

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held Remotely via GoToMeeting.com
Hosted by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

Minutes April 15, 2020

D. Mohler representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. After a roll call of participants, he reviewed how the remote meeting would proceed including public comments being accepted through the chat feature.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

David Mohler, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost MassDOT Dist. 3; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Tracy Murphy, Subregion 1; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Mike Bolduc, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Christopher Timmel, FHWA; Neil Angus, Devens; Ray Racine, Leominster; Ray Lyons, Harvard; Ryan McLane, Hubbardston; Travis Brown, Hubbardston; John Telepciak, MRPC; Adam Lamontagne, Templeton; Bob Szocik, Templeton; Jeff Bennett, Templeton; Joshua Hall, Westminster; Keith Hickey, Winchendon; Steven Tyler, Howard Stein Hudson;

STAFF PRESENT

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

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of March 25, 2020 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the March 25, 2020 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2021-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review & Discussion of Draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP*
- *MPO Action to Release Draft TIP for Public Review and Comment*

B. Doherty reviewed with the members a draft copy of the FFY 2021-2025 TIP. The draft TIP is based upon the financial scenarios previously presented to the MPO at prior meetings. Staff reviewed the individual project listings for each FFY from 2021 to 2025 as well as Statewide and Transit projects. In addition, the fiscal constraint analysis for each year was discussed. Each year was under the provided federal aid target figures for the region resulting in a fiscally constrained draft. Since that last meeting, the MRPC received an email from the town of Templeton that indicated that the town's priorities in respect to the two projects contained in the TIP; Project # 608424 - Route 68 Reconstruction from King Phillip Trail (Route 202) North to the Phillipston Town Line (2.65 Miles) and Project # 608784 -

Roundabout Construction at the Intersection of Patriots Road, South Main Street, North Main Street and Gardner Road. In the MPO preferred scenario, the Roundabout project is listed in FFY 2023 with the Route 68 project listed in the Appendix. The town indicated in their email that their preference was for the Route 68 project before the Roundabout. In order to address the town's issues, the MRPC developed a scenario identified as the Templeton Email Scenario. Since the projects are of considerable differences in cost (\$5.96 million for Rt 68 and \$1.5 million for the Roundabout) several changes would be needed to compile a fiscally constrained scenario. The Templeton Email Scenario did not take into consideration any comments from MassDOT or the status of the projects but simply tried to develop a scenario that reflected the town's concerns. B. Doherty indicated that at the last MJTC meeting on April 8th, a comparison of the MPO Preferred Scenario to the Templeton Email Scenario was presented and discussed.

MassDOT District representatives commented at the MJTC that the movement of the projects impacted by the Templeton Email Scenario, as well prior information provided to MassDOT from the town, the current status of the designs and costs they would not favor the Templeton Email Scenario. After discussion, the MJTC recommended that the Draft TIP be based on the MPO preferred scenario and that the MPO release the draft document for a 21-day public review and comment period.

A motion was made to release the Draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP as presented for a 21-day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- *Review & Discussion of Draft FFY 2021 UPWP*
- *MPO Action to Release Draft UPWP for Public Review and Comment*

S. Bean reviewed with MPO Members, the draft FFY 2021 UPWP. Referring to a handout, staff highlighted the changes made to the document since the last MPO presentation. This included a completed overall budget as well as individual task budgets. S. Bean then highlighted some of the tasks for the next program year.

The Draft UPWP was presented to the MJTC at their April 8th meeting. After the presentation, the MJTC reached consensus to recommend to the MPO that they release the Draft FFY 2021 UPWP for a 21-day public review and comment period.

B. Harris indicated that if released, the UPWP will have the same comment period time frame as the draft TIP.

A motion was made to release the Draft FFY 2021 UPWP as presented for a 21-day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review of Comments to Draft FFY 2020 TIP Amendment #3*
- *MPO Action to Endorse Draft FFY 2020 TIP Amendment #3*

B. Harris presented to the members the draft TIP Amendment #3 that was put out by the MPO for a 14-day public review and comment period. The comment period was shortened due to the timing of MPO meetings. B. Harris reviewed the proposed changes covered by this Amendment. We received one comment from MassDOT during the comment period. These comments related to an additional cost change to the one target project in FFY 2020, the Route 13 project in Leominster. In the Amendment #3 the project has a cost increase of \$745,000. The email comment from MassDOT requested an additional cost increase of \$13,909. In the approved FFY 2020-2024 TIP, we had listed an unspent balance of target

funds of \$855,000. This balance is enough for us to cover the original cost increase in the Amendment #3 of \$745,000 as well as the email request of \$13,909. Altogether, the cost increase for the Route 13 project is \$758,909. Therefore, the additional funding requested can be incorporated in the TIP without impacting the fiscal constraint for FFY 2020 of the TIP. The other major project in the Amendment #3 is the Fitchburg-Leominster Twin Cities Rail Trail. This project also has a cost increase as well as a recommendation to be move to FFY 2021. Additionally, two new projects are being added due to the recent awarding of Workforce Transportation Grants to MART. These are federal funds that will be transferred from FHWA to FTA and therefore needs to be amended into the TIP.

A motion was then made to endorse TIP Amendment #3. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

A. Frost mentioned that the Leominster Route 13 project is looking to be advertised in mid July 2020 and the Ayer Route 2A project #607902 was advertised on April 11th.

G. Kahale reported that MART will receive \$9 million from the federal government for COVID-19 impacts such as cleaning, driver relief and operating revenue. Also, Phase 2 of the Ayer project which involves the development of a pedestrian plaza at Depot Square has started and has an estimated completion date at the end of June.

B. Harris referred members to a handout prepared by Glenn Eaton that covers what MRPC is undertaking as part of our COVID-19 work support.

D. Mohler indicated that MasDOT District 2 representative Mike Bolduc has a microphone issue and has sent along the following status report. Project 609397 Athol/Phillipston Route 2 Resurfacing was advertised and will begin construction this summer.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- Next MPO Meeting

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for May 20th at 1:00 PM. The meeting will also likely be a virtual meeting.

D. Mohler recognized Adam Lamontagne from Templeton who wished to make a statement. A. Lamontagne indicated his appreciation over the consideration given to their email and request. The town will continue to advocate for Route 68 and he would appreciate a chance to speak on the project and rebut possible concerns that were apparently raised by the town of Lancaster at a prior meeting.

D. Mohler stated that he is welcomed to comment at the next MPO meeting before the vote on the endorsement of the TIP.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 4 15 2020 Agenda

MPO 3 25 2020 Minutes

4 FFY 2021 2025 Draft TIP FULL w Maps
4 MPO & Templeton Scenario Comparison 4 15 2020
4 Preferred Target Scenario
4 State Prioritized Projects
4 TIP 2021-2025 Transit Projects FINAL
5 DRAFT FFY 2021 UPWP
6 Comments Responses FFY 2020 TIP Amendment #3
6 FFY 2020 TIP Amendment #3 3 30 2020
6 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #3
FINAL MRPC REPORT to MPO for 4-15-20 GE GC