

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 10:00 A.M.

Organization Members Present

Salem Derby, City of Easthampton
William Dwyer, Town of Hadley
Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard
Joshua A. Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke
Michael McCabe, Mayor of Westfield
Paula Simmons, MassDOT Highway District 2
JM Sorrell, Chair of PVTA
Aaron Vega, WesternMass EDC
James Whalen, Holland Selectboard
Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT OTP

Non-Voting/Ex-Officio Members

Sandra Sheehan, Administrator of PVTA

Guests

Mark Berman, East Longmeadow
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
Laura Hanson, MassDOT Highway D2
Van Kacoyannakis, VHB
Timothy Keane, Town of Longmeadow
Randall Kemp, Southampton
Mark Moore, MassDOT Highway District 1
Benjamin Muller, MassDOT
Derek Shooster, MassDOT OTP
Sam Taylor, MassDOT OTP

PVPC Staff Present

Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner
Geoffrey Klafeta, Transportation Planner
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Jeffrey McCollough, Principal Transportation Planner
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning

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

The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting on February 24, 2026, was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was noted.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Held on January 27, 2026

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JM SORRELL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27, 2026, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING AS AMENDED. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. MPO Approval of the CY 2026 PM1 Safety Performance Targets for the Pioneer Valley MPO, Clarification of January Motion

Andrew McCaul explained that at the January meeting, the motion concerning the CY 2026 PM1 safety performance targets was misstated as requiring a public review period. Mr. McCaul clarified that federal regulations do not require public review for highway safety performance targets and that the intended action was MPO approval of the statewide targets for application in the Pioneer Valley region.

MOVED BY JM SORRELL, SECONDED BY JAMES WHALEN, TO APPROVE THE CY 2026 PM1 STATEWIDE SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR THE PIONEER VALLEY MPO. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. MPO Approval of the CY 2026 Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Safety Targets, Clarification of January Motion

A. McCaul noted that a similar clarification was required for the CY 2026 PVTA safety targets. At the January meeting, the motion incorrectly referenced a 21-day public review period, which is not required for transit safety performance targets under federal regulations. A. McCaul explained that the PVTA had completed its safety target development process for fixed-route and paratransit services and was seeking MPO approval of those targets.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JM SORRELL, TO APPROVE THE CY 2026 PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PVTA) SAFETY TARGETS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Review, Discussion, and MPO Confirmation of the CY 2026 MPO Sub-Area 3 Membership

Gary Roux reviewed the annual MPO membership confirmation process. For Sub-Area 3, two municipalities expressed interest in serving as the alternate member, triggering a ballot process. Ballots were distributed to the five Sub-Area 3 municipalities, and votes were counted on February 18, 2026. Based on the results, Mayor Salem Derby of Easthampton was selected as the alternate member for MPO Sub-Area 3.

MOVED BY JM SORRELL, SECONDED BY JAMES WHALEN, TO APPROVE MAYOR SALEM DERBY AS THE CY 2026 MPO SUB-AREA 3 ALTERNATE MEMBER. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the Vision Zero Statement Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

A. McCaul presented the updated Vision Zero statement, developed as part of the region's work under the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program and in developing a regional Safety Action Plan. The statement had been introduced previously, reviewed by the Joint Transportation Committee, and released for the required 21-day public review period. A. McCaul reported that the public review period had concluded and that no public comments were received. A. McCaul requested MPO endorsement of the updated Vision Zero statement to support ongoing safety planning efforts and grant activities.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JM SORRELL, TO ENDORSE THE VISION ZERO STATEMENT. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

8. Review, Discussion, and MPO Endorsement of the Pioneer Valley Critical Freight Corridors Currently Out for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

A. McCaul reviewed the updated rural and urban critical freight corridors for the Pioneer Valley region. The corridors had been presented to the MPO previously and released for the required 21-day public review period. Staff reported that no public comments were received. Mr. McCaul explained that endorsed corridors would be submitted to MassDOT for inclusion in the FFY 2027 State Freight Plan. MPO members discussed the level of public engagement typically associated with freight planning efforts and noted that much of the input had occurred earlier in the process.

