

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present:

Paul Burns, PVTA
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT Highway District 2
Anne Capra, Town of South Hadley
Michelle Chase, Town of Agawam
Nick Dines, Town of Williamsburg
Doug Ellis, City of Chicopee
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
Alexis Hosea-Abbott, MassBike
Betsy Johnson, Pedestrian Representative, Springfield
Van Kacoyannakis, VHB
Tim Keane, Town of Longmeadow
Connor Knightly, West Springfield
Tom Kulig, Russell
Linda Leduc, Town of Belchertown
Jim Maksimoski, Town of Hadley
Carolyn Misch, City of Northampton
Ben Murphy, Town of Monson
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Thomas Ruta, MassDOT Highway District 2
Chris Stratton, Northampton Resident

PVPC Staff Present:

Gary Roux, Principal Planner/Traffic Manager
Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner
Jeffrey McCollough, Principal Transportation Planner
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Geoffrey Klafeta, Transportation Planner
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner

1. Call to Order

The September 10, 2025, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Joint Transportation Committee convened under the temporary chairmanship of Gary Roux due to the absence of an official chair. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Mr. Roux, and everyone in attendance was welcomed. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Roux asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11 and August 13, 2025, Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meetings.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY BETSY JOHNSON, TO APPROVE THE JUNE 11, 2025, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION, FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY BETSY JOHNSON, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 13, 2025, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH FOUR ABSTENTIONS, FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comment

There was no comment.

4. JTC Discussion and Approval of a New JTC Chairperson

Mr. Roux addressed the nomination of Carmen Rosado as the new chair of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC). It was noted that Ms. Rosado has served as the Disability representative for nine years and has expressed interest in the chair position. Due to her inability to attend the meeting because of a private commitment, the approval motion will be deferred until the October 2025 meeting. Attendees were encouraged to consider candidacy for the alternate chair position to ensure continuity in the chair's absence.

5. 2025 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan – Update

Jeffrey McCollough provided the Pioneer Valley Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update. Three major outreach events were held in Springfield, Northampton, and Amherst, gathering community input on bicycling and walking priorities, with maintenance consistently emerging as a top concern. Additional events included a student-focused Earth Day at UMass and a mayor's bike ride in Westfield.

Across different communities, maintaining existing infrastructure such as shared use paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes was emphasized as essential for safety and a quality user experience. Feedback showed strong interest in bike lanes, shared use paths, and sidewalks, with specific concerns about pedestrian crossings and sidewalk connectivity. Distracted driving was identified as a significant deterrent to biking and walking, influencing the development of strategies to improve safety. Traffic calming and slowing traffic received less attention than expected.

Survey data revealed that most walking and biking trips were for exercise, recreation, social activities, and shopping, indicating many trips could be shifted from driving if safe options were available. Draft performance metrics included miles of bike lanes, pedestrian facilities, network completeness, access for disadvantaged populations, usage volumes, institutional integration, and safety, aligning with the regional transportation plan. The team plans to finalize the plan's strategies based on feedback and aims to present a recommendation for public review at the October 2025 JTC meeting.

6. Update to the Pioneer Valley Critical Freight Corridors

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is in the process of updating its State Freight Plan, which includes a review and potential expansion of designated critical freight corridors within the state. The original State Freight Plan, created in 2017, required the identification of critical freight corridors categorized as primary, non-primary, urban, and rural. An update is planned for 2026, with increased mileage allowances for corridor designation. Massachusetts currently has approximately 133 miles of rural and nearly 75 miles of urban designated freight corridors. The state can now designate up to 300 rural and 150 urban miles. In the Pioneer Valley, about 23 rural and 10 urban miles were designated in 2017. Changes in urban boundaries may shift some corridors from rural to urban classification, such as a section of Ware Road in Palmer.

Potential additions to the corridor designations include extending corridors in Belchertown, Pelham, Palmer, Ware, Westfield, West Springfield, Holyoke, and connections to neighboring regions. The goal is to better link freight corridors to interstates and national highway systems. The team is using tools like Replica for freight heat mapping and internal traffic and class counts to verify candidate corridors, supplemented by new traffic counts at select locations. Municipalities were asked to submit corridor input by late August, with some flexibility for late submissions.

Verification and ranking of candidates will occur through September and October, with a recommendation to the MPO expected in October and submission to MassDOT by November. The candidate list will be presented to the JTC in October for recommendation, enabling a timely submission to MassDOT for the freight plan update.

7. Transit Grant Opportunities

- Microtransit/Last Mile—opens September 5, due November 7, 2025.
- CTGP Operating & Mobility Management – Opens September 5, due November 7, 2025.
- CTGP vehicle cycle—opens September 25, due November 21, 2025.

8. Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. McCaul provided an update on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In the first quarter of FY 2025, notable accomplishments included the successful advertisement of projects such as the Rocky Hill Greenway Multi-Use Trail, pavement and bridge preservation on Route 57 and I-91, and four SS4A grants for Chicopee, Holyoke, Westfield, and PVPC.

During the second and third quarters of FY 2025, highlights included bridge projects in West Springfield and Hadley, a heavy vehicle grant for Springfield Public Schools to electrify buses, and an at-grade crossing elimination grant for Long Meadow. Additional projects included resurfacing and intersection improvements in Springfield and bridge work in Cummington.

In the fourth quarter of FY 2025, updates included the Chicopee South Hadley resurfacing and related Route 33 work, bridge preservation in Huntington, and two regional discretionary projects that underwent cost adjustments and were anticipated for advertisement. Some projects were funded by state dollars and scheduled for future advertisement.

The FY 2026 project schedule included key projects such as the Chicopee Intersection Improvement, Springfield Armory Street Bridge replacement, and a shared-use path along Mount Tom Road, expected to be advertised in the first quarter. Subsequent quarters will include bridge replacements, guide sign updates, and local street reconstructions in multiple towns, with some projects at risk due to tentative advertisement dates.

Looking ahead to FY 2027 through FY 2030, local projects will continue with phased work on Mountain Street, Main Street, and complete streets projects in Northampton and East Longmeadow, as well as resurfacing and intersection improvements in various towns. Bicycle share initiatives and pedestrian tunnel reconstructions are also planned.

Funding and advertisement clarifications indicated that specific projects, such as the Huntington Bridge preservation, will be funded through non-federal fair share funding and advertised accordingly. Other projects, like the Chesterfield North Road and Damon Pond Road, were confirmed for upcoming advertisement.

Design progress concerns remained for the South Hadley FY 2026 Main Street reconstruction project, which is currently at 25% design, prompting inquiries to District 2 for updates and reasons for delays.

9. Other Business

- MPO Recruitment – Sub-area 3 and 4 – The MPO is seeking alternate members from sub-area 3 (Amherst, Hadley, South Hadley, East Hampton) and sub-area 4 (about 20 communities in the Eastern Pioneer Valley), ideally mayors, select board members, or city councilors to ensure consistent local representation.
- MassDOT All Way Stop Control Materials Procurement – MassDOT identified 17 intersections in Pioneer Valley communities for potential implementation of all-way stop controls based on crash data.
- Information Sessions – Two information sessions were scheduled for September 22 and October 6, 2025, to provide details and answer questions.

Attendees were encouraged to have appropriate staff attend the information sessions and to suggest topics for future Joint Transportation Committee meetings to improve their value and relevance.

The next JTC meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

10. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mr. Roux adjourned the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,