

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of August 3, 2016

S. Woelfel representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; John Telepciak, MRPC; Mohammed Khan, MART; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 1; Gary Luca, Subregion 3; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENTS

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Katy Zazzera, MassDOT; Thatcher Kezer, Devens; Bonnie Mahoney, MART;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty, George Kahale, Kaitlyn Olbrich, Glenn Eaton

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of June 29, 2016 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the June 29, 2016 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with N. Piazza abstaining.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2

- *Review and Response to Comments*
- *MPO Endorsement*

B. Harris referred members to a handout titled *Comment Response Amendment #2 Summary* and indicated that last month the MPO voted to release the draft for a 30 day public review and comment period. That comment period ran from July 1st to August 1st. During that time, we did not receive any comments on this amendment. The MJTC also reviewed the amendment at its meeting on July 20th and at that time recommended that the MRPC authorize its chair to endorse the amendment and that the MPO also endorse the amendment as presented. The MRPC also authorized its chair to endorse the amendment at their meeting on July 26th.

A motion was made to have the MPO endorse the FFY 2016 TIP Amendment No. 2. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review and Response to Comments*
- *MPO Endorsement of FFY 2017-2021 TIP*
- *MPO Endorsement of Self Certification Compliance*
- *MPO Endorsement of Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements*

B. Harris distributed several handouts related to the Draft FFY 2017-2021 TIP including a handout that summarized the comments received on the draft document. Last meeting the MPO voted to release the draft TIP for a 30 day public review and comment period. That comment period ran from July 1st to August 1st. During that time, we received comments from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) and MassDOT District 3. The comments focused more on the narrative parts of the TIP document and the Green House Gas reporting section of the TIP. Comments specific to projects simply verified or answered estimated cost questions only with all projects remaining programmed as outlined in the draft TIP. These comments have been addressed in the final version of the document prepared for the MPO meeting. The final TIP presented today is fiscally constrained for each of the federal fiscal years of the document. In addition, the MJTC reviewed the draft at its meeting on July 20th and at that time recommended that the MRPC authorize its chair to endorse the TIP and that the MPO also endorse the document as presented. The MRPC also authorized its chair to endorse the TIP at their meeting on July 26th.

B. Mahoney reviewed the Transit Element of the TIP and also responded to a question from the last MPO meeting regarding the amount of paving that was to be done around this facility. Based on what is planned approximately 130,500 square feet or almost 3 acres will be paved as part of the \$400,000 project.

A motion was made to have the MPO endorse the FFY 2017-2021 TIP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris then discussed two additional endorsements needed by the MPO related to the annual Self Certification Compliance statement and the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) and its requirements. The two statements indicate that the MPO is following to the best of its abilities all applicable federal and state regulations related to the transportation planning process as well as to the GWSA. These statements list the various regulations that are part of the Self Certification and GWSA and state that the Montachusett MPO adheres to their respective requirements.

A motion was made to have the MPO endorse the Self Certification Compliance and the GWSA statements. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development

- *Review and Response to Comments*
- *MPO Endorsement*

B. Harris presented information regarding the draft of the 2016-2017 UPWP. He referred members to a handout that detailed the UPWP tasks as well as the budgets for each item. Again at the last meeting, the MPO voted to release the draft UPWP for a 30 day public review and comment period. That comment period ran from July 1st to August 1st. During that time, we received two comments; one from the MRPC and one from the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP). The MRPC comment was in relation to the FTA Section 5303 budgets for three separate tasks. During the comment period, the MRPC received its final contract amount for the FTA 5303 contract. That amount was \$1,613 more than what was used to develop the draft UPWP. As a result, the individual task budgets for three tasks were adjusted slightly to account for this difference. There was no change to the task scope or schedule. The comments from MassDOT were focused on the narrative part of some of the tasks as well as requested refinements to the Title VI analysis of past UPWP tasks. These comments have been addressed in the final version brought to the MPO. As with the other two draft documents discussed today, the MJTC reviewed the draft at its meeting on July 20th and at that time recommended that the MRPC authorize its chair to endorse the UPWP and that the MPO also endorse the document as presented. The MRPC also authorized its chair to endorse the UPWP at their meeting on July 26th.

