PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of the Joint Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present:
Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Highway District 2
Mark Berman, East Longmeadow
Ben Breger, Bowman
Paul Burns, PVTA
Luis Capellan, Longmeadow
Michelle Chase, Agawam
Nicholas Dines, Williamsburg
Connie Englert, UMass Transit
Peter Frieri, MassDOT Highway District 1
Teddy Gronostalski, STAVROS
Alexis Hosea-Abbott, MassBike
Carl Jackson, Principal Transit Planner
Betsy Johnson, Pedestrian Representative, Springfield
Joe Kietner, Westfield
Connor Knightly, West Springfield
Andrew Krar, Springfield
Linda Leduc, Belchertown
Dan McCormack, BETA Group
Carolyn Misch, Northampton
Ben Murphy, Monson
Diane Rossini-Smith, Easthampton
Matt Sokop, Holyoke

PVPC Staff Present:
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Geoffrey Klafeta, Transportation Planner
Andrew McCaul, Deputy Director of Transportation Planning
Jeff McCollough, Chief Transportation Planner
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning

1. Call to Order

The October 14, 2026, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Joint Transportation Committee meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Nicholas Dines, and everyone in attendance was welcomed. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Mr. Dines asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2026, Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meeting.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY JOE KIETNER, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2026, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Opportunity for the Public to Comment on Transportation Issues

There were no public comments.

4. Discussion and Approval of JTC Chair

Gary Roux reported that the Committee has been seeking a permanent chair for several months and recognized Mr. Dines for his work as vice chair. Mr. Roux announced that Joe Kietner, representing Westfield, has expressed his willingness to serve as chair after meeting with staff to discuss the position and its responsibilities.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY MATT SOKOP, TO APPOINT JOE KIETNER OF WESTFIELD AS CHAIR OF THE JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Recommendation to the MPO to Release the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for Public Review

Jeffrey McCollough explained that Pioneer Valley Planning Commission staff completed an update to the 2026 Public Participation Plan (PPP). Mr. McCollough stated that the revised plan incorporates feedback from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, as well as recommendations developed through a review of public participation plans used by metropolitan planning organizations across the state.

Mr. McCollough described the plan as a roadmap for developing public-engagement strategies for major planning documents, including the Regional Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). He added that compliance with the plan helps ensure that the regional planning process meets federal certification standards. Staff requested that the Committee recommend the plan's release for a public review period of at least 45 days.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY JOE KIETNER, TO RECOMMEND TO THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TO RELEASE THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR PUBLIC REVIEW. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Recommendation to the MPO to Release an Amendment to the FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Roux presented a proposed amendment to Task 2.2 of the FY 2027 UPWP concerning the regional travel-demand model. He explained that the PVPC had originally planned to use unspent funds to hire a consultant to modify the model. Still, the available budget was insufficient to complete all the requested work. Mr. Roux stated that the amendment would transfer responsibility for several subtasks from PVPC staff to a consultant. The updated model would support scenario planning during the development of the next long-range transportation plan and would provide more current information for that work.

The proposed amendment would transfer $27,000 from Safety Planning Task 3.6 to direct consultant costs under Task 2.2. The transfer is not expected to reduce the safety planning work conducted under Task 3.6. Staff requested a recommendation that the MPO release the amendment for a 21-day public participation period.

MOVED BY PAUL BURNS, SECONDED BY MATT SOKOP, TO RECOMMEND TO THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TO RELEASE AN AMENDMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. PVPC I-291 Ramp Closure Study – Update

Rana Al-Jammal presented a prototype roadway closure analysis completed using the Replica online modeling platform. Ms. Al-Jammal explained that the study examined the potential closure of the I-291 southbound ramp connecting to I-91 South at Exit 1A. The analysis aimed to show the platform's ability to quickly model transportation disruptions and present results through maps, charts, and roadway-level data. The study evaluated both an afternoon

peak-hour closure and a full-day closure. The results indicated that the closure could affect traffic not only in Springfield but also in West Springfield, Longmeadow, and Agawam. The model showed potential traffic volume increases along I-91 South, Route 20, and several other roadway links, with some locations experiencing substantial increases or exceeding their estimated design capacity.

Ms. Al-Jammal reported that trips longer than eight miles were more affected than shorter local trips and that the greatest impacts occurred during the afternoon peak period between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. The model also identified potentially affected census tracts and provided information about residents, workers, household income, transportation modes, and trip characteristics. Ms. Al-Jammal noted that the model did not include the Connecticut or Hartford metropolitan area, even though travel south of the Massachusetts border could significantly influence the findings. She recommended that future regional modeling efforts include Connecticut data when possible. She concluded that Replica could supplement the PVPC's current analytical methods, support corridor and roadway studies requested by member communities, and strengthen the long-range transportation plan analysis.

Mr. Roux added that PVPC staff have been using Replica more frequently and intend to incorporate it into additional planning work. He encouraged JTC members to contact the PVPC if their communities could benefit from similar analyses. It was noted that roadway links showing high capacity use could be identified and potentially avoided when establishing detour routes during roadway disruptions. The model reassigns traffic to alternative routes based on origins and destinations, travel speeds, roadway characteristics, lane configurations, and available capacity.

8. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Updates

Andrew McCaul reported that the FFY 2027 to 2031 TIP and UPWP became active on October 1 after receiving state and federal approval. MassDOT can now begin advertising programmed projects for construction. Mr. McCaul reviewed the regional project backlog, consisting of approximately 30 projects valued at just under $400 million. He explained that the number of projects in the backlog has declined over time because projects were being advertised, deactivated for failing to meet milestones, or otherwise removed. At the same time, the average cost per project increased, resulting in fewer projects being advertised each year.

Mr. McCaul emphasized that municipalities must communicate regularly with their consultants, MassDOT project managers, and PVPC staff to ensure that project schedules remain current and design comments are addressed. Delayed projects can affect funding distribution across the five-year TIP and create a domino effect when projects must be moved to later years. The Committee reviewed projects scheduled for advertisement during FFY 2027, including bridges on Appleton Street in Holyoke, a MassDOT-managed roundabout project in Westfield, and the Resnic Boulevard and West Franklin Street intersection project in Holyoke. Mr. McCaul also discussed the Northampton Complete Streets project, which is undergoing a 100% design review; its final FFY 2027 advertisement schedule will depend on the comment resolution process and an updated project schedule.

Mr. McCaul explained that a typical project can require at least four years to move from design development to construction contract authorization, even when the process proceeds smoothly. He reiterated that communities with projects in the TIP or seeking future TIP funding must closely monitor consultant progress and maintain communication with MassDOT and the PVPC.

Luis Capellan asked staff to verify whether the listed Longmeadow project should be identified as Phase 2. Mr. McCaul agreed to confirm the project information and provide a response.

9. Other Business

- Current Grant Opportunities – Mr. McCaul stated that the PVPC will continue sharing information about

available grant programs and application deadlines. He encouraged members to contact PVPC staff with questions so that staff can direct them to the appropriate resources.

- November Meeting Date and Time – Mr. Roux announced that the October MPO meeting has been moved from October 27 to October 20 because of a conflict with the MassDOT Moving Together Conference. The meeting will be held in person at the PVPC offices. Mr. Roux noted that the regular November JTC meeting date falls on Veterans Day, when PVPC offices will be closed. Staff plan to coordinate with the new chair regarding the agenda and anticipated postponing the meeting by one week to the following Wednesday. Members will receive a formal notice once the date is confirmed.

10. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Mr. Dines adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,