

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)



Thursday, February 4, 2021

7:00 PM

REMOTE: GoToMeeting App

MEETING MINUTES

1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. G. Corbosiero stated in accordance with Governor Baker's Covid-19 Executive Order regarding the Open Meeting Law and remote participation, votes will be taken through Roll Call.

2. Approval of January 7, 2021 MRPC Minutes

P. Cunningham moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the January 7, 2021 minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alyne Butland- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Veronica Kell- yes

3. Cash Schedule – January 2021

L. Shifrin read the January 2021 cash schedule.

Opening Balance \$398,449.91; Total receipts this month \$146,864.02; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$545,313.93; Less: amount of this warrant \$155,345.71; Balance after this warrant \$389,968.22.

L. Shifrin asked if anything was unusual this year from any previous years. G. Eaton stated we are earning more money as we have more contracts.

R. Swartz moved to accept the January 2021 cash schedule as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alyne Butland- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Peter Cunningham– yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Shaun Copeland- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Veronica Kell- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes

4. Administrative Matters

4.1 COVID-19 Office Space Management Update

G. Eaton stated there are no changes to the office status.

4.2 Update Concerning H. 48: An Act Relative to Non-commonwealth Entities within the State Employees' Retirement System

There are no changes to the status however, if you have questions, please contact G. Eaton.

4.3 Attorney General Grant (AGO) to MRPC, Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP)

G. Eaton corrected the amount of grants that were awarded in the month of January from nine to 12.

4.4 FY20 Community Development Block Grant, COVID Response Award of \$296,100 to Shirley (lead community), Lunenburg, Royalston, Townsend, and Westminster

G. Eaton stated the three food bank contracts have been disbursed to the communities of Lunenburg, Shirley, and Townsend. We have so far received 10 inquiries for the Micro Enterprise Grant program however, no one has applied for the program yet.

4.5 Strategic Planning for the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and its Affiliate the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC)

The Executive Director continues to work on preparing the Strategic Plan, he now just needs to write it out to prepare for a presentation. G. Eaton states he would like to have this done and presented no later than June 2021.

4.6 Budget Updates for Commissioners' and Related Policy Matters

G. Eaton discussed the two PDF's which were included with the handout.

The first PDF is presentation of the FY21 Budget. Glenn added a line of revenue for contracts being processed. Currently we have a DLTA PY14 with an amount of \$51,868.75. This represents a portion of a project which will be spread over 2021 and 2022. Typically, we would include 50% of the budget for both years however with the work load we currently have going on, 25% is represented for FY21 and 75% will be received in FY22.

Also included in this PDF is a line item for Pass through contracts. This includes the MA Attorney General grant for \$25,000. We made 12 loans which means we will return \$13,000 to the AGO.

The approximate total revenue for FY21 is \$1,966,236.45.

G. Eaton met with Linda Q. and Linda P and learned that we need to make corrections to some of the expense line items listed. Glenn reviewed all changes which were marked in red and blue indicating an increase or a decrease to the original amount.

Peter Cunningham asked where are employees getting their health insurance? G. Eaton stated we are part of the State's Group Insurance Commission (GIC).

J. Telepciak asked to clarify what the savings of \$2,000 per month was for. G. Eaton stated is to pay our retiree health benefits payments.

G. Corbosiero asked if the changes all equaled out? Is the PDF reflecting an increase or decrease in total expenses? G. Eaton was not sure at this time but stated we had sufficient cash to cover the expenses.

RESOLUTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the increases and costs as presented by the administrative and financial staff.

John Telepciak moved to accept the resolution to accept the increases and costs as presented by the administrative and financial staff. The motion was seconded.

Alyne Butland- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Phil Duffy- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Shaun Copeland- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Veronica Kell- yes

The motion was moved unanimously.

G. Eaton presented the draft of the FY22 Budget using the second PDF included in the handout. An explanation was given for the contracts showing a \$0 budgeted line item. These are grants we are currently working on but run out by June 30, 2021. They are left on the spreadsheet representing contracts that we may reapply for.

