

# **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 June 17, 2020**

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

## **I. Introduction**

### **SIGNATORIES PRESENT**

David Mohler, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost MassDOT Dist. 3; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3;

### **MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT**

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Mike Bolduc, MassDOT District 2; Laura Hanson, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Michelle Ho, MassDOT; Paula Simmons, MassDOT; Travis Brown, Hubbardston; Neil Angus, Devens Enterprise Commission

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brad Harris; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; George Snow

## **II. Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

B. Harris explained briefly where and how the members could get copies of the handouts for the meeting through an online link via the MPO meeting notice on the MRPC website.

## **III. Approval of May 20, 2020 Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the May 20, 2020 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Review of Task Budget Change Proposal*
- *MPO Action to Related to UPWP Task Budget Changes*

B. Harris presented a series of handouts related to the proposal to amended the task budgets within the FFY 2020 UPWP. He stated that the proposed changes are in response to the restrictions implemented by the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic that have adversely affected the data collection efforts for certain tasks. B. Harris then indicated that these changes will impact only the yearly "PL" funds; the FTA funds and overall budget will not change. After a review of the budgets for all the tasks within the UPWP, it was decided that two separate tasks would be most impacted by the pandemic restrictions. He then reviewed the budgets for *Task 2.31 - Data Collection and Analysis Program* and *Task 4.41 - Bus Routes Performance Evaluation*. Task 2.31 is currently budgeted for \$40,000 in "PL" funds while Task 4.41 is currently budgeted for \$12,000 in "PL" funds. The recommended changes that will again only

affect the “PL” funds are for Task 2.31 a reduction of \$16,500 and for Task 4.41 a reduction of \$1,500. This will result in new “PL” fund budget totals of \$23,500 for Task 2.31 and \$10,500 for Task 4.41.

In re-allocating these funds, it is being recommended that the total reduction of \$18,000 be transferred to two tasks as follows: \$9,000 in “PL” funds to *Task 1.11 Support of 3C Process* for a new “PL” budget total of \$76,534 and \$9,000 in “PL” funds to *Task 2.21 GIS Mapping and Analysis* for a new “PL” budget total of \$67,000.

Due to the magnitude of these changes, an amendment for the UPWP must be done. This requires a 21-day public review and comment period. If the MPO agrees today to release this amendment, the comment period will begin on Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup> and end on Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the MJTC reviewed this proposal at their meeting last week and recommended that it be released for comment.

A motion was made to release the draft Amendment to the FFY 2020 UPWP for a 21-day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **V. Presentation on Travel by Tourism Work Task**

### **- Status of Study**

S. Bean shared with the members a PowerPoint presentation on the current task entitled “Travel by Tourism. She stated that this study will analyze the top tourism sites throughout the region, focusing heavily on the cities of Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster. Each site will show accessibility for vehicles, pedestrian and bicyclists. Transportation gaps will be inventoried and potential future TIP eligible projects will be identified. The following activities will be undertaken as part of the development of this program:

- Identify top tourism sites
- Identify and analyze transportation options within ½ mile of each site
- Identify and analyze transportation gaps
- identify potential future TIP eligible projects

There were 88 sites identified regionwide. Sidewalks, bike lanes, transit bus and commuter rail infrastructure were used for the analysis. The presentation focused on the cities of Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster. Each were shown on a map with the identified tourist attractions as well as the infrastructure available. The next steps will be to analyze the transportation gaps, gather community recommendations, identify potential TIP eligible projects and additional funding sources.

## **VI. Updates**

### **- MassDOT Highway Division**

A. Frost mentioned that MassDOT has the final plans for the Leominster Route 13 project and it has a July 18<sup>th</sup> ad date. The Ayer Route 2A project #607902 was advertised on April 11<sup>th</sup> with a bid opening in mid-July. Westminster Route 140 Resurfacing from Route 2A to Patricia Road is at the final design stage and is scheduled for advertisement in January 2021. Lunenburg Bridge Rehabilitation on Route 2A over Pearl Hill Brook is at PS&E design stage and should be advertised at the end of November. Gardner Pearson Boulevard is at the 25/75 % design phase with an ad date of next June and the Gardner Route 140 Rumble Strip Installation is at 75% design with an expected ad date of next June also.

L. Hansen from MassDOT District 2 indicated that there were no updates for the District.

### **- Transit**

B. Mahoney stated that the transit authority has decided to remain fare free until September; there has been a delay in the driver protection equipment from the manufacturer until around August so that has played into our decision to hold off on the fare collection. We are looking to restart the Boston and Worcester shuttles in July or August.

As part of a study being done by a consultant AE Com that was hired to do our comprehensive service analysis for our 5-year transportation plan. It is to be completed by mid-September. As part of this a survey is being conducted. Access can be found on the MART website as well as the MRPC website.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that MJTC Nominating Committee parented a slate at the last meeting. It consists of: Chair – Jon Wyman, Westminster; Vice Chair – Nicolas Bosonetto, Fitchburg; and Secretary – Tracy Murphy, Winchendon. The election will take place at the July MJTC meeting. We received from MassDOT and announcement of a new funding program entitled “Shared Streets & Spaces”. Full details are available on our website. Finally, the MJTC will meet in July but not in August.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

B. Harris stated that the MRPC Offices are beginning to be opened to staff. Staff has been split into certain days in order to minimize contact. Transportation, Transit and GIS are in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays while Administration, Financial and Comprehensive Planning are in on Mondays and Thursdays. The office will be unoccupied on Fridays. At the last Commission meeting, the budget was presented and discussed. Further refinements may be needed as we move forward. Finally, staff is working on a number of DLTA projects that were submitted in the last advertised round.

## **VII. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

A. Frost stated that more information and details on the Shared Streets & Spaces program will be released over the next few weeks.

B. Harris stated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for July 15th at 1:00 PM. The meeting will be held remotely.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

### **DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 6 17 2020 Agenda

MPO 5 20 2020 Minutes

4 Int Parties UPWP Budget Amend Memo 6 22 2020

4 MJTC MPO Task Adjustment Summary 6 10 2020

5 MPO 6\_17 Tourism Presentation

5 MPO 6\_17

6 MART Survey Flyer

6 Shared Streets & Spaces

6 Shared Streets and Spaces Program