

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)



Thursday, May 6, 2021

7:00 PM

REMOTE: GoToMeeting App

MEETING MINUTES

1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 March 25, 2021 MRPC Minutes

P. Cunningham moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the March 25, 2021 minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Staci Donahue- Abstain

Roger Hoyt- yes

Robert Swartz- Abstain

Peter Cunningham- yes

Matthew Brenner- yes

Laura Shifrin- Abstain

John Telepciak- yes

Guy Corbosiero- yes

Dean Valliere- Abstain

Barbara Yocum- Abstain

Alyne Butland- yes

Alan Pease- Abstain

3. Cash Schedule – March 2021 and April 2021

L. Shifrin read the March 2021 cash schedule.

Opening Balance \$548,816.33; Total receipts this month \$101,323.52; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$650,139.85; Less: amount of this warrant \$144,680.91; Balance after this warrant \$505,458.94.

L. Shifrin read the April 2021 cash schedule.

Opening Balance \$505,458.94; Total receipts this month \$131,166.02; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$636,624.96; Less: amount of this warrant \$180,621.51; Balance after this warrant \$456,003.45.

B. Yocum moved to accept the March 2021 and the April 2021 cash schedules as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes

Alyne Butland- yes

Barbara Yocum- yes

Dean Valliere- yes

Guy Corbosiero- yes

John Telepciak- yes

Matthew Brenner- yes

Peter Cunningham- yes

Robert Swartz- yes

Roger Hoyt- yes

Staci Donahue- yes

Laura Shifrin- yes

4. Slate of Officers for FY21

G. Eaton stated the Nominating Committee Meeting did not take place earlier this evening as scheduled. The Nominating Committee will meet on June 3, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. There will be a meeting notice and an agenda sent out Monday. Members of the Nominating Committee are J. Telepciak, P. Cunningham and S. Copeland.

Currently the members of the Executive Committee are as follows: G. Corbosiero- Chairman, J. Telepciak- Vice Chairman, L. Shifrin- Treasurer, R. Hoyt- Assistant Treasurer, Secretary- Vacant, Member at Large- M. Cruz and P. Duffy.

G. Eaton is requesting to meet with the current Executive Committee to discuss the budget in greater detail due to staff changes coming up due to L. Parmenter's retirement as well as salary changes for staff.

5. Administrative Matters

G. Eaton will make presentations on the following topics.

5.1 Update: COVID-19 Office Space Management and Safety- Information

The office remains closed. However, as COVID19 cases have been declining in the region, we are planning to have the employees work back at the office under safe conditions. The Executive Director issued the following email to

all employees on the afternoon of May 5th.

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All:

Please be advised that I will present a Hybrid Work Locations Policy before the Commissioners at their meeting that will be held on the first Thursday in June.

Please be advised of the following:

1. *Returning to Work on May 10, 2021 – Urging Volunteerism*
 - a. *All COVID19 safety protocols are in place.*
 - b. *All employees are urged, if at all possible, to voluntarily return to work at the office beginning Monday, May 10, 2021.*
 - c. *Please email or call me at 978-400-8374 with questions you may have concerning home schooling, day care of children or other matters and we'll work together to do so as safely as possible; I can discuss one-on-one beginning Friday, May 7th.*
 - d. *Temporary, part-time employees are also encouraged to contact me to discuss your unique employment situations.*
2. *Returning to Work on July 12, 2021 – Mandatory Working in the MRPC Office*
 - a. *All COVID19 safety protocols will remain in place.*
 - b. *All employees are required to return to work at the office beginning Monday, July 12, 2021.*

*Thank you,
Glenn*

P. Cunningham asked if MRPC will develop a vaccine policy. G. Eaton explained that due to HIPPA Laws, we will not have a vaccine policy. MRPC will be developing a hybrid work location policy which will be presented to the Commissioners at a later date.

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

The process of seeing new legislation make it through both Houses on Beacon Hill and land on the Governor's desk has been estimated to take approximately five to seven years, on average. Reports on this topic will only be made at future meetings of the Commissioners when key actions are about to take place or have recently occurred.

5.3 Update: FY19 Community Development Block Grant, COVID Response Award of \$296,100 to Shirley (lead community), Lunenburg, Royalston, Townsend, and Westminster- Information

The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has raised the grant award limit from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for the Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP). In order to boost the number of applications from businesses the Executive Director made "cold calls" on businesses in two of the five communities included in this project last weekend and mailings to hundreds of businesses were, and will, be issued to three of the five towns by May 7th. The food bank operators in Lunenburg and Townsend have delivered food to clients and will send monthly reports and invoices to the MRPC this week and next week.

5.4 Update: Strategic Planning for the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and its Affiliate the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC)- Information

An in-depth strategic planning effort needs to involve the Commissioners and staff in one or more intensive meetings (preferably in person) and be an intensive process designed to identify goals, objectives, and tasks of a non-profit organization or government agency. Under the current COVID19 State of Emergency it has been impossible to conduct these meetings. However, this does not mean that cannot consider what some elements of a strategic plan might include. As all regional planning agencies in Massachusetts are charged with ... (G.L. of A, C 40B, s. 5, see excerpt at the end of section 5.4). Holding in-depth group meetings will enable this agency to take our first, meaningful step toward building our regional policy plan.

As discussed above (in section 5.1, above) we are moving closer to, one day very soon, being able to hold that meeting at the MRPC's office. Ideally, we will be able to discuss "SWOT" and related matters for both the region and our two organizations: MRPC and MEC, Inc. ... Let's keep our fingers crossed.

While we are not yet able to have these in-person group meetings, this does not mean that we cannot make some progress in planting the seeds of ideas and issues that some of us may want to include in our strategic plan. In an effort to jump-start the process, please find below issues collected from other strategic plans (much of which has been borrowed heavily from the outstanding strategic plan published by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council [MAPC]). Comments and questions follow the possible policies *in italics*. Management is requesting that you review this information, not with the intention of automatically including everything shared with you this evening, but to help start the conversation when we do meet, this summer?

