



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)

Thursday, June 3, 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 May 6, 2021 MRPC Minutes

P. Cunningham moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the May 6, 2021 minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-Abstain
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

3. Cash Schedule – May 2021

L. Shifrin read the May 2021 cash schedule.

Opening Balance \$456,003.45: Total receipts this month \$157,495.45; Total cash on hand before this

warrant \$613,498.90; Less: amount of this warrant \$119,586.03; Balance after this warrant \$493,912.87.

L. Shifrin did request more information on all checks and debits other than payroll be provided for all upcoming meetings. L. Quinlivan agreed to have this information provided going forward.

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

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- Abstain
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

4. Election of Officers for FY21

J. Telepciak presented on behalf of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee selected:

Guy Corbosiero – Chairman
John Telepciak – Vice Chairman
Laura Shifrin – Treasurer
Roger Hoyt – Vice Treasurer
Shaun Copeland – Secretary
Peter Cunningham – At Large Committee Member
Maribel Cruz – At Large Committee Member

P. Cunningham moved to approve the Slate of Officers as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes

Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5. Administrative Matters Presented by the Executive Director

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

As of May 10, 2021, the doors to the office were opened to staff on a volunteer basis. As of July 12, 2021, all employees will be required to return to the office to work.

In addition, we will resume meeting in person for upcoming MRPC Committee meetings beginning July 8, 2021.

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

There is no new information to report this month.

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

C. McDermott has been reviewing applications and the Executive Director and H. Ford have continued marketing the program via email and mailing brochures.

All food bank operator contracts have been signed and we are anticipating reports and reimbursement requests soon.

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

There is no new information to report this month.

5.5 Proposed Addition of Flexible Work Locations and Scheduling benefit, Deletion of Compensatory Time benefit, and Accompanying Edits to the MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended – Approvals of Commissioners Requested

5.5.1 Proposal That a New Benefit Entitled, Flexible Work Locations and Scheduling Policy be Added to the Existing MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended

REPORT

We are looking to implement a Flexible Work Location Policy. This would allow employees to choose to work in the office or at home. Employees would still be required to work 37.5 hours per week however it would allow employees to better manage challenges at home while still being able to complete their workload.

Employees will need to be approved to take advantage of this policy. This is not a benefit; it is a privilege.

Each department head would be responsible to manage their employees and their employees job performance.

S. Copeland asked if “have a presence” in the office means an employee needs to come in for the day or just for a meeting? G. Eaton explained that we need to have set core working days which would be Monday through Wednesdays, Thursday and Fridays would be open to the Flexible Work Location policy.

In addition, an employee would need to be outside of their probationary period and in good standing to qualify to work off site.

R. Hoyt asked if employees were involved in the development of the policy. The Executive Director stated he asked several employees their input and consulted with the Human Resource consultant.

R. Hoyt asked if this would affect employees that come in earlier than others or work with a flex day schedule. G. Eaton does not see that this policy would not conflict with any other policies.

R. Burke requested an update in three months and again in six months to help identify any issues that may arise and to see how many employees are taking advantage of this. G. Corbosiero confirmed the Board would like to see updates every three months to evaluate the progress and identify any issues.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the Flexible Work Locations and Scheduling benefit be added to the existing MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended

J. Telepciak made a motion to adopt the Flexible Work Location and Scheduling Policy as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes

Russell Burke- yes

Russ Williston- yes

Roger Hoyt- yes

Robert Swartz- yes

Peter Cunningham- yes

Matthew Brenner- yes

Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

J. Telepciak asked if going forward, the MRPC meetings will be in person. G. Corbosiero stated as of right now after the June 15, the Governor stated all boards should go back to the regular Open Meeting Laws that were in place prior to the March 12th order. How we proceed will be up to the Governor.

G. Eaton stated MRPC is looking into purchasing additional equipment to allow split meetings allowing some to remote in as well as others to come in. We will just need to be sure we have a quorum in house.

L. Shifrin requested a list of attendance of in person meetings vs. remote meetings. G. Eaton stated we would provide that to the Commissioners.

5.5.2 Proposed Deletion of Compensatory Time Benefit from the MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended

REPORT

After the most recent audit in March 2020, L. Parmenter and L. Quinlivan did an analysis of the accrual of compensatory time. It is their recommendation, and the Executive Director agrees, by continuing compensation time accrual it will and is increasing our overhead rate.

If compensatory time is eliminated, it will force employees to take time off during the pay period of when comp. time is earned.

S. Copeland asked if time would have to be earned prior to taking time off. G. Eaton confirmed yes, time must be earned prior to taking the time off.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the deletion of Compensatory Time Benefit from the Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended.

R. Burke moved to accept the deletion of the Compensatory Time Benefit from the MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.5.3 Accompanying and Relevant Edits to the MRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as Amended

REPORT

The Executive Director recommends the addition of the following definition of “insubordination” in the MRPC’s Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as amended to the list of reasons for implementing progressive discipline and/or termination of employment.

