

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF JUNE 9, 2021
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

B. Harris called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; Matthew Brenner, Lunenburg; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Beth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon.

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Paula Simmons, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3.

Non-Members

Staff

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

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of May 12, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the May 12, 2021 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee

R. Maki reported that the Nominating Committee met and had come to agreement on the following slate of nominees: Nicolas Bosonetto, Fitchburg for Chair, Dick Kilhart, Athol for Vice Chair, and Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon for Secretary.

B. Harris asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none. Elections will take place at the next meeting and anyone wishing to add their name to the slate can do so as a floor nominee at that time.

V. RAISE Discretionary Grant Application Program

- *Discussion of Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Discretionary Grants through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants*

B. Harris stated that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 discretionary grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. These RAISE grants were formerly known as BUILD and TIGER. Projects for RAISE funding will be evaluated based on merit criteria that include safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Within these criteria, the Department will prioritize projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial equity, reduce impacts of climate change and create good-paying jobs. RAISE grants maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single State. Up to

\$30 million will be awarded to planning grants, including at least \$10 million to Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP).

B. Harris then reviewed a presentation with the members that was developed by FHWA on the RAISE Grants. Upon completion of the slide presentation, B. Harris reviewed with the members the RAISE Grant Application proposals that the MRPC will be putting together for submittal. They include:

Under Planning Grants, the MRPC has identified two possible applications:

1. Environmental and Design Feasibility Study of a New Interchange to Route 2 at South Athol Road in the Town of Athol
 - Purpose – To hire a consultant to examine the environmental and physical impacts related to the implementation of a new interchange to Route 2. The final outcome would determine if such an interchange could be constructed based upon environmental and design requirements.
 - If construction is found to be possible, the consultant will then move onto design initiation following federal and state guidelines and criteria. Additionally, the consultant will work with all applicable entities to initiate construction through the TIP process.
2. Montachusett Region Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Climate Change Resilience Plan
 - Purpose – To hire a consultant to gather, review and update any and all Infrastructure Climate Vulnerability Assessments within the Montachusett Region. Where needed new plans will be developed. The final goal for all MRPC communities to be at the same level in their Climate Vulnerability Assessment Plans. The second phase of this program will be the development of individual or a regional Climate Change Resilience Plan.

Under Project Grants, we have identified one possible application:

1. Leominster- Reconstruction/ Rehabilitation on Route 12 (Central Street), Including Rehabilitation of L-08-022 (MassDOT Project #604499). The project involves pavement rehabilitation of Route 12 (Central Street) and safety improvements at the Litchfield Street intersection. The project limits extend from the Sterling Town line to the limit of the State Highway Layout located at Tocci Street, a distance of 2.6 miles. This project is listed in the recently MPO endorsed FFY 2022-2026 Montachusett TIP in FFY 2024, 2025 and 2026 with a projected cost of \$13 to \$14 million.
 - This project is located near an Area of Persistent Poverty (APP) as identified by FHWA. Although not located directly in the APP it would have an impact on all areas of Leominster.
 - Funding of this project through a RAISE grant would free up Regional Target TIP funding: in FFY 2024 of \$11.4 million; in FFY 2025 of \$1.6 million; and in FFY 2026 of \$1.3 million.

A question was asked if there had been any thought to the prospect of looking at the possible widening of Route 2 from where it currently narrows out to Route 202. B. Harris indicated that it was an interesting idea and staff would investigate what that might entail and whether it would fit in with the South Athol Road interchange planning application.

Staff will be working on these applications for submittal to the U.S. DOT by July 12th.

VI. ADA Public Right of Way (PROW) Surveys Data Collection Application

- *Review and Demonstration of Various Components of PROW App*

G. Snow gave a presentation to the members related to the ADA PROW Data Collection Guides and Data Collection applications developed by MRPC staff. This presentation ran through the various manuals compiled by the MRPC and the data collection process that would be undertaken in the field. Included were information on the four types of Pedestrian Facilities that are part of the Data Collection process. They include Sidewalks,

Crosswalks, and Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). A detailed discussion of the various questions associated with each type of facility that are part of this app were presented.

K. Kress then provided a live demonstration of the app and to the members.

VII. Contract Status Reports

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

G. Kahale stated that there was not much new information to report outside of the news that the town of Barre has formally joined MART as a member community. So MART now covers 23 communities.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the following:

- Staff is still back in the office on a limited basis. Individual attendance is up to the staff member at this time. However, all employees are required to return to the office on July 12, 2021. MRPC's office will also reopen to the public on July 12, 2021. The MRPC is also drafting up a work from home policy that will benefit both employees and the commission.
- The MPO voted last month on May 19th to endorse the FFY 2022-2026 Montachusett TIP and the FFY 2022 UPWP. So those documents will become effective on October 1, 2021.
- The Montachusett MPO is scheduled to meet next week on June 16th at 1:00 PM. However, there is a chance that the meeting will be cancelled. At this time there are no action items or time sensitive issues to be addressed. A final decision will be made by tomorrow and notices sent out either way.
- Additionally, the executive order of Gov Baker is due to end on June 15th. That means unless there is an extension or some quick legislative action, public meetings will require an in-person quorum. For the MPO that would require 6 of the 10 signatories being present in-person. At MassDOT's request we are polling MPO signatories and designees on whether they would be comfortable meeting in person next week. As of now the votes are running 12 with no problem meeting in person and 1 with concerns. In regard to the MJTC, we require 4 member communities or 3 communities and 1 organization for a quorum. We will monitor things and let members know as to how we will proceed. However, it is our intent to continue to provide a remote participation option.
- Lastly, appointment forms to the MJTC for the 2021-2022 period have gone out to local Planning Boards and Boards of Selectmen for their use. Please be on the lookout for them.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

The next meeting will be on Wednesday July 14th at 2:30pm.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

6 9 21 Agenda

5 12 2021 MJTC minutes
5 How+To+Compete+for+RAISE MJTC Version
5 MRPC_RAISE_11x17L
5 RAISE Grant Info Sheet
6 ADA Introduction to Data Collection Guides
Overview of ADA Data Collection 6-9-21 MJTC ver 2