After the Executive Director reviewed all projected revenue, he reviewed all projected expenses. Bottom line is reflecting a loss however all employees will be notified that if the revenue is not there, there will be no raises. Staff has until June when the budget is set to improve on numbers.

Peter Cunningham asked what the indirect leave time represented. G. Eaton explained it included vacation, personal, sick and holiday.

4.7 Discussion of the FY20 Audit – Audit Presentation Planned for Late March 2021

G. Eaton stated the audit is going on right now. Typically, we have a copy of the FY20 Audit by mid-March. Our audit must be submitted to MassDOT no later than March 31, 2021.

G. Eaton state he will have a Doodle Poll with available dates for an audit review.

P. Cunningham asked if there will be time to review the audit prior to the meeting. G. Corbosiero asked if the audit would be sent electronically and if so, would it be available as Peter also asked, prior to the meeting? G. Eaton stated he would check on the availability and he would get back to them.

G. Corbosiero suggested we postpone the next MRPC meeting to March 25, 2021. There were no objections to change the date. It was decided that the meeting be changed if there were no objections received within the next week.

5. CONTRACT STATUS REPORTS

5.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

MRMapper & Mobile Apps (General):

1. **Data & Applications:** Continuous project to update and maintain data and applications throughout the year; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton

- Updates to the data and applications on the site are continuously performed. Check back periodically at <https://mrmapper.mrpc.org> to see what's new.

Community-Related:

1. **Westminster Crocker Pond Recreation Area Trail Mapping:** Project to create a trail map of the Crocker Pond Rec. Area in Westminster with points of interest; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- Once the Trail Data Collection App and instruction materials have been finalized and are available to the public, they will be sent to the Committee so they can use it to GPS the trails that were not GPS'd by MRPC staff. The new trail data from the committee will be incorporated into the Trail Map of the Crocker Pond Recreation Area and sent to the Committee for review.

2. **Lunenburg Conservation Lands Mapping:** Project to create a series of "You Are Here" trail maps that will be installed at the kiosks and intersections of multiple conservation lands owned by the town; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- MRPC GIS staff received feedback from the town regarding the latest round of draft maps. GIS staff updated the maps accordingly and sent them to the Town contact for review.

3. **Templeton Cemetery:** Project to update the Town's cemetery GIS data which will be used to create internal (with editing/database maintenance functionality) and public MRMapper WebApps; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton

- A draft data set was sent to the Town for their review and we are awaiting a response to finalize the data. A draft WebApp has been created and tested. Once the data is finalized, we will finalize the WebApp and present it to the Town for their review. This project is currently on hold until the Town can get back to us regarding some database questions.

4. **Winchendon Zoning Map Updates:** Project to update the Town's Official Zoning Map; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton

- The decision was made to update the zoning layers to match the current parcel data where applicable. This project is currently on hold until the Town can collect data regarding the origins of the zoning districts and provide it to the MRPC.

5. **Westminster Parcel Updates:** Project to update the parcel data, maps and MRMapper sites for the Town of Westminster; Project Lead/Staff - Jason Stanton

- We are currently working on updating the parcel data using Coordinate Geometry (COGO).
- One the parcel data is updated we will update the paper maps and MRMapper sites for the Town.

Comprehensive Planning-Related:

1. **ADA Compliance Checklist Survey Creation:** Project to facilitate the collection of data regarding the ADA compliance of features and amenities of public spaces; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton/Kayla Kress

- We have created four digital surveys that can be completed out in the field using tablets. They will be used by MRPC staff to inventory the features and amenities of public spaces to see if they are ADA compliant. We developed a training manual for data collectors to use to complete these digital surveys and we will continue to provide any technical assistance as needed until the project is complete. Planning staff recently began the data collection process. This project remains ongoing.

2. **Athol Exchange St Abutters Mapping:** A project to identify priority sites and property owners as the MRPC works to enable to the area's rejuvenation; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff is expecting to receive map updates from MRPC planning staff.
- GIS staff was requested to begin creating a 3D model of the buildings adjacent to Exchange Street but cannot begin until the server transition has been completed.