Insubordination in the workplace refers to an employee's intentional refusal to obey an employer's lawful and reasonable orders. Such a refusal would undermine a supervisor's level of respect and ability to manage and, therefore, is often a reason for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the Executive Directors recommendation to add the above definition of insubordination to the MRPC’s Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook, as amended to the list of reasons for implementing progressive discipline and/or termination of employment.

R. Burke made a motion to add the definition of insubordination to the Personnel Policies and Employee Procedures Handbook as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes

Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- Abstain
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.6 FY22 Budget – Approvals of Commissioners Requested

REPORT

G. Eaton presented the FY22 budget stating it is healthy. MRPC's projected revenue is conservatively low, expenses are not exorbitant, the Transportation Department and Planning and Development Department are bringing in additional revenue from state and federal grant sources and the salaries budget reflect promotions of four staff as well as bringing another four employees in line with market rates for similar positions at other regional planning agencies.

The overhead rate has been estimated to be 126.58%, down from the audited rate of FY20 of over 140%.

Strengths of the FY22 Budget

- Virtually all of the funding needed for the current employees is under contract or soon will be under contract.

Weaknesses of the FY22 Budget

- Virtually all funding realized by the MRPC is "subject to appropriation" by communities, the Commonwealth, and the Federal Government, which can be countered by pursuing non-profit funding sources such as Tufts.

Opportunities of the FY22 Budget

- Pursue non-profit funding sources such as Tufts;
- Due to the pandemic, repeat business, and new requests for services from the MRPC, the employees have never been so busy, collectively, as they have been throughout FY21; and,
- All relevant employees should continue to build relationships with existing and new clients for the mutual benefit of our communities, state and federal agencies, and the general public.

Threats of the FY22 Budget

- A client of the MRPC that has dictated an overhead rate to the MRPC (unless the client acquiesces, continuation of this contract is not in the best interest of the MRPC as we saw a loss with this contract in FY21);
- All, relevant staff must continue to devise new services to be delivered to the communities and people in the Montachusett region, the failure of which could lead to a decline in revenue and the loss of employees and capacity of the agency;
- Resting on laurels; and,
- Non-performance.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission adopts the MRPC's FY22 Budget, as presented.

R. Hoyt asked if MRPC is still using steps and grades when calculating salaries? G. Eaton stated we are no longer using steps per the consultant. We are trying to be competitive with the market.

R. Burke moved to accept the MRPC FY22 budget as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.7 Executive Director's Recommendations for the Promotions of Linda Quinlivan from Fiscal Manager to Fiscal Director and Holly Ford from Executive Assistant to Administrative Manager – Approvals of Commissioners Requested

5.7.1 Executive Director's Recommendation: Promotion of Linda Quinlivan from Fiscal Manager to Fiscal Director

REPORT

Ms. Quinlivan currently performs her work for the MRPC as our Fiscal Manager. Her performance for the past three years has been exceptional. In addition, due to the retirement of the current Administrative and Human Resources Director, Ms. Quinlivan will pick up other duties and tasks currently performed by the outgoing Administrative and Human Resources Director.

Performing in her new, official role, with the approval of the Commissioners this evening, Ms. Quinlivan would have greater responsibilities, such as the preparation and maintenance of the annual budgets for MRPC and MEC, Inc., provide the Executive Director with advice concerning investing funds in accordance with all, applicable laws and regulations governing government agencies, oversee the new Fiscal Assistant, and perform other duties as needed.

The Executive Director recommends that this individual be promoted to the position of Fiscal Director.

Pending the approval of the Commissioners, the Executive Director recommends that the newly promoted Fiscal Director be compensated at an annual salary of \$81,700.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

A job description exists for the position of Fiscal Director.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves to promote the current Fiscal Manager to Fiscal Director and to increase the salary of this individual to an annual salary of \$81,700 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.7.2 Executive Director's Recommendation: Promotion of Holly Ford from Executive Assistant to Administrative Manager

REPORT

Due to the retirement of the current Administrative and Human Resources Director, a host of duties, in the areas of office management and human resources, must be officially assigned to Ms. Ford, but in a new role. Ms. Ford is willing and able to take on the additional duties, projects, and tasks. The Executive

Director recommends that this individual be promoted to the position of Administrative Manager, as the new responsibilities are outside of the role of the job description of the Executive Assistant.

Performing in her new, official role, with the approval of the Commissioners this evening, Ms. Ford would assist the Executive Director, and other employees as needed, with many of the functions currently completed by the outgoing Administrative and Human Resources Director.

Pending the approval of the Commissioners, the Executive Director recommends that the newly promoted Administrative Manager be compensated at an annual salary of \$60,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

A new job description has been created for the position of Administrative Manager.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves to promote the current Executive Assistant to Administrative Manager and to increase the salary of this individual to an annual salary of \$60,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.7.3 Executive Director's Recommendation: Promotion of Kayla Kress from GIS Analyst to GIS and IT Analyst

REPORT

The current GIS Analyst expressed an interest in assisting the GIS and IT Director with managing and supporting the information technology (IT) infrastructure for this agency and all employees working in the office and at home. Ms. Kress has, very successfully, been providing the GIS and IT Director with IT management assistance for more than a year. The Executive Director, GIS and IT Director, and current GIS Analyst agree that this work should be documented in a new job description.