1. Partner with our cities and towns to promote regional collaboration, enhance effectiveness, and increase efficiency.
 - a. *MRPC is now more well known as a interdisciplinary planning entity no longer focused upon one or two planning disciplines. How do we building upon recent momentum to capitalize on our recent strides (i.e., now delivery pavement management planning service via a locally funded contract, the growth of assessors GIS services, and our success in green communities designations and "brick-and-mortar" improvements projects)?*
2. Play a leading role in helping the region to achieve greater equity.
 - a. *It is safe to say that the MRPC is seen as one of the leading agencies, but certainly not the only one. Questions for consideration: How do we "make our mark" in the region with limited funding? The CMRPC carves out money in each, annual budget for marketing its services and directs staff to implement marketing tasks. Should the MRPC do something similar?*
3. Partner with our cities and towns to promote regional collaboration, enhance effectiveness, and increase efficiency.
 - a. *We are viewed a as service delivery organization. Are we seen as a "partner" of our cities and towns? This is a debatable point. How do we "partner" with municipalities? On what matters would we be "partners?" The "partnering" potential is growing with MEC, Inc. and other non-profit health and healthcare organizations. How will we "grow MEC's services (strategic planning was conducted in 2019 and will be shared with the Commissioners).*
4. Encourage development and preservation consistent with smart growth principles.
5. Expanding the supply of housing that the region needs to grow economically, with an emphasis on multi-family housing, smaller single-family homes, and homes that are affordable to a wide range of incomes.

6. Promoting innovative transportation strategies, including congestion mitigation, shared and appropriately priced parking, streets that work for all users, and transit solutions for both cities and suburbs.
7. Encouraging both residential and economic development that is oriented to take advantage of its proximity to current and planned subway and light rail stops, commuter rail stations, and key bus stops.
 - a. *Questions for the MRPC: How important is “smart growth” to our communities? How many of our cities and towns have smart growth zoning ordinances or bylaws?*
8. Continuing to build a successful practice area focused on shared services and other forms of collaboration among municipalities.
 - a. *Should this be considered as a service to be provide by the MRPC? We have no capacity or funding to do so as of this point in time. In order to deliver a new service, we’d have to make an investment of dollars in human resources and training of staff.*
 - b. *We should have a regional procurement service (and probably other regional services). MRPC experimented, very successfully, with delivering this service with DLTa resources approximately ten years ago. The MAPC and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) provide these services; fee-based in the Greenfield region.*
9. Helping municipalities to adopt innovative strategies to deliver services, especially in areas of core emphasis for MAPC, such as regional transportation coordination, environmental stewardship, collaborating to meet housing needs, and advancing public safety and public health.
 - a. *This is a firehose blast of possibilities. We are already conducting planning for additional transit options for people in the rural parts of our region. Should we also help to implement the proposed solution(s)? We have had homeless people in our region for decades and, unfortunately, this situation will continue unless one or more entities take bold, unwavering action to address this matter head-on. We have had virtually no discussions on this topic. We are long overdue. A region of about one quarter of a million people need to have more than one homeless shelter (in Fitchburg). Why are we not discussing designing, permitting, and building “tiny homes” (market rate, affordably priced, and for the homeless) versus constantly building “mcmansions” which many inhabitants cannot afford?*
10. Play a leading role in helping the region to achieve greater equity.
11. Working to make changes in the built environment, and related public policies, to improve health outcomes among lower-income households, racial and ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable populations.
 - a. *MRPC and MEC are at the beginning phase of providing assistance in the area of improving health outcomes of all populations, especially the most vulnerable. These efforts need to be increased and broadened. How does MRPC and/or MEC become a partner with the other health organizations and non-profit food delivery agencies? Seeds are now being planted. Where do we go from here?*
12. Help the region reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the physical, environmental, and social impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
 - a. *There is too much political interference concerning climate change. Not all planning staff believe in climate change. Do all Commissioners believe in the science? We are not a densely populated area and our GHG’s are low, admittedly. Does this even matter? Shouldn’t we all be towing the same Conestoga wagon across the prairie in our search to improve the lives of people today and tomorrow?*

How will we measure our agency and region’s progress with all to-be-adopted policy actions in the future?

Finally, again, the information above is intended to enable all of us to begin a larger conversation about what is important to your communities and constituents as we move closer to combining so much of the excellent work

that your staff does every day and adopting policies to improve the region in which we work and live.

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G.L. of MA, s.5

Powers and duties; reports

*Section 5. A planning commission established hereunder shall make careful studies of the resources, problems, possibilities and needs of its district and, on the basis of such studies, **shall prepare a comprehensive plan of development or a schematic study plan of such district or of such part or parts thereof as the commission may deem necessary and in such plans shall make such recommendations** for the physical, social, governmental or economic improvement of the district as in their opinion will be in the best interest of the inhabitants of the district. Such plans and recommendations shall concern, among other things, the general use of the district, including land use, principal highways and expressways, bridges, airports, public utilities, public facilities, parks, recreational areas, public institutions and such other matters as in the opinion of said commission will be beneficial to the district and will promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the district and the general welfare and prosperity of its people. Before the **adoption of any such regional plan** or a portion thereof, the district planning commission shall hold at least one public hearing thereon, notice of the time, place and subject of which shall be given. Written notice of such hearing shall be given to each planning board, board of selectmen, and city council. Notice of the time, place and subject of the hearing shall be published at least once in a newspaper having substantial circulation in the region at least ten days before such hearing. Adoption of such plan or portion thereof shall be by a majority vote of the representatives of the district planning commission. Such plan may be amended from time to time in the same manner as hereinbefore provided. A copy of the plan adopted by the commission or any amendments thereto signed by the chairman shall be filed with the town clerk of each member municipality not more than thirty days after commission action. Such plan or portion of a plan shall be a public record. Such district planning commission shall also assist the planning boards of the several cities and towns within the area of its jurisdiction in applying any district plans and recommendations so adopted to the local board's area of jurisdiction.*

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5.5 Draft FY22 Budget - Information in May and Approval Required in June

A draft of the FY22 budget for the MRPC is available as a handout for this evening's meeting. The document will be summarized by the Fiscal Manager and Executive Director. Questions and comments are welcome. At the next meeting of the Commissioners, to be held on June 3rd, the final budget for FY22 will be presented. Adoption of this budget will be requested at that time.

