

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of June 29, 2016

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT OTP; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; John Telepciak, MRPC; Mohammed Khan, MART; Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Fitchburg; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 1; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4.

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENTS

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Steve Walsh, MassDOT; Thatcher Kezer, Devens; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Pat Lawlor, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; John Roseberry, Leominster DPW; Raymond Racine, Leominster DPW; Lenny Laakso, Fitchburg DPW; Jack Rodriquenz, Lunenburg DPW; Trish Domigan, VHB.

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, Sheri Bean

II. Public Comments

B. Harris indicated that at the last MPO meeting there was a comment regarding whether it was appropriate for an ex-officio organization member to be appointed as a designee by a Subregion representative or alternate. A review of the current MPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) indicated that there were no qualifications or restriction placed upon who a representative or alternate could name as a designee for them and subsequently act on their behalf. The MOU was structured as such to provide the representative and alternate with enough discretion to select someone they felt was appropriate for the position. It was also indicated that at this time, the MPO has not received any concerns from member communities regarding this issue and that if it were to become an issue for the local towns, the MPO would then need to review the matter and take action.

III. Approval of May 25, 2016 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the May 25, 2016 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with T. Wadsworth abstaining.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Discussion FFY 2016 Highway Amendment No. 2
- Discussion FFY 2016 Transit Amendment No. 2
- Community Transit Grant Program – Projects Award Funding
- MPO Release Public Comment

B. Harris referred members to a handout titled *Draft Amendment #2 Summary 6 29 2016* and indicated that MassDOT had informed us recently of the need to amend the FFY 2016 Highway Element of the FFY 2016-2019 TIP. The need to amend the FFY 2016 Highway Element is due to cost changes to two projects, one a target eligible project while the other is a non-target eligible project, i.e. it utilizes statewide funds; additionally, we need to add a statewide funded project to the list.

B. Mahoney of MART then presented information on the need to amend the FFY 2016 Transit Element of the FFY 2016-2019 TIP due to the award of Community Transit Grant Program funds in the Region as well as changes to other transit project funding amounts. Additional projects also need to be added to the TIP as MART recognized some cost savings in other projects thus allowing us to expand our program in other areas.

Discussion followed regarding possible impacts to the TIP and if these changes affect any other projects in the Region. It was stated that these proposed changes on the Highway and transit side do not impact any of the other projects currently programmed and the TIP will remain fiscally constrained.

A motion was made to release the draft FFY 2016 TIP Amendment No. 2 for a 30 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *FFY Funding Scenarios*
- *MPO Release Public Comment*

B. Harris distributed several handouts related to the target eligible projects, their priorities and possible funding scenarios for MPO review and discussion. Also, the MJTC's recommendation to the MPO was discussed that favored the Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project being funded over FFY 2018 and 2019 based upon MassDOT's concerns and that this scenario minimized possible impacts to other projects.

S. Bradbury indicated that since the last MPO meeting the MassDOT District 3 office has further reviewed the design and had additional discussions with the consultant and they now feel better about advertisement in FFY 2017 but it will still need significant work.

P. Bertram then indicated that all three communities met to discuss the project and to reiterate their support for the project's funding in FFY 2017. Additionally, several questions raised at the last meeting were addressed.

Mayor S. DiNatale spoke on behalf of the project, Fitchburg's commitment to meet the deadlines and the importance of the project to the city's economy.

Discussion then took place related to the two funding scenarios that funded Summer Street over FFY 2017 and 2018. The MPO favored to move forward with Funding Scenario Number 2.

B. Mahoney presented the transit element for FFY 2017-2021 and reviewed several of the projects listed in the TIP.

A question was asked regarding the amount of pavement needed for the repaving of the MART facility. B. Mahoney indicated that she would find out the figure for the next meeting.

A motion was made to release the draft FFY 2017-2021 TIP with scenario number 2 and the transit element as presented for a 30 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Draft Task and Budget Review*
- *MPO Release Public Comment*

B. Harris presented information regarding a draft of the 2016-2017 UPWP. He referred members to a handout and explained in detail several of the new tasks to be implemented in the upcoming year.

P. Bertram asked about the stormwater app task and whether the funding listed is sufficient and if the current program year's task also has enough funding to complete the app development.

B. Harris indicated that there are sufficient funds for this year and the app development and that in the upcoming program year we anticipate that work will focus on updates, corrections and technical support to member communities and that is why the budget is reduced.

T. Kezer asked if the data collected would be housed in a single database such as in an asset management database at the MRPC or will each community maintain their own.

B. Harris indicated that we expect communities will maintain their own data but if a town has issues we are willing to have a discussion with them on what we can do.

B. Harris explained that we will work on a study for a new interchange on Route 2 and South Athol Road in Athol; create updated community trail brochures that will hopefully assist communities in tourism and economic development areas; and also conduct a safety review of Route 2 in Athol and Phillipston to assess the effectiveness of prior safety improvements.

N. Tishler indicated that MassDOT and the MBTA have recently standardize several transit survey questions and we would be more than willing to share that information with you for your transit survey task.

A motion was made to release the draft 2016-2017 Unified Planning Work Program for a 30 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

J. Hoynoski stated that the Royalston bridge project on Stockwell Road over Lawrence Brook and the Winchendon bridge project at Royalston Road over Tarbell Brook have had their design public hearings and are moving towards 75% design.

S. Bradbury answered a question from the last MPO meeting on the status of the Jackson Road Route 2 project. The project is on hold due to a delay in receiving some precast components. There currently is a demand for these items and it has caused this project to become delayed, however, they expect to complete phase 1 of the project by late August and then phase 2 should move along much faster. Sterling Route 12 Chocksett Road Project is on track to be advertised this fiscal year. The Fitchburg Safe Routes to School project 100% PSE is expected by mid-July and should also be advertised this fiscal year.

- Transit

B. Mahoney indicated MART is wrapping up their FFY 2016 projects and a number of them have come in under budget. Wachusett Station is on track for substantial completion by September 30th with at least one train going to the station in early October. Bike racks are coming in for all of our buses in the next few weeks.

M. Khan stated that the Town of Ayer has taken some land by eminent domain so that project is now moving forward. Also, MART is working with Devens for transit service from this area to Devens for some of their companies. M. Khan then indicated that the state budget should contain an earmark for

the Athol/Orange transit services in order to keep it operational. If the line item is there or not is not clear at this moment.

- *MJTC*

B. Harris indicated election of officers for MJTC will take place in July. The meeting will also serve as a public meeting for the draft documents discussed today that will be out for review.

- *MRPC*

The MRPC is wrapping up a major study on Devens by tomorrow June 30th. Also, we have recently hired a new Transportation/Transit Planner that will start on July 11th.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting - August 3, 2016*

B. Harris discussed the current schedule for the MPO and the comment period for the draft documents discussed today. MassDOT recently indicated that they would like to move the August MPO meeting from the August 10th to August 3rd. That will mean the 30 day comment period for the draft TIP, TIP Amendment No. 2 and the UPWP will begin on Friday July 1st and run until Monday August 1st. The MPO also decided to not meet in July.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

June 29, 2016 MPO Agenda
MPO Minutes of May 25, 2016
Draft Amendment #2 Summary 6 29 2016
Project List & Scenario Comp 6 16 2016
Scenario 1 vs 2 Comp 6 29 2016 REVISED
Scenario 5 vs 6 Comp 6 29 2016 REVISED
Scenario Summary 1 vs 2 5 vs 6 6 16 2016 REVISED
Transit 2017 2021 6 29 2016
DRAFT UPWP 2016 17 Summary 6 15 16
Calendar Draft Release
Focus40