Performing in her new, official role, with the approval of the Commissioners this evening, Ms. Kress would assist the GIS and IT Director with all IT matters as described below, under section 5.7.4.

Pending the approval of the Commissioners, the Executive Director recommends that the newly promoted GIS and IT Analyst be compensated at an annual salary of \$60,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

Upon the approval of this promotion, the Executive Director will include in the new Job description of the GIS and IT Analyst, her new roles and responsibilities (by June 30, 2021).

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves to promote the current GIS Analyst to GIS and IT Analyst and to increase the salary of this individual to an annual salary of \$60,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.7.4 Executive Director's Recommendation: To Provide Additional Compensation for Employee Whose Job Responsibilities Have Grown Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and there has Been a Proportional Increase in Information Technology Projects and Tasks

REPORT

Please be advised that with the COVID-19 pandemic and related matters concerning setting-up all employees for working from home and addressing new technology issues that this employee will have to manage during the post-pandemic era, Jason Stanton, the GIS and IT Director's information technology responsibilities have grown.

Recently, the Executive Director requested salary information for similar positions at other regional planning agencies throughout the Commonwealth. Based upon this research, the Executive Director recommends that, pending the approval of the Commissioners, the GIS and IT Director, Mr. Stanton be compensated at an annual salary of \$85,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves to increase the salary of the GIS and IT Director to an annual salary of \$85,000.00 commencing July 1, 2021 (the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year).

Roll call vote followed.

Shaun Copeland-yes
Russell Burke- yes
Russ Williston- yes
Roger Hoyt- yes
Robert Swartz- yes
Peter Cunningham- yes
Matthew Brenner- yes
Laura Shifrin- yes
John Telepciak- yes
Guy Corbosiero- yes
Dean Valliere- yes
Bill Oelfke- yes
Alan Pease- yes

5.8 Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) – Information

The Executive Director of both organizations will request that a meeting of the Board of Directors of MEC, Inc. be held no later than mid-September 2021. A Doodle Poll will be issued to all members of the Board for the best meeting date in June 2021.

5.9 Other Administrative Matters

7:50 PM

6. 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

- This project is 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 is added the new trail to the Regional Trail Inventory and the Fitchburg Trail Maps. After receiving minor feedback regard aesthetics, GIS staff finalized the maps and provided the deliverables.
- This project has been completed.

4. 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.

5. 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 created maps depicting the locations of the proposed projects.
- GIS staff also created a map depicting vehicular crashes that involved bicyclists or pedestrians.
- This project is ongoing.

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

- This project is complete.

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.
- GIS staff conducted two presentation/demonstrations, for the Towns of Athol and Ayer, regarding the Survey 123 for ArcGIS surveys that were created.

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 proper software is installed.

3. 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.

4. 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 incorporated the City's trail data into the MRPC's Regional Trail Inventory. GIS staff has received the City's Open Space Inventory and is working on creating a digital geographic file so that the Open Space Inventory can be depicted on the maps. GIS staff has requested additional information from the city to complete the remaining maps and will do so once the information has been 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.

5. North Lancaster 40R Smart Growth Overlay District: A DLTA project provide aid in the completion of a 40R application in North Lancaster; Project Lead/Staff – Karen Chapman/Kayla Kress

- GIS staff has been asked to find the lot sizes of parcels in the proposed 40R Smart Growth Overlay District and the acreage of the undevelopable (environmentally constrained) land in these parcels. This information must be included in the application.
- This project is ongoing.

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

- Feedback regarding the first drafts of most of the maps has been received and incorporated into the next drafts. The updated maps, along with the first drafts of the newly created maps, have been sent to the Town for review. Feedback will be incorporated.
- GIS staff has requested further 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 received the next iteration of MassDOT's roadway inventory file and the proposed data scheme to add bike/ped infrastructure is still valid so, MRPC GIS staff began adding data relating to bike/ped infrastructure to the 2020 roadway inventory file. This project is ongoing.
- GIS staff was asked to create a map showing Urban Areas with a population of 200,000 or greater, Areas of Persistent Poverty, and TIP projects to aid in the identification of possible project locations to be potentially included in a federal grant application. GIS staff also provided information regarding the availability of datasets that may help to inform project selection. GIS staff will provide any data, maps, or information as requested.

2. 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

- This project is ongoing and GIS staff will assist as requested.

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

- GIS staff updated the task review tables to specify which Environmental Justice and Title VI categories the project locations fall within. GIS staff will continue to provide any assistance as requested but the GIS portion of the project has currently been completed.

