

**I-91 Interchange 19
Northampton, MA**

**Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting # 8
Wednesday, May 11, 2011
Bridge Street School Library, Northampton, MA**

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

PAC Members

Jerry Budgar – Ward 3 Neighborhood Association
Frank J. Werbinski – Ward 3 Resident
Christine Cahillane – Ward 3 Resident
James Lowenthal – MassBike Pioneer Valley
Mary Jane Bacon – Senator Rosenberg’s Office
Marcus J. Boyle – Chair, Hatfield Board of Selectman
Al Byam – UMass Transit
Dana Roscoe – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Tom Narrigan – Valley Area Transit / Pioneer Valley Transit Authority

Members of the Public

W. Sydney Stern – Ward 3 Resident
Bill Mackiewicz – Ward 3 Resident
Joanne Mackiewicz – Ward 3 Resident
Arnold Levinson - self
Marvin Ward – self / MassBike

Project Team

Rich Masse – Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Highway Division,
District 2
Al Stegemann - MassDOT
Joe Cahill – TranSystems
Maureen Chlebek – McMahon Associates
Marcy Miller – Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc.

Meeting Summary:

Joe Cahill welcomed everyone and stated that the purpose of meeting was to provide a status update to the PAC. The meeting would explain some of the recent changes to the study, in particular what is causing them.

Joe noted that the study team has recently been made aware of two new pieces of information, both of which have a substantial impact on the findings. First, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) recently issued new population growth projections based upon the 2010 Census and updated statewide estimates. Previously, the study team based the traffic projections on a 28 percent population growth rate. PVPC now estimates only a three 3 percent population growth rate for Northampton over the same time period.

The second change is related to the roundabout analyses. The team has decided that the parameters in roundabout traffic analysis models should be modified to be more conservative. The previous analysis was reviewed by TranSystems engineers who have significant experience in roundabouts in other parts of the country. They recommended a less aggressive approach in the parameters (such as speeds, gap acceptance, type of truck) used. These new parameters would negatively impact the projected performance of the roundabouts. The project team is now collecting data from comparable roundabouts (e.g. Worcester) to confirm the new data parameters.

There was a question about the effect of the less aggressive parameters. Joe noted that the new parameters would likely negatively impact the projected performance of the roundabouts. In addition, there was question about the growth projection, in particular the drastic decrease. The team answered that the entire PVPC region has been given an overall estimate of five percent growth. Someone questioned the 28 percent growth rate, stating it seemed quite high. Maureen Chlebek answered that this estimate took into account both the PVPC and Franklin Council of Governments estimates. There has been a decline in population growth in past 10 years. Rich Masse clarified that the state issues rates to regions and the region breaks that up between the towns. (The attached spreadsheet pages illustrate the PVPC population projections methodology.)

Joe next discussed why the team postponed the public meeting. He noted that the two recent changes will likely impact the study future results. The work completed on the existing conditions will not be affected. The team would likely redo some of the future analysis, and believes that it is better to get it right than rush conclusions. In reality, the PAC has formed opinions (in the form of preferred alternatives) based on data that is changing. The team would like to present the revised information to the PAC before having a public meeting.

There was a question whether the changes could be so much that we do not actually need two roundabouts. Joe answered that this could possibly happen. There was another question whether the team was presenting options tonight and what the timeframe was to present all the new analyses. Joe answered that no, the team is currently collecting new roundabout data. Joe answered that he did not know how soon the revised analysis would be completed, as it largely depends on the data. It would likely be at least a few months, and no results are likely before the end of the summer. There was another question whether the team is still proceeding to look at all three options based on new data? Joe answered yes.

Joe continued on to discuss what the new changes will mean for the project. There will likely be some changes to the evaluation of the alternatives. The long term traffic projections will be lower. There will likely still be some problem areas, though not as bad as originally projected.

Joe discussed the next steps in the study process. The team will conduct the following tasks in the coming months in the following order:

1. Finish field data collection of other roundabouts
2. Finish revised analysis of alternatives
3. Modify alternatives as needed
4. Evaluate alternatives
5. PAC meeting
6. Public meeting
7. Recommendation

Frank Werbinski questioned the current status of the I-91 northbound off ramp. The team answered that it is LOS F in the 2009 morning and afternoon peak time periods. The overall intersection was an LOS D in those same periods. There was discussion on whether the existing conditions LOS analysis came before the addition of the left turn lane and signal onto I-91 southbound. The existing conditions analysis does incorporate this left turn lane and signal. Rich Masse noted that the PAC meeting #2 handouts have detailed information about the existing conditions LOS analyses. There was a comment that the LOS is only for the peak hours. Maureen referenced charts presented at PAC meeting #2. She noted that there were not substantial dips in the volumes in non-peak hours. Maureen also cautioned about putting too much weight on overall level of service because sometimes one or two movements can hurt how well an intersection truly functions, even if it still functions well on paper.

