide part of the TIP. The Northampton Complete Streets project may require future amendments, although adjustments will be made once the design is finalized.

Mr. McCaul noted that the West Springfield and Chicopee bridge project saw a cost increase from \$5.7 million to over \$9.3 million due to expanded scope, including deck work. The Agawam Route 57 resurfacing project and the Hadley bridge replacement project experienced cost increases due to added deck resurfacing and updated design standards, respectively. The Northampton Rocky Hill Greenway project had a change in its funding source from CMAQ to a High Priority Project (HPP) fund.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY CONOR KNIGHTLY, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND THE MPO TO ENDORSE AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO THE FFY 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Title VI Update for the Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Jeffrey McCollough provided an overview of the annual documentation required for the Title VI program, focusing on activities related to discrimination. The presentation covered federal and state requirements, staff activities, population identification, language translation services, project mapping, funding analysis, and website updates.

6. Update: Electric Vehicle Charging Assessment and Deployment Plan for the Pioneer Valley Region

Gary Roux provided an extensive overview of the efforts to develop an electric vehicle (EV) charging and assessment plan for the region. VHB was hired to develop an electric vehicle charging and assessment plan, focusing on current infrastructure and future demand. Charging stations are categorized into Level 1 (home charging), Level 2 (office/retail), and Level 3 (fast charging), with Level 3 chargers being the least common. As of August, 2024, the region has 287 charging stations, mostly Level 2 chargers, with only 29 being fast chargers. Most charging stations are located in urban areas, leaving rural areas underserved and highlighting the need for strategic infrastructure deployment.

Mr. Roux shared that by 2035, approximately 305,800 electric vehicles are expected in the region, necessitating around 20,000 public Level 2 charging points and over 1,600 fast chargers. The plan included recommendations for improving charging access, enhancing user experience, and addressing the needs of "garage orphans" who lack home charging options. Mr. Roux provided a detailed list of funding opportunities for cities, towns, and businesses to develop EV charging infrastructure, along with a model EV bylaw.

Betsy Johnson noted that there are currently two types of fast chargers: Tesla-only chargers and non-Tesla chargers. Ms. Johnson also added that there is a possibility that Tesla will make a \$125 adapter available for non-Tesla users to access Tesla chargers, but this has not yet happened. Mr. Roux explained that the final report on charging infrastructure is available on the website, and communities are encouraged to explore potential funding opportunities for installing charging infrastructure. Ms. Johnson emphasized the need for more fast chargers, noting that the number of electric cars now exceeds the availability of public charging stations.

7. PVPC Traffic Count Dashboard

Mr. Roux outlined the features and functionalities of a newly developed interactive dashboard for traffic count data by the PVPC. The dashboard, accessible via the Pioneer Valley MPO site, displays weekday daily traffic volumes collected from 2010 through 2024. Users can search by community and view data for specific locations, including average weekday totals that are unadjusted for seasonal trends. Users can request detailed breakdowns of traffic counts by referring to specific site codes and contacting PVPC Transportation staff. Future plans included expanding the dashboard to show traffic count growth over time and correcting any existing data entry errors.

8. PVPC Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

Mr. McCollough explained that the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan aims to integrate local bicycle and pedestrian plans into a cohesive regional strategy. This update is a task within the Unified Planning Work Program, intended to be a practical tool for implementing projects that prioritize bicycling and walking across various communities. The project seeks extensive feedback from constituents and plans to engage the public through events like Bike Month and an online Wiki Map tool. The team will work closely with the JTC's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group and welcomes input to ensure the plan supports local efforts.

9. Other Business

- SRTS Bicycle Rack Grants: Mr. McCollough provided an update on the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School's new bicycle rack initiative, which is available to member schools through a quick online application. The deadline for applications is November 15, 2024, and Tori Halloran is a resource for schools wishing to join. Additionally, all relevant information has been sent to the JTC.
- PVMPO Recruitment: Mr. McCaul discussed the recruitment efforts for the MPO, noting that there are five sub-areas in the region. Currently, sub-areas 4 and 5 lack alternate members despite multiple email solicitations for interested parties. Mr. McCaul urged individuals from these sub-areas to encourage their elected officials to participate to ensure proper representation.

10. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, Mr. Dwyer called for any objections to adjourning the meeting.

THERE BEING NO OBJECTIONS TO ADJOURN THE NOVEMBER 13, 2024, COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:37 A.M.

Members not in attendance

Agawam	Hampden	Plainfield
Amherst	Holland	Russell
Barnes Municipal Airport	Holyoke	South Hadley
Belchertown	Huntington	Southampton
Blandford	Longmeadow	Southwick
Brimfield	Ludlow	Tolland
Chester	Middlefield	University of Massachusetts
Chesterfield	Monson	Wales
Chicopee	Montgomery	Western Massachusetts EDC
Cummington	Northampton	Westfield
East Longmeadow	Palmer	Westhampton
Goshen	Pelham	Wilbraham
Granby	Peter Pan Bus Lines	Worthington
Granville	Pioneer Valley Railroad	

Respectfully Submitted,