

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

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

Minutes June 19, 2019

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woefel, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist. 3; Amy LeBlanc, Fitchburg; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Doug Briggs, Subregion 2; Phyllis Luck, Subregion 3

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Jeffry Bennett, Templeton; Dick O'Brien, Twin Cities Rail Trail Association; Nikki Peters, Leominster; John Roseberry, Leominster DPW; Tim Kilhart, Harvard DPW

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty, George Kahale, Kayla Kress

II. Public Comments

D. O'Brien from the Twin Cities Rail Trail Association stated that he was here to learn about the cost changes for the Trail project listed in the TIP Amendment. S. Woefel indicated that this would be discussed in the upcoming agenda item.

No other public comments were made.

III. Approval of May 15, 2019 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the May 15, 2019 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Review and Discussion of Comments Received on Draft UPWP*
- *MPO Action to Endorse FFY 2020 UPWP*

S. Bean indicated that the comment period for the FFY 2020 UPWP has closed and that we had received comments from MassDOT and the general public. S. Bean then gave a brief overview of the MassDOT comments and our responses to those comments that will be incorporated into the final UPWP. Regarding the comment from the public, it dealt with a request that funding be allocated to study linking the Twin Cities Rail Trail with the Mass Central Rail Trail. Our response is that this will be considered as part of the Task 3.41 Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan and that we will work with the CMRPC as well as the Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition as part of this effort.

A motion was made to approve and endorse the FFY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #3

- *Review and Discussion of Adjustment to Amendment #3*
- *MPO Action on Adjustment to TIP Amendment #3*

B. Doherty discussed the TIP Amendment #3 that was endorsed by the MPO at the last meeting on May 15, 2019. One of the projects amended was Project #608193 FITCHBURG-LEOMINSTER RAIL TRAIL CONSTRUCTION with cost change from \$11,059,443 to \$6,530,900. However, after a review, it was discovered that staff, i.e. B. Harris, had misread an email and the correct revised amount was supposed to be \$7,993,905 and not \$6,530,900. B. Harris indicated that there is no change in the project scope or expected advertisement, just a change in the price for the project in FFY 2019. Therefore, it was felt that an Adjustment could be made instead of a full Amendment.

D. O'Brien stated that he was wondering about the cost reduction for the project because he knew that originally there was a much higher number for the project. D. O'Brien asked if the reduction was due to a change in the project scope or limits and what was the rationale behind it.

A. Frost indicated that MassDOT had a more refined cost estimate from the design consultant and that led to the cost change. He also indicated that MassDOT is fully committed to the project, that it is a "poster child" project for the state and they will fully back the Rail Trail construction. In addition, there will be a Phase 2 to the project and any aspect that was missed in Phase 1 can be picked up in Phase 2.

A motion was made to approve the Adjustment to the FFY 2019-2023 TIP Amendment #3. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Montachusett 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- *Review of Draft RTP*
- *Review & Discussion on Online RTP for Public Comment*
- *MPO Action to Release Draft 2020 RTP for Public Review and Comment*

B. Harris referenced handouts related to the RTP. The first handout is a copy of the Executive Summary that highlights the various parts of the draft RTP. Due to a table error the Financial Analysis part of the Executive Summary is incomplete but will be corrected for the draft comment period. The second handout discusses the planning scenarios developed for the RTP. These scenarios are based upon the scenarios developed by the MA Commission on the Future of Transportation and their recently released document.

B. Harris then proceeded to review the development of the RTP planning scenarios and how they relate to the Montachusett Region. Three scenarios were compiled and identified as: Scenario 1 – Status Quo; Scenario 2 – Multiple Hubs; and Scenario 3 – Strong Community Centers. Each scenario utilized input from the public outreach process and results of the RTP survey. In addition, funding percentage options between identified categories derived from the RTP survey were related to the scenarios were discussed as well as how they relate to future project prioritization of MPO target funds.

A more detailed review of the Fiscal Analysis for the RTP was discussed and presented to the MPO.