4. 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

- GIS staff created Walking Route maps for Transportation staff's outreach for both communities.
- GIS staff received the Townsend pedestrian infrastructure data that was collected by Transportation staff. After digitizing the data, GIS staff created pedestrian infrastructure maps for the two sections of the study area. These maps depict sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signage.
- This project is ongoing.

5. 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 received the next iteration of MassDOT's roadway inventory file and has begun incorporating the updates from the communities into the dataset. Once this phase of the project is complete, GIS staff will create second drafts of the maps that depict sidewalks, bike lanes, and rail trails/paved pathways so each community can approve the data or provide further feedback. These maps will also be used to aid in the identification of priority areas for future transportation projects.
- This project is ongoing.

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

- GIS staff completed road and sidewalk maps for the Town of Athol to assist MRPC pavement and sidewalk condition data collection.
- GIS staff is working with the Town of Hubbardston to update their road inventory in order to complete an Official Street map for the Town.

Transit-Related:

1. 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.

2. 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.

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

6.2 Planning and Development

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA): EDA Award Number: ED19PHI3020032 also Referred to as the MRPC's EDA Annual Planning Grant

Summary:

Task	Status
<p>Task #1- MEC, Inc. Project Planning: MRPC will provide staff support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc., to:</p> <p>A. Support, develop, coordinate, and manage a variety of training programs that assist the rehabilitation and construction of housing (i.e. foreclosure, credit, home improvement training</p>	<p>MRPC just recently received a contract EDA. MRPC staff is looking for opportunities to support MEC, including any grant funds available.</p>

<p>programs) and retention and creation of jobs (i.e. practice interviews, enhancing life skills through training, and assisting entrepreneurs in locating and obtaining financing to launch or expand their businesses);</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	
<p>Task #1- MEC, Inc. Project Planning: MRPC will provide staff support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc., to:</p> <p>B. Support the planning and development of job retention and creation projects; and,</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	<p>MRPC is initiating staff support to MEC and investigating opportunities for this task.</p>
<p>Task #1- MEC, Inc. Project Planning: MRPC will provide staff support to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc., to:</p> <p>C. Create plans for the development of affordable priced housing to low, moderate-, or middle-income families in the Montachusett Region by identifying affordable housing or “mixed-use” projects to be implemented by non-EDA planning funding within the next one year (short term), two to three years (moderate term), and more than three years (long term).</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	<p>Passage of an age restricted development bylaw was achieved in May and is currently under review by the Attorney General Office for final implementation. Development of an updated housing production plan for the Town of Ashburnham is also under way.</p>
<p>Task #2- Provide Municipalities Technical Assistance Preparing Community and Economic Development Grant Requests: This will include providing assistance to at least three towns or cities with the pursuit of grant resources addressing local projects that improve economic vitality. These efforts will focus on- but not be limited to- food systems, energy systems and siting, sustainability, regionalize municipal services, housing related to the bolstering of the construction industry and workforce housing, transit and transportation planning and other related disciplines as they relate to the mobility of the workforce and the efficient movement of goods and services. The human resources, hardware, and software within the MRPC's Geographic Information System and Information Technology Department (GIS&IT) will provide data collection, warehousing, analysis, and 2d</p>	<p>Drafted an ADA planning grant for the Town of Townsend in the winter of 2020. While this grant was not funded, a meeting was held with the Town and MOD at which resubmission was encouraged. Staff continues to assist communities with grant applications when requested to do so.</p> <p>MRPC also drafted three Planning Assistance Grants to the state that were submitted on May 28, 2021. One grant was for a Solar Bylaw update for Hubbardston, the second was for an update of Townsend's Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the third for drafting master plan chapters for the Town of Ashburnham.</p>

<p>and 3d modeling of data supporting this and other tasks when appropriate.</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	
<p>Task #3- Continue Increasing Public and Private Sector Participation on the Montachusett Brownfields Group (MBG) Steering Committee and Obtain Additional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Resources: Since 1998, MRPC has had a successful Brownfields Site Assessment Program, which utilizes EPA grant funds (most recently awarded on October 1, 2019). MRPC will work to increase the level of public/private sector participation in the MBG and complete one EPA Brownfields Grant Application for the reuse of brownfields sites within the Montachusett Region.</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	<p>MRPC continues to work with the Public and Private Sector to enhance participation in this program. All current EPA funds have been allocated to projects. MPPC intends to apply for additional funds from EPA in fall 2021.</p>
<p>Task #4 Maintain the Regional CEDS: The Montachusett Region will continue to maintain and implement its long-term Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy so as to create a strong and diversified economy. Work is currently under way to update this critical document to account for COVID-19's impact on the region. MRPC will provide economic development data at least annually to community and economic development professionals; train student interns on a regular basis in fields directly or indirectly related to economic development; and complete other joint efforts that would foster job retention and creation in the Montachusett Region.</p> <p>Project Implementation: 4/2021 – 3/2022</p>	<p>2019 CEDS under review. See grant report for EDA COVID.</p>

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director, or Christopher McDermott, Economic Development Manager, concerning this program.

