

# MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of October 19, 2016

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

## I. Introduction

### SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; John Telepciak, MRPC; Arthur Frost, MassDOT District 3; Mohammed Khan, MART; Kristin Kelly, Leominster; Mike O'Hara, Fitchburg; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 1; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Gary Luca, Subregion 3 (Alternate);

### MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENTS

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Mike Bolduc, MassDOT District 2; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Thatcher Kezer, Devens; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Eric Rodriguez, Cleghorn Neighborhood Center; David Chandler, FHWA; Greg Dumas, Sterling;

### STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, George Snow, Sheri Bean, George Kahale

## II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

## III. Approval of August 3, 2016 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the August 3, 2016 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with P. Bertram abstaining.

## IV. Montachusett FFY 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment/Adjustment

- *Review & Discussion for FFY 2017 Highway Element Amendment*
- *MPO Release for Public Review and Comment Period*
- *Adjustment to Add Transit GHG Analysis Appendix to TIP*
- *Future Potential Actions Related to TIP*

B. Harris referred members to a handout titled *Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #1* and indicated that we had received notice from MassDOT for the need to amend the FFY 2017 Highway Element of the FFY 2017-2021 TIP. This amendment would entail the addition of a project to Section 1C Federal Aid Non-Target Projects of FFY 2017. The project is #608193 Fitchburg-Leominster Rail Trail, known as the Twin Cities Rail Trail, as a HPP (High Priority Program) project for a total cost of \$2,846,000. This includes \$2,276,800 in federal funds and \$569,200 in local non-federal funds. The local funds are split between Fitchburg and Leominster at \$157,099.20 and \$412,100.80, respectively. These non-target funds will allow the cities to acquire 3.8 miles of CSX inactive rail line. The cities would also like to make this purchase before or around December 1<sup>st</sup> of this year before a new appraisal is sought by CSX. Thus, a shorten public review and comment period has been discussed by MassDOT. Instead of the typical 30 days, the Montachusett Public Participation Plan (PPP) allows for a shorten comment period of not less than 10 days under extraordinary circumstances. A fifteen (15) day comment period could begin on Monday October 24<sup>th</sup> and would close on Monday November 7<sup>th</sup>, two

days before the next regularly scheduled MPO meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>. This amendment does not impact our fiscal constraint issues for the TIP.

A motion was made to release the FFY 2017 TIP Amendment No. 1 for a shorten public review and comment period of 15 days. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris discussed the need to make an Adjustment to the current FFY 2017-2021 TIP based on a request from MassDOT. As part of the requirements with the FFY 2017-2021 TIP Programming Guidance, each RPA was requested to conduct a Green House Gas (GHG) analysis for both completed and proposed transit projects. Due to the timing of the subsequent coordination and review process, the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) was unable to capture this analysis into the completed TIPs and State TIP (STIP). At this time, MassDOT is requesting the incorporation of both the completed and programmed transit project GHG analysis as an Appendix to each RPAs endorsed TIP as an adjustment to the document.

The MRPC has prepared an Appendix for the current FFY 2017-2021 Montachusett TIP that incorporates the requested GHG analysis information. Based on the Adjustment criteria and procedures outlined in the TIP, the addition of an Appendix can be considered a minor modification and action since there is no changes made to the projects, their costs or fiscal year listings.

This adjustment simply needs notification to the MPO and their approval. No public review and comment period is required.

A motion was made to approve the Adjustment #1 to the current FFY 2017-2021 Montachusett TIP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris then presented information to the MPO regarding future actions that will need to be discussed at the next MPO meeting related to additional Amendments to the FFY 2017-2021 TIP. MassDOT informed MRPC that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) had approved two projects in the Montachusett FFY2017 Highway Element for advertisement and construction with Redistribution funds in FFY2016. As a result, these two projects will be removed from FFY2017 and will consequently result in the Montachusett TIP being \$2,678,965 under our regional target of \$9,256,919 for FFY 2017. He then reviewed the two projects in question and presented two potential options to address the issue to the MPO. He stressed that no decision is required at this time but that this was merely a “heads up” on an issue that will be discussed at the next meeting. He also indicated that the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) will meet this evening and that this will be a point of discussion. It is hoped that a recommendation will be developed tonight for the MPO’s consideration.

B. Mahoney of MART indicated that there would also be a need for an Amendment to the Transit Element of the TIP and it also would be discussed at the next meeting.