Some of the highlights of tonight's presentation include the following.

1. As always, the budget has been constructed "conservatively," meaning:
 - a. Low revenue
 - b. Bare knuckle costs have been included in all, administrative line items that contribute to the agency's overhead or indirect cost rate (many of the line items are "just right" while others are

very lean, and some may need modest increases throughout the fiscal year)

2. Salaries

- a. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, Commonwealth's State of Emergency, and related unknowns about future funding, the agency did not provide an increase in salary to the employees at the beginning of FY21
- b. Collectively, the team has been working diligently throughout the past two fiscal years, and especially under the COVID-19 State of Emergency
- c. Salary increases are warranted for employees, personnel evaluations-allowing
- d. Management has included a sufficient amount of funding to allow all employees to receive a salary increase up to 2.5% over the salary that employees earned for two fiscal years ago

3. Revenue: Recurring and New

a. Recurring revenue

- i. Annual assessments from our communities equates to \$83,318.94.
- ii. Additional Funding to the agency is anticipated to be received from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Economic Development Administration (EDA)

b. New Revenue

- i. Some employees have been very successful at applying for competitive funding from the Commonwealth and Federal agencies
 1. The Transportation Department is applauded for leading the MRPC to new funding sources from MassDOT, Tufts Foundation, and a new service and contract with Athol
 2. Grant proposals submitted to the Department of Energy Resources (for Green Communities Planning and Implementing) and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEEA, Planning Assistance Grants [PAG]), by the Planning and Development (P&D) Department, are turning into recurring grants, even though these are competitive programs, some of our highly successful grant writers and managers are bringing-in new revenue to the agency
 3. P&D will also attempt to deliver all hazards mitigation and historic planning services by pursuing all state and local funding, respectively

c. Past revenue not to repeat

- i. This agency will no longer pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grants on behalf of communities
 1. The program has been too costly to administer over the long haul
 2. Qualified staff are very difficult to find and hire
 3. A portion of the past, significant increases in our overhead rate in some fiscal years can be attributed to the loss of CDBG administrative revenue

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Montachusett Regional Planning Commission			Page 1
Draft FY2022 Budget (7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022)			5/4/2021
Next budget update will be done in August 2021			
Revenues			
Federal	Contract #		
	305400	MassDOT PL 3 months (Jul-Aug-Sept 2021)	\$229,989.07
	305500	FTA 5303 3 months (Jul-Aug-Sep 2021)	\$54,527.18
	308000	EPA Brownfields	\$51,463.07
	306900	EDA CEDS new (Jul 21 - March 22) 9 months	\$70,000.00
	TBD	EDA CEDS new (Apr 22 -June 22) 3 months	\$17,500.00
	305100	EDA CARES COVID	\$271,040.00
	TBD	MassDOT PL 9 months (Oct 21 - Jun 22)	\$500,445.00
	TBD	FTA 5303 9 months (Oct 21 -Jun 22)	\$60,539.31
State			
	303870	AARC	\$76,515.00
	303900	DLTA 14 6 months (Jul 21- Dec 21)	\$114,111.00
	TBD	DLTA 15 6 months (Jan 22 - June 22)	\$114,111.00
	305000	Montachusett Age Friendly	\$24,836.00

	TBD	MART FY22	\$102,000.00
	306200	Planning Assistance Grant Ster, Hubb, Athol	\$38,579.00
	306100	Shirley CDBG - CV	\$17,692.46
Local	305600	Sterling Complete Streets	\$17,945.00
	305900	Hubbardston Green Community	\$2,244.00
	306400	Heywood Health Care CHA	\$5,837.00
	306800	Athol Rd Survey	\$8,982.00
	304030	MEC Tufts Grant 3 months	\$4,906.00
	300980	Community Assessments FY22	\$83,318.00
	304700	Ayer ADA	\$10,000.00
	306700	Health Alliance Clinton	\$15,847.26
	306600	Templeton Green Community	\$6,000.00
Pass through contracts		EPA Revolving Loan Fund	\$38,389.00
		Total Revenue	\$1,898,427.35
EXPENSES			Page 2
		Total Direct Salaries	\$701,076.24
		Total Direct Expenses	\$202,214.41
		Indirect Salaries	\$243,293.90
		Indirect Leave Time	\$206,119.97
		Cash Matches:	
		<i>DLTA 14 (July 1 2021 - December 31 2021)</i>	\$5,187.50
		<i>EDA CEDS (July 1, 2021 - March 30, 2022)</i>	\$13,125.00
		<i>EDA CEDS (Apr 1, 2022 - Jun 30, 2022)</i>	\$4,375.00

		DLTA 15 (January 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022)	\$5,187.50
		Total Cash Matches	\$27,875.00
50600		Employer Medicare	\$16,000.00
50700		Unemployment Insurance	\$21,500.00
50800		Employee Moving Expense	\$600.00
50900		Employer Share-Health/Dental Insurance	\$201,760.00
50901		Retiree's Health Insurance	\$28,660.00
51000		Worker's Comp Insurance	\$3,000.00
54000		Consultant Fees	\$1,000.00
54100		Service/Maintenance Contracts	\$9,000.00
55000		Travel	\$1,000.00
56000		Accounting/Legal	\$20,000.00
56100		Advertising	\$1,500.00
56200		Conference/Meetings/Training	\$1,000.00
56201		Major Events	\$0.00
56300		Depreciation	\$6,000.00
56400		Equipment Rental	\$1,000.00
56500		Equipment Repair	\$250.00
56700		Liability Insurance	\$12,000.00
56800		Dues & Membership	\$4,000.00
56801		License Fees	\$4,100.00
56802		Subscriptions	\$25,000.00
56900		Miscellaneous Expenses	\$100.00
57000		Office Supplies	\$7,000.00
57001		Small Tools, Equipment & Furniture	\$2,500.00
57002		Equipment/Furniture Purchase	\$12,000.00
57100		Printing Expense	\$500.00
57200		Postage & Shipping	\$500.00

