

# **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 February 17, 2021**

Bryan Pounds representing Acting Secretary Jamie Tesler called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

## **I. Introduction**

### **SIGNATORIES PRESENT**

Bryan Pounds, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT; John Telepciak; MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Tracy Murphy, Subregion 1; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Michael-Ray Jeffreys, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4

### **MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT**

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Sen. John Cronin; Kristen Lamoureux, The Arc of Opportunity; Paula Simmons, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; Eric Atkins, The Engineering Group; Paul Milewski, Green International Affiliates, Inc.; Chris McGowan, Clinton; Kevin Bowe, media; Bob Szocik, Templeton; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Patty Page, Sterling; Jacob Simopoulos, Sen. Cronin's Office; Erik Atkins, Green International Affiliates, Inc.; Dana Mascari, Sen. Cronin's Office; Chris Timmel, FHWA;

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brian Doherty; George Snow; George Kahale;

## **II. Public Comments**

No public comments were made.

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

A motion was made to approve the January 20, 2021 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with three abstentions.

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

- *Review of Potential Amendments*

B. Doherty 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)**

- *Project Presentation – Clinton #610681 Reconstruction of Sterling St (Rt 62)*
- *Review of Project TEC Score Updates*
- *Review and Discussion of Project Priority Listing*
- *Review of Target Funding Estimates*

B. Doherty introduced P. Milewski from Green International who gave a presentation on project #610681, which is the reconstruction of Sterling Street (Rt 62) in Clinton. P. Milewski discussed the key connectivity this roadway provides to the area, the existing conditions of the roadway including the poor safety, poor drainage, poor pavement and sidewalk conditions, the lack of accessibility for all roadway users and proposed design improvements. C. McGowan confirmed the need for this project.

B. Doherty reviewed the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scores for projects being considered for the FFY 2022 - 2026 TIP Target Section and provided an update on the projects scheduled on the FFY 2021 TIP. All the scheduled FFY 2021 projects appear to be on schedule at this time. For the upcoming FFY 2022 - 2026 TIP, the MRPC will be updating the TEC scores for each of the projects listed on the Project Priority Listing which is the MRPC world of projects. At the March MPO meeting staff will be presenting project scenarios for discussion for each year of the new TIP. The MRPC has received the target numbers for each year of the TIP which is the collection of all federal federally funded projects in the MRPC region. Also, at the March MPO meeting, there will be a section on transit projects prioritized by MART and a section on the statewide prioritized projects in the MRPC region. B. Doherty presented a handout that compared the current FFY 2021 - 2025 TIP target numbers to the new FFY 2022 - 2026 TIP target numbers. In FFY 2022 - 2025, the target numbers are the same as the current target numbers. However, the FFY 2026 target number decreases to \$10,904,432. This is due to the federal GANs payments (Grant Anticipation Notes) which the state is obligated to pay for the statewide Accelerated Bridge Program. B. Doherty reviewed the TIP development schedule.

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

- *Review Preliminary Task List*
- *Review and Response to Local Task Requests*
- *Review of Initial Environmental Justice Requirements and Analysis*

B. Doherty mentioned that the MRPC is in the process of the annual update of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which is our budget and task tool used for the Transportation Department. The UPWP will begin October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and run through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Staff is currently identifying rollover projects such as the traffic count program and pavement management. There are also rollover federally required tasks such as the annual TIP development. Then there are studies that the staff solicits from member communities in the MRPC region. Some examples include intersections studies, corridor analysis, walkability and bikeability studies, and safety studies. As of today, staff has received a number of requests. Member communities should send their request to either Sheri Bean or Brad Harris as soon as possible as staff need to start prioritizing the requests. Examples include the following. Sterling has requested assistance with their pavement management system and project development for the Route 140 and 62 intersection. Several communities have requested trail planning assistance. Hubbardston has requested studies for the High Street intersections with Gardner Road. An important element is that there needs to be an equitable distribution of studies throughout the region.