There was a request for clarification on the four alternatives still in the mix. Joe answered that alternatives 13A, 13B and 13, and the No Build were previously recommended to be further analyzed. Jerry Budgar asked if a whole new alternative could possibly come out of this. Joe answered yes, this was possible. There was a question on whether it is still possible to do nothing. Joe answered yes. Frank Werbinski requested that the No Build, in combination with traffic calming, be considered equally as the analysis moves forward, since the traffic calming aspect of the double roundabout was appealing to some of the PAC. Joe answered that the team will consider this. Others expressed concerns about the No Build alternative, that it would just cause a new study to be commissioned in another 10 years. Al Stegemann noted that in another 10 years there will be another U.S. Census count, and projections may change drastically yet again. No one can predict what will happen then.

There was a comment that because the speed limit from the Coolidge bridge is higher (45mph), traffic calming is largely needed on Hadley side of river.

Rich noted that Massachusetts Department of Transportation is considering an external peer review of this analysis when it is complete. If this occurs, another consultant firm would review the roundabout analysis, to confirm the results are accurate. Rich agreed to present the outcome of the peer review.

Attachment I

Population Projections Methodology

These projections were developed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, completed in February of 2011. Projection calculations were limited to Pioneer Valley Region totals for each year by regional projection totals that were provided by MassDOT (Massachusetts Department of Transportation). Following is a summary of calculation methods that were used:

Population

1. For each municipality, calculate what percent of the current 2009 population for the Pioneer Valley region was located in that municipality (% share).
2. Calculated a baseline estimate for each municipality for each of the projection years using the control total provided by MassDOT with the assumption that the % share for each community would remain the same for all years.
3. Examine baseline calculations in comparison to recent population trends based on U.S. Census Bureau along with previously calculated population projections from the MA State Data Center (2003) and PVPC (2003).
4. Made adjustments to 2035 projections based on past trends and land use, economic development, and transportation trend knowledge by regional experts while ensuring all municipal projections added up to the regional total provided by MassDOT. This provided projections and % share proportions for each municipality for the year 2035.
5. Calculated average % share change per year between 2009 (current estimates) and 2035 (PVPC projections) by subtracting the 2009 % share from the 2035 % share.
6. Using this average change in % share per year, calculated a new % share for intermediary projection years. This created a smooth trend line where change in % share was consistent for all years in the projection years period.
7. Used new % shares and MassDOT regional control totals for intermediary years to calculate population projection numbers for all intermediary years.

Households

Assumptions: Since there was only one year of households data provided and there must be some correlation between population trends and household trends, it was challenging to look at household trends in isolation. The main assumption used in these calculations is that between 2000 and 2035 communities will have the same change in the share of overall population and households as a percentage of the whole region. This means that the % share changes between 2000-2035 same amount for housing as it does for population.

1. For each municipality, calculate what percent of the 2000 Households (most recent available from Census Bureau) for the Pioneer Valley region was located in that municipality (% share).
2. Calculated a baseline estimate for each municipality for each of the projection years using the control total provided by MassDOT with the assumption that the % share for each community would remain the same for all years.
3. Based on the assumption that the ratio between population and households would remain the same between 2000 and 2035 for all communities. Calculated the 2000 ratio between % share for population and % share for households.
4. Calculated 2035 households % share by using this ratio and the 2035 projection population % share. Used the 2035 % share to calculate the 2035 households projection.
5. Calculated average % share change per year between 2000 (most recent census data) and 2035 (PVPC projections) by subtracting the 2000 % share from the 2035 % share.
6. Using this average change in % share per year, calculated a new % share for intermediary projection years. This created a smooth trend line where change in % share was consistent for all years in the projection years period.
7. Used new % shares and MassDOT regional control totals for intermediary years to calculate household projection numbers for all intermediary years.