A question was asked regarding the percentage of funding for stormwater projects as well as the impacts to communities to meet stormwater requirements. MassDOT stated that they are reviewing stormwater issues in their project designs in order to address as much as they can. B. Harris indicated that the project types listed were meant to be illustrative of what be funded through that category.

A question was asked if a 2024 project is moved out to 2025, would it not be funded because of the percentages listed as part of the financial analysis. MassDOT responded that it would be an MPO decision at that point when the TIP is developed as this would be a target eligible project. Those types of decisions are made during the TIP development process and a project's programming is dependent on a number of factors that the MPO considers. A follow up question was asked about the Route 101 south project in Ashburnham and its inclusion in 2024 at this time. It was indicated that a number of factors were involved that changed its scope and MassDOT re-submitted and re-approved the project with a new ID number. There is no design submission at this time and the best advice is for the town to move ahead with the design and work with the District.

K. Kress from the MRPC GIS Department then presented to the MPO an initial draft of the online map journal of the RTP. This map journal is based upon what MassDOT did for their Capital Investment Plan (CIP) and is being developed to help support and improve public review and comment. The GIS staff will have the entire RTP up by the start of the RTP comment period. People will be able to submit comments at any point of their review.

A motion was made to release the draft RTP for a 21-day public review and comment period to run from June 25th to July 15th. A comment was made regarding the Transit financial figures indicating that there are some updated figures that the RTA will supply to the staff. Also, MassDOT asked if there is a preferred scenario being put forward. B. Harris answered that not at this time but we intend to monitor over the next few years the project types and applicable categories in order to track a preferred scenario. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

MassDOT Dist. 3 – Clinton- High Street was advertised on June 10th; Hubbardston- Route 68 resurfacing is due to be advertised on June 22nd; Westminster – Route 2A at Route 140 intersection was advertised in December and the Notice to Proceed was given to PJ Albert on June 13th; Townsend – West Meadow Road over Lock Brook bridge is at 100% design with final PS&E due this Saturday with a mid-August advertise date; Hubbardston- Evergreen Road over Mason Brook is at 100% design with an advertise date of September 14th; Lancaster/Harvard/Littleton – resurfacing & related work on Route 2 was advertised in December 8th and the Notice to Proceed to PJ Keating is pending; Fitchburg/Leominster- Twin Cities Rail Trail 75/100% design was received May 2nd and we expect to advertise September 14th.

- Transit

B. Mahoney indicated that MART received a new bus last week in Gardner and a second bus will be delivered to MART next week at a conference in Rhode Island. MART is submitting a grant application under FTA Section 5339 for 10 buses and some Automatic Passenger Counters. We are also putting in an application under MassDOT Community Transit grant for buses and vans. G. Kahale indicated that the construction is under way at the Ayer parking garage project with an expected completion date of November. The ground breaking was held last month and it was well attended.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that the Next MJTC meeting will be on July 10th with the major agenda topic being the RTP. We will also have the election of officers; as of now the slate remains the same as the current officers – Jon Wyman of Westminster as Chair; Paula Bertram of Lunenburg as Vice Chair; and Doug Walsh of Athol as Secretary. Floor nominations will be accepted at the July meeting also.

The ADA PROW project was also discussed. A consultant was sought and Stantec was the winning bidder. Initial meetings with Lunenburg and Lancaster have taken place and data collection should begin soon. The third community in this program will be Winchendon.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

J. Telepciak stated that the MRPC received an EPA Brownfield assessment grant for hazardous substances of \$300,000. Grant funds will be used for sites and outreach. MRPC also received \$70,000 from EDA for the development of the CEDS and grant application assistance.

A question was asked as if the Brownfields funds have already been allocated. Staff stated that the funds have not been distributed yet and if any community is interested in the program to contact John Hume at the MRPC for information on the application procedure (jhume@mrpc.org).

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

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

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 6 19 2019 Agenda

MPO 5 15 2019 Minutes

Adjustment FFY 2019 Highway Amendment #3 6 19 2019

Comment Responses FFY 2020 UPWP 6 12 19

DRAFT FFY 2020 UPWP 5 15 2019

DRAFT Scenarios w CHART 6 19 2019

Scenario Funding 5 15 2019

RTP Executive Summary