

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO)

Minutes of March 9, 2016

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Arthur Frost, MassDOT District 3; Mohammed Khan, MART; Glenn Eaton, MRPC; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Phyllis Luck, Subregion 3; Doug Walsh, Subregion 1; Doug Briggs, Subregion 2; Dane Arnold, Gardner.

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENTS

Leah Sirmin, FHWA; Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Neil Angus, Devens; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT; Tim Kilhart, Hubbardston; DPW, Erik Maki, Tetrattech; Phil Duffy, Clinton; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3, Robert Sims, CDR Maguire.

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, George Snow, George Kahale

II. Approval of February 17, 2016 MPO Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 17, 2016 MPO minutes as printed. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention.

III. Montachusett FFY2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Project Presentations

B. Harris distributed for reference a handout entitled MRPC Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) for projects under review and indicated four project presentations will take place at this meeting.

- Route 13 Leominster Main Street Project

E. Maki of Tetrattech presented a map of the project location. Six intersections are being improved from Haws Street to Prospect Street. A road safety audit was completed in 2012. Road safety audit concluded that this is a congested corridor, it has numerous driveways, operations of signals are challenged, limited pedestrian bike facilities and there are pavement challenges. He presented the crash history of the road safety audit with Hamilton Street experiencing the most crashes. He explained in detail the planned improvements to the corridor. A 25% design hearing was held. Concerns arose about the Hamilton Street and River Street areas which will be studied further. The estimated cost is \$3.5 million and it is a two year construction project. A second public meeting will be held and a 75% design would be completed in late Summer.

- Gardner (Route 2 at 68), Leominster (Leominster Connector and Nashua Street) and Sterling (Route 12 and Pratt Junction and North Row Roads) Intersection Improvements

A. Frost explained that Road Safety Audits are being scheduled for Spring. The estimated cost is \$550,000 for the three locations. The projects will be funded under the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Gardner intersection has 55 crashes and 13 injury crashes; Leominster intersection has 25 and 3 injury crashes; Sterling intersection has 13 crashes and 5 injury crashes. He explained the planned improvements to each intersection. Preliminary Design plans will be prepared in the Summer, and 25% design plans in Fall and 75% design plans in Spring of 2017.

- *Gardner Resurfacing and Related Work on Matthew Street*

R. Sims from CDR Maguire Consultants explained that they are in the process of reviewing the design to add some provisions for the Complete Streets Initiative. Sidewalks will be provided from the Hospital on Green Street on one side of the road to the housing development. A multi-use trail exists behind that and it is close to Gardner's bike trail. We will look at providing widening for bikes with a 15 foot paving width with four foot shoulder for bicyclists. Project is at 75% design.

- *Templeton Resurfacing on Route 68 at Gardner City line to end of State Highway.*

J. Hoynoski explained the resurfacing project is approximately two miles in length. Design is at 75%. Anticipated 100% design will be in the Spring. The cost is estimated to be at \$2 million. The project will accommodate a total pavement width of 32 feet which will result in two eleven foot travel lanes with five foot shoulders and bicycle accommodations. The current sidewalk will be reconstructed to be in compliance with ADA standards. A new flashing beacon will be installed. Other improvements will be made at the intersection for better pedestrian access.

- *Transportation Evaluation Criteria Scoring*

B. Harris indicated that updated project information has been received from two communities. MRPC will finalize the TEC scores to develop scenarios for possible funding. He distributed and explained a TIP Project Update Listing for this year which will be sent to MassDOT and discussed on TIP Day, April 14, 2016.

Discussion took place regarding the Route 101 Resurfacing Project in Ashburnham and adding it to the TIP Project List.

IV. 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development

- *Schedule*
- *Budget Information*

B. Harris explained and distributed a handout entitled FFY2016-2017 Montachusett UPWP Development Schedule. He indicated that we are looking to identify new tasks and studies within the region. Member communities should contact MRPC to discuss transportation issues that are of concern in their communities. In April budget estimates should be available for the upcoming program year.

Discussion took place regarding the feasibility of installation of traffic cameras on Route 2. N. Tishler indicated she would obtain more information.

A motion was made to reschedule the April MPO Meeting from April 13, 2016 to April 20, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. MPO Self-Certification Compliance Statement – Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements

B. Harris presented a handout entitled Meeting Air Quality Goals in Transportation. He explained that the MPO is required to self-certify that it is making a good faith effort to meet this Act. He read the Self-Certification Statement to the MPO.

Discussion followed regarding where our region is as compared to others in the state regarding reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Discussion also took place regarding the recent energy efficiency upgrades to the Transit Authority's facilities and possibly collecting that data for this purpose as well.

A motion was made to endorse the Self-Certification Compliance Statement for the Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Public Participation Plan - Draft

-MPO Release of Draft for Public Comment

B. Harris presented and explained the draft Public Participation Plan. He indicated the draft was updated to reflect comments received from Federal Highway and MassDOT. Based on those comments, MRPC added a summary section and a flow chart to depict a graphical presentation of the process.

A motion was made that the Draft Public Participation Plan be released for a 45 day public comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. MPO Subregion Representative Selection Process Update

B. Harris indicated that MRPC received nominees for the MPO Subregion Representatives. MRPC has scheduled two dinner meetings to select representatives. The first meeting is March 24, at 6:00 p.m. at the Old Mill for Sub regions 1 and 2; and the second is March 31, 2016 at 6:00 pm. at the Bull Run for Sub regions 3 and 4. Once the MPO has endorsed the TIP and UPWP the representative's terms will begin. B. Harris distributed a handout with the names of the nominees.

VIII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

A. Frost indicated that the Sterling Chocksett Road/Route 12 Project Public Hearing was held on February 23, 2016. Main comments centered on stormwater, accidents, bike and pedestrian accommodations. Cost is now at \$5.5 million. Additional funding may be required.

Fitchburg's Safe Routes to School Project public hearing was held on February 24, 2016. Cost has increased. It is at \$1.2 million.

- Transit

B. Mahoney indicated that MART implemented its new bus routes on March 1, 2016. Adjustments will also be made to the Gardner Bus Routes which will be implemented on March

14, 2016. Athol fixed bus routes will also be implemented on March 14, 2016. MART is expecting delivery of new buses and vans in May.

G. Kahale explained the bus route for Athol. Wachusett Station will be completed end of Summer/Early Fall. Fitchburg Commuter Rail Improvement Project is completed. New MBTA commuter rail schedule should be available in April. Negotiations continue regarding the Ayer Parking Facility and a resolution is close.

- MJTC

B. Harris indicated that at the April 20, 2016 MJTC Meeting we will have a presentation by VHB regarding Complete Streets Program.

IX. Administrative Matters

Discussion followed regarding the MS4 Stormwater Permitting.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

March 9, 2016 MPO Agenda
February 17, 2016 MPO Minutes
Meeting Air Quality Goals in Transportation
TIP Day for 2017-2021 STIP
Transportation Evaluation Criteria
FFY2016-2017 Montachusett UPWP Development Schedule
MPO Subregion Nominees
Project Update – MassDOT
Interested Parties Memo
Target Fund Review