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FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA): EDA Award Number: ED20PHI3070074 also Referred to as the MRPC's EDA COVID19 Grant

Summary:

A full review of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) continues. In recent months, the 2019 report's tables and underpinning data were reviewed and updated to reflect the latest available information. A poll has also been distributed to regional stakeholders and municipal leaders, gauging their impressions of the region's economic vitality. In the coming weeks, a request will be shared with these officials seeking project proposals to be included in the updated document.

Task	Status
Recruit and onboard an Economic Development Manager: July 2020 – September 2020	Task completed Christopher McDermott hired as Economic Development Manager on 9/21/2020
Recruit and onboard an intern to assist the EDM: October 2020- November 2020	Task completed Nick Mellis hired as Economic Development Intern on 11/16/2020
Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS): October 2020 – September 2021 See subtasks, below.	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Review 2019 CEDS: September 2020- October 2020	Completed. October 2020
Locate and obtain relevant data: October 2020- November 2020	Completed. November 2020.
Public Outreach See subtasks, below.	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Present findings from demographic research and collect feedback: January 2021	Completed. February 2021.
Outreach to local officials/Draft and prioritize development goals based upon feedback: February 2021	Review and redraft of project request reform underway. Anticipated distribution- early June.

Distribute community leaders survey: March 2021	Completed. May 2021.
Distribute business leaders survey: April 2021	Completed.
Compile findings: May 2021	Demographic data throughout the report has been updated to reflect the latest available information. SWOT analysis responses are being collected and will be added in mid-June.
Present Goals to MRCEDS Committee for approval: June 2021	Slated for 6/30/21.
30 Day Public Comment Period: July 2021	To be posted to MRPC website and shared with municipal clerks in July.
Publication and promotion: August 2021- September 2021	This task will be accomplished this summer.
Develop adequate technological capacity for MRPC Staff Members: July 2020 – June 30, 2022	Completed November 2020. Under continuous review as needs evolve.
Hire a Marketing Survey Consultant: December 2020	<p>Recently, the North Central MA Chamber of Commerce completed an analysis of the regional market. MRPC's management and EDA staff decided to not duplicate this effort with taxpayer funding. MRPC has been advised that a significant benefit to the private sector would be the completion of a GIS mapping project that would include the locations of water and wastewater pipes and appurtenances located in proximity to industrially zoned areas along major transportation routes in the Montachusett region.</p> <p>The EDA and GIS employees are collaborating on the development of a scope of services and cost estimating. Once completed, MRPC will request an amendment from the EDA in order to eliminate the market study tasks and replace it with the creation of the above-referenced mapping project.</p>

	This issue is directly related to the MRPC's need to complete its Future Industrial Land ("FIL") grant proposal and submit it to the EDA. This project will complete an analysis, report, and related GIS mapping related to the most suitable sections within each community in which to zone land for industrial purposes. Input from local officials and the general public will be critically important to this study. Included within the final report will be zoning change recommendations for many of the region's communities. This report may be able to serve as a portion of the Montachusett Regional Policy Plan.
Conduct a regional marketing study: March 2021	See above.
Publish and promote regional marketing study: July 2021	See above.
Locate and secure funding for CEDS priority projects: October 2021-June 2022	Pending update of CEDS projects.
Pursue goals and objectives identified within CEDS: October 2021- June 2022	Pending update of goals and objectives.
Conduct annual review of CEDS and project: May 2022-June 2022	Pending update.

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

This three-year grant award, beginning October 1, 2019, was for \$300,000. Funds have been utilized and allocated for six projects which includes \$244,000 for site assessments with the remainder for community outreach and administration. While all funds have been utilized/allocated, MRPC encourages communities to continue to submit Site Nominations in hope of additional future funding.

MRPC will pursue additional funding this fall.

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.

Status of project: Drafted contract with scope of work and sent to town on March 2nd for signature. MRPC is awaiting the return of this signed contract. Upon receipt, MRPC will fully execute the agreement and move forward with the tasks contained within the scope.

MRPC Team Leader, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Ashburnham: MRPC will work with local officials 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.

Status of project: The contract with scope of services is under development.

MRPC Team Leader, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Jason Stanton, GIS and IT Director.

Ashburnham: Infrastructure Mapping: water distribution system, sanitary sewer system, and storm drainage infrastructure.

Status of project: A contract with scope of work has been prepared and sent to the town on March 2nd for signature. MRPC is awaiting the return of this signed contract. Upon receipt, MRPC will fully execute the agreement and move forward with the tasks contained within the scope.

MRPC Team Leader, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Jason Stanton, GIS and IT Director.

Ayer: Create build-out study for parcels in the Downtown Ayer/Park Street

Status of project: A contract with scope of work has been prepared and sent to the town. MRPC is awaiting the return of this signed contract. Upon receipt, MRPC will fully execute the agreement and move forward with the tasks contained within the scope.

MRPC Team Leader, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Jason Stanton, GIS and IT Director.