A motion was made to have the MPO endorse the 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. Proposed MPO Coordination Notice of Proposed Rule Making

- Review and Discussion

B. Harris discussed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) put out by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the Federal Register on June 27, 2016 related to MPO Coordination. He referred members to a summary handout on the NPRM and its potential to impact and effect on the designation of the MPO, its member communities and the local input process as well. The NPRM would require one set of planning documents for each urbanized area (UZA) and because the Boston UZA enters into the eastern part of our current region, we would have to either: (1) coordinate efforts with the Boston MPO to produce one set of planning documents for the Boston UZA; (2) redraw the boundaries of the MPO's to maintain only one MPO for UZA; or (3) merge the two MPO's into one. The comment period for this NPRM runs until August 26th. Information will be sent to our member communities on this issue in order to call their attention to this NPRM and encouraging them to comment.

N. Tishler indicated that MassDOT has yet to take a formal position on the NPRM at this time and is currently collecting information and feedback from various groups and MPO's. If an MPO wishes to comment, that is fine, in fact several MPO's have already voted to do this. The state is trying to evaluate the NPRM and is looking at several issues because there are a lot of complications with the logistics of what this means. One scenario might result in there being only two MPO's in Massachusetts with everything east of Worcester becoming one MPO that also would include southern New Hampshire and the entire state of Rhode Island. Berkshire Regional would then remain as the other MPO in Massachusetts. Pioneer Valley and Franklin County would become part of the Hartford MPO. Everyone is paying close attention to this.

M. Khan asked if there was any thought given to the Regional Transit Authorities that go across the boundaries of the MPO's and how they will coordinate with this process.

S. Woelfel indicated that that is a good question and if this does come to fruition then that is a real question as to how this will be handled because there are a lot of overlaps. At this time everyone is still trying to take this in.

Discussion took place on the NPRM, its possible impacts and how it is unclear what the outcome might be from the state and the MPO's point of view.

A motion was made to have the MRPC draft a comment letter under the signature of the Executive Director on behalf of the MPO, send it to MPO members for review and then finalize and submit the comment letter to FHWA/FTA before the August 26th deadline. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VIII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

S. Bradbury presented information on two projects; Sterling Route 12 at Chocksett Road project and the Fitchburg Safe Routes to School project. District 3 anticipates both being ready for advertisement before the end of this fiscal year.

J. Hoynoski stated that the Winchendon Route 140 project will have a PS&E submission on Friday August 5th. Also the Templeton Route 68 project should have a 100% submission on Friday.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale stated that Wachusett Station work is being expedited and it should be completed by October 2016. There is an issue related to a sidewalk project approved by the MPO in 2014. The funds have been traced to FHWA where they are awaiting an application for the funds from MBTA for the sidewalk project. We are encouraging the MBTA to submit that application. The Town of Ayer has taken some land by eminent domain so the parking facility project is now moving forward.

- *MJTC*

B. Harris indicated that the election of officers for MJTC took place in July. The MJTC has decided not to meet in August therefore the next meeting will be on September 21st at 7:00 PM.

- *MRPC*

G. Eaton recognized the new chair of the MRPC, John Telepciak, who is here today and is following the late Victor Koivumaki.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting - September 14, 2016*

B. Harris indicated the next meeting is September 14 at 1:00 PM. It was the decision of the MPO to keep the September date at this time and as we move closer we will decide if the MPO should meet or hold off until October 12th.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

August 3, 2016 MPO Agenda
MPO Minutes of June 29, 2016
Interested Parties Draft TIP UPWP Amend 2 Memo 6 30 2016
Draft Amendment #2 Summary 7 1 2016
Comment Response Amendment #2 Summary 8 3 2016
Summary Projects DRAFT FFY 2017 2021 TIP
MPO Endorsed FFY 2017 2021 TIP Summary 8 3 2016
DRAFT Summary UPWP 2016 17 5 4 2016
MPO End Summary Comments UPWP 2016 17 8 3 2016
MPO NPRM Summary Notice July 2016