

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 January 20, 2021

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT; Arthur Frost, MassDOT; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Mark Piermarani, Leominster; Tracy Murphy, Subregion 1; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Paula Simmons, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; Travis Condon, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; Jon Rockwell, The Engineering Group;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; George Snow; George Kahale; Sheri Bean

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of December 16, 2020 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 16, 2020 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Review of Potential Amendments*

B. Harris mentioned that there were no Amendment items to discuss at this time. This was a placeholder on the agenda in case MassDOT needed to bring any changes forward during this period.

V. Montachusett FFY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review and Discussion of Project Listing*

B. Harris presented various handouts to the MPO members related to the continued development of the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. As a reminder he presented the TIP Development memo that went out to all individuals and organizations on the Montachusett outreach list that invited interested parties to participate in the compilation of the new TIP. The memo included meeting dates where the TIP would be a topic of discussion. The second handout was a review of the TIP development schedule that identified certain milestones in the process.

B. Harris then began a review of the process for the establishment of a project list for the TIP. As part of this, the prior TIP projects were discussed along with current status information. For FFY 2021, it appears that all of the target identified projects are in good shape to be advertised by the end of FFY 2021. Therefore, these projects will not need to be part of the FFY 2022-2026 TIP. The cost estimates for the remaining projects from the FFY 2021-2025 TIP were then reviewed along with any new projects that were found through the MassDOT Project Info website.

B. Harris indicated that further information will come from an upcoming meeting of MARPA and MassDOT next week as well as from TIP Readiness Day in early February. He then discussed the next step in the development process and what will be presented at the next MPO meeting.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- *Development Schedule*
- *Review and Discussion of Potential Tasks*

S. Bean presented to the MPO the development process for the upcoming FFY 2022 UPWP. A copy of a memo sent to all communities in the MPO, solicitating their interest in a potential task for inclusion in the UPWP. In addition, a development schedule was reviewed that outlined the process for having the UPWP endorsed by the MPO in May of this year.

S. Bean then discussed the types of work tasks that communities may be interested in as well as some of the regular tasks that we will maintain in the new UPWP. A brief discussion was given related to the initial feedback the MRPC had received from communities regarding potential tasks. To date, we have received inquiries from four municipalities.

A question was asked by Mary Jo Bohart of Fitchburg regarding the number of local tasks that are done in each program year and if there was a limit.

S. Bean stated that there was no hard and fast limit to how many local tasks are undertaken in a given year. Rather, it depends on the types of requests, other required tasks and our UPWP budget. All of these factors are considered when the requested tasks are reviewed. Additionally, we will do an equity analysis of past work efforts in order to try to maintain an equitable distribution of funds around the region. Regarding the budget, we expect to receive figures at the upcoming MARPA/MassDOT meeting next week.

S. Bean then stated that at the next meeting, we will discuss the requests in more detail, the overall budget and what we believe will be able to be accomplished in the next work program.

VII. MassDOT Safety Performance Measures (PM1) – CY 2021

- *Review & Discussion of State Targets*
- *MPO Action Related to MassDOT PM 1 for CY 2021*

D. Krevat from MassDOT/OTP presented to the members that per Federal Highway Administrations regulations that were passed in 2016, all MPO's throughout the country are required to adopt certain performance measures as developed by their state or as developed through their own analysis. The Safety Performance Measures, PM 1, are required to be reviewed and revised each calendar year. Within PM 1 there are five annual safety performance targets. One each for Total Fatalities, Fatality Rate, Total Incapacitating Injuries, Incapacitating Injuries Rate, and Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Incapacitating Injuries. D. Krevat then reviewed the data behind the target analysis as well as the new statewide target figures for CY 2021 that will be reported by MassDOT to FHWA.

Based upon the FHWA rule, MPOs are asked to either adopt the statewide targets or to develop and report their own target numbers. This is a decision for the MPO. Over the last few years, the Montachusett MPO has voted to adopt the state target figures and to leave the reporting to MassDOT. Adopting the Targets does not commit the MRPC region to achieving the numbers set in the Targets but says that the MRPC agrees with the MassDOT process and their goals to reduce fatalities in the state.

A motion was made by G. Corbosiero to adopt the state PM 1 Targets for CY 2021. The motion was seconded by A. Frost and passed unanimously.