Pioneer Valley Region Municipal Population Projections - Completed Feb. 2011

	Decennial Census	Census Bureau Estimates	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	Percent Change 2010 to 2035
TOWN	2000	2009	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	
AGAWAM	28,144	28,616	28,702	29,067	29,249	29,523	29,797	30,025	4.61%
AMHERST	34,873	36,246	36,354	36,817	37,048	37,394	37,741	38,030	4.61%
BELCHERTOWN	12,968	14,141	14,211	14,587	14,763	15,043	15,325	15,587	9.68%
BLANDFORD	1,214	1,301	1,305	1,321	1,330	1,342	1,355	1,365	4.61%
BRIMFIELD	3,339	3,813	3,836	3,970	4,031	4,131	4,231	4,326	12.76%
CHESTER	1,306	1,308	1,312	1,328	1,337	1,349	1,362	1,372	4.58%
CHESTERFIELD	1,201	1,270	1,278	1,327	1,350	1,386	1,423	1,458	14.05%
CHICOPEE	54,653	55,994	56,125	56,578	56,821	57,164	57,503	57,751	2.90%
CUMMINGTON	1,004	972	975	987	994	1,003	1,012	1,020	4.62%
EAST LONGMEADOW	14,100	15,936	16,002	16,336	16,495	16,744	16,995	17,221	7.62%
EASTHAMPTON	15,994	16,324	16,373	16,581	16,685	16,842	16,998	17,128	4.61%
GOSHEN	903	957	960	972	978	987	996	1,004	4.60%
GRANBY	6,132	6,305	6,331	6,459	6,521	6,617	6,713	6,800	7.41%
GRANVILLE	1,521	1,643	1,648	1,669	1,679	1,695	1,711	1,724	4.62%
HADLEY	4,793	4,753	4,767	4,828	4,858	4,904	4,949	4,987	4.61%
HAMPDEN	5,171	5,386	5,406	5,501	5,546	5,617	5,688	5,751	6.39%
HATFIELD	3,249	3,262	3,272	3,313	3,334	3,366	3,397	3,423	4.62%
HOLLAND	2,407	2,566	2,576	2,629	2,654	2,693	2,732	2,767	7.40%
HOLYOKE	39,838	40,005	40,104	40,471	40,664	40,940	41,215	41,425	3.29%
HUNTINGTON	2,192	2,233	2,245	2,315	2,347	2,399	2,451	2,500	11.34%
LONGMEADOW	15,633	15,527	15,550	15,578	15,602	15,626	15,646	15,641	0.59%
LUDLOW	21,209	22,161	22,246	22,659	22,857	23,166	23,476	23,752	6.77%
MIDDLEFIELD	580	559	561	568	572	577	582	587	4.69%
MONSON	8,359	9,073	9,118	9,359	9,472	9,651	9,832	10,000	9.68%
MONTGOMERY	656	730	734	753	763	777	792	806	9.86%
NORTHAMPTON	28,978	28,370	28,438	28,683	28,812	28,997	29,180	29,317	3.09%
PALMER	12,497	13,124	13,176	13,435	13,559	13,752	13,946	14,120	7.16%
PELHAM	1,403	1,399	1,403	1,421	1,430	1,443	1,457	1,468	4.62%
PLAINFIELD	576	595	597	604	608	614	619	624	4.56%
RUSSELL	1,655	1,769	1,778	1,827	1,849	1,886	1,922	1,956	10.01%
SOUTH HADLEY	17,196	17,387	17,430	17,585	17,666	17,783	17,899	17,987	3.20%
SOUTHAMPTON	5,387	5,991	6,027	6,234	6,330	6,483	6,639	6,786	12.59%
SOUTHWICK	8,835	9,706	9,759	10,052	10,189	10,407	10,628	10,834	11.02%
SPRINGFIELD	152,082	155,575	155,910	156,967	157,554	158,357	159,148	159,684	2.42%
TOLLAND	428	466	467	473	476	481	485	489	4.62%
WALES	1,737	1,905	1,918	1,995	2,030	2,087	2,144	2,199	14.65%
WARE	9,708	9,888	9,936	10,197	10,318	10,512	10,707	10,888	9.58%
WEST SPRINGFIELD	27,899	28,165	28,225	28,415	28,520	28,665	28,806	28,902	2.40%
WESTFIELD	40,072	42,133	42,296	43,094	43,477	44,073	44,673	45,207	6.88%
WESTHAMPTON	1,468	1,593	1,602	1,656	1,681	1,721	1,762	1,800	12.33%
WILBRAHAM	13,473	14,179	14,229	14,467	14,582	14,759	14,937	15,093	6.07%
WILLIAMSBURG	2,427	2,522	2,533	2,591	2,619	2,662	2,706	2,746	8.40%
WORTHINGTON	1,219	1,277	1,285	1,330	1,351	1,384	1,418	1,450	12.85%
TOTAL	608,479	627,125	629,000	637,000	641,000	647,000	653,000	658,000	4.61%