S. Woelfel indicated that it needs to be mentioned that these are only two possible options right now and that this needs to be put out there so that all communities and/or projects have a chance to be considered.

## **V. MPO Coordination Notice of Proposed Rule Making**

### *- Review, Comments and Discussion*

B. Harris indicated that at the last MPO meeting a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) put out by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the Federal Register on June 27, 2016 was discussed. This NPRM related to MPO Coordination. At that time the comment period was to run until August 26<sup>th</sup>. Since that time, the federal agencies have agreed to

extend the comment period until October 24<sup>th</sup> in order to allow for more input. The MPO as well as the MRPC, MassDOT and two of our communities have submitted comments to the docket. He presented copies of the comments submitted and encouraged any other communities or organization to also submit comments if they feel so inclined.

A question was asked if the Nashua area would be part of this change if it comes about. B. Harris indicated that the Nashua Urbanized Area does come into our current region slightly so we would have to work out the coordination process with the MPO up there but they also will likely be effected by the Boston UZA and the coordination efforts needed with them.

A question was asked regarding the MPO comment response letter and the line that states that there is "little if any relationship to the city (Boston) and its surrounding metropolitan area." B. Harris stated that in putting the letter together, he was focusing on how the MPO operates and that the larger Boston MPO has a different structure and approach and that that really does not fit with how the Montachusett MPO has evolved.

## **VI. Updates**

### *- MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost indicated that the Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street is at the 75% submission level. The next step is to get the Right-of-Way plans together for the communities to begin that process. P. Bertram stated that the Lunenburg Board of Selectmen received an update last night from the design consultant. They are advancing towards the 100% design; they have received approval on the environmental permitting and are now beginning the temporary easement process. A neighborhood meeting is scheduled for the beginning of November to discuss the easement issues. There are 26 temporary and 6 permanent easements in Lunenburg. The six are all related to MBTA property and the appraisals are to start in January or earlier. Approval of the easements will be sought at annual town meeting.

S. Woelfel asked to be notified of who the consultant and town are in contact with at MBTA. P. Bertram indicated she would find out.

A. Frost continued stating Gardner Matthews Street is ready to go and will be advertised before the end of the year; Hubbardston Route 68 should be ready after the start of the new calendar year.

J. Hoynoski stated that the Templeton Route 68 project has been advertised and has a bid opening scheduled on February 14<sup>th</sup>; Winchendon Route 140 has also been advertised and has a bid opening on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Winchendon bridge replacement on North Royalston Road is at 75% design; Winchendon Route 12 resurfacing had a 75% submission on October 18<sup>th</sup>; and Royalston bridge replacement on Stockwell Road has a design public hearing set for October 27<sup>th</sup>.

### *- Transit*

B. Mahoney stated that MART will have a TIP Amendment for the next meeting. Part of that will be a project using CMAQ funds that were never obligated for a sidewalk connecting at the Wachusett Station. Some of the amendment will be due to the redistribution of some available funds.

G. Kahale indicated that the Wachusett Station project has been substantially completed and that it is operating with some limited service. MART has also adjusted its service to meet the trains currently and as the schedule expands, service will continue to be expanded. Regarding the Ayer parking facility, MART signed a contract with Weston & Sampson to start the design of the facility.

- *MJTC*

B. Harris indicated that the MJTC will meet tonight at 7:00 pm that will have a presentation on low income figures for the Region recently completed by MRPC staff member, K. Olbrich.

- *MRPC*

J. Telepciak indicated that the Commission has been working on some internal matters such as budgets, etc. B. Harris stated that the transportation staff has begun work on the new UPWP tasks and are developing work scopes.

## **VII. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris reviewed a few handouts with the MPO. One is a listing of acronyms for members to refer to; a second one is a calendar of meeting dates for the remainder of 2016 and a new calendar for 2017. The next meeting is November 9th at 1:00 PM.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

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

MPO Amendment 1 Summary 10 19 2016  
MPO Adjustment 1 Summary 10 19 2016  
APPENDIX E Transit GHG Part A  
MPO Amendment 2 Summary 10 19 2016  
Final NPRM Comment Ltrs MPO MRPC MassDOT  
MPO NPRM Ext of Comments  
MMPO MRPC ACRONYM LIST 8 2016  
2017 Meeting Calendar  
Oct to Nov 2016 Meeting Calendar  
Royalston Public Hearing Notice Bridge Project #608250  
Baystate Roads Complete Streets 201 Flyer Oct2016