

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2021
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

D. Kilhart called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Todd Dwyer, Lunenburg; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; George Kahale, MART;

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Laura Hanson, MassDOT District 2; Rachel O'Donnell, Safe Routes to School; Lucy Friedman Bell, Safe Routes to School; Chris Klem, MassDOT Planning

Non-Members

Meghan Kilcoyne, State Representative

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty;

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of August 11, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the June 9, 2021 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

IV. Safe Routes to School Program

- Presentation on SRTS & Infrastructure Funding Program
by Rachel O'Donnell, Outreach Coordinator & Communications Lead, MassDOT

S. Bean introduced Rachel O'Donnell and Lucy Friedman Bell from the MassDOT's Safe Routes to School section to discuss the program, what is involved and what can be done by communities if they become a SRTS member/participant. R. O'Donnell and L. Friedman Bell then gave a presentation on the program. SRTS was established in 2005 and it is a Federally funded program administered by MassDOT which means that there is no cost for the schools to participate. It aims to increase safe walking and biking to and from school which will then lead to decreased traffic congestion around the schools and, in turn, increase air quality. The program uses the 6 E's to serve as a guideline – Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Engagement, Engineering and Equity. There are a handful of Outreach Coordinators split up into territories throughout the state for grades K-8 that assist with arrival/dismissal observations, walk audits, bike & pedestrian safety training, mapping, etc.

There are two funding programs for SRTS – Signs & Lines Grants and SRTS Infrastructure Grants. The Signs & Lines Grant can be up to \$6,000 reimbursement to the municipality and approximately \$4,000 additional benefits in assessment and design services from AECOM. These projects could include new signage, removal of signage, crosswalk improvements, pavement markings, etc. The SRTS Infrastructure Grants are for projects that cost \$300,000-\$2,000,000. These projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, crossing

improvements, bicycle & pedestrian facilities, traffic diversion, etc. The application period for this funding category opens on October 15th and closes on December 1st. More information can be found on the Safe Routes website - <https://www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school>.

D. Kilhart mentioned that the communities need to be sure that they have buy in from the schools for this program. In Athol, they wanted to apply for funding to construct a sidewalk but were unable to do it due to a lack of support from the school district.

V. Sterling Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

- Overview of Plan Development & Implementation

S. Bean presented an overview of the Sterling Complete Streets Prioritization Plan project that was completed in August 2021. This plan was created as the Tier 2 requirement of the overall Complete Streets Program. Tier 1 includes the Complete Streets Policy which Sterling completed and adopted in May 2020 and Tier 3 which includes the infrastructure component. S. Bean mentioned the various methodology and public participation that went into developing the Prioritization Plan. The final document consisted of a detailed table with 15 total projects, project descriptions and cost estimates. The next step for the town will be to apply for infrastructure funding (Tier 3).

VI. Contract Status Reports

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

B. Harris mentioned that MRPC is currently wrapping up the ADA Bus Stop Evaluation Study for Fitchburg and Leominster. This study includes all the established bus stops that are included on the MART bus schedule. He also mentioned that George Kahale is now a member of the Transit Authority so he will be the MART representative for the MJTC moving forward. Bruno Fisher has also been named the Administrator for MART after being the Acting Administrator when Mohamad Kahn retired. G. Kahale also mentioned that MART has reviewed several new bids for the Ayer Commuter Rail Station construction project and is working on signing a contract with one of the construction companies. This will be for the construction of the pedestrian plaza at Depot Square. It is expected to be completed by Spring 2022. MART is also working on installing automatic passenger counters on all transit buses. This project will also include real-time location for the buses. MART is also in the process of updating their website and bus route evaluations.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the following:

- As mentioned before, staff is back in the office. The MRPC Executive Director is continuing to monitor information and recommendations in case a change is needed. Any changes will be posted to the MRPC website.
- There will be no MPO meeting in October. The meeting that was originally scheduled has been canceled. The next MPO meeting will be held on November 17th at 1:00pm.
- MRPC staff recently completed a separate contract with the town of Athol related to pavement management. Brian Doherty was the lead for that project and gave a brief update regarding what the project entailed. He mentioned that all town own roadways and sidewalks were inventoried which included 100 miles of road and 30 miles of sidewalk. A web-based application was also developed to

display the data for the town. If someone is interested in having something similar be conducted for their community, please reach out to Brian Doherty for more information.

- A new transportation planning program year has just begun that runs from October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022.
- MRPC has a new liaison from the MassDOT office of Transportation Planning . Derrik Krevat has moved up to the position of Manager of MPO Activities and our new liaison is Chris Klem.
- A handout from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency regarding mitigation assistance programs was presented for informational purposes.

VII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris mentioned that at the previous meeting we decided to go to an every other month schedule so our next meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2021 at 2:30pm.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

10 13 21 Agenda
8 11 2021 MJTC minutes
4 srts_flyer_10_15_2021
4 SRTS_TMGM PPT
SRTS_MRPC Presentation 10-13-21_Final
5 Complete Streets Presentation Sterling Handout 10 13 2021
6 MEMA Grant Notice
Sterling_Projects_210820_85x11P