

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of October 18, 2017

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Highway; John Telepciak, MRPC; Mohammed Khan, MART; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Gary Luca, Subregion 3; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Quinn Molloy, MassDOT; Michael Bolduc, MassDOT District 2; David Chandler, FHWA; Travis Brown, Hubbardston DPW; Thatcher Kezer, Mass Development Devens; Richard Tenney, Phillipston DPW; Kevin Flynn, Phillipston; Bonnie Mahoney, MART;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of July 19, 2017 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the July 19, 2017 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- *Discussion of Budget Adjustment Need Due to FTA Contract Figures*
- *MPO Action Related to Adjustment Discussion*

B. Harris referred to a handout titled "FFY 2018 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Adjustment Summary". He mentioned that the current FFY 2018 UPWP was endorsed in July and shortly thereafter the Federal Transit Administration sent out a budget change for the Section 5303 contract to the MRPC. The budget had total increase of \$2,160. These funds were distributed within three separate transit tasks and the overall budget was updated accordingly. All of the changes resulted in budget adjustments of 10% or less. The overall FFY 2018 Program Year budget increase of \$2,160 only results in a change of less than 3%. Also on the handout, the Amendment and Adjustment Procedures for the UPWP as contained in the Endorsed document is presented. These procedures state that a modification of budget funds can be treated as an Administrative Adjustment requiring MPO approval by a vote and then approval by MassDOT. This does not require a 21-day public review and comment period as would be necessary for an Amendment to the UPWP.

B. Harris stated that upon MPO approval, he would then submit a UPWP budget change request to MassDOT.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget changes to the FFY 2018 UPWP through the Administrative Adjustment process. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Discussion of Potential Highway/Transit Amendment or Adjustment*
- *MPO Action Related to Potential TIP Action*

B. Harris reviewed a proposed draft Amendment #1 to the FFY 2018 Transit and Highway Elements. The proposal for the FFY 2018 Transit Element would add four new projects to the TIP. These projects would be added under the Section 5310 and Non-Federal categories and involve the purchase of vans and/or buses for MART, GAAMHA, Inc. and The Arc of Opportunity in North Central Mass based upon recent grant awards. Because this involves adding new projects to the TIP, an Amendment would need to be put out for a 21-day public review and comment period. If approved for release by the MPO, the comment period would begin on Monday October 23rd and close on Monday November 13th.

In regards to the FFY 2018 Highway Element, MRPC was informed by MassDOT of some administrative cost changes conducted to the State TIP in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in order to address some fiscal constraint issues. In addition, one project was to be added to the Montachusett TIP in FFY 2018 while a second project was to move from FFY 2021 to FFY 2020. B. Harris referred members to a handout entitled "Amendment #1 to the FFY 2018-2022 Montachusett TIP" that listed the administrative cost changes and the project additions and movements. The added project is to be listed under Section 1B – Earmark of Discretionary Grant Funded Projects in FFY 2018 for Gardner – North Central Pathway Design at a total cost of \$375,000. This is a prior High Priority Project (HPP) earmark. This additional project will not impact our fiscal constraint issues for the TIP. The second project change involves moving a bridge project in FFY 2021, Shirley – Bridge Replacement Longley Road over Mulpus Brook, from Section 2A – Bridge Program/Off System to the same funding section in FFY 2020. This also does not affect our fiscal constraint analysis. Based upon the criteria outlined in the TIP as to what constitutes an Adjustment of an Amendment, the MPO was informed of the cost adjustments implemented by MassDOT with FHWA. It was also recommended that the one bridge project moved from FFY 2021 to FFY 2020 fit the definitions established for an Adjustment and therefore did not need to be treated as an Amendment. Finally, it was proposed that a Draft Amendment #1 be put out for a 21-day public review and comment period that incorporates the addition of the four new projects to the FFY 2018 Transit Element and the one new project to the FFY 2018 Highway Element. The comment period will run from October 23rd until the close of business on November 13th.

A motion was made and seconded to release the Draft TIP Amendment #1 containing the addition of four projects to the FFY 2018 Transit Element and the addition of one project to the FFY 2018 Highway Element for a 21-day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

G. Luca asked a question regarding a project in Ayer, Project #607902 Route 2A, where at a recent meeting it was indicated that this project was now listed in FFY 2022 when the town was originally under the impression that it was set for FFY 2020. The project is important to the town and he wanted to know what could the town do to see it move forward.

B. Harris indicated that he was aware of the town's concern and had talked to the Ayer DPW Director. He stated that at this time in the current FFY 2018-2022 TIP, it is being carried in FFY 2022 but the process to develop the next TIP will begin within a few months and the status of all projects will be reviewed and reprioritized. This would be the time to lobby for the project to see if it can be carried any sooner in the TIP. It is also important that the town keep the design process moving forward because this is a critical component to prioritizing TIP projects.

VI. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Structure

- *Results of Subregion 1 Representative Selection Process*
- *Discussion of Establishment of Subregion Only Meetings*

B. Doherty indicated that at the last meeting it was mentioned that John Columbus of Templeton had informed the MPO that he was giving up his Select Board seat and therefore could no longer serve as the MPO Representative for Subregion 1. In order to fill this vacancy, the MRPC canvassed the communities in Subregion 1 to see if there were any volunteers for the position. We then heard from Templeton that Select Board member Julie Richard was interested in the position. Since this was the only volunteer, an online poll was conducted of the municipalities involved for her election. The poll participants voted in favor of Ms. Richard and she will now assume the Subregion 1 Alternate position for the MPO. Additionally, the former Alternate, Barbara Anderson of Winchendon, will move up to the Representative position. We are currently awaiting an official designee appointment from Ms. Richard.

