

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2023
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

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

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Brian Doheny, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Nicholas Erikson, Fitchburg; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Jeff Bennett, Templeton; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Beth Faxon, Townsend

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Travis Condon, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Ben Breger, MassDOT; George Kahale, MART

Non-Members

William Caldwell, Sterling

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no comments at this time.

III. Approval of November 9, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the November 9, 2022 MJTC Meeting Minutes as presented. Consensus was given to accept the minutes.

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

- Discussion on Draft Amendment #3 to the Highway Element
- MJTC Recommendation to the Montachusett MPO

G Snow stated that the MRPC was contacted by MassDOT about the need for an Amendment to the FFY 2023 Highway Element of the FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett TIP. The amendment is for Project #608784 in Templeton for the Roundabout Construction at the Intersection of Patriots Road, South Main Street, North Main Street and Gardner Road. The amendment is due to an increase in the total cost of the project from \$2,037,795 to \$2,817,313, an increase of \$779,518 or 38.3%. The TIP guidelines state that an increase of more than \$500,000 for projects under \$5 million require that the Amendment process be used. This project is also a target project under Section 1A, Regionally Prioritized Projects. But due to the TIP being under programmed in FFY 2023 by approximately \$2,260,000, the additional increase still leaves FFY under our total target figure and the TIP remains fiscally constrained.

At the December 21st MPO meeting, this information was presented and discussed. The MPO voted to release this as TIP Amendment #3 for a 21-day public review and comment period that began on December 28th and will run until January 17, 2023. To date, no comments have been received on this Amendment. The MJTC is asked to provide any comments and a recommendation to the MPO on this Amendment.

The MJTC then reached consensus on a recommendation that the MPO endorse TIP Amendment #3 as presented.

V. FFY 2024-2028 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review and Discussion of Development Schedule for Next TIP

B. Doherty informed the members that it is that time of year to begin development on the next Transportation Improvement Program or TIP. The new TIP will cover FFY 2024 to FFY 2028. We have developed a memo outlining the upcoming process as well as the meetings where the TIP will be discussed. This memo went out to everyone on our mailing lists inviting any one with an interest to be part of the TIP development process. In addition, we have developed a schedule that outlines the process as well as the discussion points for upcoming MJTC and MPO meetings. The goal is to have a fully endorsed TIP by May of 2023.

B. Doherty then discussed the TIP schedule in more detail with the members.

It was mentioned to the communities present that if they would like to discuss any projects that they have in the works with the MJTC to please contact B. Doherty so that it can be placed on an upcoming MJTC meeting agenda.

VI. FFY 2024 Montachusett Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Review and Discussion of Development Schedule for Next UPWP

S. Bean indicated that the development of the FFY 2024 UPWP will follow a similar schedule as the TIP as the two documents go hand in hand. Both go out for public comment around the same time and we try to have them endorsed at the same MPO meeting. Currently, we are working on an outreach memo to our communities to solicit some possible task and study ideas. But one thing we will be stressing is the development of more regional studies as opposed to single community projects. Those type of spot-based analysis will still be considered but we would like to broaden the scope of some of our tasks. As an example, this program year, we are conducting a housing coordination study that will focus on several municipalities.

Also, we encourage any community to reach out to us to discuss at any time to discuss ideas and suggestions for consideration. We hope to bring some of these back at the February meeting for discussion. We also need to take into regional equity in the development of the UPWP, so we encourage some of our smaller communities to reach out to us to discuss various options.

We do not have any information on the budget for the FFY 2024 program year, but we expect that it will be in the same ballpark as this past year. In FFY 2023, the total budget comprised of FHWA, and FTA funds was set at \$927,000. We should have a number by the February meeting. Again, we encourage any community to contact us, and we can discuss anything that is of concern to you.

VII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update

- Goals, Objectives and Strategies Discussion & Update
- Performance Measures Discussion & Update

B. Doherty stated that at this meeting we want to continue our discussion on reviewing the goals, objectives and strategies from the last RTP as well as the various performance measures that are linked to those strategies. Last time we did review the first two of the seven goals, so we will focus on the remaining ones. Please note, that we do not need final feedback at this meeting. We welcome comments from individuals after you have had a chance to look things over.

