

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held at
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

Minutes of March 28, 2018

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

David Mohler, MassDOT OTP; Ann Sullivan, MassDOT District 3; Glenn Eaton, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Albert Gallant, Subregion 1; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Cassie Chase, FHWA; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Gary Luca, Ayer; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Ryan McLane, Hubbardston; Travis Brown, Hubbardston; Tim Kilhart, Harvard

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; George Snow; Brian Doherty; David Fee; George Kahale

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of February 21, 2018 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 21, 2018 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with A. Gallant abstaining.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review of TIP Amendment #4*
- *MPO Action to Release Amendment #4 for Public Comment*

B. Harris referred members to a handout on the proposed Amendment #4. He indicated that MassDOT informed the staff of the need for an amendment to the FFY 2018 Highway Element related to two bridge projects. The first is in Hubbardston Project #607127 Evergreen Road over Mason Brook. It is proposed that this project be moved out of Section 2A – Bridge Program Off-System as it will not be ready for advertisement before September 30, 2018. The second project, #605094, Fitchburg Route 31 over Phillips Brook listed under Section 2A Bridge Program On-System has a cost adjustment from \$4,738,140 to \$3,120,258. Both projects are outside of our target eligible list and therefore would have no impact on the fiscal constraint for FFY 2018. In addition, due to recent weather issues that resulted in the delay of this meeting, it would not be possible to have a full 21 day comment period for this Amendment if it is to be endorsed by the MPO at the next meeting on April 18th. However, if we start the comment period tomorrow, we could close it on Tuesday April 10th and this would give us a 20 day comment period. So, if this is to proceed for endorsement next month, we would also need a motion to shorten the regular 21 day comment period to 20 days.

A motion was made to release TIP Amendment #4 for public review and comment. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

A motion was made to reduce the public comment period from 21 days to 20 days for TIP Amendment #4. The motion was seconded.

A question was asked on what was happening to the Hubbardston bridge project. D. Mohler explained that it was being moved out of FFY 2018 as it would not be ready for advertisement by September 30, 2018 and into FFY 2019, which would mean it would be advertised between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019. As to the exact reason for the delay, the information was not available but MassDOT will try to have further information by the next meeting.

After discussion the motion was passed unanimously.

B. Harris then indicated that there is also a proposed adjustment to the FFY 2018 Transit Element of the TIP. Members referred to a handout that described the proposed adjustment.

B. Mahoney explained that recent cost estimates on a project regarding bus route signing would be less than originally programmed. In addition, RTA's across the state are also seeing budget reductions in their operating funds. Therefore, MART thought that this would be an opportunity to utilize the unspent funds from the sign project and reallocate them to the Operating Funds line item. Essentially, \$200,000 would be taken from the sign project, reducing it from \$560,000 to \$360,000, and then allocate it to the Operating Funds line item thereby increasing it from \$2,100,000 to \$2,300,000. Because the changes reflect a less than 10% change in the Operating Funds, it was felt that this change could be handled as an Administrative Adjustment to the TIP. Also, as part of this, \$50,000 in RTA CAP funds are now available, so MART is proposing two additional projects to be added as Other Non-Federally funded projects; one to replace and repair the engines on two buses and one to purchase a replacement van. Since both projects do not involve federal funds, they do not have to be part of an amendment or adjustment process.

A question was asked regarding the operating funds line item and the cost change as to whether this will be an ongoing issue. B. Mahoney responded that this change is based on the recent state budget reductions for RTA's and they do not know what will be the case next year. They need the help from the state in order to maintain the same level of services.

A motion was made to approve the Adjustment as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2019-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review of Regional Project Prioritization Listing*
- *Review and Discussion of FFY Funding Scenarios*

B. Harris presented a number of items pertaining to the 2019–2023 TIP. These included the final TEC score for target eligible projects and the prioritized listing of the projects based on their TEC score. In addition, a draft Transit listing and additional highway projects outside of the target projects were reviewed. He indicated that the funding scenarios distributed with the meeting announcement were no longer applicable as we were informed the other day of several project cost changes as well as status changes. MassDOT did prepare an initial funding scenario with these revisions for MPO use and as a starting point for discussion. The MPO then reviewed the target projects, their priority score, revised costs and status and the total target funds for each fiscal year.

After much discussion, including comments related to the readiness of Winchendon, Ayer, Hubbardston projects, the MPO decided on a draft funding scenario for the upcoming TIP. This scenario included the following:

FFY 2019	# 608728 Winchendon- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 202 #604691 Clinton- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 110 #607848 Hubbardston- Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 68 #607446 Westminster- Intersection Improvements, Route 2A At Route 140
FFY 2020	#608891 Gardner- Resurfacing and Rumble Strip Installation on Route 140 #605651 Leominster- Reconstruction on Route 13 #608779 Lancaster- Intersection Improvements on Route 117/Route 70
FFY 2021	#608784 Templeton- Roundabout Construction at Intersection of Patriots Rd, South Main St #607604 Sterling- West Boylston- Improvements on Route 140 At I-190 #607902 Ayer- Reclamation & Related Work on Route 2A #608548 Winchendon- Improvements & Related Work on Central Street
FFY 2022	#604499 Leominster- Reconstruction/ Rehabilitation on Route 12 #608888 Gardner- Reclamation and Related Work on Pearson Boulevard
FFY 2023	#601957 Ashburnham- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 101 #608832 Lancaster- Interchange Improvements at Route 2 Exit 34