3. **Harvard Buildout Analysis:** A DLTA project to update the Build-Out Analysis and Analyze Fiscal Impact; Project Lead/Staff – John Hume/Jason Stanton

- Staff plan to meet with the Planning Board on January 25th to review the results of the project and answer any questions.

Transportation-Related:

1. **Data Collection & Analysis Program:** Program to collect and analyze various data sources in support of studies and regional databases: Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- The GIS portion of this project is complete, but GIS staff will continue to aid Transportation staff as requested.

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2. **Walkability Study(s):** Program to develop and monitor regional performance measures; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- GIS staff have finalized the map of the study area in Sterling and are currently finalizing the study area map for the Townsend study. Data collection for these projects will continue in the spring.

3. Regional Pedestrian Plan: Program to develop a regional bike plan based upon the statewide bike plan: Additionally, a program to develop a handheld app for use in the field to collect data on trails throughout the region
Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton/Kayla Kress

- Development of the app is complete, and we are currently in the process of rolling this out to interested communities and organizations.
- GIS staff finished editing the video for the Android tutorial. After receiving feedback regarding the video and editing it accordingly, GIS staff finalized the video for the Android tutorial and is currently working on recording the video for the WebApp tutorial. An additional video for Apple devices will also be created.
- GIS and Transportation staff discussed the method to collect input from the communities. GIS will create maps depicting sidewalks, bike lanes and rail trails/pathways that will be sent to MRPC member communities for their confirmation, comment, and review.

4. ADA PROW Database: Program developed to provide technical assistance to member communities with issues related to the Public Right of Way (PROW) elements of their ADA Plans: Project Lead/Staff – George Snow/Jason Stanton

- The GIS portion of this project is complete.

Transit-Related:

1. Shirley Station Commuter Parking: Project to redevelop and improve the Shirley MBTA Station Commuter Parking Lot; Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff received a request from MRPC Transit staff to add annotation to the maps regarding the number of proposed parking spaces at Shirley Station. GIS staff made the edits accordingly and sent the updated maps to Transit staff.
- This project is complete.

Please contact Jason Stanton, GIS/IT Director and/or Kayla Kress, GIS Analyst for further information concerning GIS projects.

5.2 Planning and Development

Comprehensive Planning Division

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

A full review of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) continues. This review is focused upon identifying any information which needs to be compiled and any priorities that need to be removed, revised, or added. Work to locate and access any necessary data sources and draft potential revisions has likewise begun. MRPC will hold a CEDS meeting on February 23rd at 5 p.m. to provide a status report on the CEDS Update along with a presentation by Mary Giannetti, Director of Resource Development, Heywood Hospital concerning the update of Heywood Healthcare 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment – MRPC was contracted to assist Heywood with this project. MRPC also anticipates a contract to assist HealthAlliance to assist to update their 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment.

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director or Chris McDermott concerning this program.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), MONTACHUSETT REGION BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

This 3-year grant award, beginning October 1, 2019, is for \$300,000. Funds have been utilized and allocated for several projects. While all funds appear to be utilized/allocated, MRPC encourages communities to continue to submit Site Nominations in hope of additional future funding.

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director concerning this program.

MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (EOEEA)

MRPC was awarded an FY20 Planning Assistance grant for \$48,000 to fund Master Plan Chapters for the Town of Hubbardston. MRPC will present the Land Use Element in its entirety to the Hubbardston Planning Board on January 21, 2020. MRPC was also awarded \$18,000 in November 2020 to complete the Implementation Element of the Master Plan.

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jennifer Burney, Senior Planner for further information concerning this project for Hubbardston.

DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)

MRPC will soon have an executed contract with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This is the 14th year of this State-funded initiative. MRPC issued a Request for Service Delivery (RSD) on January 6th, 2021 that was forwarded to Mayors/Boards of Selectmen, Town Administrators/Managers and Planning Boards/Departments, Boards of Health, among others, with a proposal due date of February 2, 2021 for the first round and March 2nd, 2021 for the second round. Awards will be made at the Planning Commission's meetings held on February 4, 2021 and March 4, 2021.

