

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present:

Mark Berman, East Longmeadow
Paul Burns, PVTA
Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT Highway District 2
Luis Capellan, Longmeadow
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
Connor Knightly, West Springfield
Andy Krar, Springfield
Tom Kulig, Russell
Scott McCarthy, Town of Hadley
Carolyn Misch, Northampton
Ben Murphy, Town of Monson
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Thomas Ruta, MassDOT Highway District 2

PVPC Staff Present:

Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Kyati Parmar, Principal Transportation Planner
Kyle Finnell, Principal Land Use Planner
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Jeffrey McCollough, Principal Transportation Planner
Gary Roux, Principal Planner/Traffic Manager

1. Call to Order

The November 12, 2025, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Joint Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Gary 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 October 8, 2025, Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meeting.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY CAROLYN MISCH, TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 8, 2025, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comment

There was no comment.

4. JTC Recommendation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to Release the Proposed Changes to the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) for the 21-day Public Review Period

Andrew McCaul presented proposed updates to the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) to align with current federal and state requirements, particularly in anticipation of the expiration of the current federal authorization in 2026. The changes focus on strengthening the connection between housing and transportation, as informed by a recent housing coordination and production plan, and increasing the available points for housing-related criteria from 2.5 to 4. The proposal merges the education access criterion into the housing section. It expands the scope of eligible projects to include parks and rest areas, making it easier for projects to earn points in these areas.

Additionally, the proposal removes references to Environmental Justice (EJ). It replaces them with Title 6 language to comply with federal law. However, some members expressed concern about losing Massachusetts-specific EJ considerations and suggested creative alternatives during the public comment period. Enhanced public involvement is emphasized, requiring municipalities to conduct outreach beyond standard hearings, especially to communities with limited English proficiency. The Committee agreed to release the draft changes for a 21-day public review, after which feedback will be considered before finalizing the criteria.

MOVED BY BETSY JOHNSTON, SECONDED BY PAUL BURNS, TO RELEASE THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TRANSPORTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Draft Top 100 High Crash Locations – Updates

Kyati Parmar presented an update on the draft list of the top 100 high-crash locations, which is now in its fifth edition. The report uses finalized crash data from the MassDOT database, specifically covering the years 2019 to 2021, a period that includes the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology for ranking intersections relies on Equivalent Property Damage Only (EPDO) scoring, which assigns higher weights to fatal and injury crashes based on their associated costs. In contrast, property damage-only crashes receive a single point. This year, both MassDOT and the PVPC have updated their methodologies to align completely, including changes in how crash clusters are defined. Clusters are now determined by crash proximity rather than overlapping buffer zones, resulting in smaller, more precise clusters, especially in areas like Springfield.

The region has 103 top crash intersections, with the majority concentrated in the urban core, particularly Springfield. Of the top 25 crash intersections, 24 are in Springfield, and one is in Chicopee (Memorial Drive). Over three-quarters of the top crash locations are in Springfield, and the number of high-crash intersections in Springfield has been increasing over the years. The report noted that other communities have fewer high-crash sites. Still, future updates and the Safety Compass initiative (supported by the SS4A grant) will address crash locations outside the urban core. The finalized 2022 crash data will be released soon, after which both MassDOT and the PVPC will update their clusters and rankings, including bicycle and pedestrian crash clusters. The complete draft listing of high crash locations will be sent to all JTC members and alternates, and the top 100 list will serve as the basis for the TEC scoring process beginning in January, 2026.

6. Review, Discussion, and JTC Approval of the 2025 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan currently out for Public Review

Jeffrey McCollough shared that the JTC approved the release of the draft Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for a 21-day public review period at the October, 2025, meeting. During this time, four public comments were received and incorporated into the final version of the document. Mr. McCollough explained that the team has already started implementing recommendations from the plan, and that the initial step is conducting a bicycle parking inventory.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY CAROLYN MISCH, TO APPROVE THE 2025 REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN CURRENTLY OUT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. 2026 to 2030 Transportation Improvement Program – Updates, Adjustments, and Statewide Amendment

Mr. McCaul reported that the Interstate 91 Pavement Preservation Project between Deerfield and Northampton had its cost reduced from \$15.4 million to \$12.4 million, triggering an amendment that will be endorsed at the next MPO meeting, freeing up about \$3 million for potential future use. Several completed project earmarks with remaining balances are being repurposed, resulting in nine regional projects receiving just over \$4 million, including transfers to projects in Northampton, Williamsburg, South Hadley, Westfield, Granby, Chicopee, Holyoke, and Long Meadow. These adjustments are expected to offset current TIP project costs and help absorb future increases, with all changes to be reflected in a future TIP amendment.

8. Federal Functional Classification of Roadways in the Pioneer Valley Region – 2020 UZA Update

Mr. McCaul noted that the 2020 census led to changes in federally recognized urbanized areas, resulting in several roadway segments being reclassified from rural to urban. This update does not alter the roads' functional designation; it only changes their urban/rural status. Some segments previously went through a formal redesignation process, but a few were missed and are now being corrected. Staff also found coding errors in the latest functional class data that do not affect funding but do affect regional mileage totals and research accuracy. Ongoing efforts are ensuring all roadway classifications and data are accurate.

9. Other Business

- MPO Recruitment – Sub-Areas 3 and 4 – The team is actively seeking alternates for the MPO in Sub-Area 3 (Northampton, East Hampton, South Hadley, Amherst). The current representative is Mayor Shiara, but an alternate is needed. Sub-Area 4 (eastern region) also requires an alternate. The current representative is James Whalen from Holland. Alternates should generally be the Select Board's mayor or chair.
- JTC Outreach and Engagement Efforts – Staff have identified communities lacking representatives or alternates for the JTC. Progress has been made in recruiting new members and alternates, and efforts are ongoing. Current members without alternates will be contacted to ensure complete coverage for all communities. Feedback was encouraged to improve the usefulness and engagement of the meeting; suggestions can be sent to Mr. McCaul.
- Critical Freight Corridors – The draft list of critical freight corridors has been prepared and will be submitted to MassDOT for consideration. There is no guarantee all or any corridors will be accepted, but updates will be shared once available.
- 2026 MassTrails Grant Applicants – In the last round, five towns received funding through the MassTrails program, primarily for shared-use paths. The new grant round is now open, providing opportunities for communities to advance projects. Interested applicants should review the MassTrails grant website for details.

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

10. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mr. Roux adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,