

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2022
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

D. Kilhart called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Nick Erickson, Fitchburg; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; Jasmin Farinacci, Lancaster; Janet Tice, Shirley; Kirsten Newman, Sterling; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; George Kahale, MART

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Kathy Dougherty, MassDOT

Non-Members

Brian Doheny, Ashburnham; Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Christopher McGowan, Clinton; Jenna Montgomery, Nashoba Associated Board of Health; Thomas Bigelow, Green International

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of January 12, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the January 12, 2022 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

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

- Discussion on Draft Amendment #2 to the FFY 2022 Transit Element
- MJTC Recommendation to the Montachusett MPO

B. Harris stated that at the last MJTC meeting, there was a discussion concerning Transit TIP Amendment #1. At that time, we had received a comment from MART that had included two additional project cost changes as well as an additional new project. After discussion, the MJTC recommended to the MPO that these additional changes should require a second 21-day public comment period because they met the criteria for a significant comment change. At the MPO meeting last month, MART added to their comment, that they would like the original TIP Amendment #1 to be considered on its own, i.e., in line with the original document put out for comment and that the additional changes outlined in their comment letter be treated as a second TIP Amendment. So, in short, they would like to have it addressed as TIP Amendment #2, i.e., an Amendment to TIP Amendment #1. The MPO agreed with this process and endorsed TIP Amendment #1 and then voted to release TIP Amendment #2 for a 21-day public comment period. That comment period began on January 25th and will close on February 14th. This MJTC meeting is also serving as an opportunity for public comment. To date, we have received no comments on TIP Amendment #2. We are looking for a recommendation from the MJTC that we will forward to the MPO at their meeting next week when this item comes up for endorsement.

It was the unanimous consensus of the MJTC, to recommend to the MPO that TIP Amendment #2 be endorsed as presented.

V. FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Discussion on Updates to Project Listing, Costs and Status
- Presentation on Project #610681 Clinton, Reconstruction of Route 62

B. Doherty provided the members a brief update on the projects under review for the new TIP. He discussed the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) used to prioritize the regional target projects as well as updated status based upon the recent TIP Day meeting with MassDOT. This meeting allows everyone to share information on the projects and to identify any issues that need to be addressed. B. Doherty then shared with the members the new regional target figures provided to us from MassDOT that we will use to develop a fiscally constrained TIP. He stated that these figures are different from what we saw last year. In most cases there is an approximately \$2 million increase in each year's target number. These increased funds are a result of an increase in funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which was passed in November. He then reviewed the current project listing for each federal fiscal year with the new target figures in order to illustrate how things look at this point. At the next MJTC meeting, we will review some funding scenarios for each year based upon these new targets and additional project information.

B. Doherty then introduced Christopher McGowan from the town of Clinton and Thomas Bigelow from Green International who will provide an update to the members on project #610681 in Clinton, the Reconstruction of Route 62.

C. McGowan stated that the town of Clinton has invested a lot into the rehabilitation of the major feeder roads into the town. This project is along Route 62 that provides access to Sterling from the Leominster/I-190 area. T. Bigelow from Green International then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation with the members that highlighted the project limits, its planned upgrades to the road, bicycle and pedestrian networks and to the overall safety of the roadway. The goals of the project are to address safety issues along the corridor; upgrade Sterling Street to design standards in line with its functional designation; implement Complete Street features; improve pavement conditions, drainage infrastructure and driveway access management.

B. Faxon asked if the project includes any traffic calming features similar to what MassDOT has highlighted in their new Safe Speeds website. T. Bigelow indicated that some features of traffic calming are in the design, such as narrower street lanes and enhanced signage that should have the desired effect of slowing down traffic.

B. Harris stated that if any community would like to present information on their project for the benefit of the MJTC to please reach out and contact us.

VI. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Discussion on Budget, Federal & State Requirements, and Tasks

S. Bean updated the members on the local task requests that have been received. To date there are six requests; one from Leominster, one from Townsend; one from Shirley; and then three from Lunenburg. We are reviewing the requests now. We may seek to combine items due to their similarity regarding their goals, etc. We hope to send out determination letters before the end of next month. The MRPC also received information on our PL and FTA allotments for FFY 2023. The total budget for this UPWP will be \$876, 231. This is an increase from FFY 2022 of \$128,252. So we will be building a program year based upon this budget amount.

S. Bean also provided the members with a brief review of the Equity Analysis underway for the UPWP. She discussed the various definitions established by FHWA and FTA for Environmental Justice and Title VI populations and how that relates to past UPWP tasks.

VII. Contract Status Reports

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

G. Kahale stated that MART has launched a new schedule at the beginning of last month for the Winchendon G-Link. The service has been extended to Heywood Hospital and Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner. This includes one express loop in the morning from the Winchendon Town Hall to the Hospital and then to downtown Gardner.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated that the MPO will meet next week on February 16th at 1:00 pm. The major action item will be the FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #2 MJTC. In addition, they will also continue the TIP and UPWP development.

As mentioned last month, we have a vacant Chair position. B. Harris would like to find out how the MJTC would like to proceed. He presented two options to the members: 1 - Leave the position open until the next election cycle which will begin in May with the selection of a Nominating Committee leading to a July election; or 2 - Begin the process to replace the Chair now. In which case, the earliest an election can be held would be in April. After discussion, D. Kilhart the current Vice Chair, stated that he has no problem continuing to Chair the meetings until the next election cycle. Other members thanked Mr. Kilhart for his efforts and then came to a consensus to continue as we have and fill the Chair position at the next election.

B. Harris then reviewed three handouts with the members. The first was an announcement by MassDOT of the Safe Speeds website that provides a strategy for reducing speeds on roadways for the purpose of creating safer roads. Part of this strategy addresses the role of setting speed limits which can be found through The Role of Speed Limits on Massachusetts Roadways. The MRPC encourages member communities to examine the Safe Speeds website to learn more about implementing the safe speed measures and the opportunities to seek grant funding. The second handout is a reminder for the "MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Program". Applications are due by March 1st and are to be submitted via an online form. This flyer and information is also available on the MRPC website under Announcements. The last handout was a copy of a News Release from the Baker-Polito Administration that outlines the state's funding plans under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Massachusetts is anticipated to receive over \$9.5 billion over 5 years, including an increase in the re-authorization of federal transportation dollars.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Decision Related to Vacant Chair Position*
- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

IX. Adjournment

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

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 2 9 2022 Agenda
- 1 12 2022 MJTC minutes
- 4 FFY 2022 Transit Amendment #2 1 19 2022
- 4 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #2
- 5 Blank TEC Sheet
- 5 FFY 2023 2027 TEC Scores

- 5 Montachusett Federal Target Comparison 23 to 27
- 5 Project Master List 23-27
- 6 FFY 2023 PL FTA Budgets Comparison 2 2 2022
- 7 Baker-Polito Administration Outlines Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding Plans for MA 2 3 2022
- 7 MassDOT Safe Speeds Website2
- 7 Shared Street Announcement 1 11 2022