

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held at
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

Minutes of January 24, 2018

A. Frost representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Arthur Frost, MassDOT; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Highway; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Albert Gallant, Subregion 1; Stephanie Lahtinen, Subregion 2; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Travis Brown, Hubbardston;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; David Fee; 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 with A. Frost, A. Gallant and P. Bertram abstaining.

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

- *Review/Response on Comments to Draft Amendment #2*
- *MPO Endorsement of FFY 2018-2022 TIP Amendment #2*
- *Review, Discussion and MPO Action on Potential TIP Amendment #3*

B. Harris referred to a handout that summarized TIP Amendment #2 for the FFY 2018 Transit Element of the FFY 2018-2022 TIP. The amendment had a 21-day public comment period from December 26, 2017 to the close of business on January 16, 2018. During that time, we did not receive any comments on the Amendment. The MJTC also reviewed the Amendment at their meeting on January 10th and recommended that the MPO endorse Amendment #2 as presented subject to any comments that may be received. B. Mahoney reviewed the change in the TIP Amendment to the MPO and the reasons behind the project change.

A motion was made to endorse TIP Amendment #2 as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris indicated that an email was received from MassDOT of a TIP Amendment proposal to the FFY 2018 Highway Element. It involves the addition of target funds to project #608188 Gardner/ Leominster/ Sterling – Intersection Improvements at three locations. The cost for this project has

increased and as such, MassDOT would like to utilize the remaining target funds of \$1,385,219 for our region in FFY 2018. This would be added to the project along with an additional \$37,278 of statewide HSIP funds. Altogether, the project has increased from \$1,200,000 to \$2,622,497 and by utilizing these two funding changes the project can move forward. A review of the fiscal constraint for our TIP after this change would leave us right at our overall FFY 2018 target amount of \$9,864,087. Therefore, the TIP would remain fiscally constrained. A handout provided to the MPO summarized the proposed changes and the fiscal constraint analysis.

P. Bertram asked why the cost of the project had changed so much. A. Frost indicated that the main change in the project occurs at the Gardner Route 68 rotary under Route 2 where we are adding pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in the area, extending the sidewalks down towards Timpany Boulevard and along the other side towards Main Street. There are also some added right of way and environmental issues related to improvements on the Route2 westbound off ramp into the rotary.

A motion was made to release TIP Amendment #3 for a 21-day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2019-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review of Regional Project Listing

B. Doherty referred members to a handout that listed the projects under consideration for the upcoming FFY 2019-2023 TIP. The projects are grouped into those projects expected to compete for regional target funds, bridge projects and other projects expected to be funded through statewide funds. Also included in the listing is a column that identifies the TEC, or Transportation Evaluation Criteria, score for the project based upon our regional criteria. We will be reviewing these scores as well as providing initial scores for the new projects added to our region.

B. Harris indicated that we are planning on some project presentations for the next meeting. We are currently looking at the following projects as candidates for presentation: #608784 Templeton Roundabout Construction; #608779 Lancaster Intersection Improvements; #608793 Hubbardston Route 68; and #608879 Winchendon Route 202. We will be reaching out to the communities to see if something can be scheduled for next month. In addition, at the end of January we will be attending a MARPA/MassDOT meeting where we should be receiving our target estimates for the FFY 2019-2023 TIP.

VI. Massachusetts Safety Performance Measures

- Review of State Safety Performance Measures*
- MPO Adoption of Performance Measures*

G. Snow reviewed information regarding the state's development of a Safety Performance Measure and the role and the decision needed to be made by the MPO. A federal requirement states that individual state DOTs must set a series of Performance Measures (PMs) over the next several months. The state has set PMs and the MPO now has to decide if they want to adopt the state's PMs or develop their own. Further information was provided on the state Safety PMs and the five annual safety targets. In addition, the MJTC reviewed the state Safety PMs at their last meeting on January 10th and recommended that the MPO adopt them as presented.

B. Harris also explained to the MPO that with the last Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), we developed some performance measures for the region covering a number of goals and objectives, one of which was safety. These PMs for the RTP are and will be evaluated as part of the development of the next RTP and as such they will be revised and updated as needed. However, it is our intention that they will reflect and incorporate the PMs developed by the state. The regional PMs will be used by us to

evaluate our progress in reaching the goals defined by the RTP. So, the regional PMs are not intended to replace any of the state PMs but supplement them.

