

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Zoom Meeting
Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 10:00 A.M.

Organization Members Present

William Dwyer, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Roger Fuller, Chesterfield Selectboard
Joshua A. Garcia, Mayor of Holyoke
Michael McCabe, Mayor of Westfield
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor of Northampton
Derek Shooster, MassDOT
Paula Simmons, MassDOT Highway District 1
JM Sorrell, Chair of PVTA
Aaron Vega, Chair of WesternMass EDC

Alternates/Non-Voting/Ex-Officio Members

Salem Derby, Mayor of Easthampton
Sandra Sheehan, Administrator of PVTA

Guests

Sarah Cannamela, MassDOT District 2
Arnav Chatterjee, MassDOT
Michael Daniels, Chicopee
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Timothy Keane, Longmeadow
Sam Taylor, MassDOT OTP

PVPC Staff Present

Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Jeff McCollough, Chief Transportation Planner
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning

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

The Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting on September 22, 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 June 23, 2026

MOVED BY JM SORRELL, SECONDED BY MICHAEL MCCABE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 23, 2026, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING AS AMENDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

4. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the Administrative Adjustment to the FFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Andrew McCaul explained that approximately \$8,000 in available staffing funds would be transferred from the safety and planning studies task to direct costs to purchase computer equipment. He noted that the adjustment qualifies as an administrative amendment and also requires approval from the Office of Transportation Planning.

MOVED BY MICHAEL MCCABE, SECONDED BY JM SORRELL, TO APPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT TRANSFERRING APPROXIMATELY \$8,000 FROM THE SAFETY AND PLANNING STUDIES TASK TO DIRECT COSTS FOR COMPUTER EQUIPMENT. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Review, Discussion, and MPO Approval of the Pioneer Valley Regional Safety Action Plan – Released by the MPO for Public Review at the June 23, 2026 MPO Meeting

A. McCaul reported that three comments were received during the public review period. The final plan incorporated comments from the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) requesting perimeter fencing improvements and dashboard camera technology. The remaining comments were determined to be already addressed within the document.

Sandra Sheehan explained that the PVRTA maintains camera data internally and provides it to municipal police departments only when requested as part of an investigation. She stated that the information is not broadly shared outside the organization.

A. McCaul advised that staff believed the conditions attached to the MPO's previous conditional approval have been satisfied. Board members expressed no objections to proceeding under the prior approval.

6. Review and Discussion of the Upcoming Update to the Pioneer Valley Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Jeff McCollough outlined ongoing efforts to update the PPP to reflect changing outreach practices, accessibility requirements, language needs, and public-engagement tools. He highlighted increased use of online engagement platforms, community-based outreach, and staff accessibility training. J. McCollough advised that a draft plan is expected in October, with final adoption anticipated by year-end.

7. Review and Discussion of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A. McCaul reported that all 11 FFY 2026 TIP projects, totaling approximately \$274 million, have been advertised for construction. He reviewed FFY 2027 funding allocations, including significant bridge investments and opportunities to advance projects currently programmed in later fiscal years if project schedules permit.

A. McCaul clarified that Project 612600 is fully funded in FFY 2027 and explained that some projects are intentionally funded across multiple years to maximize available transportation funding.

Regarding whether current TIP projects remain on schedule and within budget, and whether tariffs, material costs, or supply-chain challenges are affecting project delivery, Derek Shooster stated that updated project cost and schedule information would be reviewed following federal approval of the FFY 2027 to 2031 State Transportation Improvement Program and could be provided through subsequent updates or follow-up communications.

8. Updates from MassDOT Highway District 1 and District 2 on Relevant Transportation Issues and Projects

MassDOT Highway District 1 provided updates on projects, including the Huntington bridge preservation project and several bridge replacement and roadway reconstruction projects in Huntington, Williamsburg, and Russell.

MassDOT Highway District 2 reviewed project status updates in Holyoke, West Springfield, Chicopee, Northampton, Westfield, South Hadley, Easthampton, and Longmeadow.

D. Shooster clarified that the Westfield project is an intersection improvement project and noted that Project 608423 is located in Easthampton rather than Southampton.

9. Updates from PVRT Administrator Sandra Sheehan on Relevant Transit Issues and Projects of Interest to the Pioneer Valley MPO Members

S. Sheehan reported that August ridership was about 3% below the prior year. She also highlighted ridership growth on new routes connecting Holyoke to Ware and Northampton to Southwick, recent vehicle deliveries, ongoing facility improvements, and grant applications supporting fleet electrification and service expansion.

S. Sheehan explained that the ridership declines were concentrated in the Northampton and UMass service areas because the academic year started late, while Springfield-area routes continued to perform strongly. She added that increased service frequency, expanded operating hours, and enhanced weekend service have contributed to sustained ridership growth and are expected to support additional increases in the coming year.

10. Other Business

A. McCaul reported that the October MPO meeting will be rescheduled from October 27 to October 20, 2026, due to a conflict with the MassDOT Moving Together Conference. He noted that staff are also exploring the possibility of holding the meeting in person because the Undersecretary of Transportation may attend, with confirmation expected approximately two weeks before the meeting. A. McCaul explained that official participation requires in-person attendance and advised that S. Sheehan could serve as the PVRT alternate representative. JM Sorrell subsequently designated S. Sheehan as his alternate for the October meeting if necessary.

A. McCaul informed members of a virtual public meeting on the West-East Rail Boston and Albany Corridor Development Plan scheduled for October 6, 2026, and an in-person PVPC Commission meeting to be held in Holyoke on October 8, 2026. He also reviewed current funding opportunities and encouraged members to contact PVPC staff for help with grant programs and applications. A. McCaul further reported that the PVPC is expanding its social media presence to improve public outreach and disseminate planning information.

A. McCaul stated that staff will confirm and distribute the updated social media account information following the agency's rebranding.

D. Shooster highlighted a recent TIP workshop hosted in the Franklin region and noted that MassDOT would be willing to partner with the PVPC on a similar workshop for Pioneer Valley municipalities to provide additional guidance on transportation project development and the TIP process.

The next MPO meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2026.

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

MOVED BY MICHAEL MCCABE, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 10:40 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the September 22, 2026, Meeting

1. Metropolitan Planning Organization, September 22, 2026, Presentation