A motion was made to approve the draft funding scenario as developed for the TIP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Review and Development of Tasks and Budget

B. Doherty reviewed a handout outlining planned tasks and budget for the FFY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Individual tasks were highlighted that will be implemented during the October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019 work year. The budget includes \$661,146 in the FFY 2019 "PL" allocation, \$63,955 in FTA Section 5303 funds and \$15,989 in local RTA matching funds for a total budget of \$741,090. Staff will work to finalize the various task descriptions over the next few weeks and it is anticipated that a draft will be available for the next MPO meeting for eventual release for public comment. Tasks highlighted for the MPO included Task 2.64 Freight Corridor Analysis; Task 3.34 Climate Change; Task 3.64 Lunenburg Study (in response to a local request); Task 2.54 Fatal Crash Corridor analysis; and Task 3.14 Regional Transportation Plan Update.

A question was asked about a previous MPO item related to freight corridors. B. Harris responded that the prior item was related to identifying Critical Rural and Urban Freight Corridors within the Region and was limited to a specific criteria and mileage limit. This was related to eligibility for an additional pot of federal funding and is not related to the freight Corridor Analysis task.

A question was asked about a freight advocacy group that reached out to the city of Fitchburg called gorail.org and whether anyone had heard of them and if they would be the type of group to be part of the freight corridor analysis task. B. Doherty answered that we were not familiar with that group but we would look into it as a possible source.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

J. Hoynoski gave an update on bridge project #608179 North Fitzwilliam Road over Lawrence Brook in Royalston. It is at 75% design and they are expecting 100% in the near future.

A. Sullivan stated that they are awaiting the 100% design on the Route 31 bridge project over the Phillips Brook in Fitchburg and the 100% design for project #608188 Gardner/ Leominster/ Sterling – intersection improvements at three locations is under review.

- *Transit*

B. Mahoney indicated that MART has recently completed and released a series of travel training videos on the MART website and YouTube. On YouTube the videos can be found on MART's channel by searching for "How to Ride MART Channel". MART will also be visiting New Hampshire to look at a smaller, light weight bus which may be more economical to run.

G. Kahale stated that a design for the Ayer Commuter Rail Station prepared by the consultant was reviewed and the construction documents are now being prepared. Hopefully, by the end of May the project will be advertised and construction will be completed by next year.

G. Luca indicated that the town is happy to be at this point and he thanked George Kahale and Mohammed Khan for their efforts.

G. Kahale indicated that the utilities have been addressed at the Ayer platform and the pedestrian plaza is now useable.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris indicated that due to inclement weather the March 14th MJTC meeting was cancelled. The April MJTC will be held in Westminster on the 11th at 6:30 PM in the Town Offices. This is the same location we intended to use in March. Staff will be participating in a Route 2 Safety Task Force meeting on April 18th at the Erving Senior Center. A handout on the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program from the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game is available with applications due by April 6th.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Eaton indicated that MRPC will be hosting a forum on Marijuana Laws in MA at 5:00 PM with members of the Cannabis Control Commission; MRPC will be doing nine District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) projects for six communities this round; and the MRPC has implemented a new employee canine pet policy. Appropriate signage will be put in place to inform people of the canine policy for those with issues and allergies.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 18, 2018 at 1:00 PM here in the MRPC offices.

B. Harris referred members to a handout that contained the obituary for Nicole Tishler. Nikki was the MRPC liaison with the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning and while on a business trip to Washington, D.C. she suffered a brain aneurysm. She unfortunately passed away on Sunday March 25th at the age of 29. She was a tremendous asset for our region and she will be missed. A moment of silence was observed in her memory.

B. Pounds indicated that the obituary listed that donations in her name can be made to the Brain Aneurysm Foundation, 269 Hanover Street, Hanover, MA 02339 or online at www.bafund.org. Also, MassDOT has put together a team for the 17th Annual Arterial Challenge Run/Walk at Fenway Park on April 22nd. People can donate to Team Tish if they wish.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 3 28 2018 Agenda
2 21 18 MPO Minutes
FFY 2018 Amendment #4 Summary 3 20 2018
FFY 2018 Transit Adjustment #1 Summary 3 28 2018
MART MassDOT Adj 3 28 2018
FFY 2019 2023 FINAL TIP TEC Scores 3 14 2018
MPO DRAFT Scenario 3 28 2018
Other TIP Projects 3 28 2018
DRAFT TRANSIT LIST FFY19-23 3 28 2018
FFY 2019 2023 TIP TEC Score Sheets 2 14 2018
2019 2023 TIP Scenario Comparison 3 12 2018
Winchendon DPW Project Status Letter
UPWP Draft Tasks MPO 3_28_18
Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program
N. Tishler Obituary