57500		Rent	\$33,765.00
57510		Electric	\$11,000.00
57520		Cleaning Services	\$6,900.00
57600		Communications	\$6,000.00
57750		Employee Education Reimbursement	\$2,000.00
57800		Computer Software	\$1,000.00
58400		Interest Expense (Line of Credit)	\$500.00
58600		Other Post Employment Benefits	\$24,000.00
59700		Total Indirect Costs	\$914,548.88
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,845,714.53
		Estimated Surplus (Deficit)	\$52,712.82
Indirects divided by:			\$914,548.88
Direct Labor (salaries)			\$701,076.24
Indirect Rate			130.45%

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P. Cunningham asked if we have salary comparables of what other Regional Planning Agencies have for the same positions that we have at MRPC. G. Eaton stated what we have is outdated but we would be happy to make a request to ask for updated data so we can present this information to the Executive Committee to also be followed up by a plan.

5.6 Hiring of Fiscal Assistant - *Approval Required*

The retirement of the current Administrative and Human Resources Director (as of June 30, 2021) will create a gap in staff support that the current Fiscal Manager needs to implement all, required financial operations, ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and other audit compliance matters. Funding for the currently proposed part-time position will be paid for with cost savings realized by the retirement of the aforementioned employee. MRPC's Administration intends to:

- A. Hire a qualified, part-time, non-benefitted Fiscal Assistant at an hourly rate of \$23.69 for a maximum of 18.5 hours weekly; and,
- B. Place in the upcoming fiscal year's budget an amount to \$46,195 for salary and another approximate sum of \$22,000 into the health insurance line item to be prepared for increasing this position to full-time status, in the case that Fiscal Manager and Executive Director determine, at some future date, that this should be a full-time position given the level of work required.

The position has been advertised and applications are being reviewed and at least one interview had been conducted. Staff will not proceed with the hiring of an individual for this, or any other, position without first receiving the approval of the Commissioners.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of MRPC management's request and recommendation to hire a qualified, part-time Fiscal Assistant at an hourly rate of \$23.69 for a maximum of 18.5 hours weekly where no benefits will be provided to this part-time employee at this level of hours.

P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution to hire a part-time Fiscal Assistant as presented by the Executive Director. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes
Alyne Butland- yes
Barbara Yocum- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes

Staci Donahue- yes

Laura Shifrin- yes

Phil Duffy- yes

5.7 Hiring of Principal Planner - *Request for Hiring Withdrawn*

Per a meeting between the Executive Director, Fiscal Manager, and Admin and Human Resources Director that there are insufficient funds to hire this position as of this time. Also, there are insufficient funds to engage a Loan Originator as of this point in time.

5.8 Other Administrative Matters

This section of the agenda allows for Commissioners and management to discuss items for future agendas.

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CONTRACT STATUS REPORTS

6.1 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. **Clinton Parcel Updates:** Project to update the parcel data, maps and MRMapper sites for the Town of Clinton; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress, Jason Stanton

- GIS staff worked on updating the parcel data using Coordinate Geometry (COGO) and ran a quality assessment on the updated data.
- The paper maps have been updated and the MRMapper sites for the Town are currently being updated. Once the MRMapper sites are updated, this project will be complete.

2. **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

- GIS staff is waiting to receive feedback about the first draft of the trail map from the Crocker Pond Recreation Area Committee. Once feedback is received, GIS staff will incorporate any edits as requested.

3. **Fitchburg Trail Maps for the Field:** A project to create trail maps for field installation; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- GIS staff finalized the first drafts of the various trail maps and sent them to the Committee to review. Information regarding post numbers and kiosk locations was provided and incorporated into the maps.
- Further edits were received and incorporated into the maps. Additional trail data has been received and GIS staff is working on adding it to the Trail Inventory and the maps. Once the new trail data has been added, GIS staff can finalize the maps and provide the deliverables.
- This project is expected to be completed by late April or early May.

3. **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

- Town contact is collecting edits to the trail locations from the public. Once the edits have been compiled and sent to MRPC GIS staff, they will edit the trail data accordingly.
- This project is ongoing.

4. **Shirley Parcel Updates:** Project to update the parcel data, maps and MRMapper sites for the Town of

Shirley; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress, Jason Stanton

- GIS staff finished updating the parcel data using Coordinate Geometry (COGO) and updated the paper maps.
- The MRMapper sites for the Town have also been updated so this project is completed.

5. Sterling Aquifer Protection Bylaw Map: A project to create a map depicting area affected by the proposed Aquifer Protection Bylaw; Project Lead/Staff – Kayla Kress

- GIS staff received edits to the area that would be affected by the proposed Aquifer Protection Bylaw. GIS staff updated the map and recalculated the acreage and number of parcels affected by the proposed bylaw and the current bylaw.
- This project is complete.

6. Sterling Complete Streets: A project conduct and complete a Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan; Project Lead/Staff – Jen Burney and Sheri Bean/Kayla Kress, Rhiannon Dugan

- GIS staff mapped out the locations of the proposed projects and updated the map.
- GIS staff prepared and provided a dataset of bike/ped infrastructure for the engineers.
- After the map of proposed projects was reviewed by the various entities working on Sterling Complete Streets, the projects extents were refined further, and GIS staff edited the proposed project locations accordingly. GIS staff also provided the coordinates of the extents of the projects as they are required in the Complete Streets application.
- This project is ongoing.

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

- GIS staff finished updating the parcel data using Coordinate Geometry (COGO) and updated the paper maps.
- We are currently working on updating the MRMapper sites for the Town and anticipate that this will be completed in late April or early May.

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 is in the process of collecting data.
- GIS staff provided technical assistance to sync and export the results of the surveys.