VIII. Updates

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 mentioned that the FFY21 Project #607431 Westminster resurfacing and related work on Rt. 140 from Route 2A to Patricia Road was advertised on January 2nd; Project #608657 Lunenburg bridge rehabilitation for Rt. 2A over Pearl Hill Brook was also advertised on December 5th; Project #608888 Gardner resurfacing and related work on Pearson Blvd. has had a 100% design submittal on December 16th; Project #608891 Gardner resurfacing and rumble strip installation on Rt. 140 is at 75% design and is still on track to be advertised on May 22, 2021; and finally, Project #608561 Leominster Rt. 12 North Main Street at Hamilton and Nelson Streets has had a 100% design submittal and is under review.

P. Simmons of MassDOT District 2 stated that the FFY21 Project #608548 Winchendon, Route 202 from Front St to Maple St has had a 100% design submittal. The PS&E submission is due this month; in FFY22 Project #608850 Petersham Bridge Replacement of Glen Valley Rd over the East Branch Swift River is expected to have the 100% design submittal this coming July.

- *Transit*

B. Mahoney mentioned that the Ayer project is on hold for now due to the weather. Staff is working on improvements at the Shirley Commuter Rail Station with the town and MBTA to see what can be done. The commuter bus shuttle from Fitchburg and Leominster to Clinton and Worcester will start up again in the near future. There are several stops planned after Fitchburg and Leominster. They include the Clinton Hospital, downtown Clinton, the Porter and Chester Institute, and the Court House and Union Station in Worcester. Also, MART has decided to have Saturday service in Athol starting this coming week.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris mentioned that the MJTC had met last week on January 13th. The major topic at this meeting was a review of the Roundabouts in the Region study that is currently underway.

Staff will be meeting with officials from Fitchburg next week to discuss the Route 12 Corridor Study scope as well as local issues. Also, we will be looking to start up the traffic count program over the next few months by hiring two traffic interns to conduct counts throughout the summer.

There are two separate handouts for your information. The first is from the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. They are seeking proposals from Massachusetts municipalities interested in replacing an undersized, perched, and/or degraded culvert located in an area of high ecological value. The purpose of this funding is to encourage municipalities to replace culverts with better designed crossings that meet improved structural and environmental design standards and climate resiliency criteria.

The second handout is from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announcing a new electric vehicle charging infrastructure program and enhancements to three existing programs under the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP).

Both are posted on the MRPC website under News and Announcements.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Corbosiero mentioned that the Executive Director is continuing to monitor the daily COVID-19 statewide case reports issued each evening by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). This data, and other relevant information, will guide MRPC's management in determining when to reopen the MRPC's office to the general public and clients under "pre-pandemic" conditions.

In regards to "H. 48: An Act Relative to Non-commonwealth Entities within the State Employees' Retirement System", all regional planning agencies are in the process of educating our respective legislative delegations concerning the adverse financial impacts of H. 48 upon regional planning agencies and councils of government in Massachusetts.

The Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP) provided to the MRPC from an Attorney General Grant (AGO), has had its' deadline extended through January 31, 2021. Some highlights of this program. A total of 18 business grant requests have been received by MRPC staff. Three awards of \$1,000 each have been made to businesses in Fitchburg, Groton, and Westminster.

MRPC has received eight inquiries into the Microenterprise Assistance Program (MAP). Applications have been provided to the inquiries and MRPC staff are waiting for the applications to be submitted. MRPC and its affiliate the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) are developing a strategic plan. The goal would be to develop one strategic plan for both organizations to be completed by spring 2021. Elements of this plan are proposed to include a Mission statement; an assessment of current resources; and an outline of goals, objectives, and activities for the future.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next scheduled MPO meeting is on February 17, 2021 at 1:00pm.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 1 20 2021 Agenda

MPO 12 16 2020 Minutes

TIP 2021 2025 w Ad Dates

4 Trans Element FFY 2021 2025 TIP Proj List

4 5 MPO Mtg 1 20 2021 Project Master List

5 TIP Development Memo 11 13 2020

5 TIP Schedule FFY 2022 2026

5 21-25 TIP as Submitted

5 22-26 Target Project First Look

6 UPWP Project Solicitation Memo

6 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022

7 Safety Performance Measures CY21 - Regional Partner Handout
7 Safety Performance Targets for RPAs 1-4-2021 MRPC
7 Safety Performance Targets for RPAs 1-4-2021 STATEWIDE Figures
FINAL FY22_CRMA_PreRFR Announcement
MassDEP Electric Vehicle Prog Annce and Matrix Jan 2021