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner, and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information concerning the DLTA program.

5.2 District Local Technical Assistance Applications – *Approval Required*

Reviews and Awards for Services: District Local Technical Assistance

REPORT:

In response to a first solicitation, on or before February 2nd, 2021 a total of eight (8) proposals were received for use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services. The proposals received are as follows:

1. **Ashburnham:** Land Use Master Plan Chapter.
2. **Ayer, Devens, and Harvard:** Technical assistance to work with Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) communities on a Nashoba Regional Greenways project.
3. **Hubbardston:** Explore Creation of a Town Center Overlay District Bylaw.
4. **Lancaster:** Assistance with continued creation of a draft language to amend the town's zoning bylaw by creating a new zoning district to resemble a mixed-use, center village district.
5. **Leominster:** Open Space and Recreation Plan mapping, updating of Community Setting section, and management of the Community Survey.

6. **Petersham:** Nichewaug Inn & Academy building; Review and Assist with the creation of a project schedule, facilitate public informational meetings and public input of MRPC's recent Nichewaug Inn & Academy 2020 Public Survey at two public meetings. Based on input meetings, research and present a report on any funding sources. Present final results of the study to the community.
7. **Sterling:** Permitting Guidebook and supplemental study to review the Town's existing bylaws for any impediments to economic growth.
8. **Townsend:** MRPC GIS staff to draft approximately 16 maps for the draft Master Plan Update, and 24 to 32 hours of consulting from MRPC Planning Staff to answer questions and review specific plan sections.

RESOLUTION REQUIRING COMMISSION ACTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) recommends that #1 through #8 of the above-named project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), if eligible, be **conditionally** awarded based upon further communication/ clarification/ negotiation with the applying communities and **approval from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**. Moreover, all activities in some applications may not be awardable under the DLTA program: MRPC staff reserves the right to negotiate an awardable detailed scope of services.

Those requests conditionally awarded (#1 through #13) are subject to the conditions listed below.

1. The services to be delivered to the communities will be completed commencing no earlier than a fully executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC.
2. Services will be delivered to the subject community(ies) during the implementation of the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program year (2021).
3. The award of services from the MRPC is subject to the:
 - a. Funding available to the MRPC during the program year (2021);
 - b. Successful negotiation of a detailed scope of services, schedule for the completion of the tasks identified in the scope of services, and budget utilizing DLTA and other funds, if available and eligible for the aforementioned project;
 - c. Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MRPC and the community(ies); and,
 - d. The MRPC's receipt of a letter from the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of all of the affected communities indicating agreement to this proposal and willingness to participate in this analysis. (Communities may agree to participate in this analysis after the full execution of the MOU between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC but must agree to participate in order to receive the results of the report.)
4. Where and when possible the MRPC will deliver the tasks related to "analysis, preparation and presentation ... report(s) ..." as indicated above. The MRPC and the community requesting services will "outsource" consulting services only when absolutely deemed to be necessary by both the lead community and the MRPC.
5. This is an award of services from the MRPC to the applicable community(ies). This is not a cash award.
6. If at any time DHCD determines that the project is ineligible, the award of services will be null and void.
7. The municipality and all municipal departments shall provide MRPC with cooperation/access/assistance to public data applicable to the DLTA project including the provision of such materials. Related costs associated with this (data collection, photocopying, etc.) will be at the expense of the municipality(s).

S. Copeland moved to accept the resolution to accept the resolution. The motion was seconded.

John Telepciak- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Phil Duffy- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Shaun Copeland- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Veronica Kell- yes

The resolution was passed unanimously.

AYER ADA SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN

The MRPC has a contract with the Town of Ayer for \$30,000 to complete this plan. The Town is utilizing an ADA Planning Grant Award from the MA Office on Disability to the Town of Ayer and has used DLTA 2020 Grant for matching funds. Moreover, MRPC is contributing to the project in terms of Public Rights of Way (PROW) where MRPC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (Transportation Department) funds are being used to complete this component.

