

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF February 10, 2021
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

J. Wyman called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Jon Wyman, Westminster; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Nicolas Bosonetto, Fitchburg; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Kristen Lamoureux, The Arc of Opportunity; Jessica Strunkin, MassDevelopment

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Paula Simmons, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3;

Non-Members

Veronica Kell, Townsend; Todd Dwyer, Lunenburg; Erik Atkins, Green International Engineering; Steven Tyler, HSH Associates

Staff

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

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of January 13, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the January 13, 2021 MJTC Meeting Minutes as presented. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

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

- *Review of Project TEC Score Updates*
- *Review and Discussion of Project Priority Listing*
- *Review of Target Funding Estimates*

B. Doherty started the presentation by reviewing the status of projects in FFY 2021 in the current TIP. All target projects appear to be on track for advertisement. He then highlighted the TIP development schedule and where we stand as of this meeting in February. TIP Readiness Day was just held with MassDOT to finalize project status and cost estimates. He also mentioned that staff recently received target funding estimates for the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. The target estimates were presented as follows:

	Total Federal Aid
FFY 2022	\$11,072,618
FFY 2023	\$11,314,453
FFY 2024	\$11,462,749
FFY 2025	\$11,195,149
FFY 2026	\$10,904,432

The target estimates have remained the same as from the prior TIP with the addition of a new target for FFY 2026. Using these figures, staff will work to develop some funding scenarios for discussion and review at the March MJTC and MPO meetings.

B. Doherty then proceeded to review the various identified projects and their scoring through the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC). These scores help us to prioritize the projects based upon several criteria developed by and for our region. Mr. Doherty then highlighted various criteria within the TEC and how they are scored by the staff. With the projects scored, a listing of all the target eligible projects is then compiled and ranked based on the TEC score. One project in Clinton has not been scored yet as this is a new project. The design consultant will be giving a presentation to the MPO at next week's meeting.

Mr. Doherty then reviewed several points of discussion from MassDOT that were presented at TIP Readiness Day held the day before. These changes will impact the development of funding scenarios for this TIP that will be presented and discussed at the March meeting.

B. Harris reminded members that when the funding scenarios are developed that an inflation factor of 4% per year will need to be added to the estimated project costs. For example, those projects placed in FFY 2023, or year 2 of the new TIP, will see a cost increase of 4%; those in FFY 2024, or year 3, an 8% increase; FFY 2025 a 12% increase; and in FFY 2026 a 16% cost increase. This follows guidance from FHWA.

V. Montachusett FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- *Review Preliminary Task List*
- *Review and Response to Local Task Requests*
- *Review of Initial Environmental Justice Requirements and Analysis*

S. Bean presented to the members an update on the number of requests received for the FFY 2022 UPWP in response to our memo that was sent out to our member communities. She then reviewed the individual community requests and what our initial thoughts are on those requests. To date six communities have responded: Sterling, Winchendon, Hubbardston, Ashburnham, Townsend, and Leominster. These requests include trail planning, intersection analysis, walkability studies, corridor profiles and pavement management assistance. Some of the request, for example from Sterling asking about the development of a TIP project at the intersection of Route 140 and Route 62, are really not full, standalone tasks but rather something we can do under other tasks within the UPWP. This type of request can be handled at any time by staff as part of regular community support. We will be reaching out to the town about that issue outside of the UPWP development process. She continued to state that staff will be continuing our review of the requests and discussing internally what makes sense and how we will be able to meet the community's need.

Another factor in the UPWP development is our expected budget for the FFY 2022 program year. At a meeting last month between MARPA and MassDOT, we received our funding figures from FHWA and FTA. These two sources are combined into one contract and one pot of funds. The following shows what we anticipate from each source:

		Combined Total	5303	PL
Montachusett RPA	FFY 2022	\$747,979	\$80,719	\$667,260
	FFY 2021	\$770,478	\$99,021	\$671,457
	Difference	-\$22,499	-\$18,302	-\$4,197

As you can see, we are looking at a total contract reduction from this year of \$22,499. The majority is from a reduction of \$18,302 in FTA Transit funds. So, these figures will impact what we can do and what we can fund by way of local tasks.

