

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

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

Minutes of March 20, 2019

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist. 3; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Albert Gallant, Subregion 1; Heather Lemieux, Subregion 3;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Mark Wetzel, Ayer DPW; Tim Kilhart, Harvard DPW; Travis Brown, Hubbardston; Ryan McLane, Hubbardston; Alicia Muck, Hubbardston; Bob Szocik, Templeton DPW; Tim Bethke, Tom Tom; Steven Tyler, Howard Stein Hudson;

STAFF PRESENT

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

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of February 20, 2019 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the February 20, 2019 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. A. Frost abstained.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2020 – 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review of Funding Scenarios

B. Harris mentioned that the MRPC is in the process of developing the new TIP document. We have gone through the prioritization process and now we're looking at funding scenarios for the 2020-2024 TIP. The goal is to come up with the most desirable funding scenario that will then be used for the draft document.

B. Doherty referenced a hand out and presented a number of different project scenarios for the 2020-2024 TIP based on TEC scores, project readiness and available target funds. These scenarios were also presented to the MJTC the previous week. B. Doherty reviewed each scenario in detail. M. Wetzel presented an update for project #607902 in Ayer with the hope of advancing the project to an earlier year based on project readiness. There was some concern from MassDOT Dist. 3 regarding the number of easements that would be required for this project. M. Wetzel indicated that he was confident that the town could get it done in time for a spring of 2019 town meeting. A. Frost cautioned the town that they don't want to acquire these easements too soon and that they should continue to work with the

Right of Way department. The town indicated that their design consultant will continue to work with MassDOT Dist. 3.

S. Woelfel stressed the importance of making all the communities with TIP projects aware of the MPO meetings and the process of voting on the upcoming TIP, Lancaster & Ayer in particular since they are both battling for FFY 2020 placement. Communities need to keep in touch with their design consultants to keep the MPO members up to date on project status and schedules for any upcoming meetings and votes.

After some discussion, the MPO voted to have scenario #3, which keeps Lancaster on the FFY 2020 TIP as the preferred scenario based on the most up to date information given. Scenario #3 included the following projects –

- FFY 2020
 - Leominster- Reconstruction on Route 13 from Hawes Street to Prospect Street
 - Lancaster – Intersection Improvements on Rt. 117/70 at Lunenburg Road and Route 117/70 at Main Street
 - Westminster – Resurfacing & related work on Route 140 from Rt. 2A to Patricia Road.
- FFY 2021
 - Winchendon – Improvements & related work on Central St (Rt. 202) from Front St to Maple St
 - Ayer – Reclamation & related work on Rt. 2A from Harvard Rd to Main St.
 - Gardner – Reclamation & related work on Pearson Blvd.
- FFY 2022
 - Leominster – Reconstruction/rehabilitation on Rt. 12 (Central St)
- FFY 2023
 - Sterling/West Boylston – Improvements on Rt. 140 at I-190
 - Hubbardston – Highway reconstruction of Rt. 68 (Main St) from 1,000 ft north of Williamsville Rd. to Elm St.
 - Gardner – Resurfacing and rumble strip installation on Rt. 140
 - Templeton – Roundabout construction at the intersection of Patriots Rd, South Main St, North Main St, and Gardner Rd.

B. Harris indicated that there was a discussion with MassDOT regarding the target numbers for the Transit Asset Management section. A handout was referenced for informational purposes with the hope of an endorsement or acceptance at the April MPO meeting.

V. Performance Based Planning Agreement

- *Comments and Feedback Discussion*

B. Harris referenced a handout regarding a Performance Based Planning Agreement from all the MPO's Statewide and MassDOT. This was discussed at the previous MPO meeting last month. This agreement involves the development and acceptance of performance measures, sharing of data between the RPA's/ MPO's/MassDOT/Transit Authorities, outlines responsibilities and roles as well as possible dispute resolution measures, etc. We anticipated adopting and endorsing this agreement at the meeting today but there has been a slight delay with information from FHWA. It is anticipated that it will be brought to the MPO at the April meeting. In the meantime, everyone can review the document and ask questions or submit comments to MassDOT.

VI. Montachusett 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- *Status and Workshop Results*

The MRPC held a series of 5 - 6 RTP workshops across the region over the last month. These workshops included an overview of the RTP and the process of the RTP development as well as a Massachusetts Capital Investment Plan overview. A survey was also handed out. This survey was offered on paper and by web link. This survey will be open until the end of March. To date there has been 176 responses. There was also a comment application that was created for RTP outreach where 35 comments were submitted. Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce assisted with survey distribution via their newsletter. MRPC hopes to reach out to the other Chambers to see if they could promote the survey weblink as well.