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

- Roadway width was provided to GIS staff allowing them to calculate the area of excess roadway of Exchange Street if the street was a consistent 37 feet from its intersection with Main Street to the

beginning of the bridge that spans the Miller River.

- 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. Ashburnham Zoning Map Update: A DLTA project to update Ashburnham's Zoning Map; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton

- We worked with the Town to update a portion of their Zoning map to remove the Wetland & Watershed Protection district and update the Water Supply Protection overlay. This project is complete.

4. Hubbardston Master Plan – Land Use: A DLTA project to create a series of maps to be used in the Land Use chapter of Hubbardston's Master Plan; Project Lead/Staff – Jason Stanton

- We created a series of maps for the town related to the Land Use section of their Master Plan.
- Maps are being updated as information from the Town is provided.
- This project is ongoing.

5. Leominster Open Space and Recreation Plan Mapping Update: A DLTA project to update the series of maps used in Leominster's Open Space and Recreation Plan; Project Lead/Staff – Karen Chapman/ Kayla Kress

- GIS staff has created the first drafts of most of the maps and has requested information from the City to complete the remaining maps. The maps will be created as information is provided by the City. GIS staff will provide any data/stats as requested.
- This project is expected to be completed by late June or early July.

6. Townsend Master Plan Mapping: A DLTA project to create a series of maps to be used in Townsend's Master Plan; Project Lead/Staff – Karen Chapman/ Kayla Kress

- GIS staff has created the first drafts of most of the maps. They have been sent to the town for review. Feedback will be incorporated.
- GIS staff has requested information from the Town to complete the remaining maps and the maps will be created as information is provided by the Town.
- This project is expected to be completed by late June or early July.

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

- GIS staff created a data scheme to add bike/ped infrastructure to MassDOT's roadway inventory file so that the addition of this data into the next version of the dataset will be seamless.
- GIS staff is waiting for the release of MassDOT's next iteration of the roadway inventory file to see if the proposed data scheme will still be valid. If so, MRPC GIS staff will begin adding data relating to bike/ped infrastructure to the inventory file. This project is currently on-hold.

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

and Kayla Kress

- GIS staff added the new projects and deleted the old projects to both the TIP database and the TIP maps. GIS staff updated the Environmental Justice and Title VI geographies and updated the maps to include the both the updated geographies and projects. GIS staff also updated the Project Tables that are included in the report and provided updated population counts to Transportation staff.

3. Fitchburg Corridor Study: Program to review and identify issues and deficiencies along the Route 12 corridor in Fitchburg; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brain Doherty, and Kayla Kress

- GIS staff created the first draft of the study area map. It may be refined as the project continues.
- GIS staff assigned recent crashes to crash clusters and provided location information. GIS staff also summarized the number of crashes by severity by crash cluster.
- This project is ongoing and GIS staff will assist as requested.

4. Unified Planning Work Program: Program to develop the annual UPWP; Project Lead/Staff – Sheri Bean/Brad Harris and Kayla Kress

- GIS staff used the compiled analysis criteria to identify the Environmental Justice and Title VI communities in the Montachusett Region and updated the task review table identifying the projects that are in these communities. GIS staff also updated the report text relating to the number of projects within the different types of Environmental Justice/Title VI communities.
- GIS staff updated the map that depicts the number of Projects by Community.

5. Walkability Study(s): Program to improve walkability and access in identified study areas in Sterling and Townsend; Project Lead/Staff – Sheri Bean / Brad Harris, Kayla Kress

- Data collection for these projects will continue in the spring and GIS staff will digitize the data as it is collected.

6. 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 finalized the first drafts of the maps that depict sidewalks, bike lanes and rail trails/pathways for each community. MRPC Transportation staff sent these maps to each MRPC member communities for their confirmation, comment, and review of the data. Feedback was received from each community and MRPC GIS staff has created a data scheme for compiling the data into a single dataset based on MassDOT's roadway inventory file. GIS staff is currently waiting for the next iteration of MassDOT's roadway inventory file before updating the data.

Transit-Related:

1. MART G-Link Maps: Project to create maps of the MART's individual G-Link routes; Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale/Kayla Kress

- Only one map that depicted both G-Link routes existed, so GIS staff was asked to create a map for each G-Link route (to Winchendon and to Athol). The maps were created and sent to MART for

review. They were approved so this project is complete.

2. MART Human Service Transportation Brokerage Area Map Update: Project to update the map that depicts MART's HST Brokerage Area; Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff updated MART's HST Brokerage Area map to include the previous regions 1, 2, and 6 in the agency's service area.
- GIS staff updated the boundaries the HST regions and the Brokerage Area map.
- GIS staff will work on resizing the map to 11"x17" when time allows.

3. MART Intercity Shuttle Map Update: Project to update the map of MART's Intercity Shuttle route; Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff updated the map based on the new schedule and sent it for review. No changes were requested so GIS staff will update the Fitchburg/Leominster system map when time allows.

4. MART Worcester/Clinton Commuter Shuttle Map: Project to create a map of MART's new Worcester/Clinton Commuter Shuttle route; Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff mapped out the routes and stops of the three loops of the new shuttle line that runs from Fitchburg to Worcester through Clinton and created a map to be posted on MART's website.
- Edits to the map were received and incorporated into the map. Further changes to the route and stops are expected as the schedule is for introductory service and is subject to change depending on demand and route performance outcomes.

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

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6.2 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.

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.

DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)

MRPC has an executed contract with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This is the 14th year of this State-funded initiative.

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.

Ashburnham: Land Use Master Plan Chapter: Drafted MOU with scope of work and sent to town on March 2nd for signature. MOU has been signed and work has been initiated.

Ashburnham: Infrastructure Mapping: water distribution system, sanitary sewer system, and storm drainage infrastructure. Work on this project has been initiated.

Ayer: Create build-out study for parcels in the Downtown Ayer/Park Street FBC district (DAPSFBC) only. Work has been initiated on this project.

Hubbardston: Town Center Overlay District Bylaw: examination of existing town center and zoning bylaws. Work has been initiated on this project.