Harvard: MRPC will create a sustainable transportation plan and an agricultural staff study. A kick-off meeting has been scheduled for June 29th.

Status of project: The contract with scope of services is under development and will be sent to the town in the near term.

MRPC Team Leader, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Transportation staff to be determined.

Hubbardston: Town Center Overlay District Bylaw: examination of existing town center and zoning bylaws and the production of a relevant report for the purpose of zoning changes to enhance the Town Center visually and economically.

Status of project: The contract with scope of services is under development and will be sent to the town in the near term.

MRPC Team Leader: Jennifer Burney, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Lancaster: Village District Bylaw/40R development.

Status of project: Ms. Chapman has been meeting regularly with the Affordable Housing Trust and the Economic Development Committee.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Kayla Kress, GIS Analyst.

Leominster: Open Space & Recreation Plan Mapping (nine maps), Revised Community Setting and tabulating a community survey.

Status of project: MRPC staff has been meeting with the Open Space and Recreation Committee and work continues to put together a draft by June 30. Public surveys have been completed and goals & objectives are being reviewed by the city's Open Space and Recreation Committee. Draft maps are being completed.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Kayla Kress, GIS Analyst.

Nashoba Greenways: This project involves managing public outreach, coordinating meetings with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) region, identifying first projects, and potential funding sources. Technical assistance from MAPC was recently approved so this project will move forward working as a team with MAPC. This project is related to a MRPC UPWP Task where Sheri Bean, Principal Planner.

Status of project: The contract has been created and shared with the three communities. Once returned to the MRPC, we will fully execute this contract and move forward with the tasks identified within the scope of services.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Petersham: Nichewaug Inn and Academy Redevelopment Evaluation. This project involves the presenting town wide survey results concerning this property's future, researching potential funding options, and two public meetings.

Status of project: The town wide survey results have been presented by staff. The researching of potential redevelopment funding options and two public meetings are anticipated to be completed this summer and fall, respectively.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Royalston: MRPC will 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.

Status of project: A contract was sent to Royalston on May 26th and is anticipated to be signed by the Board of Selectmen on June 1st. Ms. Chapman will meet, in person, with the local Planning Board on June 9th.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Shirley: MRPC will 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.

Status of project: A contract has been sent to Shirley. Work will commence upon the date of the full execution of this contract.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Sterling: MRPC will complete a streamlined permitting guidebook for businesses and a supplemental study to review the Town's existing bylaws for any potential impediments to economic growth.

Status of project: Staff have met with the Economic Development Committee on March 22, 2021. Sample guidebooks were sent to local officials on March 22nd. On April 26th, Ms. Chapman received the guidebook of choice by local officials. The next step involves the creation of a draft guidebook based upon the choices made by local officials.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: None as of this point in time.

Townsend: MRPC will create maps for the Townsend Master Plan update and 24-32 hours of planner consulting for questions and review/update of relevant regional data.

Status of project: Draft maps have been provided to the town for review and input by local officials. Some of the maps have been finalized.

MRPC Team Leader: Karen Chapman, Senior Planner.

Other staff assigned: Kayla Kress, GIS Analyst.

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 working to complete this ADA Transition Plan Report.

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

Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) reports for Heywood Group and Health Alliance/UMass Memorial

MRPC contracted with Heywood Group and Health Alliance/UMass Memorial to update their Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) reports. To conduct and complete the CHNA, the project scope includes data collection, a public survey, and hosting focus groups. Work on this project has been initiated and is ongoing.

The project team originated primary data through a public survey and collected secondary data from available sources such as the US Census Bureau, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the two hospital

groups. Our public survey garnered responses from 1,321 community members and had a 41% completion rate of all answers. The survey response period is complete. The datasets for community demographics, housing, and health are 75% complete. We are waiting for the final data tables from DPH. The hospitals continue to gather internal data, review for accuracy, and filter to ensure patient privacy.

The project team finishes the Focus Group meetings on June 15, 2021. We will transcribe the meetings then review the qualitative data. To date, the transcription is complete, and the review for informative and supporting quotes to weave into the report is ongoing.

Blair Haney is working to complete the CHNA Reports.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER)

MRPC is assisting our communities under a Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) program grant, as well as through Administrative Costs associated with community grant awards. The REPA grant was provided to MRPC to assist the communities in our region with tasks associated with becoming and maintaining Green Communities Designation and status. This includes application for designation, managing administration of grants, competitive grant applications, data management in MassEnergyInsight, Annual Reports, adding schools to community programs, as well as general technical assistance. This REPA Grant contract ends May 30, 2021.

Status. Karen Chapman continues to assist the Towns of Ashby, Royalston, Templeton, Lunenburg, and Hubbardston with their Green Communities Grant Awards through the Administrative Costs line item of their grant. 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 its 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 move these projects toward completion.

Using funding from REPA, 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 9, 2021. These awards should be announced in June.

