

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present:

Daniel Banister, Williamsburg
Mark Berman, East Longmeadow
John Broderick, South Hadley
Michael Chase, Agawam
Nicholas Dines, Williamsburg
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
Jon Goddard, Southwick
Dena Grochmal, Wilbraham
Betsy Johnson, Pedestrian Representative, Springfield
Timothy Keane, Longmeadow
Joseph Kietner, Westfield
Connor Knightly, West Springfield
Mark Langone, Hampden
Carolyn Misch, Northampton
Benjamin Murphy, Monson
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Daniel Shearer, Barnes Airport
Peter Shumway, Springfield
Jason Skeels, Amherst
Matt Sokop, Holyoke
Connie Englert, UMass Transit
Michael McCabe, Mayor of Westfield

Guests:

Van Kacoyannakis, VHB
Dan McCormack, BETA Group
Thomas Ruta, MassDOT Highway District 2
Angela Sirois-Pitel, The Nature Conservancy
Chris Stratton, W6 City Council, Northampton

PVPC Staff Present:

Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner
Geoffrey Klafeta, Transportation Planner
Peter Kuusisto, Senior Transit Planner
Aaron Lybansky, Intern
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Jeff McCollough, Chief Transportation Planner
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning

1. Call to Order

The March 11, 2026, 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 January 14, 2026, Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meeting.

MOVED BY BETSY JOHNSON, SECONDED BY CAROLYN MISCH, TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 14, 2026, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH THREE ABSTENTIONS FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comment

There was no comment.

4. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Update – Current Activities

Mr. Roux provided an update on the federally funded SS4A program, reporting that the Regional Vision Zero statement had been updated and approved by the MPO in February, that public and stakeholder engagement had begun, and that work was underway to update the Regional Safety Compass. Staff explained that the primary objective is to complete a compliant Regional Safety Action Plan by early June to maintain eligibility for future federal funding, and that a future demonstration project will focus on safety performance and compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) at regional traffic signals. The public mapping tool was demonstrated, and members were encouraged to submit safety concerns from their own communities, particularly outside the I-91 corridor. It was noted that Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Westfield, and Ware are pursuing their own SS4A grants, and that the PVPC is coordinating regionally to avoid duplication. Members were invited to submit questions offline, and staff indicated consultants would return in April, 2026, with another update.

5. Review, Discussion, and Recommendation to the MPO to Endorse Amendment No. 3 to the FFY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Currently Out for the 21-Day Public Review Period

Andrew McCaul presented FFY 2026 TIP Amendment No. 3, explaining that it includes two statewide-funded projects that do not affect regional discretionary funds, including a cost increase to the I-291 signage project due to expanded scope and inflation, and a significant cost increase to the I-391 bridge/viaduct over Route 116 in Chicopee, resulting from design refinements and construction cost escalation. Staff noted that the amendment was released for a 21-day public review period with no comments received and that the MPO would act on the amendment later in March, 2026.

MOVED BY DANIEL BANISTER, SECONDED BY JOSEPH KIETNER, TO RECOMMEND TO THE MPO TO ENDORSE AMENDMENT NO. 3 TO THE FFY 2026 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP), CURRENTLY OUT FOR THE 21-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. FFY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development – Request for Potential Transportation Studies

Mr. Roux provided an informational update on development of the FFY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program, explaining that municipalities and elected officials had been invited to submit requests for transportation planning studies, that submissions are requested by the end of March, 2026, and that staff will evaluate requests and bring a recommended program to the MPO, with draft release anticipated in April and endorsement targeted for May, 2026.

7. FFY 2027 to 2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Scenario Development

Mr. McCaul presented a detailed overview of the FFY 2027 to 2031 TIP scenario development process, explaining that project updates and coordination with municipalities and MassDOT have been completed and that multiple challenges related to design readiness, right-of-way, environmental review, and cost escalation are affecting project schedules. Mr. McCaul noted significant difficulty identifying a project ready to advance in FFY 2027 despite more than \$20 million in available regional target funds. He explained that advanced construction and multi-year funding splits are being used to advertise projects sooner and limit cost increases.

Betsy Johnson emphasized that the Bernard Avenue project in Springfield should be fully reconsidered, given the accelerated relocation of the adjacent school. She stated that the project had not adequately addressed speeding, flooding, or safety issues even before the relocation decision. Mr. McCaul acknowledged the concern and committed to coordinating with MassDOT and Springfield to determine whether the project should be removed, noting that doing so could free funding for another project.

Additional discussion addressed risks to the Williamsburg project related to potential Article 97 impacts, continued delays to the Northampton project due to unforeseen conditions, and the possibility of shifting statewide projects to regional funding if necessary to preserve regional funds. Mr. McCaul indicated that three scenarios will be presented to the MPO for guidance and requested that members suggest any projects they believe could realistically advance in the 2026/2027 timeframe.

8. Upcoming Vulnerable Road User Safety Study Location Solicitation

Mr. McCaul reported on the results of the Vulnerable Road User Safety Study solicitation, noting that two locations were selected for study: one near Washington Street Elementary School in Springfield focusing on pedestrian and bicycle access for students and staff, and one in Brookfield near North Main Street and Brookfield Road where faded crosswalks, speeding, and pedestrian access to adult education facilities present safety concerns. Mr. McCaul indicated that coordination with the communities will begin soon and that studies are expected to be conducted over the summer.

9. Update on Ongoing Recruitment Activities: MPO and JTC Membership and Participation

Mr. McCaul provided an update on recruitment and membership efforts, reporting that all municipalities are currently represented on the JTC, that one MPO alternate vacancy remains in Sub-Region 4, and that continued outreach is underway to fill alternate positions and increase participation and engagement.

The Committee paused to acknowledge the passing of former JTC member Marvin Ward, recognizing his long-standing advocacy for bicycle and pedestrian safety and his contributions to the region.

10. Other Business

- Grant Funding Opportunities – Mr. Roux reviewed ongoing grant funding opportunities and encouraged members to contact PVPC staff for assistance.

The next JTC meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

11. Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted,