

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 May 18, 2022

Stephen Woelfel called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist., 3; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; George Kahale, MART; Tom Skwierawski, Fitchburg; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Andrew Wang, MassDOT; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Dist. 2; Michelle Ho, MassDOT OTP; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; Jon Rockwell, TEC Inc.; Ann Sullivan, MassDOT Dist. 3; Bonnie Mahoney, MART;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; Brian Doherty; Sheri Bean; George Snow

II. Public Comments

S. Woelfel asked those present if there were any public comments to be made.

A. Frost announced that he will be retiring soon. A. Frost thanked everyone and stated that he will miss working with the whole group. S. Woelfel stated members share the same sentiments working with A. Frost. B. Harris stated that on behalf of the MRPC he wanted to thank A. Frost for all the work he has done for the MRPC region. It has been a pleasure working with A. Frost as he has always been very responsive with answers to our questions, and he will be missed.

III. Approval of April 20, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the April 20, 2022 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with R. Meissner abstaining.

IV. Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan Update

- *Presentation by MassDOT OTP*

C. Klem provided an overview of MassDOT's next statewide, long range transportation plan entitled Beyond Mobility. The purpose of the long-range plan is to articulate a vision statement that will help guide the future of transportation in Massachusetts, serve as a strategic plan for MassDOT, and guide future capital planning at MassDOT. This plan will use an extensive public engagement and strategic planning process. There will be four (4) tasks within the Scope of work for the long-range plan that are categorized into four phases. First, is the Assessment Phase which will involve tasks such as existing conditions analysis, analyzing the most pressing trends facing Massachusetts through scenario planning,

and defining the network for a site-specific needs analysis. Next is the Visioning Phase which will involve extensive public and stakeholder engagement and will entail crafting a vision based on input from the public and from stakeholders. The third is the evaluation phase which will also involve public engagement, but it will be based more on assessing public input on a variety of tradeoffs. The final phase will involve recommendations based on this input and other analyses. Recommendations may be related to restructuring the capital planning framework related to organizational recommendations, policy related, or location specific recommendations. MassDOT is currently in the visioning phase for the long-range planning process. So far, multilingual focus groups have been completed, and a website has been launched that has a public survey for gathering input. Additional stakeholder meetings will take place throughout the summer of 2022. C. Klem asked attendees to help spread the word.

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

- *Review of Comments Received on FFY 2022 Amendment #4*
- *MPO Endorsement of FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #4*
- *Review of on Proposed Amendment #5*
- *MPO Action to Release TIP Amendment for Public Comment*

G. Snow reviewed with the MPO Draft TIP Amendment #4 that involves two (2) projects in the FFY 2022 Highway Element and nine (9) projects in the FFY 2022 Transit Element. MassDOT Highway proposed the amendment for projects #610672 Gardner and #610730 Westminster-Fitchburg. The Gardner project needs to be moved from FFY 2022 to FFY 2023 while the Westminster-Fitchburg project should be removed from the FFY 2024 TIP list as it has already been advertised in December 2021 with state funds. On the Transit side, there are six projects that have cost changes and three are being removed altogether. None of these changes impacts our fiscal constraint for the TIP nor do they effect any target eligible projects. The MPO voted to release this Amendment for a 21-day public review that began on April 26th and closed Monday May 16th. No comments were received on this Amendment.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse TIP Amendment #4.

G. Snow reviewed with the MPO proposed TIP Amendment #5 that involves project #609314 - Intersection Improvements at Greenville Road and Turnpike Road in Ashby. This project is listed under Section 2B and therefore does not affect region target totals or address fiscal constraint issues. The project is at 100% design with an expected advertisement date of July 30. But overall project cost has increased which is the reason for this Amendment. Project cost has increased approximately \$720,000 from approximately \$2.5 mil to approximately \$3.2 mil. G. Snow stated that we are looking for a vote from the MPO to release proposed TIP Amendment #5 for a 21-day public review and comment period to commence on Monday May 23 and close at the end of business on Wednesday June 13. A. Frost stated that the advertisement date has been changed to August 27, 2022.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to release TIP Amendment #5 for a 21-day public review and comment period.

VI. FFY 2023 Unified Work Planning Program (UPWP)

- *Review of Comments Received on Draft FFY 2023 UPWP*
- *MPO Endorsement of Draft FFY 2023 UPWP*

S. Bean reviewed with the MPO the draft FFY 2023 UPWP that was put out for public comment. The MPO voted in April to release the draft UPWP for a comment period to run from April 26th to May 16th. During that time frame, we received comments on the UPWP from MassDOT and the FHWA. S. Bean then reviewed the comments and the planned responses to them. These responses will be incorporated into a final FFY 2023 UPWP for the MPO to review. The MJTC reviewed the comments and responses at

their last meeting on May 11th and reached consensus on a recommendation that the MPO endorse the FFY 2023 UPWP.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse the Draft FFY 2023 UPWP.