Pioneer Valley Region Municipal Household Projections - Completed Feb. 2011

	Decennial Census	NA	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	Percent Change 2010 to
TOWN	2000	2009	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2035
AGAWAM	11,271		11,840	12,105	12,217	12,417	12,557	12,683	7.12%
AMHERST	9,150		9,681	9,947	10,061	10,262	10,416	10,558	9.06%
BELCHERTOWN	4,904		5,336	5,588	5,698	5,889	6,055	6,217	16.51%
BLANDFORD	460		491	507	514	526	536	545	11.16%
BRIMFIELD	1,252		1,396	1,485	1,524	1,592	1,653	1,714	22.79%
CHESTER	490		512	522	526	534	538	542	5.86%
CHESTERFIELD	446		487	511	522	540	556	572	17.48%
CHICOPEE	23,115		24,227	24,731	24,943	25,322	25,580	25,807	6.52%
CUMMINGTON	406		421	427	429	433	435	436	3.65%
EAST LONGMEADOW	5,236		5,729	6,023	6,150	6,373	6,568	6,760	17.98%
EASTHAMPTON	6,859		7,214	7,381	7,453	7,579	7,670	7,751	7.45%
GOSHEN	368		391	403	408	417	424	431	10.13%
GRANBY	2,259		2,400	2,472	2,504	2,559	2,602	2,643	10.13%
GRANVILLE	542		580	600	609	625	637	650	12.03%
HADLEY	1,895		1,977	2,012	2,026	2,052	2,068	2,081	5.27%
HAMPDEN	1,823		1,939	1,999	2,025	2,071	2,108	2,142	10.47%
HATFIELD	1,378		1,443	1,472	1,485	1,507	1,522	1,534	6.32%
HOLLAND	900		966	1,003	1,019	1,046	1,070	1,092	12.98%
HOLYOKE	15,000		15,639	15,905	16,015	16,214	16,335	16,434	5.08%
HUNTINGTON	813		871	903	916	940	960	979	12.38%
LONGMEADOW	5,738		5,916	5,967	5,988	6,026	6,034	6,034	1.99%
LUDLOW	7,666		8,169	8,435	8,550	8,751	8,913	9,066	10.98%
MIDDLEFIELD	219		227	229	230	232	233	234	3.03%
MONSON	3,099		3,369	3,526	3,595	3,714	3,817	3,918	16.28%
MONTGOMERY	257		281	296	302	313	322	332	17.95%
NORTHAMPTON	11,863		12,293	12,447	12,510	12,625	12,678	12,713	3.41%
PALMER	5,090		5,431	5,612	5,691	5,828	5,940	6,045	11.31%
PELHAM	537		561	571	576	583	588	592	5.60%
PLAINFIELD	247		261	267	270	275	279	282	8.24%
RUSSELL	598		648	677	689	711	730	748	15.46%
SOUTH HADLEY	6,584		6,877	7,003	7,056	7,150	7,210	7,261	5.58%
SOUTHAMPTON	1,966		2,175	2,302	2,357	2,454	2,541	2,626	20.76%
SOUTHWICK	3,312		3,628	3,815	3,897	4,040	4,166	4,288	18.22%
SPRINGFIELD	57,178		59,778	60,909	61,385	62,236	62,788	63,261	5.83%
TOLLAND	183		196	203	206	211	215	219	11.94%
WALES	660		730	772	791	823	852	881	20.70%
WARE	4,020		4,280	4,416	4,475	4,578	4,661	4,739	10.72%
WEST SPRINGFIELD	11,866		12,376	12,589	12,678	12,838	12,936	13,018	5.18%
WESTFIELD	14,798		15,800	16,338	16,569	16,976	17,306	17,619	11.51%
WESTHAMPTON	539		591	622	635	659	679	700	18.42%
WILBRAHAM	4,941		5,265	5,436	5,510	5,640	5,744	5,842	10.96%
WILLIAMSBURG	1,031		1,100	1,137	1,152	1,180	1,203	1,224	11.28%
WORTHINGTON	471		511	533	543	560	575	590	15.51%
PIONEER VALLEY REGION	231,430		244,000	250,100	252,700	257,300	260,700	263,800	8.11%