B. Doherty mentioned that for this UPWP the MRPC PL/FTA 5303 allocation will be \$747,979, which is a decrease of \$22,500 from last year. The UPWP schedule is similar to the TIP schedule. For the March meeting, staff plans to have in-depth task descriptions and a listing of UPWP line items for MPO review. Staff anticipates presenting the task descriptions that have been identified as the preferred tasks to be included in the UPWP and will seek to obtain consensus from the MPO. Staff will then compile a draft UPWP document which will be presented at the April MJTC and MPO meetings. At the April MPO meeting staff will seek a vote to release the draft UPWP document for a 21-day public comment period, which will run from April 26<sup>th</sup> through May 17<sup>th</sup>. After the comment period is over on May 17<sup>th</sup>, staff will incorporate all comments into the final UPWP document and present it to the MPO at the May 19<sup>th</sup> MPO meeting and seek a vote to endorse the 2022 UPWP.

## **VII. Updates**

### **- MassDOT Highway Division**

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 was due last month and is on track; in FFY24 Project #609107 Philipson/Templeton resurfacing on Route 2, 100% PS&E is due on March 24th.

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 mentioned that for the 2021 projects, B. Doherty went through a lot of the updates; for Project #608891 Gardner, resurfacing and rumble strip installation on Rt. 140, all that is needed is to have acceptance that the plans show that there is no right away issue.

### **- Transit**

B. Mahoney mentioned that MART received the last bus of the five-bus purchase. There's been a delay in the release of the low floor cut away busses because of issues with Chevy. Chevy's releasing their chassis a bit late. So that delivery of those busses has been pushed back to late April or early May unfortunately. Hopefully, this will give MART more time to figure out the farebox problem occurring at this time. MART is starting a brand-new service. MART received a workforce grant to start a commuter shuttle to Worcester which will be starting on Monday, February 22nd. There will be three loops, one in the morning and two in the evening, to bring people back and forth between Fitchburg, Leominster, and Worcester with a stop in Clinton center on High Street. MART has been partnering with Phil Duffy and the Economic Development Department in Clinton. MART has received a number of comments from people in Fitchburg who say that they're trying to get jobs and there are jobs in Clinton and Worcester that they can't reach. So, this new service will help them get to the jobs that are there for them.

### **- Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)**

B. Doherty mentioned that the MJTC met last Wednesday. The TIP and UPWP updates discussed today were covered at the MJTC. At the March meetings, we will be discussing project scenarios for the TIP, and additional details of project tasks for the UPWP. The March meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM.

### **- Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)**

B. Doherty mentioned that MRPC staff continues to work remotely for the foreseeable future. The MRPC is undergoing its 15th Round of DLTA. Communities are encouraged to apply for local and regional planning assistance projects. Contact John Hume of our Planning and Development Office for further assistance. The MRPC is managing Community Development Block Grant awards to the towns of Shirley, Lunenburg, Royalston, Townsend and Westminster. Contact Glenn Eaton to learn more about the program. The MRPC is preparing Heywood Healthcare's Community Health Needs Assessment which staff originally completed a few years ago. This assessment should be completed in August and is a triannual report. Contact John Hume to learn more about the project. The MRPC continues to provide assistance to our communities with Green Community designations. Karen Chapman in our Planning and Development Office is in charge of that program and you can contact her to learn more. The next MRPC virtual meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.

## **VIII. Administrative Matters**

### **- Next MPO Meeting**

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

## **IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

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

MPO 2 17 2021 Agenda  
3 MPO 1 20 2021 Minutes Draft  
5 Clinton Sterling Street Handout  
5 Blank TEC Sheet  
5 DRAFT FFY 2022 2026 TEC Scores  
5 Montachusett Federal Target Comparison  
5 TIP Schedule FFY 2022 2026  
5 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022  
6 UPWP Project Solicitation Memo  
6 UPWP Requests to date  
MRPC Monthly Report for MPO Meeting 2-17-21