Also using REPA funds, Karen submitted a successful Green Communities Designation application to DOER on December 23, 2020 on behalf of the Town of Clinton who was awarded \$164,753 in grant funds in April 2021. 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.

A new technical assistance (REPA) grant solicitation was released by DOER in May and applications are due from MRPC by July 9, 2021. Karen will be emailing communities to gauge interest in continued assistance from MRPC for 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.

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 working to complete this ADA Transition Plan Report.

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

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. A contract extension was sought and obtained to extend this deadline to September 2021. Establishing points of contact with each community is being pursued to complete community assessment and engage in the creation of a working group that can meet with MRPC staff on a regular basis to review and provide feedback on draft documentation with the aim of providing an action plan suitable for each individual community to engage in age friendly best practices.

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. Revised plans for a timeline of tasks and financial plans have been submitted to the grant manager. A quick fact sheet with the purpose of informing community points of contact and addressing frequently asked questions has been drafted and will be hosted on the MRPC website. Staff has moved forward with beginning to draft the presentation for a

regional meeting, to serve as a collaboration and discussion event, while also reaching out to individual communities to begin assessment of their current status as pertaining to being age friendly.

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 and MRPC is contracted to do the work. 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 have been working to identify the resources and partners needed to create a Transportation Connections program to help address these gaps. The Town of Ayer, serving as a regional hub, and MRPC, in conjunction with several community partners aim to create an implementable plan for two strategies. These two strategies are a dedicated shuttle service with a focus of addressing routine transit and local employment needs, and a volunteer driver service to help close the transportation gap for medical/health/social service needs.

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 to create a plan for a volunteer driver initiative in the Town of Winchendon and MRPC is conducting the work. The executed contract was received July 23, 2020, with an end date of June 30, 2021. The Town of Winchendon is a recognized food desert, and residents and community leaders have expressed persistent gaps in transportation access for many needs – primarily food security and medical, along with other health/social services. To address this transportation gap for residents in Winchendon, especially those most vulnerable to being without transit options, MRPC staff members have met with community stake holders on several occasions and have conducted research into comparable volunteer driver programs in other communities, as well as broader regional initiatives.

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

STERLING COMPLETE STREETS

The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. A community must have an approved Tier 1 Complete Streets Policy, which Sterling has done, and develop a Tier 2 Prioritization Plan which MRPC is assisting the Town with. MRPC has a contract with the Town of Sterling to conduct and complete a Sterling Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan. Once the

Prioritization Plan is approved by the State, Sterling can apply for construction funding (Tier 3). The Tier 3 Funding Application is September 2021. The Contract between Sterling and the MRPC is for \$39,839.25 to conduct and complete a Sterling Complete Streets Tier 2 Prioritization Plan. All services to be completed by 08/31/21. Through a procurement process, the engineering firm, MRPC engaged the engineering services of Fuss & O'Neil in the amount of \$9,930.

MRPC staff Jen Burney and Sheri Bean has been compiling existing data and studies, conducted a town wide survey, and conducted a site visit with Town staff, Fuss and O'Neill to develop and prioritize a list of 15 projects. Jen and Sheri have attended Sterling Complete Streets (Planning Board and DPW) Meetings. The Prioritization list of projects is being finalized with associated costs and will be submitted to the town within the next few weeks.

Contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director and/or Jennifer Burney, Senior Planner for further information.

Community Development Division

Reports concerning the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) can be found above under section 5.

MONTACHUSETT ENTERPRISE CENTER, INC.

Reports concerning the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) can be found above under section 5.

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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 following: local officials and member communities, state representatives and federal representatives. Project Lead/Staff – George Kahale

- **Orange:** Staff discussed, with the Stantec Group, the Town of Orange’s grant application for MassDOT’s Shared Winter Streets and Spaces program. Staff reviewed the proposal and provided recommendations regarding bus stop(s) and bus shelter(s) for the Athol Shuttle.
- **Public Meetings:** Staff met virtually with the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) – May 12th; Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO) – May 19th; and Fitchburg Line Working Group meeting to review MBTA new Service Schedule.
- **Training sessions:** Staff attended webinars on Can Free Buses Save Public Transit presented by MassINC - April 23rd; and an MBTA webinar regarding the new MBTA Service Schedule System wide - April 30th.

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 MART 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 design and construction of a restroom facility at the Pedestrian Plaza which 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.
- **MART Operation Managers Meetings:** Staff attended MART Operation Managers monthly meeting virtually 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 four facilities MART operates.

- **MART Advisory Board:** Staff attended a MART Advisory Board virtual meeting due to the State Emergency for COVID-19.
- **Fare Collection System (FCS):** During the past month MRPC staff continues to assist MART with the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) of the Automatic Fare Box Collection System and attended a meeting with MART Staff and the consultant Genfare Technologies regarding the RFP of the FCS.