Jonathan Vos continues completing ramp slopes of municipal buildings and Blair Haney is initiating work on the ADA Transition Plan Report.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER)

Karen Chapman continues to assist the Towns of Royalston, Ashby, Templeton, Lunenburg, and Hubbardston with their Green Communities Grant Awards. Tasks associated with managing the grant awards include reporting, procurement, and data management, as well as project initiation and management. Royalston is looking to complete their Designation Grant projects and submit a competitive grant application this year. Ashby and Lunenburg are looking to close out their existing competitive grant awards and apply for new grant funds. Karen will complete Final Reports for these communities and assist with competitive grant applications. Templeton and Hubbardston are working on projects from their designation grant award. Karen is assisting to get projects completed.

Karen prepared and submitted Annual Reports for the towns of Ashby, Athol, Fitchburg, Harvard, Lancaster, Shirley, and Westminster that were due November 6th. John Hume did the same for the Annual Report for Townsend. Questions from reviewers on the Annual Reports are beginning to come in and these will be addressed with the communities.

Karen submitted a Green Communities Designation application to DOER on December 23rd on behalf of the Town of Clinton. Questions will come back from the application reviewers; which Karen will address. Then we wait for word from the state on designation.

This contract with DOER ends on May 31, 2021. A new assistance grant solicitation will be released in March and due in May to apply for funds to continue to assist our communities with becoming and staying Green Communities. We plan on applying on behalf of communities interested in our assistance.

Please contact Karen Chapman, Senior Planner for further information concerning the Green Communities Program.

MA DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER), AFFORDABLE ACCESS REGIONAL COORDINATION (AARC)

A grant in the amount of \$104,039 has been received from the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER). The DOER's Energy Efficiency Division is funding regional planning agencies (RPAs) to develop programs and provide clean energy training to municipal or community organizations that support low-income populations. This funding will allow RPAs to increase knowledge of the Commonwealth's low-income residential clean energy programs, expanding the reach of existing successful programs. The contract began October 9, 2019 and ends September 30, 2021. MRPC is scheduling outreach meetings and training in all our communities as soon as we can under COVID-19 restrictions.

Please contact Karen Chapman, Senior Planner for further information concerning the AARC project. Moving forward, the new MRPC staff person, Senior Planner Meagan Donoghue, will be project manager for this project.

HEALTHY AGING TUFTS MOMENTUM FUND

MEC has a \$10,000 grant for a pilot program to assist the Towns of Ashburnham, Westminster, and Winchendon to become certified Age Friendly. This contract ends December 2020. Research for comprehensive assessment continues. Staff are seeking a grant deadline extension to June 30, 2021 guarantee project completion by the end of the grant and help ameliorate difficulties created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information.

HEALTHY AGING TUFTS FUND

MRPC was awarded a \$75,000 grant to help all the non-Age Friendly communities in the Montachusett Region become certified as Age Friendly. MRPC received the executed contract on July 24, 2020. MRPC staff are currently finalizing a virtual public forum for all non-Age Friendly communities and several other participating organizations, including Fitchburg State University, to review the Age Friendly process, answer questions, and establish working groups with each participating community. Comprehensive assessment and community engagement plans to serve as benchmark indicators are in the process of being submitted and evaluated by the grant manager.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MA DOT), MORE RIDES PLANNING PROJECT

The Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC) was awarded \$48,000 by Mass DOT. The executed contract was received July 23, 2020 with an end date of June 30, 2021. Seniors and disabled residents within the Montachusett Region have expressed persistent gaps in transportation access for many needs – primarily medical, employment, education, and other health/social services. MRPC staff will work to identify the resources and partners needed to create a Transportation Connections program to help address these gaps. Additional staff have been hired and will assist with this grant project.