Lancaster: Village District Bylaw/40R development. MRPC staff met with the Lancaster Planning Board on April 12. A meeting was also held with the Economic Development Committee & Housing Trust on April 22.

Leominster: Open Space & Recreation Plan Mapping (9 maps), Revised Community Setting and tabulating a community survey MRPC staff met with the Open Space and Recreation Committee on April 8. Two survey drafts were sent to the committee on April 14 and MRPC staff met with the committee on April 22 to discuss.

Nashoba Greenways: Manage public outreach, coordinate meetings with MAPC MAGIC region, identify first projects and potential funding sources. Scope of work forwarded to communities and is being reviewed.

Petersham: Nichewaug: presentation of survey results, research funding options, two (2) public meetings. Work has been initiated on this project.

Sterling: Preparation and completion of a streamlined permitting/business guidebook and supplemental study to review the Town's existing bylaws for any impediments to economic growth. Work has been initiated on this project.

Townsend: maps for the Townsend Master Plan update and 24-32 hours of planner consulting for questions and review/update of relevant regional data. Draft maps were sent to the Master Plan Committee for review on April 22. MRPC met with the committee on April 23 to discuss draft maps.

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APPROVAL REQUESTED

REPORT:

In response to a third solicitation, on or before March 8, 2021 a total of three (3) 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. **Shirley:** To assess the feasibility of the creation of as-of-right zoning districts such as those eligible under the MA Department of 40R/Smart Growth statute including starter homes.
2. **Ashburnham:** to correct and improve the current Zoning Map. Information related to district boundaries shown on previous versions of the map is omitted from the current version of the map.
3. **Royalston:** to continue work to prepare a bylaw for Assisted Living and Multi Family housing needs and to prepare a bylaw which will increase potential small business opportunities.
4. **COVID19 Data Dashboard:** To provide additional GIS and planning support of Provisions of GIS and planning assistance to local health officials during the pandemic.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) recommends that numbers 1-4, of the above-named project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), if eligible, be conditionally awarded based upon further communication, clarification, and 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 reserves the right to negotiate an awardable detailed scope of services.

S. Donahue questioned why the town of Harvard is not listed and is it because they were not approved? G. Eaton stated it was due to an oversight and requested we amend the request to approve to add the two relevant Harvard requests. The requests from Harvard pertain to the Agricultural Committee and Transportation Planning for the Climate Resiliency work.

P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution to hire a part-time Fiscal Assistant as presented by the Executive Director. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes
Alyne Butland- yes
Barbara Yocum- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Phil Duffy- yes

Requests are conditionally awarded and 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, and 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).

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. This component of the project has been completed.

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 Ashby, Royalston, 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 fall. A Final Report was developed and submitted for Ashby's recent grant award and a new Competitive Grant Application will be developed and submitted in the fall. Lunenburg is working on closing out their existing competitive grant awards and Karen will develop and submit a Final Report to DOER. Lunenburg will be applying for a Competitive Grant in the fall with Karen's assistance. Templeton and Hubbardston are working on projects from their designation grant award. Karen is assisting to get projects completed.

Karen prepared and submitted Competitive Grant applications for the towns of Townsend and Harvard and the City of Fitchburg by the due date of April 9th. These awards should be announced in June.

Karen submitted a successful Green Communities Designation application to DOER on December 23rd on behalf of the Town of Clinton who was awarded \$164,753 in grant funds this month. Karen will work with the town on submitting a list of prioritized projects based on the grant amount. This application is due by July 2nd.

This contract with DOER ends on May 31, 2021. A new assistance grant solicitation will be released in May and due in June to apply for funds to continue to assist our communities with becoming and staying Green Communities. We will be reaching out to communities to gain their interest in MRPC continuing to assist them with their Green Communities tasks.

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 was 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. DOER has given RPAs the opportunity to extend this contract to June 30, 2022 and MRPC has submitted a memo requesting such an extension. We have been unable to carry out many of the tasks associated with this grant due to COVID restrictions prohibiting in person meetings. Meagan Donoghue, one of our new Senior Planners has been working with several organizations in our region to develop this program to reach the most amount of low income persons and

property managers

Please contact MRPC staff person, Senior Planner Meagan Donoghue, for information regarding 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. Work on this project has been initiated.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director 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 will present his report on the CDBG projects at the MRPC Meeting under Section 5, Administrative Matters, above.

MONTACHUSETT ENTERPRISE CENTER, INC.

The Executive Director will request a meeting of MEC's members of the Board of Directors prior to the end of this summer.

6.3 Transit

MRPC staff is working on the following projects:

1. **Support of Transportation Planning Operations (Referred to as “3C” which is defined as comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning process):** To provide administrative and technical support to the 3C Process such as providing community liaison and short-term technical planning assistance on mass transit matters to the followings: local officials and member communities, state representatives and federal representatives. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale
 - **Ayer:** Staff attended a virtual meeting with Ayer Elected Town officials regarding the construction issues of the Depot Square improvements Project. Also, the National Grid completed the installation of the temporary lighting at Depot Square.
 - **Templeton:** Staff discussed with MassDOT consultant Kittelson & Associates, Inc. The East Templeton MassDOT project on including potential Bus Stop amenities in the vicinity of the Patriots Road and Main Street intersection in East Templeton that would benefit transit riders.
 - **City of Fitchburg:** Boulder Drive and Main Street Two-Way Conversion Project, Staff reviewed drawing plans regarding its impact on MART Bus Routes and Bus Stops and provided recommendations.
 - **Orange:** Staff discussed with the Consultant Stantec Group the Town of Orange grant application for MassDOT’s shared winter streets and spaces program. Staff reviewed the application and provided recommendations regarding Bus Stop and Bus Shelter for the Athol Shuttle.

Public Meetings: Staff met with the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) – March 10th and April 14th; the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – March 17th and April 21th; Staff attended webinars on (How will our public transportation system recover after the Pandemic) presented by MassINC-February 26th; (MaPIT for chapter 90) presented by UMass Transportation Center and Baystate Roads-March 4th; (The impacts of automation in future public transport systems) presented by UMass Transportation Center and Baystate Roads-March 11th; All About Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)} presented by Stantec Generation AV Consultant-March 18th; MBTA Public meeting regarding (Rail Vision and Urban Rail Concept)-March 19th.