Pioneer Valley Region Municipal Employment Projections - Completed Feb. 2011

	MA EOLWD*	MA EOLWD*	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	PVPC Projection	Percent Change
TOWN	2000	2009	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2010 to 2035	
AGAWAM	11,523	11,562	11,624	11,939	12,170	12,263	12,309	12,355	6.29%	
AMHERST	12,408	14,606	14,677	15,023	15,291	15,369	15,389	15,408	4.98%	
BELCHERTOWN	1,812	2,589	2,609	2,726	2,798	2,853	2,897	2,942	12.75%	
BLANDFORD	143	219	222	241	251	263	273	284	27.94%	
BRIMFIELD	478	535	538	553	563	568	570	572	6.34%	
CHESTER	113	108	109	116	120	123	127	130	19.15%	
CHESTERFIELD	124	122	123	126	128	129	130	130	6.00%	
CHICOPEE	21,200	18,803	18,931	19,639	20,105	20,401	20,621	20,843	10.10%	
CUMMINGTON	208	206	207	213	217	218	219	220	6.23%	
EAST LONGMEADOW	9,125	7,855	7,897	8,111	8,268	8,331	8,363	8,394	6.29%	
EASTHAMPTON	4,786	4,294	4,324	4,494	4,603	4,677	4,733	4,789	10.75%	
GOSHEN	90	156	157	165	170	174	177	180	14.42%	
GRANBY	883	745	751	783	803	818	829	841	12.04%	
GRANVILLE	151	156	157	161	164	166	166	167	6.47%	
HADLEY	4,442	5,231	5,287	5,632	5,830	6,022	6,193	6,366	20.40%	
HAMPDEN	759	814	818	841	857	863	867	870	6.31%	
HATFIELD	2,962	1,945	1,957	2,023	2,068	2,093	2,111	2,128	8.72%	
HOLLAND	131	146	147	151	154	155	155	156	6.28%	
HOLYOKE	24,145	20,949	21,084	21,814	22,307	22,593	22,796	23,000	9.09%	
HUNTINGTON	402	416	418	430	438	441	443	445	6.40%	
LONGMEADOW	3,308	3,353	3,363	3,400	3,443	3,429	3,402	3,375	0.34%	
LUDLOW	5,891	6,372	6,406	6,580	6,707	6,758	6,784	6,809	6.29%	
MIDDLEFIELD	40	39	39	40	41	42	42	42	7.08%	
MONSON	1,374	1,283	1,290	1,325	1,350	1,361	1,366	1,371	6.29%	
MONTGOMERY	50	26	26	27	27	28	28	28	7.08%	
NORTHAMPTON	17,681	17,980	18,060	18,429	18,734	18,789	18,772	18,754	3.84%	
PALMER	5,459	4,942	4,967	5,091	5,185	5,217	5,229	5,241	5.51%	
PELHAM	175	154	155	159	162	164	164	165	6.56%	
PLAINFIELD	108	40	40	41	42	43	43	43	6.90%	
RUSSELL	266	180	181	188	193	196	198	200	10.35%	
SOUTH HADLEY	4,841	4,401	4,425	4,544	4,633	4,668	4,685	4,703	6.29%	
SOUTHAMPTON	1,046	1,075	1,081	1,110	1,132	1,140	1,145	1,149	6.31%	
SOUTHWICK	2,534	2,511	2,523	2,583	2,629	2,643	2,646	2,650	5.02%	
SPRINGFIELD	78,559	74,280	74,640	76,381	77,739	78,124	78,213	78,300	4.90%	
TOLLAND	52	37	37	38	39	40	40	40	7.48%	
WALES	136	149	150	154	157	158	158	159	6.15%	
WARE	2,749	2,703	2,718	2,791	2,845	2,867	2,877	2,888	6.27%	
WEST SPRINGFIELD	18,485	16,777	16,858	17,249	17,555	17,640	17,659	17,677	4.86%	
WESTFIELD	16,267	16,599	16,673	17,012	17,293	17,343	17,326	17,309	3.82%	
WESTHAMPTON	238	288	290	297	303	306	307	308	6.37%	
WILBRAHAM	4,155	4,469	4,493	4,615	4,704	4,740	4,758	4,776	6.30%	
WILLIAMSBURG	504	550	553	568	579	583	586	588	6.34%	
WORTHINGTON	196	192	193	198	202	204	204	205	6.20%	
PIONEER VALLEY REGION	259,999	249,857	251,200	258,000	263,000	265,000	266,000	267,000	6.29%	

*EOLWD = Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development