MRPC staff and the Town of Ayer have assembled a steering committee that has begun to evaluate other community ride connector programs to service both health and employment needs. Currently areas of focus have been selected by the steering committee for in-depth data gathering and analysis to determine suitability with local resources and needs, which continues apace.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MA DOT) WINCHENDON VOLUNTEER DRIVER PLANNING PROJECT

The Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC) was awarded \$24,000 by MassDOT. The executed contract received July 23, 2020 with an end date of June 30, 2021. Seniors and disabled residents within the Montachusett Region have expressed persistent gaps in transportation access for many needs – primarily medical, employment, education, and other health/social services. Staff are continuing analysis of data to support the further development of various strategies that can be used to meet and mitigate these persistent gaps in local area transportation. Additional staff have been hired to help complete this grant project.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

MRPC recently signed a contract with Heywood Hospital. Heywood Healthcare requires assistance from the MRPC to conduct and complete a 2021 Community Health Assessment for Heywood Hospital and Athol Hospital. Professional services are expected by MRPC to achieve the timely completion of the relevant tasks, by Thursday, September 30, 2021. The report will consist of a broad scope of data from multiple sources including but not limited to primary and secondary data sources, input from stakeholder interviews, community member focus groups, and a survey to provide a status of health in the service area. MRPC updated the 2018 Community Health Assessment and this will provide staff with a model.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Matt Leger, Principal Planner for further information.

STERLING COMPLETE STREETS

The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. Eligible municipalities must pass a Complete Streets Policy, which Sterling has done, and develop a Prioritization Plan. MRPC has a contract with the Town of Sterling to conduct and complete a Sterling Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan. MRPC staff Jen Burney has been compiling existing data and studies and is in the process of procuring engineering services to assist with Project Identification and the Prioritization Plan itself.

Community Development Division

The Executive Director presented information concerning the FY19 CDBG-CV award to Shirley (lead community), Lunenburg, Royalston, Townsend, and Westminster earlier in the meeting.

MONTACHUSETT ENTERPRISE CENTER, INC.

The Executive Director presented this information earlier in the meeting.

5.3 TRANSIT

1. Support of Transportation Planning Operations: Provided administrative and technical support to the 3C planning process such as providing community liaison services and short-term technical planning assistance on mass transit matters to the following: local officials and member communities, state representatives and federal representatives. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale

- **Ayer:** Staff discussed with town representatives the Depot Square construction improvements. Also, discussed with National Grid issues regarding the temporary lighting at Depot Square.

- **Clinton:** Staff discussed with local representatives the issues of the proposed Fitchburg-Clinton-Worcester Commuter Shuttle and conducted a reconnaissance survey of the proposed bus route.
- **Public Meetings:** Staff met with the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) – January 13th; the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – January 20th; Staff attended a webinar on (Freight Developments in Connected and Automated Trucks) – January 13th.

2. Technical Assistance to MART: Staff continually provides technical planning services and assistance to the Montachusett Area Regional Transit Authority (MART) which includes the coordination of short-range special transit planning projects and assistance at regional transit authority (RTA) advisory board meetings. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale

- **Ayer Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza:** During the past month MRPC staff assisted MART and the Town of Ayer to move forward the construction of Phase III of Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza located at the MBTA Station. Phase III of the project is the Restroom Facility at the Pedestrian Plaza. Also, working with National Grid to provide the Depot Square with temporary lighting. MART anticipates completion of the project by Spring 2021.
- **Shirley Station Commuter Parking:** MRPC staff is working with MBTA on redevelopment of the Shirley MBTA Station Commuter Parking Lot Improvement.
- **Athol-Orange Shuttle:** Staff is monitoring the performance of the bus route and working on new schedule for the Athol-Orange Shuttle and providing MART with recommendations.
- **Worcester Commuter Shuttle:** Staff is working on the development of the new bus route and schedule for the Fitchburg-Clinton-Worcester Commuter Shuttle and providing MART with relevant recommendations.
- **Fitchburg/Leominster Bus Route Schedule:** MRPC met with MART regarding the new MBTA commuter rail schedule and the required updates needed to MART's bus route schedules.
- **MART Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan (RTP) Update 2020:** Staff continues to attend the bi-weekly virtual online meetings with AECOM Consultant regarding MART Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan Update 2020 and reviewed updates.
- **MART Operation Managers Meetings:** Staff attended MART's monthly meeting of the operation managers virtually online to discuss the operational strategies and receive an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Transit operation.