3. Bus Stop ADA Accessibility Evaluation: During the past month MRPC staff continued to compile data on The Path to Accessible Transit Infrastructure (PATI)** which is a state recommendation. The PATI is assessing the accessibility of the bus stops in the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority's 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 then ranks the capital improvement (critical, high, medium, or 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}.*

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6.4 Transportation

Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)

The MJTC met on May 12th. The next MJTC meeting will be held on Wednesday June 9th at 2:30 PM. At the May meeting a Nominating Committee was appointed. They will present their slate at the June meeting and the election will occur in July.

Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The Montachusett MPO met on Wednesday May 19th. At that meeting, MPO members reviewed comments received on the Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP, the Draft FFY 2022 UPWP and Draft TIP Amendment #3. Then MPO then voted to endorse these documents.

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 5/4/2021
 - A FHWA VPI Webinar: Engaging Traditionally Underserved Communities using Virtual Public Involvement on 5/4/2021
 - MJTC Meeting on 5/12/2021
 - MPO Meeting on 5/19/2021
 - EDC Virtual Public Involvement Committee meeting on 5/20/2021
 - MassDOT CIP Mtg on 5/27/2021
 - Virtual MassDOT Innovation Conference on 5/25-5/28/2021
 - ACS Census Webinar on 5/18/2021

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

- GIS staff updated the task review tables to specify which Environmental Justice and Title VI categories the projects are located within.
- On April 21, the MPO voted to release the UPWP Draft for a 21-day public comment period from 4/26/21-5/17/21. Comments received were reviewed at the May 19th MPO meeting and the document was voted to be endorsed. The FY 22 program year will start on October 1, 2021.

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 distributed notices related to the draft TIP, UPWP and TIP Amendment #3. In addition, information was posted to the MRPC website.

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

- At the April MPO meeting, the MPO voted to release the Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2021-2025 TIP for a 21-day public review and comment period that began on April 26th and ended on May 17th. At the May 12th MJTC meeting, the Amendment was reviewed, and it was the consensus of the MJTC to recommend to the MPO that the Amendment be endorsed by the MPO at the May 19th MPO meeting. A motion was made to endorse the Amendment at the May 19th MPO and the Amendment was passed unanimously.
- In addition, the same process was followed for the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. At the May MPO meeting, a motion was made to endorse the full FFY 2021-2026 TIP and was passed unanimously.

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

- GIS staff completed road and sidewalk maps for the Town of Athol to assist MRPC pavement and sidewalk condition data collection.
- GIS staff is working with the Town of Hubbardston to update their road inventory in order to complete an Official Street map for the Town.

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

- After participating in a road safety audit for the Greeley Street at Sterling Street intersection in Clinton on April 29th, staff reviewed and commented on the draft Clinton Greeley Street at Sterling Street RSA Report that was prepared by the consultant.

7. 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

- GIS staff created Walking Route maps for Transportation staff's public outreach for both communities.
- GIS staff received the Townsend pedestrian infrastructure data that was collected by Transportation staff. After digitizing the data, GIS staff created pedestrian infrastructure maps for the two sections of the study area. These maps depict sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signage.
- Public outreach meetings were held on May 1st in Townsend and May 3rd in Sterling. Over 40 people attended between the two outreach sessions. Attendees met at each town hall, walked a portion of the study area, and establish areas that are in need of improvements. Further analysis is now being conducted.

8. 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 the safety profile analysis for this study. There are three (3) High Crash Locations (HCLs) on this corridor including two (2) in the area of the Route 12 at Wanoosnoc/Bemis Rd intersection. One safety concern is the proximity of the Twin City Rail Trail to Route 12 for a considerable length of the trail and the intersecting streets with Route 12 that also intersect with the trail. The two (2) HCLs that exist in the area of Route 12 at Wanoosnoc/Bemis Rd intersection are a safety concern as the trail runs in between the HCLs. This location will need further study.

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

- GIS staff received the next iteration of MassDOT's roadway inventory file and has begun incorporating the updates from the communities into the dataset. Once this phase of the project is complete, GIS staff will create second drafts of the maps that depict sidewalks, bike lanes, and rail trails/paved pathways so each community can approve the data or provide further feedback. These maps will also be used to aid in the identification of priority areas for future transportation projects.

10. 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/

- GIS staff conducted two presentation/demonstrations, for the Towns of Athol and Ayer, regarding the Survey 123 for ArcGIS surveys that were created.
- After staff completed the development of the ADA PROW Data Collection app and developed a PowerPoint presentation of the app, staff presented the app at two (2) virtual meetings. The first was with Athol on May 5th and the second was with Ayer on May 20th. The app was well received, and the communities discussed their plans for using the app. Staff will reach out to other communities and present the app at a future MJTC meeting.

11. 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.

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.

8:05 PM

7. New Business

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

8:15 PM

8. 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
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	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	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	7.2011	X	
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019	X	

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Eaton, Holly Ford, Linda Quinlivan, Jason Stanton, Christopher McNamara, George Kahale, John Hume, Kayla Kress

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:

May 6, 2021 MRPC Minutes
June 3, 2021 Meeting Handout
June 3, 2021 Meeting Agenda
Hybrid Working Policy