Additionally, we will conduct an equity analysis to see what communities have not received any planning assistance over the last few years. Our goal in doing this is to see that all of our municipalities can share in this planning program. An initial review shows us that Ashburnham has not been the focus of any prior tasks over the last number of years. This indicates to us that we should be looking to make their request a priority if possible. S. Bean then asked for comments or suggestions from the MJTC regarding the local requests.

R. Maki recommended that based on the equity information provided, the Ashburnham Route 12 Corridor Profile request be put near the top of the list as a local task.

J. Wyman asked if there were enough projects to fill the year or are you still looking for more project tasks.

S. Bead replied that typically we do four to five local tasks requests per year but until we develop the tasks some more and establish a budget it is hard to tell right now. However, communities can still reach out to us and we can discuss things. At the least we can file it away for consideration next year.

VI. Contract Status Reports

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

G. Kahale mentioned that the Ayer is on hold due to the weather. Hopefully by March/April they can resume work on the remaining construction of the restroom. Staff is working on improvements at the Shirley Commuter Rail Station parking lot. Right now, no one is using the rail system. There is only about 10% ridership and the lots in our region are all empty.

Finishing touches are being put on the new service MART is implementing for the commuter bus shuttle from Fitchburg and Leominster to Clinton and Worcester. There are several stops planned after Fitchburg and Leominster. They include the Clinton Hospital, downtown Clinton, the Porter and Chester Institute, the Court House and Union Station in Worcester. This service is in addition to the hospital shuttle that goes to Worcester.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated that staff attended a joint MARPA/MassDOT meeting on January 26th. At that meeting we heard from the new Acting Secretary and CEO of the MA Department of Transportation. Stephanie Pollack resigned that Monday to take a position in Washington. Gov. Baker named Jamey Tesler as the Acting head of MassDOT. He comes over from the MA RMV. Staff met with Fitchburg City officials to discuss the scope for the Route 12 Corridor study undertaken by the MRPC. Issues along the corridor were discussed and as a result it was felt that the section of Rt 12 from Bemis Rd/Wanoosnoc Rd to the Water St Bridge should be the focus area. The MRPC will be ramping up the traffic count program over the next few months by looking to hire two traffic interns to conduct counts throughout the summer. Staff was also invited by the City of Fitchburg to be part of a Steering Committee for a project to examine the John Fitch Highway corridor between Summer Street and Lunenburg Street titled *John Fitch Highway - A Climate Resilient Corridor*. Funded through the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grant program, the goal is to begin a redesign of the John Fitch Highway corridor to mitigate flooding, reduce urban heat island impacts, and provide equitable mobility and access options in this environmental justice neighborhood. The first meeting is later today. As a reminder, there is a handout is from the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. They are seeking proposals from Massachusetts municipalities interested in replacing an undersized, perched, and/or degraded culvert located in an area of high ecological value. The purpose of this funding is to encourage municipalities to replace culverts with better designed crossings that meet improved structural and

environmental design standards and climate resiliency criteria. The PRE-Request for Responses (RFR) period is January 12, 2020 to February 18, 2021, 3:00 PM and provides a preview of the RFR.

VII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

The next meeting will be on Wednesday March 10th at 2:30pm.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 2 10 21 Agenda
- 1 13 2021 MJTC minutes
- 4 Blank TEC Sheet
- 4 DRAFT FFY 2022 2026 TEC Scores
- 4 Montachusett Federal Target Comparison
- 4 TIP Schedule FFY 2022 2026
- 5 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022
- 5 UPWP Project Solicitation Memo
- 5 UPWP Requests to date
- FINAL FY22_CRMA_PreRFR Announcement