MRPC is also working towards submitting a few draft chapters to MassDOT for review over the next month or so. The survey and web application comments will be incorporated into these draft chapters where appropriate.

M. Bohart mentioned that the workshop meeting attendance was low and perhaps more outreach could have been done and the survey was simplified and may not give the full picture of the regions commuting patterns. B. Harris mentioned that by using Constant Contact for our email outreach, there was only 27% opened rate for the outreach emails that went out. We are able to go into the system and see who didn't open them and unfortunately there were Mayors, Planning Departments, etc. on that list. It is unclear as to why this is happening. If a community would like an additional outreach meeting that is certainly something that MRPC could arrange. In terms of the online survey, the goal was to keep it fairly simple and base it on scenario planning. We do rely on the census data for some journey to work information.

VII. Montachusett FFY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Task Discussion

S. Bean referenced two handouts. One shows the 2020 UPWP funding and the other is the draft 2019-2020 UPWP Tasks. The funding sheet shows the total PL allocation for each RPA. The goal is to use this funding allocation and split it into thirds for each task section, as shown in the task handout. S. Bean indicated that the majority of the tasks are standard and do not change year to year. However, there are a few new tasks proposed for the upcoming year such as Travel Options & Rideshare Program, Scenic Byway and/or Heritage Program Development and a Trail Data Application.

S. Bean also mentioned that communities are encouraged to reach out to MRPC with any project proposals that they may have for the UPWP. Projects examples include intersection or corridor analysis, walkability and parking studies, etc.

VIII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

MassDOT Dist. 2 - J. Hoynoski mentioned that they are preparing a project for an Athol bridge replacement – Washington Ave. and Morgan Ave. over the Athol Pond Outlet is scheduled to be advertised this Saturday; Winchendon resurfacing and related work on Rt. 202 was advertised in October and bid openings were February 26th; they are still waiting for it to be awarded; Athol bridge replacement on Crescent St over Millers River was advertised and the bid opening day is in May.

MassDOT Dist. 3 – A. Frost mentioned Clinton Rt. 110/High St is at PS&E and due to be advertised on April 20th; Hubbardston Rt 68 is at 100% PS&E and due to be advertised in June; Westminster Rt. 2A at

Rt. 140 was advertised on Dec. 1st and bids are due to be opened on March 26th; Hubbardston Evergreen Rd Bridge was delayed this year due to property acquisition; Fitchburg/Leominster Twin Cities Rail Trail was recently split into two phases – 2019 advertisement for Phase 1. which is south of the Nashua River in Fitchburg to just south of Doyle Field in Leominster. and Phase 2 would be each end of the project that includes the bridge over the Nashua River and the railroad tracks in Fitchburg and the remaining section to Mechanic Street in Leominster.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale mentioned the MART received six (6) bids for the Ayer parking facility on January 23rd and MART awarded the project to the lowest bidder. MART continues to work with the contractor on the contract that is hoped to be signed by the end of the month so work can begin in April. Also, the high project costs have caused MART to have to shift some funding around to be able to accommodate the higher dollar amount. There will be a proposed TIP amendment next month that will represent this funding shift.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris referenced a few handouts – Transportation Innovation Conference flyer, a Sentinel and Enterprise news article regarding a new Route 2 Task Force in North Central Mass targeting Route 2 from Gardner to Concord, and the Safe Routes to School program information that indicates that the City of Gardner and Leominster have moved on in the funding process. There was also a 25% design hearing for the Twin Cities Rail Trail last week with over 200 attendees.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

J. Telepciak mentioned that MRPC reviewed the proposed boundary changes for Census tracts and block groups related to the 2020 Census. MRPC recommends that all communities be aware and involved with these proposed changes. For the DLTA program, 10 Communities submitted a total of 13 requests for DLTA services. MRPC staff is in the process of securing a Federal grant for the creation of an Industrial Lands analysis. They are reengaging with the Economic Development Administration and re-submitting a previous grant application this spring.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled April 17th at 1:00 PM in MRPC offices.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 3 20 2019 Agenda

MPO 2 20 2019 Minutes

FFY 2020 – 2024 TIP Funding Scenarios

Ayer Project Info #607902

MART TAM Targets

DRAFT - V2 - Performance-Based Planning and Programming Agreement

2020 RTP Survey Notice

Workshop Survey 2 21 2019

UPWP FFY 2020 PL Allocation

UPWP FFY 2020 Draft Task Lists

