

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2020
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

B. Harris called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Dick Kilhart, Athol; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; Matthew Brenner, Lunenburg; Richard Liberatore, Fitchburg; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Travis Condon, NCM Chamber

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Laura Hanson, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3;

Non-Members

Veronica Kell, Townsend

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; George Kahale

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of November 10, 2020 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the November 10, 2020 MJTC Meeting Minutes as presented. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review, Discussion & Comments to FFY 2021 TIP Amendment #1
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding TIP Amendment #1

B. Harris shared a memo that was released on November 20th that gives an overview of a transit amendment for the FFY 2021-2025 TIP as well as the 21-day public comment period that began on Nov. 23 and ends on Dec. 14. We're using this MJTC meeting as an opportunity for public comment. The Amendment reflects the addition of nine (9) projects to the FFY 2021 Transit Element as well as cost changes to three (3) projects and the removal of six (6) projects within this TIP Element. Due to discretionary awards that MART received, projects had to be shifted around to incorporate these funds. Bus purchases that were originally scheduled for FFY 2021 were purchased with the grant awards and must now be removed from the TIP project list.

A question was asked about the Shirley Commuter Rail Station and discussions between MART and the MBTA regarding parking improvements and when it would appear on this project list. B. Harris answered that as far as he is aware, MART and MBTA are in discussions with no project identified as of yet. When a decision is reached, then MART would be looking to add an improvement project to their TIP program. So, until a decision has been made and an improvement project identified it will not be listed in the TIP. A follow up question was asked on

how often the listings are updated. B. Harris responded that the TIP is revised each year and that is usually when the project lists are updated. In addition, the TIP can be amended at any time during the year if needed.

A question was asked regarding the net change in funding between the amendment and the original listing. Staff responded that they do not have the exact figures regarding the funding but in general those projects that are being removed are either being completed with other funds, such as the CARES funding, or they are to be combined with other projects. MART would not be changing these projects without some other means or plans to address their needs. In most cases it has more to do with the funding categories than a lost project.

Consensus was given to recommend to the MPO that they endorse Amendment #1 for the FFY 2021 Transit Element.

V. Worcester Urbanized Area Transportation Planning MOU

- Review and Discussion
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding MOU

G. Snow discussed a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and agencies operating in the Worcester MA Urbanized Area (Worcester UZA). The reason for our notification and involvement on this MOU is due to the fact that a small portion of the Worcester UZA enters into our region in Clinton, Lancaster and Sterling. Because of this we were asked to review and comment on a draft of the MOU and then to subsequently sign onto it through MPO approval. The MOU contains and outlines the basic roles and responsibilities between the agencies operating within the Worcester UZA. This includes the sharing of data and information and coordination in the development of studies and plans. The document is similar to a MOU recently approved between the Montachusett MPO and the Nashua UZA last month. The MOU has been passed on to MART for their review and approval as well.

B. Harris indicated that MassDOT has decided that once all of the Massachusetts MPO's involved in the MOU have agreed to it, then the Secretary of MassDOT, Stephanie Pollack, will sign on behalf of the MPOs.

Consensus was given to recommend to the MPO that they endorse the MOU as presented.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Development schedule and participation

B. Doherty referenced a memo that was sent out regarding some upcoming MPO, MJTC and MRPC meetings. The TIP will be discussed at these meetings. There is another handout that has the FY2022-2026 TIP development schedule. Over the next month or so we will be reviewing current projects as well as new potential projects for the TIP. B. Doherty reviewed the steps and deadlines that go into the development of the TIP. The proposed schedule has an anticipated endorsement date of May 19, 2021.

B. Doherty also mentioned that in the past, the MRPC has encouraged communities to give a presentation for any TIP projects that are in the works during the January and February MPO meetings. This will allow MRPC staff to have more information and score these projects more accurately. If this is something that a community is interested in then please contact MRPC to set up a presentation date.

A question was asked regarding funding categories, namely bike and pedestrian funding. It was mentioned that there are categories that these types of projects fit into and the State has additional funding categories such as Safe Routes to School and Complete Streets that may be of interest to communities. The MPO does not prioritize the State funded projects. Community participation in the TIP development is critical to moving a project forward. B. Doherty also briefly reviewed how to get a TIP project started with contacting MassDOT and completing a Project Need Form. The MRPC is willing to assist in the project development component if needed.

VII. Contract Status Reports

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- MassDOT 3C

G. Kahale mentioned that the Ayer phase 1 & 2 have been completed and they are currently working on phase 3 right now which involves the restroom and some electrical work. Construction should begin this spring. MART is working with National Grid to install more lighting and also working on moving the fencing to provide better pedestrian access. For the Shirley project, everything is on hold due to COVID 19. Commuter rail ridership is low which reflects on the cars parking at the commuter rail parking facilities. Transit service cut are expected this spring.

B. Harris reviewed how to access the meeting handouts online via the MRPC website – www.mrpc.org. There are a number of handouts that were sent out with this meeting information.

The MRPC office is now closed to staff and visitors as of 12/4/20 due to the increase in COVID 19 cases in the area.

B. Harris also mentioned another handout regarding the “Shared Winter Streets & Spaces” funding opportunity. This is basically a continuation of the Shared Streets & Spaces that was offered earlier this year. More information on what could be funded is mentioned in the handout.

It was also mentioned that there is a handout on the MassTrails grant program funding opportunity with a deadline of 2/1/21.

The upcoming meeting calendar was also presented that includes MRPC, MPO & MJTC meetings for the upcoming 2021 calendar year.

L. Hanson requested that MRPC staff show meeting attendees how to find the most recent TIP document. This will be helpful for an overview of projects and funding categories for people who might not be familiar with the process or could use a refresher. B. Harris showed where this document is located and how to reference it. B. Doherty also mentioned that in January the MRPC staff typically goes over the TIP process in more detail.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

The next meeting will be on Wednesday January 13th at 2:30pm.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

12 09 20 Agenda
11 10 2020 MJTC minutes
FFY 2021 DRAFT Amendment 1 Comment Period 11 24 2020
Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #1
DRAFT Worcester MA CT UZA MOU October 2020_v4
TIP Development Memo 11 13 2020
TIP Schedule FFY 2022 2026