3. Bus Stop ADA Accessibility Evaluation: The Path to Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI) is assessing the accessibility of the bus stops in the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) Region. The purpose of the study is to determine the level of accessibility of each bus stop in MART system by collecting field information and determines its ranking for capital improvement (critical, high, medium, low). The higher the "score" the less that a bus stop complies with accessibility requirements and the more it is in need of capital improvements. This will be a multiyear project to cover all the stops in the MART system. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale
Contact George Kahale, Transit Projects Director for further information.

5.4 Transportation

Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)

The MJTC met on January 13, 2021. Major topics of discussion were the initial project listing for the FFY 2022-

2026 TIP, the development schedule for the FFY 2022 UPWP and a study update on Roundabouts in the Region. The next MJTC meeting will be held on Wednesday February 10, 2021 at 2:30 PM.

Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Montachusett MPO met on Wednesday January 20th. Items included discussion on the development of the FFY 2022-2026 TIP and the FFY 2022 UPWP. In addition, MassDOT presented the latest target figures for the statewide Safety Performance Measures¹ for MPO adoption. The next MPO meeting will be on Wednesday February 17, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

Unified Planning Work Program FFY 2021

The MRPC has continued work on various tasks included in the FFY 2021 UPWP which runs from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

- 1. Support of 3C:** Program to provide assistance with various meetings and activities with Communities, Regional Groups, Federal and State Officials; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

Staff attended various meetings throughout the month including the RPA Transportation Managers Group, a special informational meeting with the Townsend Planning Board, a MARPA/MassDOT meeting and a meeting with Fitchburg City Officials regarding the Rt. 12 Corridor Study. Meetings also included the MRPC, the MJTC and the Montachusett MPO.

- 2. Unified Planning Work Program:** Program to develop the annual UPWP; Project Lead/Staff – Sheri Bean/Brad Harris

The 2021-2022 UPWP development process has recently started. A project solicitation memo was sent out to all communities on 1/4/21. Any community who has a potential project is asked to respond to the memo and MRPC will take it under advisement.

- 3. Public Information Reporting/Participation Program:** Program to maintain an active Public Participation Program through various outreach methods; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

Staff updated the MRPC website with announcements of grant and funding opportunities.

- 4. Development of TIP:** Program to develop the annual TIP; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty/Brad Harris

Staff continued work on the development of the FFY 2022-2025 TIP. An initial project listing was compiled and shared with the MJTC and MPO. Staff also attended a MARPA/MassDOT meeting to discuss TIP items.

- 5. GIS Mapping & Analysis:** Program to conduct GIS work & support; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton/Kayla Kress

Refer to GIS updates for information on various projects for MassDOT.

- 6. Data Collection & Analysis Program:** Program to collect and analyze various data sources in support of studies and regional databases; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

All 2020 traffic counts have been uploaded to the MS2 website as requested by MassDOT.

- 7. Performance Measures:** Program monitor and review regional and state PM; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty/Brad Harris

¹ More information concerning Federal Highway Administration Safety Performance Measures can be found here: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/hsip/spm/>.

Staff continued a review of the latest Safety Targets for the state as part of the adoption process for CY 2021. MassDOT presented the Safety Performance Measures update to the MPO for their action.

8. Intersection Analysis: Program to and issues or deficiencies; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty/George Snow

Staff continued to review information from WPI and initiated development of additional analysis to be conducted this program year.

9. Walkability Study(s): Program to develop and monitor regional performance measures; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

GIS staff have finalized the map of the study area in Sterling and are currently finalizing the study area map for the Townsend study. Data collection for these projects will continue in the spring.

10. Fitchburg Corridor Study: Program to review and identify access to various local tourist destinations/sites: Program Manager – Project Lead/Staff – Sheri Bean/Kayla Kress

Staff organized and attended a meeting with city officials as part of the development of a scope of work. Various issues of concern from the city were discussed.

11. Regional Pedestrian Plan: Program to develop a regional bike plan based upon the statewide bike plan: Project Lead/Staff – Sheri Bean/George Snow

GIS and Transportation staff discussed the method to collect input from the communities. GIS will create maps depicting sidewalks, bike lanes and rail trails/pathways that will be sent to MRPC member communities for their confirmation, comment, and review this.

