

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO)

Minutes of February 17, 2016

T. Wadsworth representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

MEMBERS PRESENT

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT; Arthur Frost, MassDOT District 3; Mohammed Khan, MART; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Vic Koivumaki, MRPC; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4, Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Fitchburg. Gordon Robertson, Leominster representing Mayor Mazzarella.

GUESTS PRESENTS

Leah Sirmin, FHWA; Laura Hanson, MassDOT District 2; Thatcher Kezer, Mass Development/Devens; Bonnie Mahoney, MART, Nikki Tishler, MassDOT; Michael Pineo, Sterling; Kristen Kelly, Leominster.

STAFF PRESENT

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

II. Approval of January 13, 2016 MPO Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January 13, 2016 MPO minutes as printed. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention.

III. Draft FFY2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment

B. Harris distributed a Summary of The TIP Amendment that was out for public comment. He explained that the comment period ended February 15, 2016. The amendment included adjustments to various statewide projects under the Highway Element and changes and additions to the Transit Element. Four comments were received on the Amendment. 1) Comment regarding the removal of the stormwater component to the Sterling, Lancaster Leominster on I-90 project(#60675). Mass DOT response indicted Best Management Practices are already in place meeting federal requirements. 2) Comment regarding the two different cost estimates for the Gardner Pleasant Street Bridge Project (#603513). A. Frost responded the cost is \$4,000,000 for the project. He explained the project in detail. The amount on the website was incorrect. 3) Comment regarding the difficulty to implement requirements of the Complete Streets Program as well as the federal design requirements of the program. Programs need to be more context sensitive and less restrictive when dealing with the needs of the more rural communities. Comment was due to concerns centered around removal of an Ashburnham Intersection Project. N. Tishler indicated that we are open to hearing any issues that Communities are having with the Complete Streets Program. We have set up training for communities and steps are in place to make the Complete Streets Program a viable option for communities. 4) Comment from the Harvard Council on Aging regarding the transit amendment for purchase of replacement vans. Harvard COA indicated that one of the replacement vans be considered or assignment to Harvard due to high mileage of current vehicle. MRPC forwarded the comment to MART. M. Khan indicated the MART Advisory Board will prioritize the distribution of vehicles.

A motion was made to endorse the FFY2016-2019 TIP amendment. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Montachusett FFY2017-2021 Montachusett TIP

B. Harris provided and explained in detail handouts regarding the Montachusett FFY2017-2021 Montachusett TIP that included: a memo to interested parties regarding the Development of The TIP ; the schedule for the development of TIP; a Listing of Montachusett Target Projects; and a Listing of Montachusett Target Eligible Projects.

T. Wadsworth added that funding estimates should be available by March 10th. TIP Day will be April 14, 2016.

N. Tishler gave a brief overview of the Safe Routes to School Program.

B. Harris asked for input from the MPO on Projects they would like to be discussed at the next meeting.

It was decided that the following projects will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

- Gardner Leominster Sterling intersection Improvement Project
- Gardner Resurfacing of Matthews Street
- Templeton Route 68 Resurfacing
- Route 13 Project in Leominster

Discussion followed regarding how communities should go about submitting TIP Project Listings.

V. MPO Subregion Representative Selection Process

B. Harris updated the MPO regarding the Representative Selection Process. He distributed and explained a handout regarding this issue. He stated he sent out an Information Guide to local officials regarding the MPO and the MPO Representative Selection Process. The email also asked for volunteers to serve as representatives. MRPC, to date, has received replies from Petersham, Winchendon, Lunenburg and Athol. MRPC will schedule a dinner meeting for the nominees to discuss and select the representatives and alternates for their Subregion. At the end of March or April we should have an idea of who the next Subregion representative will be.

A. Frost recommended appointing new Subregion representatives after the TIP Development Process.

B. Harris indicated we could invite them to attend meetings in April and May and they could begin their appointment in June.

VI. Updates

a. MassDOT Highway Division

L. Hanson stated that two new projects were recently approved: 1) Intersection improvements at Route 2A and Brookside Road in Athol; and 2) Reconstruction of Route 68 in Templeton from King Phillip Trail Route 202 North to the Phillipston Town Line.

A. Frost indicated that a public hearing will be held on February 23, 2016 on the Project in Sterling at Route 12, Chocksett Road. The project involves the installation of a roundabout at the southbound off Ramp at I-190 and Route 12 and a roundabout at Chocksett Road. There have been many crashes at those locations.

b. Transit

B. Mahoney stated that MART will be changing its fixed route schedule effective March 1, 2016 based upon a service analysis undertaken last year. Due to an increase in State assistance, routes will be expanded by one hour each day. MART will submit three applications to the Community Transit Grant Program for mini-buses, vans and travel training.

G. Kahale added that MBTA has developed a new commuter rail schedule. In our area they added two trains to the Fitchburg Line closing existing gaps. New schedule should be implemented in May 2016. MassDOT has developed a new bus route between Worcester and North Hampton via I-190 and Route 2. Service is operated by a private operator and will run four trips per day. Bus service is called MAX.

c. MJTC

B. Harris indicated that next month we will discuss the Public Participation Plan. The next MPO meeting will be held on March 9, 2016.

d. MRPC

V. Koivumaki indicated the next MRPC Meeting will be February 23, 2016.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

February 17, 2016 MPO Agenda

January 13, 2016 MPO Minutes

Draft Amendment #1 to the FFY2016-2019 Montachusett TIP

Interested Parties Memo – Development of the Draft Montachusett 2017-2021 Transportation Program (TIP)

FFY 2017-2020 Montachusett TIP Development Schedule

TIP Project Listing as of 2/1/2016

TIP Project Listing as of 2/16/2016

MPO Subregion Selection – 2016

MassDOT Notice of Public Hearing Project File No. 60742

Announcing New Complete Streets Funding Program – MassDOT Flyer

Complete Streets Program Workshops Flyer – Bay State Road