

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF May 10, 2023
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

T. Condon, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Beth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Travis Condon, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; George Kahale, MART; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Ben Breger, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3

Non-Members

Amanda Reid, Lunenburg; Jasmin Farinacci, Lancaster

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

III. Approval of April 12, 2023 Minutes

A consensus was reached to accept the minutes for April 12, 2023 as presented.

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

- Review of Comments on Draft TIP Amendment # 4 to the Transit Element
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding Draft TIP Amendment # 4

B. Harris presented the members with information regarding a draft Amendment #4 to the FFY 2023 Transit Element of the FFY 2023-2027 TIP. At the MPO meeting last month, the MPO voted to release TIP Amendment #4 for a 21-day public review and comment period. The Amendment reflects the removal of one (1) project, cost changes to six (6) projects and the addition of one (1) project to the FFY 2023 Transit Element. These changes are due to increased cost changes and updated priorities for MART. The public review and comment period began on Tuesday April 25, 2023, and will close at the end of business on Monday May 15, 2023. This MJTC meeting is also serving as an opportunity for comment on the Amendment. To date we have not received any comments on Amendment #4.

The MJTC then reached consensus to recommend to the MPO that the Draft FFY 2023 TIP Amendment #4 be endorsed as presented.

V. FFY 2024 Montachusett Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Review of Comments on Draft FFY 2024 UPWP
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding Draft FFY 2024 UPWP

S. Bean presented the members with comments received from MassDOT on the draft FFY 2024 UPWP that was put out for a 21-day public review and comment period. The MPO voted last month to release the draft for the comment period that will run from Tuesday April 25, 2023 to the close of business on Monday May 15, 2023. S. Bean then reviewed the individual comments received from MassDOT and the MRPC response to those comments. FHWA comments have been received as of yet.

The MJTC then reached consensus to recommend to the MPO that the Draft FFY 2024 UPWP be endorsed as presented.

VI. FFY 2024-2028 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review of Comments on Draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding Draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP

B. Doherty presented members with the draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP that is currently out for a public review and comment period. Like the prior TIP Amendment #4 and the FFY 2024 UPWP, this comment period will run until Monday May 15th. Last month, the MJTC reviewed the draft TIP project list. Since that briefing, there has been one significant change to the project listing. That was for the Route 12 project in Leominster that is programmed for FFY 2024 and FFY 2025. The project increased approximately 61% from \$13 million to \$21 million. To meet this cost increase, MassDOT has agreed to fund the costs that exceed our target limits under statewide funds. With this funding agreement, the TIP will remain fiscally constrained.

B. Doherty then reviewed the individual comments received from MassDOT and our response to those comments with the MJTC members.

The MJTC then reached consensus to recommend to the MPO that the Draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP be endorsed as presented.

VII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update

- Goals, Objectives, Policy Final Edits
- Timeline for Draft, Public Comments & Endorsement

B. Doherty presented to the members an update on the development of the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan. In particular, the Goals, Objectives, and Policy statements for the RTP were reviewed. Since the Goals and Objectives discussion previously held with the MJTC, we received some comments and input from a community regarding the need to address heavy truck traffic in the region and their potential impacts. Staff have made some changes to the goals and strategies. B. Doherty then reviewed the changes in detail illustrating the differences from the prior version.

B. Doherty reviewed the upcoming timeline for the development of the draft RTP and its release for a 21-day public review and comment period. We are anticipating formal MPO endorsement of the RTP in July.

VIII. Contract Status Reports

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

G. Kahale stated that there is no update at this time.

- MassDOT 3C

The MPO will meet next week on Wednesday May 17th at 1:00 pm. Formal endorsement of the draft TIP Amendment #4, the FFY 2024-2028 TIP and the FFY 2024 UPWP will be sought.

Handouts for discussion:

From MassDOT, there is the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study newsletter for April 29th. The newsletter discusses the next step in the study process. As part of the analysis of the four additional service alternatives, schedule times and trip times will be developed for service scenarios. Then, the team will develop ridership levels and estimates for cost to design and build the infrastructure for each scenario. Please see the MRPC website for the newsletter.

There is an announcement from MassDOT regarding a Public Information Meeting on Tuesday May 23rd at 6:00 PM. The purpose of this informational meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the Bridge Replacement of Bridge H-24-003 located on Williamsville Road over Burnshirt River in Hubbardston, MA. Information is included on the flyer on how to register. This notice is also on our website under Announcements.

There is a MassDOT announcement on a new round of funding for the Fiscal Year 2024 Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP). Effective May 1st and until 5 p.m., Thursday, June 1st, the program is accepting applications from freight rail-supported businesses across the state for projects to expand or improve rail or freight access and which will support economic opportunity, safety and job growth. IRAP is a competitive state-funded public/private partnership program that provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to invest in industry-based rail infrastructure access improvement projects. Applicants must match public funds with private funds, with private funds paying at least 40 percent of a project's total cost. Applicants may match more than the required minimum. For more information, a link is provided on the notice to the program. This notice is also included on our website.

There is a notice from MassDOT regarding the FY 2024 Community Transit Grant Program. They are now accepting applications for operating and mobility management projects that expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. Those interested in applying, are asked to request application forms and application training from us at Rachel.L.Fichtenbaum@dot.state.ma.us or (857) 368-8584. Applications are due June 23, 2023. Applications for wheelchair-accessible vehicles will open later this year. As always, this notice is also on our website.

IX. Administrative Matters

- Next MJTC Meeting

B. Harris stated that the next meeting will be on Wednesday June 14, 2023, at its regular start time of 2:30 pm.

B. Harris also mentioned to members that we are approaching that time of year for appointments to the MJTC for the July 2023 to June 2024 term. A copy of the appointment form is included as a meeting handout as well as a current list of MJTC representatives for each community for the Select Board/Mayor and the Planning Board/Department. We will be mailing these later this month, so please be on the lookout and alert your respective boards on whether you wish to remain a MJTC representative.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

5 10 2023 Agenda

4 12 2023 MJTC minutes

4 Draft TIP Amendment #4 Announcement & Summary 4 13 2023

5 DRAFT FFY 2024 UPWP
5 int_parties_draft_tip_upwp_memo_4_20_2023_english
5 UPWP Comments
6 DRAFT FFY 2024 2028 TIP with Maps
6 DRAFT Highway 2024 2028 TIP
6 Draft TIP Schedule FFY 2024 2028
6 TIP Comments Received
7 G,O,S,PM recommended changes
8 2023_clean_school_bus_program
8 Community Transportation News
8 Hubbardston DPH #609187 Williamsville Rd Flyer
8 MassDOT Industrial Rail Access Program Grant Applications 5 3 2023
8 MJTC Notice MassDOT Signage 5 10 2023
8 Northern Tier April 2023 Newsletter
8 USDOT Webinar Identifying Discretionary Grant Opportunities 5 10 2023
9 2022_2023 MJTC Member List 2 6 2023
9 MJTC 2023 2024 Appointments