

# **MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING**

**Minutes of December 20, 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; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Stephanie Lahtinen, Subregion 2; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4;

### **MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT**

Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Thatcher Kezer, Mass Development Devens; David Chandler, FHWA; Bonnie Mahoney, MART

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; David Fee; Glenn Eaton; George Kahale

## **II. Public Comments**

There were no public comments to be made.

## **III. Approval of December 20, 2017 Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the December 20, 2017 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed.

## **IV. Montachusett FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- *Review/Discussion on Potential Draft Amendment #2*
- *MPO Action to Release FFY 2018-2022 TIP Draft Amendment #2 for Public Comment*

B. Harris referred to a handout that summarized potential TIP Amendment #2 for the FFY 2018 Transit Element of the FFY 2018-2022 TIP.

B. Mahoney then outlined the scope of the Amendment, the reasons behind the needed shift in funding and scope.

B. Harris also stated that the 21-day public comment period because of all of the upcoming holidays would run from December 26th until the close of business on January 16, 2018, one day before the scheduled next MPO meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

A motion was made to release Draft TIP Amendment #2 for a 21 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **V. Massachusetts Safety Performance Measures**

- *Overview Presentation by MassDOT*

N. Tishler gave a presentation to the MPO regarding the state's development of a Safety Performance Measure and the role and decisions that are needed to be made by the MPO over the next month or

two. A federal requirement states that individual state DOTs must set a series of Performance Measures (PM) over the next several months. The first of these is the Safety PM and that is the focus of the presentation today. As required, the state has to set a PM and the MPO's then have the option of adopting the state PM or developing their own. If a MPO adopts the state PM there is nothing further to due, i.e. there is no reporting requirement for the MPO, but if the MPO does choose to develop their own PM then they must report on an annual basis to the federal government. The state set thier PM back on October 1, 2017 and now the MPO must take an action by February 27, 2018. Further information was provided on the state Safety PM, the five annual safety targets, their development process and the upcoming schedule for additional PM.

The next step for the MPO will be to take formal action on adopting the state PM targets or to set their own safety targets by February 27, 2018. Therefore, the MPO will be discussing this action item in the next month or two.

B. Harris indicated the MPO that PM has discussed PM in the past especially during the development of the last Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). These PM were developed before any formal adoption or development by the state but It has always been our intention to coordinate with the state on the various PM and to revise, adjust, adopt and clarify the regional PM during the development of the next RTP. The regional PM are not intended to replace any of the state PM but instead to work with and contribute to them.

## **VI. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan**

### *- Discussion and Review of Regional Population Projections*

B. Harris presented information related to the development of Regional and Community based population projections for 2020, 2030 and 2040 as part of the development process for the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Based upon MassDOT and work done by the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI), regional population projections were developed and provided to the RPA's. After review and discussion, we agreed with these figures as developed for the Montachusett Region. The next step is now for the RPA to distribute these regional numbers to the communities that comprise the region. MassDOT has left this method for development of the community figures up to the RPA's. As such, we have been looking at potential methods to accomplish this. The MRPC has identified three possible options. We are now reviewing these numbers and discussing them internally. It is our intention to identify a preferred option and then send these figures out to the communities for their feedback.

B. Harris then reviewed the options and resulting figures with the MPO.

N. Tishler stated that the work the state is doing with UMDI is establishing the projections for all of the regions across the state so that everyone is using the same methodology. Also, the option that utilizes a weight factor is intriguing as it gives more weight to the recent population trends.

## **VII. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

### *- Results of Subregion Survey*

S. Bean indicated that as a result of the survey conducted regarding the potential dates and times for a Subregion meeting, we are now going to reach out to the communities with specific dates and times to hold these initial meetings. We are looking at the last two weeks of January 2018 and plan on having set dates, times and locations by approximately January 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. Updates**

### *- MassDOT Highway Division*

B. Harris stated that there was only one updated item from District 2 for Project #608179 in Royalston. A Design Public Hearing was held and they are expecting submittal of 75% designs over the next couple of weeks.

S. Bradbury indicated that Hubbardston Route 68 project had a bid opening on August 31<sup>st</sup> with P.J. Keating as the apparent low bidder; in Lunenburg the Route 13 Chase Road project bids were opened on November 15<sup>th</sup> with P. J. Albert as the apparent low bidder. The Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project bids opening has been moved to February 2018. The Route 31 bridge project in Fitchburg is at 75% design; the Gardner/Leominster/Sterling Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) project at three locations is awaiting the 75% designs; and the District is waiting for the 100% design on the Pleasant Street bridge in Gardner this week.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale stated that the Ayer project is nearing 100% design and that they expect to go out to bid for construction in February 2018. Also for the Devens bus route, weekly ridership has gone over the 100-passenger mark.

M. Khan also stated that along with the other RTA's in the state, MART is fighting the reductions in the proposed state budgets. MART is also working on absorbing Athol and Orange into their normal operating area and that it looks like we will be able to maintain at least a minimum of one bus on an hourly basis in that area. Also, MART is looking to add the Devens route into our normal operations. These are two of the major issues we are facing especially in light of potential state budget issues.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris indicated that the MRPC is updating the regions High Crash locations. This information is also being updated on MrMapper. Staff is also at work on an update to the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan. Staff will be attending a meeting with the North Central Regional Coordinating Council to discuss the status of the plan. We are also working on an update to the Regional Trail Guide produced a few years ago. As such, two public input meetings have been set up. There is a handout discussing the Trail Guide update project and the location and time for the meetings. Finally, the next MJTC meeting will be on January 10, 2018 and it will be the first of our meetings to be held out in the region. This one will be held in Gardner at the City Hall.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Eaton indicated that the MRPC is currently working on a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) by March 2018. A series of focus group meetings have been held and will continue to be held. In addition, a survey has been developed that will go out soon. Some questions deal with transportation and results will be shared. We are also working on a grant proposal for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to address some issues in business and industrial needs and locations.

N. Tishler indicated that at the last meeting a question was raised regarding the state freight plan and Pan Am railroad and their effort to upgrade their trains to clean diesel. However, since Pan Am is a private carrier, we do not have that information but the question has been forwarded as a public comment to the plan.

## **IX. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 17, 2018 at 1:00 PM here in the MRPC offices.

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

**DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 12 20 2017 Agenda  
11 15 17 MPO Minutes  
Draft Transit FFY 2018 Amendment #2 REVISED 12 20 2017  
Safety Performance Measures (PM1)  
Safety Rule Final  
FULL Pop Proj Handout 12 20 2017  
Pop Proj Presentation  
Subregion Meeting Survey FINAL Results 12 20 2017  
2018 Meeting Calendar ver 1