

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 9, 2024, 10:00 A.M.

Members and Guest Present:

Alexis Hosea-Abbott, MassBike
Andy Krar, Springfield DPW
Ben Breger, Bowman
Ben Murphy, Town of Monson
Betsy Johnson, Walk/Bike Springfield
Carmen Rosado, Stavros CIL
Chris Klem, MassDOT-OTP
Chris Sorensen, Highway District 1
Connor Knightly, West Springfield DPW
Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2
Dawn Nims, MassDOT District 2
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Doug Ellis, Chicopee City Engineer
Jeff Maxtutis, BETA Group
Linda Leduc, Town of Belchertown
Mark Berman, East Longmeadow DPW
Michelle Chase, Agawam Town Engineer
Nicholas Dines, Williamsburg Greenway
Paul Burns, PVTA
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT Highway District 2
Van Kacoyannakis, VHB

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

1. Open Meeting

The October 9, 2024, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Joint Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Principal Planner Dana Roscoe, who welcomed everyone in attendance. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ms. Roscoe asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024, JTC meeting. It was noted that members who were not present would be included in the meeting minutes in the future.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY BEN MURPHY, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2024, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Update of the Statewide Performance Targets for the Pioneer Valley

Chris Klem presented an update on statewide performance targets for the Pioneer Valley, focusing on system performance measures for congestion, reliability, and emissions. In 2016, the Federal Highway Administration established three performance measures for state DOTs and MPOs to track: improving safety, maintaining bridge and pavement conditions, and system reliability, congestion, and emissions. Performance measures PM1, PM2, and PM3 were reported on different schedules, with PM1 being annual, and PM2 and PM3 every four years, including a mid-period check at two years. The Level of Travel Time Reliability (LOTTR) is calculated based on the percentage of person-miles traveled that are reliable. The state has met its targets for both interstate and non-interstate systems and is on track to meet future targets. This measure is similar to overall travel time reliability but is specific to the interstate system. The state has met its target for Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) and is projected to continue meeting it.

The metric measures annual hours of excessive delay per capita on the national highway system during peak periods. The state has successfully met its target for this measure. It also tracks the percentage of people commuting using modes other than a single-occupancy vehicle (SOV). The state has exceeded its targets and has adjusted future targets accordingly. The final measure focuses on reducing on-road mobile source emissions from projects funded by the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. The state has met its targets in this area, although some regions no longer require reporting due to the end of their air quality maintenance periods.

A member inquired about the procedure if the target of 22.7% is exceeded within the next two years. Mr. Klem responded that it would be considered an achievement, and new measures would be developed for the subsequent reporting period. There was confusion over the travel time reliability metrics, particularly how they seem to justify long delays on the Massachusetts Turnpike. Mr. Klem clarified that travel time reliability is calculated at the statewide level, including the Massachusetts Turnpike, and is not based on user satisfaction.

Betsy Johnson highlighted the lack of reliable non-SOV travel options to Boston, pointing out that this issue contributes to the overall travel time reliability problem. It was explained that the region has adopted statewide targets for performance measures which may not always align with local experiences. The focus is on the national highway system, not local roads. Mr. Klem expressed optimism that new data and adjustments to the metrics will better reflect travel conditions over time, especially with potential improvements in non-SOV travel options. He noted that the current metrics and definitions are established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and that there is limited flexibility for state and regional authorities to alter them.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY BEN MURPHY, TO APPROVE THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND THE MPO ADOPT THE PROPOSED NEW SPRINGFIELD NON-SOV TARGET AT THEIR NEXT MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Safe Streets for All Users (SS4A) – Status Update

Gary Roux reported that the PVPC was awarded \$1.25 million under the Safer Streets and Roads for All program, with \$1 million coming from Federal Highway and a 20% match from MassDOT. The grant aims to develop a regional safety action plan and study non-compliant traffic signals. Permission has been granted for the Executive Director to sign the user agreement, and an RFP for consulting services is expected to be released in late 2024. The project will involve public outreach to identify projects for the regional action plan, making communities eligible for future funding.

The demonstration activity involves studying traffic signals that do not comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to see if outdated signals contribute to fatalities and serious injuries. The development of the regional action plan will include extensive public outreach to identify projects for future funding applications. The communities covered in this plan include Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Westfield, and Ware.

6. 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Andrew McCaul provided an overview of the 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) review, detailing the status and financial aspects of various projects undertaken by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) over the past year. Mr. McCaul outlined the projects completed in each quarter of the year, including interstate maintenance, resurfacing, and bridge construction. Specific projects mentioned include the Springfield Chicopee interstate maintenance, resurfacing of Route 116 in Amherst and Hadley, and bridge projects in Monson, Worthington, Cummington, and Ludlow. Several projects experienced significant cost increases, leading to amendments in their budgets. Notably, the Worthington project and the "X" Project in Springfield required substantial financial adjustments. The total TIP cost was \$107.5 million, with the adjusted federal participating cost slightly over \$111 million.

7. Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Recruitment

Mr. McCaul discussed recruitment efforts for the MPO. The MPO consists of five sub-areas, each represented by local officials. Currently, there are vacancies for alternate members in sub-areas four and five. Mr. McCaul emphasized the importance of filling these positions to ensure adequate representation of the communities within the MPO. Efforts have been made to inform local officials and encourage them to recommend suitable candidates for these roles. Mr. McCaul also highlighted the significance of having alternate members to maintain representation if the primary members are unable to attend meetings.

8. Other Business

- Rapid Flashing Beacons: Mr. Roux reminded attendees that MassDFT has a website for submitting potential locations for installing rapid rectangular flashing beacons, with equipment provided free of charge by MassDOT. Communities awarded the equipment will be responsible for installation. The deadline for applications is October 10, 2024, and assistance is available from the transportation section staff for those having difficulty with the application process.

9. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, Ms. Roscoe called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY CARMEN ROSADO, SECONDED BY PAUL BURNS, TO ADJOURN THE OCTOBER 9, 2024, COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:45 A.M.

Members Not In Attendance

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