MOVED BY JM SORRELL, SECONDED BY AARON VEGA, TO ENDORSE THE PIONEER VALLEY CRITICAL FREIGHT CORRIDORS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

9. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval to Release Amendment No. 3 to the FFY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Required 21-Day Public Review Period

Amendment No. 3 to the FFY 2026 TIP includes:

- A significant cost increase and scope changes to the I-291 signage project, driven by expanded scope, additional safety features, and increased unit costs.
- A revised cost estimate for the I-391 bridge replacement over Route 116 in Chicopee, reflecting updated design assumptions and more refined cost estimates as the project advanced.

A. McCaul emphasized that neither project affects regional discretionary funding, but the magnitude of the cost changes requires a formal TIP amendment. MPO members discussed concerns about project cost escalation, long project delivery timelines, transparency, and the challenges these issues pose for both local and regional budgeting.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY SALEM DERBY, TO RELEASE AMENDMENT NO. 3 TO THE FFY 2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE REQUIRED 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

10. MPO Review and Discussion of the Development of the FFY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the FFY 2027 to 2031 TIP, Including the Draft Project Universe and Scenario Development

A. McCaul provided a detailed update on the development of the FFY 2027 UPWP and the FFY 2027 to 2031 TIP, and explained that at least two, and possibly three, TIP scenarios will be presented at the March MPO meeting for discussion and guidance. That guidance will inform the preparation of draft documents for April, 2026, and public review in May, 2026.

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

District Two provided updates on FFY 2026 and FFY 2027 TIP projects. Several FFY 2026 projects are advancing toward construction, including the Chicopee intersection improvements at Montgomery Street, Granby Road, and McKinstry Avenue, which are awaiting final right-of-way and permitting actions, and the Northampton Downtown Complete Streets project, which is at the 75% design stage pending utility coordination and updated cost estimates. The I-91 pavement preservation project between Deerfield and Northampton has been bid. It is awaiting an award, while the East Hampton/Northampton shared use path and Springfield Armory Street bridge replacement projects were recently advertised with bid openings scheduled for March, 2026.

For FFY 2027 projects, District Two reported ongoing design and utility coordination for the South Hadley Main Street reconstruction, early design progress for the East Longmeadow Route 83 resurfacing project, and continued advancement of the Westfield Route 202 intersection improvements, with a design public hearing scheduled for February 25, 2026.

MassDOT Highway District One provided updates on several bridge and roadway projects. The Huntington Route 112 bridge preservation project is fully permitted but remains delayed due to ongoing access negotiations with CSX. The Williamsburg Mountain Street reconstruction project received 100% design plans and was recommended for a delay to FFY 2027 due to potential Article 97 concerns. Additional bridge replacement projects in Huntington and Russell, both programmed for FFY 2027, are progressing slowly and were recommended for delay to FFY 2028 due to design schedule challenges. The Williamsburg Bridge Street and South Main Street bridge replacements over the Mill River may require a second public hearing due to design changes and new right-of-way impacts; the project is currently recommended to remain in FFY 2028.

12. Updates from PVTA Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit-Related Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

Sandra Sheehan reported that January, 2026, ridership declined by approximately 4% due to winter storms that led to service reductions, while February ridership was trending higher than the previous year before being affected by another storm-related service cancellation. Routes that have recently received service enhancements continue to outperform other routes in the system. S. Sheehan also reported that the PVTA has placed orders for replacement buses, including standard and articulated vehicles; manufacturing timelines are approximately 18 months. She highlighted the launch of the new LINK 413 interregional service connecting the Berkshires, Franklin County, and the Pioneer Valley, which has carried 108 passengers in its first month of operation. Finally, she noted that the PVTA recently completed an exit conference with state auditors regarding the battery electric bus program, with no findings reported at that time.

13. Other Business

The next MPO meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

The PVPC is beginning to compile and share a regularly updated table of potential grant opportunities for municipal partners. This information will be presented at MPO and Joint Transportation Committee meetings to help communities stay informed about available funding opportunities as they open and close. It was noted that a related design public hearing is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on February 25, 2026.

There being no further discussion, a motion to adjourn the meeting was called.

MOVED BY AARON VEGA, SECONDED BY STEPHEN WOELFEL, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:56 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the February 24, 2026, Meeting

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization, February 24, 2026, Presentation