

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 8, 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; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Bob Szocik, Templeton; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; George Kahale, MART;

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Chris Klem, MassDOT Planning; Travis Condon, North Central MA Chamber

Non-Members

Staff

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

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of October 13, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the October 13, 2021 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

IV. FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Discussion on Development Schedule
- Initial Project Listing

B. Doherty presented to the members an initial schedule for the development of the upcoming FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a federally required document that is prepared each year and covers the upcoming five federal fiscal years. As staff to the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), we are tasked with compiling the document. He then reviewed with the members several handouts.

The first was a copy of a memo sent out to our communities and posted to the MRPC website announcing the development of the TIP, the various meetings where the TIP will be a topic of discussion and inviting input to the process from the public and interested stakeholders.

The second handout is a month-by-month schedule that identifies the MJTC and MPO meeting dates and the proposed topic of discussion related to the TIP. Beginning in January of 2022, the MJTC and MPO will see a listing of federal aid projects for our region along with updated costs and design estimates. In February, we will discuss the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scoring done for each target eligible project. Staff will conduct the scoring and subsequent priority listing based on the TEC scores with MJTC and MPO members. From there we will discuss funding scenarios for each federal fiscal year based upon funding estimates for our region provided by MassDOT. The MJTC will be asked to make funding recommendation to the MPO and once

the MPO has agreed to a particular scenario, a draft TIP will be developed. We anticipate releasing the draft for a 21-day public review and comment period. After the close of the comment period, a final version of the TIP will be compiled based upon comments received and forwarded to the MPO for a target endorsement date of May 18, 2022. That is the planned schedule and our target date for completion. Throughout the process, we will be asking the MJTC for feedback and recommendations that can be forwarded to the MPO for their consideration.

The final handout is a listing of the current target projects from the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. This is our usual starting point for development of the new TIP. B. Doherty then reviewed the individual fiscal years and the projects currently contained in the TIP.

D. Amaral from MassDOT District 2 indicated that if any communities are looking to try to get a new project on the TIP, the next MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC) meeting is coming in February, so project submittals need to be into the MassDOT districts by January 15th in order for them to be seen by the PRC.

B. Doherty also indicated that if any community, or their consultant, wishes to make a project presentation to the MJTC on their project, to contact us and we can put you on a MJTC agenda. We typically do these presentations in February.

B. Szocik asked if a project for Royalston Road (Route 68) that is in 2026 gets ready to bid shortly, will that change. B. Doherty indicated that it would depend on the project cost available target funds and feedback from MassDOT. Typically, if a project is ready sooner than expected and it needs to have its planned FFY changed, there are usually changes with other projects that also need to be addressed in order to cover the funding while maintaining a fiscally constrained TIP. This type of action would be accomplished through an amendment procedure to the TIP.

As a follow up, a question was asked about the Route 68 TEC scoring. B. Doherty indicated that we are always willing to review and discuss the TEC ratings with the communities and as more information becomes available adjust them accordingly. We will send to Templeton the rating sheet for Route 68, and we can then meet to discuss it in more detail.

B. Croteau of Winchendon indicated that the Winchendon project for Maple Street listed in the Appendix has been completed by the state and it can come off the list.

V. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Discussion on Development Schedule

S. Bean presented an overview for the development of the next UPWP. A schedule was reviewed that is similar to the TIP schedule. We are again looking to release a draft document in April of 2022 and to then seek MPO endorsement in May. Shortly after the first of the year, we will send out to our communities a memo that outlines the development of the UPWP and that also solicits feedback from the municipalities any potential work tasks in the towns. This could be anything from walkability studies to intersection analysis to a corridor profile. We ask for a letter of interest describing the request and then we will contact the town to discuss it further. Not all requests can be honored in a year as there are other required documents and work tasks that must be done to meet our obligation to the state. So, we ask any interested community to get in touch with us and we can then let you know what we should be able to do to assist the community.