B. Doherty then highlighted to the members the handouts prepared for the meeting and the initial changes developed by the staff. The original goals, objectives and strategies are depicted on the left hand side of the handout and the proposed changes are located on the right hand side. Green text indicates a suggested

addition, red text indicates the deletion of some text. As for the Performance Measures, the focus was on whether the strategy is quantifiable or not. We want them to be easily defined and measured. So proposed changes are based on that assumption. He then proceeded to review the remaining goals, objectives, strategies and performance measures in more detail with the members. MJTC members were again encouraged to review the information at their leisure and to submit comments, questions, etc. to the MRPC as they see fit.

B. Doherty and S. Bean then discussed the RTP workshops held in November, the feedback obtained from those meetings and the distribution of the Public Outreach Surveys. Surveys are located on our website and staff has also distributed paper copies and drop boxes to the libraries and senior centers in our communities.

S. Bean discussed an upcoming workshop to be held in conjunction with MassDOT and the Community Health Network of North Central MA (CHNA 9) on February 16th. A notice will be going out soon for people to register and attend. MassDOT will discuss the state Long Range Transportation Plan that they are developing and we will discuss issues related to the RTP as well as the Community Health Network. Part of the discussion will be related to the possible establishment of a Transportation Management Association in the region.

Finally, it was mentioned that a website had been established for the 2024 Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan that can be accessed through the front page of the MRPC website at mrpc.org.

VIII. Contract Status Reports

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

B. Harris mentioned that staff is working on an update to the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) that was last done in 2018 and that we will be working closely with MART on that update.

G. Kahale mentioned that MART recently received funding through the Shared Streets and Spaces program for FFY 2023 of \$180,000 for the purchase of bus shelters. MART has and will be installing the shelters in Gardner, Fitchburg and Athol.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated that the MPO will meet next week on Wednesday January 18th at 1:00 pm. There will be some actions related to TIP Amendment #3; the statewide Performance Measure 1 regarding safety targets and release of a draft Limited English Proficiency plan update.

Some handouts for discussion:

From MassDOT, there is the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study announcement for a Virtual Public Workshop scheduled for later today at 6:00 pm. The Study team will present information on the first 2 service plan alternatives. If you would like to register for the meeting, you can do so through this handout or from the MRPC website at mrpc.org. On the home page, if you look at the Announcements section, the fourth item down will have the meeting information and the registration link.

Next, the MassTrails Grant Program has announced that the 2023 Grant Round is now open. Now through February 1, 2023, applications can be submitted to receive funds for project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared use pathways and amenities that support trails.

From MassDOT is an announcement of a Virtual Design Public Hearing on January 19th at 6:00 pm where they will present designs for ADA retrofits at various locations in District 3 including in the city of Leominster. If interested, please see this handout and the qr code or the link provided.

Finally, there is a copy of a press release from MassDOT announcing \$6.65 million in Complete Streets Funding Awards. For FY 2023 Round 2, the state has awarded 15 communities funds for local multimodal infrastructure projects that improve travel for bicyclists, pedestrians, public transit users, and people using other forms of transportation. This is the fourteenth overall grant round for this program. In our region, the town of Shirley was awarded \$500,000 to construct a permanent shared use path on Front Street between Hospital Road and the Harvard town line. The project will include curb ramps, bicycle and pedestrian warning signs, crosswalk improvements, solar-powered speed feedback signage and bicycle racks at the Town Hall and Town Library Complex.

IX. Administrative Matters

- Next MJTC Meeting

B. Harris stated that we had decided previously to not meet in December so the next meeting will be on Wednesday February 8, 2023 at 2:30 pm.

X. Adjournment

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

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 1 11 2023 Agenda
- 11 9 2022 MJTC minutes
- 4 DRAFT FFY 2023 Highway Amendment #3 Summary 12 28 2022
- 4 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #3 12 21 2022
- 5 2023 Meeting Calendar Ver 2
- 5 Draft TIP Schedule FFY 2024 2028
- 5 TIP Development Memo 1 6 2023
- 6 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2023
- 7 G,O,S, Recommended Changes
- 7 PM Recommended Changes
- 7 RTP Public Outreach Survey
- 8 Complete Streets Press Release 1 5 2023
- 8 District 3 ADA Public Hearing Notice
- 8 Mass Trail Grant Notice 11 2022
- 8 Northern Tier Dec 2022 Newsletter