B. Doherty also mentioned that the MRPC staff is considering holding MPO Subregion only meetings to allow for the representatives for each Subregion to meet and discuss key issues or topics that pertain to their particular Subregion communities. These meetings could either be held out in the Subregion or here at the MRPC. Communication amongst Subregion representatives is key and we are trying to find creative ways to make this communication easier as well as boost participation for all representatives, alternates and their designees. We are asking for some discussion from the MPO as to whether the establishment of these Subregion meetings was something we should move forward with and also some feedback on dates and times for the meetings.

After some discussion, B. Harris indicated that a poll will be developed for the Subregion communities in order to get input on preferred times and dates.

VII. Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT)

- *Presentation and Demonstration by MassDOT GIS Team*

Q. Molloy of MassDOT gave a presentation on the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT). MaPIT is a web-based application designed to streamline completion of municipal Project Need Forms (PNF) and Project Initiation Forms (PIF). MaPIT is planned to be the primary interface for all state-funded project submittals and tracking in a move towards an all-electronic format. The web app is expected to go live in late October. Ms. Molloy then walked the MPO members through a sample project highlighting the project development process and correspondence system.

M. Bolduc indicated that he had available forms for communities to fill out in order to receive the necessary log-in information. We are currently only planning on one log-in account for each municipality.

A question was asked that if a form has already been filled out for a town, when will they receive the log-in information.

M. Bolduc indicated that all of the account information is being compiled and notices will be going out soon but not until the system has gone live online. Hopefully, that will be end of October or early November.

VIII. FFY 2017 Montachusett MPO Title VI Annual Report

- Presentation and Discussion of Report

S. Bean reviewed with the MPO, the information that was compiled for the 2017 MPO Title VI Annual Report. This report was submitted to MassDOT at the end of September. The document was formatted to address questions and comments received in a letter from MassDOT. That letter is presented in the appendix of the document. S. Bean then highlighted some of the other major areas contained in the report including data on translation options used by the MRPC as well as the methodology used to assess equity issues related to Transit projects included in recent TIPs. In addition, some of the goals identified by the MRPC aimed at improving our Title VI work and activities in the future were highlighted.

IX. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

M. Bolduc stated that the Royalston bridge project no. 608179 on North Fitzwilliam Road over Lawrence Brook is at 25% and has a design public hearing scheduled for November 8th. In Athol, 25% design has been received for bridge replacement on Washington Avenue over the Athol Pond Outlet and MassDOT comments are due at the end of this month. The Winchendon Route 202 project is at PS&E and is ready to go when funding is available. Also, there is one construction update; project no. 608542 Route 140 from Teel Road to just south of Route 12 has had a sizable extra work order that extends down into Gardner with all safety improvements.

S. Bradbury indicated that Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project was advertised in August and the bids are expected to be opened in December. The Gardner/Leominster/Sterling HSIP project at three locations is at 25% design as well as the Hubbardston bridge replacement project on Evergreen Road over Mason Brook. The Fitchburg Route 31 project over Phillips Brook is at 25% design and the Gardner Pleasant Street bridge project is at 75% design.

- Transit

B. Mahoney mentioned that the bids for the sidewalk project at Wachusett Station in Fitchburg have come in and we are awaiting permits from the city of Fitchburg. The contract has already been awarded. MART has plans to bring some amendments to the current TIP before the MPO in the near future. We are working on these with the state.

M. Khan stated that the Devens service set up to bring workers to and from the Fitchburg/Leominster area is also being used to pick up some commuters from the area rail stations to work at Devens in a reverse commute operation. The service has been extended to weekends as an on-demand service. MART and MassRides is also putting together a try it transit day for Devens to recruit riders. A date has not been set yet but we are looking at early November.

T. Kezer expressed his thanks to MART for setting this service up. We have a number of large manufacturing firms that indicated that they were having a hard time filling their jobs and unless something could be done they were thinking of leaving Devens and the state. Therefore it was critical that this service be set up to help meet this demand.

- Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)

B. Harris indicated that the next MJTC meeting will be held on November 8th at 6:30 pm at the MRPC offices. He referred members to a number of handouts including a copy of a news article related Complete Street funding being spent in Clinton, Lancaster and Leominster; a copy of a meeting calendar

for 2018 with MPO and MJTC meetings listed; and a copy of a Federal Funding Obligation Report for the Montachusett Region. This listing highlights the federal highway funds that were obligated to projects in FFY 2017. We have a new staff member on board at the MRPC; David Fee joined the transportation staff last week. Today, he is out with other staff members at a Road Safety Audit on Main Street in Fitchburg. Finally, S. Bean attended a ribbon cutting ceremony on South Street in Fitchburg for a Safe Routes to School project.

D. Chandler from FHWA had a comment on the Obligation Report and the regulations that identify the information that should be included. He recommended that staff review those regulations to ensure that all of the required information is provided as part of the report.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

J. Telepciak indicated that the MRPC Had an Open House/Ribbon Cutting ceremony in early October that was well attended. Our Executive Director is at a GIS conference related to Health and Human Services that should assist us in working on some Health Management Plans. The MRPC is currently looking for a full or part time planner to work in the Planning & Development Department.

X. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting would be Wednesday November 15th at 1:00 PM here in the MRPC offices.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 10 18 2017 Agenda
7 19 17 MPO Minutes
Summary UPWP Budget Adjustment 9 13 2017
Summary TIP Transit Amendment #1 Oct 18 2017
FFY 2018 Highway Amendment #1 Summary
MPO Signatory List 9 1 2017
FINAL 2017 Title VI Report NO MAPS 9 30 2017
Mont MPO FFY17_Obligation_Reports_20171016
Telegram Complete Streets Awards 10 2 2017
2018 Meeting Calendar ver 1