VII. Montachusett FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review of Comments Received on Draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP*
- *MPO Endorsement of Draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP*
- *MPO Action to Endorse Montachusett MPO Self Certification*
- *MPO Action to Endorse Certification of the Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements*

B. Doherty provided the MPO with an update on the draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP. The MPO voted in April to release the draft TIP for a 21-day public review and comment period. That comment period began on April 26th and closed on May 16th. MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provided comments. B. Doherty then reviewed the individual comments and the proposed responses that will be incorporated in the final TIP with the MPO. At the May meeting of the MJTC, it was the consensus of the members to recommend that the MPO endorse the FFY 2023-2027 TIP.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse the FFY 2023-2027 TIP.

B. Doherty reviewed the Montachusett MPO Self Certification which certifies that the process used to develop the long-range transportation plan; air quality conformity determination; Transportation Improvement Program and UPWP complies with all applicable requirements of the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

B. Doherty reviewed the Certification of the Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements which certifies that the federal fiscal year 2023 through 2027 Transportation Improvement Program and the air quality conformity determination for the 2020 through 2040 long range transportation plan for the Montachusett MPO is in compliance with all applicable requirements, state regulations, and the Global Warming Solutions Act requirements that pertain to the transportation sector.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse the Self Certification and the Certification of the Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements.

VIII. Updates

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 provided the following updates on FFY 2022. Project #608779 Rt 117 and Rt 70 in Lancaster was advertised in March. In Hubbardston, Rt 68 #608793 is due to be advertised on June 4th. In Fitchburg, Bridge Preservation for Circle Street over the North Nashua River #605296 is due to be advertised on August 27th. In Gardner and Westminster preservation and related work on Rt 2 #610729 is due to be advertised on June 18th. In Ashby, Greenville Road and Turnpike Road #609314 is due to be advertised on August 27th. In Leominster, Visculoid Avenue #609529 is due to be advertised June 25th. In Gardner #610672 has been moved to 2023.

D. Amaral of MassDOT District 2 provided the following update. In FFY 2022 project #608850 Petersham Glen Valley Road Bridge Replacement over the East Branch of the Swift River is at PS&E with a current ad date of June 11, 2022; in FFY 2023, project #608784 Templeton Roundabout at Patriots Road/South Main Street/North Main Street/Gardner Road is at 75% design, 100% is completed and has an ad date of

January 14, 2023. In Phillipston and Templeton, #609107 Rt 2 preservation and related work is proposed for 2023 with a current advertisement date of January 7th.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale stated that the Board of Selectmen for the town of Phillipston have voted to join the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART). The MART Advisory Board voted to accept Phillipston as a member of MART. MART will be doing rehab work this summer at the Fitchburg ITC.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that the MJTC met last week on May 11th. The TIP and UPWP were reviewed. The election process was initiated by putting together a nominating committee that will present a slate of officers for the next meeting in June. The elections will take place in July. The next MJTC is set for Wednesday, June 8th at 2:30 PM and will be a virtual meeting.

Staff attended a public announcement at the Circle Street bridge in Fitchburg on Monday May 8th that was hosted by the Mayor of Fitchburg Stephen DiNatali and Congresswoman Lori Trahan. The announcement focused on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the funds that are being used to fund projects. The Circle Street bridge and Water Street bridge in Fitchburg will benefit from these funds.

There is a handout for members. All of these announcements are listed on the MRPC website on the front page under the Announcements tab.

- MassDOT announcement for the FY2023-2027 Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Virtual public meetings will be held across the state. The Central Massachusetts meeting is set for May 26, 2022 at 6:00 PM.
- The second handout relates to some upcoming Pre-Application webinars for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program. There are specific webinars for Tribal Governments, Towns and Transit Authorities and MPOs. The grant application process for this program has been opened. Applications are due by September 15, 2022.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Corbosiero stated that there are no updates for the MRPC. B. Harris stated that within the next couple of weeks the MRPC will be talking about staff getting back into the office on a more regular basis.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

S. Woelfel announced to the members that the MassDOT Innovation Conference will occur May 24th to 25th in Worcester at the DCU Center. Only virtual registration is available.

B. Harris stated that the next scheduled MPO meeting is on June 15, 2022 at 1:00 pm.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 5 18 2022 Agenda
MPO 4 20 2022 Minutes
5 DRAFT FFY 2022 Amendment #4 Summary
5 DRAFT FFY 2022 Highway Amendment #5 Summary
5 Transit FY22 TIP Amendment #4 Updated 4 14 2022
6 DRAFT FFY 2023 UPWP
6 FFY 2023 UPWP Comments 5 18 2022
6 Int Parties Draft TIP UPWP Memo 4 22 2022
7 DRAFT FFY 2023 2027 TIP
7 Draft TIP 2023-27 Comments
7 TIP GHG Requirements
7 TIP Self-Cert
CIP Outreach Flyer 033022
May 2022 MPO Meeting Slides - Beyond Mobility