2. **Technical Assistance to MART:** Provide technical planning services and assistance to the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) which included the coordination of short-range special transit planning projects, technical assistance at RTA advisory board meetings. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale
 - **Ayer Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza:** During the past month MRPC staff continues to assist MART and the Town of Ayer to move forward with 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 this part of the project is under design by the consultant. MART anticipates the

completion of the project by the fall of 2021.

- **Shirley Station Commuter Parking:** MRPC Staff continues working with MBTA Representatives on the redevelopment of the Shirley MBTA Station Commuter Parking Lot Improvement. This project is in the pre-design phase.
 - **Littleton/Westford Shuttle:** Staff attended a virtual meeting with Cross-Town Connect Director regarding Littleton/Westford Shuttle service in both communities.
 - **MART Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan Update 2020:** During the past month, the AECOM Consultant has completed MART's Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan Update 2020 and submitted the regional report to MassDOT.
 - **MART Operation Managers Meetings:** Staff attended MART Operation Managers monthly meeting Virtually online to discuss the operation strategies and update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Transit operation. One of the impacts is the low ridership system-wide and empty parking garages in the 4 facilities MART operates.
 - **APC-Route Performance:** During the past month MRPC staff continues to assist MART on the RFP of the Automatic Passenger Counters (APC) and Route Performance and attended a meeting with MART Staff and the consultant Passio Technologies regarding the RFP of the (APC).
- 2. Bus Stop ADA Accessibility Evaluation:** During the past month MRPC staffs continued to compile data on The Path to Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI)**is a State recommendation. The (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 stop in the MART system by collecting field information and determines its ranking for capital improvement (critical, high, medium, low). The higher the "score" the less a bus stop complies with accessibility requirements and the more it needs capital improvement. This will be a multi-year project to cover all the stops in the MART system. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale

*** (the Governor created a Council to assess the barriers to healthy aging and living independently in the communities, hence the Governor's Council to Address Aging was created (EO576). The Council had 5 workgroups, each focusing on large barriers to independent living at an older age, including housing, employment, long-term care, transportation, and technology. The workgroups came back with a set of recommendations to the Governor at the end of 2018. Among other things, the transportation workgroup recommended that transit officials across the State understand the accessibility of each bus, rail, subway stop in the Commonwealth}.*

Contact George Kahale, Transit Projects Director for further information.

6.4 Transportation

Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)

The MJTC met Wednesday April 14, 2021. The next MJTC meeting will be held on Wednesday May 12th at 2:30 PM. The selection of a Nominating Committee will be on the agenda. The current chair, Jon Wyman of Westminster, is retiring so there will be a vacancy at that position. Also, reviews of the draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP and FFY 2022 UPWP will be discussed.

Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Montachusett MPO met on Wednesday April 21, 2021. Items of discussion included the release of the Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP, the Draft FFY 2022 UPWP and Draft TIP Amendment #3 for 21 day public review and comment periods.

Unified Planning Work Program FFY 2021

The MRPC has begun 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 several meetings during the month including:

RPA Transportation Managers Meeting on 4/6/2021

- John Fitch Highway - A Climate Resilient Corridor Steering Committee Meeting on 4/7/2021
- MJTC Meeting on 4/14/2021
- MPO Meeting on 4/21/2021
- CMAQ Consultation Meeting on 4/26/2021
- Baystate Roads Roundabouts Session 5 – Design Overview on 4/26/2021

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

APPROVAL REQUESTED

REPORT:

Endorsement of FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program- *Approval Required*

- The MPO voted to release the Draft FFY 2022 UPWP for a 21 day public review and comment period beginning April 26th and ending on May 17th. The MJTC will discuss on May 12th the draft UPWP as well as any comments received at to date. After the close of the comment period, the MPO will meet on Wednesday May 19th to review and address any and all comments received. The MPO will then likely vote to endorse the FFY 2022 UPWP at that meeting. It is requested that the MRPC authorize its Chairman and the MPO to endorse the FFY 2022 UPWP at the next scheduled MPO meeting. To download pdf copies of the Draft FFY 2022 UPWP, please see the MRPC webpage.

RESOLUTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the MRPC has reviewed the FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and based upon this review as well as the review of any comments received, authorizes its Chairman to endorse the FFY 2022 UPWP at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 19, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

R. Swartz moved to accept the resolution to authorizes its Chairman to endorse the FFY 2022 UPWP as presented by B. Harris. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes
Alyne Butland- yes
Barbara Yocum- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Phil Duffy- no
Laura Shifrin- yes

- 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 released TIP Amendment #2 for a 21-day public review and comment period. Notices were developed, distributed, and posted to the web.

Development of TIP: Program to develop the annual TIP; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty/Brad Harris, George Snow, Sheri Bean

REPORT:

Endorsement of FFY 2022-2026 TIP- *Approval Required*

- The MPO voted to release the Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP for a 21-day public review and comment period beginning April 26th and ending on May 17th. The MJTC will discuss on May 12th the draft TIP as well as any comments received at to date. After the close of the comment period, the MPO will meet on Wednesday May 19th to review and address any and all comments received. The MPO will then likely vote to endorse the FFY 2022-2026 TIP at that meeting. It is requested that the MRPC authorize its Chairman and the MPO to endorse the FFY 2022-2026 TIP at the next scheduled MPO meeting. To download pdf copies of the Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP, please see the MRPC webpage.

RESOLUTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the MRPC has reviewed the FFY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and based upon this review as well as the review of any comments received, authorizes its Chairman to endorse the FFY 2022-2026 TIP at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 19, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

R. Swartz moved to accept the resolution to authorize its Chairman to endorse the FFY 2022-2026 TIP as presented by B. Harris. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes

Alyne Butland- yes

Barbara Yocum- yes

Dean Valliere- yes

Guy Corbosiero- yes

John Telepciak- yes

Matthew Brenner- yes

Robert Swartz- yes

Roger Hoyt- yes

Staci Donahue- yes

Phil Duffy- no

Laura Shifrin- yes

REPORT:

Endorsement of Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025- *Approval Required*

- The MPO voted to release the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 TIP for a 21-day public review and comment period beginning April 26th and ending on May 17th. The MJTC will discuss on May 12th draft TIP Amendment #3 as well as any comments received at to date. After the close of the comment period, the MPO will meet on Wednesday May 19th to review and address any and all comments received. The MPO will then likely vote to endorse the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 at that meeting. It is requested that the MRPC authorize its Chairman and the MPO to endorse the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 at the next scheduled MPO meeting. To download a pdf copy of the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025, please see the MRPC webpage.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the MRPC has reviewed the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and based upon this review as well as the review of any comments received, authorizes its Chairman to endorse Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 TIP at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday May 19, 2021 at 1:00 PM.

- The MPO also voted to endorse Draft Tip Amendment #2 for the FFY 2021-2025 TIP.

R. Swartz moved to accept the resolution to authorize its Chairman to endorse Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 TIP as presented by B. Harris. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease- yes
Alyne Butland- yes
Barbara Yocum- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Staci Donahue- yes
Phil Duffy- no
Laura Shifrin- yes

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5. Environmental Justice and Title VI: Program to develop and report on Environmental Justice and Title VI issues across the planning process; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

- Required analysis related to EJ and Title VI populations was conducted for the draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP and FFY 2022 UPWP. Results and associated maps have been incorporated into the draft documents.

6. Regional Demographics & Model: Program to implement/maintain a regional model as well as various demographics for the region; Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/Kayla Kress, George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

- Staff reviewed various demographic data supplied by the GIS department as part of the Equity Analysis conducted for the TIP and the UPWP. Results and associated maps have been incorporated into the draft documents.

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

- Please see the GIS status report for information related to transportation.

8. 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

- MRPC is in the process of hiring one traffic technician and still looking for one more to assist with conducting the yearly traffic count program. It is expected that this program will begin in mid-May.
- Staff completed a safety profile analysis of the New Lancaster Rd (Rt 117) at Jungle Rd intersection and Jungle Rd for the Leominster Planning Board and Department.
- Staff completed the development of the region's Top 100 High Crash locations (HCLs) for 2015-2017. The HCLs are sorted by community and regionally.

9. Pavement Management Systems: Program to collect, analyze and support pavement conditions on regional roadways; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty

- Staff plans to begin collecting pavement surveys on federal aid eligible roads as early as this month. Currently, staff is preparing its pavement management software, RoadManager, for this years data collection and analysis.

10. Intersection Analysis: Program to review regional locations in order to identify issues and/or deficiencies and develop potential alternatives to address them; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty/George Snow

- Staff reviewed the final report submitted by WPI students for the Route 31/Route 12/Route 2A intersection in west Fitchburg. The students also presented the study results to the MJTC on April

14th. Final copies will be forwarded to the city for their use and discussion.

11. Walkability Study(s): Program to improve walkability and access in identified study areas in Sterling and Townsend; Project Lead/Staff –Sheri Bean / Brad Harris, Kayla Kress

- MRPC staff will be conducting public outreach meetings for Townsend on Saturday May 1st at 10:00 am (rain date – 5/2) and Sterling on Monday May 3rd at 5:00pm (rain date – 5/4). Attendees will meet at the town hall and will walk the study area and establish areas that are in need of improvements. Please contact Sheri Bean, sbean@mrpc.org, for more information.

12. Fitchburg Corridor Study: Program to review and identify issues and deficiencies along the Route 12 corridor in Fitchburg: Program Manager – Project Lead/Staff – Brad Harris/ George Snow, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

- Staff continued work on the safety profile analysis for this study. There are three (3) High Crash Locations on this corridor including two (2) in the area of the Route 12 at Wanoosnoc/Bemis Rd intersection.
- Staff also refined the study area based upon discussions with the city.
- Mapping of the study area and other locations has also been initiated.

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

- Updates related to mapping of trail data and other publicly provided information continued for the plan.

14. 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 the development of ADA PROW Data Collection presentation for a meeting with Athol. The meeting has been rescheduled for May 5, 2021.

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

- Staff Continued development of a draft Roundabouts in the Region study. Besides a discussion of the existing and planned roundabouts in the region, the study includes a discussion of the pros and cons of roundabouts, the different types of roundabouts, and other roundabout topics.

16. Athol Pavement and Sidewalk Database: The Town of Athol has contracted MRPC to develop a database and survey of approximately 100 miles of roadways and 30 miles of sidewalks in town; Project Lead/Staff – Brian Doherty

- Staff is currently preparing survey forms to conduct pavement and sidewalk surveys as early as this

month. We will be in contact with the Town of Athol DPW as we survey all town owned pavement and sidewalk infrastructure and build a database of the inventories.

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

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

7. Adjournment

Next MJTC Meeting – June 9, 2021 – 2:30pm to 4:00pm

Next MPO Meeting – June 16, 2021 - 1:00pm to 2:00pm ([Remote GoToMeeting](#))

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:35 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	
Skwierawksi, 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	11.2018		X
Valliere, Dean	M	Leominster	7.2019	X	
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Brenner, Matthew	M	Lunenburg	7.2020	X	
Marino, James	A	Lunenburg	7.2020		X
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		X
Vacant	M	Phillipston			X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201	X	
Natrowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015		X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	7.2017		X
Oelfke, Bill	A	Shirley	7.2020		X
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017	X	
Page, Patty	M	Sterling	7.2019		X
Maki, Dick	A	Sterling	7.2014		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	<i>7.2011</i>	X	
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	<i>7.2019</i>	X	

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Eaton, Holly Ford, Linda Quinlivan, Jason Stanton, Brad Harris, Brian Doherty

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:

March 25, 2021 MRPC Minutes

May 6, 2021 Meeting Handout