12. ADA Prow Database: Program developed to provide technical assistance to member communities with issues related to the Public Right of Way (PROW) elements of their ADA Plans: Project Lead/Staff – George Snow

Staff completed ADA PROW Data Collection Guides for the Curb Ramp, Sidewalk, Crosswalk and Accessible Pedestrian Signal Surveys. The survey guides introduce the reader to the four surveys and provide at office and in field recommendations and instructions to the surveyors who will be collecting the data on how to conduct the surveys.

13. Roundabouts and The MRPC Region: Program developed to review, analyze, and document roundabouts in member communities: Project Lead/Staff – George Snow

Staff compiled a draft inventory of the circular intersections in the Region after seeking input from member communities. Staff prepared a PowerPoint presentation discussing various features of circular intersections and the present status of rotaries and roundabouts in the MRPC region which was presented at the 1/13/21 MJTC meeting. Staff is reviewing the recently released MassDOT Guidelines for the Planning and Design of Roundabouts.

Please contact Brad Harris, Transportation Project Director, George Snow, Principal Planner, Sheri Bean, Principal Planner and/or Brian Doherty, Principal Planner for further information concerning the Transportation program.

6. New Business

There was no new business for discussion.

7. Adjournment

Next MJTC Meeting – March 10, 2021 – 2:30pm to 4:00pm

Next MPO Meeting – March 17, 2021 - 1:00pm to 2:00pm ([Remote GoToMeeting](#))

This time is being reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Meeting Attendance					
Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ashburnham BOS	A	Ashburnham	7.2020		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001		X
Vacant	A	Ashby			X
Doherty, Jacqueline	M	Athol	7.2020		X
Rebecca Bialecki	A	Athol	7.2017		X
Vacant	M	Ayer			X
Copeland, Shaun/ Archambault, Mark	A	Ayer	7.2020	X	
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011	X	
Vacant	A	Clinton			X
Lowitt, Peter	N/V	DREZ	7.2001		X
Butland, Alyne	M	Fitchburg	7.2020	X	
Skwierawski, Tom	A	Fitchburg	7.2020		X
Swartz, Robert	M	Gardner	7.2019	X	
Cruz, Maribel	A	Gardner	8.2017		X
Burke, Russ	M	Groton	7.2016		X
Cunningham, Peter	A	Groton	9.2020	X	
Donahue, Stacia	M	Harvard	7.2018	X	
Vacant	A	Harvard			X
Vacant	M	Hubbardston	7.2016		X
Stauder, Michael	A	Hubbardston			X
Christopher, Thomas	A	Lancaster	7.2016		X

Williston, Russell	M	Lancaster	<i>11.2018</i>		X
Carignan, Thomas	M	Leominster	<i>7.2019</i>		X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Brenner, Matthew	M	Lunenburg	<i>7.2020</i>	X	
Marino, James	A	Lunenburg	<i>7.2020</i>		X
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	<i>7.2015</i>		X
Vacant	M	Phillipston			X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	<i>10.201</i>	X	
Natrowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	<i>7.2015</i>		X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	<i>7.2017</i>		X
Oelfke, Bill	A	Shirley	<i>7.2020</i>		X
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	<i>8.2017</i>		X
Page, Patty	M	Sterling	<i>7.2019</i>		X
Maki, Dick	A	Sterling	<i>7.2014</i>		X

Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X
Bennett, Jeff	A	Templeton	7.2020		X
Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2018	X	
Kell, Veronica	A	Townsend		X	
Smith, Mike	M	Westminster	7.2019		X
Vacant	A	Westminster			X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019		X

STAFF PRESENT: George Kahale, Holly Ford, Brad Harris, John Hume, Glenn Eaton, Nicholas Mellis

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:

January 7, 2021 MRPC Minutes

February 4, 2021 Meeting Handout

FY21 Budget Update 2-4-21

FY22 Initial Budget Revenue Estimate 2-4-21