VI. Townsend Main St (Rt 119) at Canal St/West Elm St Intersection Analysis

- Presentation of Final Report

G. Snow presented to the members the results of an intersection analysis study conducted for the Route 119/Canal Street/West Elm Street crossing in Townsend. The town contacted the MRPC last year when we were

soliciting tasks for the prior UPWP. They expressed concerns with the operation and safety at the four-legged offset intersection located in West Townsend and asked to recommend potential alternatives to address any identified issues. Staff collected and reviewed data for the intersection. G. Snow explained the data collection process, the safety analysis and the environmental conditions surrounding the intersection. He also reviewed the various alternatives developed that would eliminate the conflicts that result from the unique geometry of the location. The alternatives included a re-routing of the current travel patterns, a new alternate roadway, a traffic signal and a roundabout.

The results of the analysis were submitted to the town in a final report and presentation for their use. The town can now determine what is the preferred alternative and proceed with efforts to implement.

VII. Contract Status Reports

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

B. Harris mentioned that the MRPC has begun work on the new program year tasks; this includes an ADA Bus Stop Accessibility study in the city of Gardner. G. Kahale then mentioned that MART is still working on the Ayer Commuter Rail Station project. Currently the contractor is working on the pedestrian plaza. Hopefully, the project will be completed in the spring. A prefabricated restroom structure will take approximately six months to build and install leading to an expected June opening date. MART has installed all of the automatic passenger counters on most of the fixed route buses. Testing is ongoing now. Once made public, riders will be able to see where the buses are and when they will be coming to their stop. Finally, G. Kahale is reviewing the current bus schedules, route, and times in order to create a new schedule.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the following:

- A recent decision by the MRPC Executive Director has resulted in the following: All staff are now allowed to work from home until further notice. Staff will still be able to come into the Office if they so choose. The office will be closed to visitors and all MRPC meetings will be held online only until further notice. As a reminder, the meeting procedures require attendees to register for the meeting. Links to the registration form will be included in the meeting email, the agenda and also on the MRPC website. Any changes will also be posted to the MRPC website. In addition, we have a Meeting Calendar for 2022 that highlights the various MRPC meetings for your use.
- There will be a MPO meeting on Wednesday December 15th at 1:00 PM. It is anticipated that there will be a discussion related to a potential Transit Amendment to the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. If that occurs there will be a 21-day public comment period following the release of the Amendment.
- There is a handout available announcing the opening of the 2022 Round of MassTrails Grants. Submissions are due by February 1, 2022. This flyer and info are also available on our website.
- At a prior meeting, we discussed some planned developments in the Lunenburg, Lancaster Route 2 area that will have impacts beyond the towns. B. Harris presented information on three developments currently planned: two in Lancaster and one in Lunenburg. The Lunenburg development is for the construction of a 372,000 square foot warehouse and distribution center off of Leominster-Shirley Road on property owned by Keating; in Lancaster, the expansion of 272,000 sq ft to a facility on Fort Pond Road and finally, the construction of a mixed use commercial, residential and industrial development of approximately 2,186,190 sq ft off of Route 70 south of Route 2. Planned designs were shown to the MJTC members. It was decided that the staff should obtain more information and make this a future agenda item for the MJTC to discuss. A question was asked if the figures could be made available to everyone. B. Harris indicated that they are currently available in a OneDrive folder for this meeting. The link is on the agenda sent out or can be accessed from the MRPC website through the MJTC Meeting Notice.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

12 8 21 Agenda
10 13 2021 MJTC Minutes
4 Draft TIP Schedule FFY 2023 2027
4 Project Master List 23-27
4 TIP Development Memo 11 2 2021
5 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022
2022 Meeting Calendar Ver 1
2022_masstrails_grant_announcement_0
Meeting Procedures 8 11 2021
Townsend Planning Board Meeting 12-6-21 Final Rt 119/Canal St Presentation
Development Map
Lancaster Rt 70 Dev Summary