A motion was made to adopt the safety performance measures developed by the state. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan

- *Discussion of Community Level Population Projections*
- *MPO Action Related to Community Level Population Projections*

B. Harris presented a handout that was a copy of a memo emailed to our member municipalities. The memo outlined the process used by the staff to develop population projections for the individual communities in the region for the forecast years of 2020, 2030 and 2040. The email also asked the communities to look over the projections and provide us with their feedback by February 16th. As background, the various Regional Planning Agencies (RPA's) have been working with MassDOT and the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) on regional population projections for each of the RPA's. After agreement on these figures as developed for the Montachusett Region, we now have taken the next step of distributing these regional numbers to the individual communities. The method for the development of the community figures that was decided upon was based on a weighted average from the 1990, 2000 and 2010 census figures. Also, one point to remember, is that these figures are not tied to any funding but are used as part of the long-range planning efforts of the region and the state.

A. Gallant asked if any figures based on age were going to be developed or provided as part of this effort. B. Harris indicated that he was not sure but he will look into that issue.

A. Frost asked if the growth numbers are different for each community or the same. B. Harris indicated that if the 2020 to 2040 changes are looked at for each community they will see different growth rates but between the 10-year periods, the change reflects the changes seen between the overall regional numbers.

VIII. Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HST)

- *Status Update Presentation*

G. Kahale presented to the MPO members a status review of the development of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan currently under development by the MRPC. This plan is an update to the 2014 Coordinated Plan that examines issues related to various target populations; low income, elderly, LEP (Limited English Proficiency), disabled and unemployed.

G. Kahale reviewed the various inputs to the plan, the updated census data and associated mapping as well as the development of gaps, needs, priorities and recommendations.

T. Murphy asked if locations such as the new commercial center in Athol are part of the considerations when looking at gaps or needs. Winchendon would like to see something available to access someplace like this. G. Kahale stated that there is some routing available that can address this but there is no direct connection available. Areas like this will be part of the analysis for this study.

IX. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- *Subregion Meetings Schedule*

S. Bean indicated that as a result of a survey conducted of the Subregion communities, a series of meetings have been set up for next week. Most of the meetings will take place in the morning except for Subregion 3 which will be held at 7:00 pm. Each meeting will cover the primary point of interest as

highlighted by our survey; Development of a TIP Project. Once these first round of meeting are held, we plan on trying to meet on a quarterly basis.

X. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

A. Frost stated Hubbardston Evergreen Road over Mason Brook is expected to be moved off of FFY 2019 because of some Article 97 land and also DCR (Department of Conservation & Recreation) owns the roadway; so, some legislative action is needed. The Route 31 bridge project in Fitchburg is at 75% design and is on schedule; and the Pleasant Street bridge in Gardner is looking at a June 2018 advertisement.

B. Harris stated that there was no update from District 2.

- Transit

G. Kahale stated that the Ayer project design has been approved by the Planning Board and completed by spring. It will go out for bid this spring with construction to begin this fall.

B. Mahoney indicated that for Wachusett Station they are waiting for the weather to break for the curbing for the sidewalk to be completed. MART has also been doing renovations in Athol at the depot facility. There was no ADA access but a ramp was put in just recently to allow ADA clients to enter the building. A large ITS project should be going out to bid hopefully in the spring. The project involves real time passenger information.

G. Kahale also mentioned that MART is looking for some funding to install facilities for bus stop locations in Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner as they move from a flag down system to a fixed stop system.

- Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)

A. Gallant provided an update on the Winchendon Central Street project. The town has met with District 2 and the engineer, Tighe & Bond, who are working on 25% and then hopefully 75% within eight months. We have also asked Tighe & Bond for a preliminary design for Blair Square and the hope to move this project forward also.

B. Harris indicated that the MJTC held its first meeting outside of the MRPC offices back on January 10th. The meeting was held in Gardner in the City Hall. The next meeting on February 14th will be held in Sterling at their Town Hall. There are two handouts; the first is on the State Rail Plan public meeting by MassDOT; the second is on two Trail Inventory Update meetings to be held over the next two weeks. These meetings are part of our efforts to compile a new Regional Trail Guide. Also, MPO Subregion 1 Alternate Julie Richard has indicated that she has selected Alan Mayo as her designee. Staff contributed to a Road Safety Audit on January 19th in Ashby for Turnpike Road/Greenville Road.

- Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

J. Telepciak indicated that the MRPC has a signed contract for District Local Technical Assistance funding for the upcoming year. We are also working with the MA Office of Technical Assistance & Technology on a workshop to be held in Leominster on March 13th to educate leaders, DPWs, Local Emergency Planning Committees, and Fire Departments on toxic chemicals in their communities. MRPC is also working on CDBG applications for Winchendon, Shirley, Lancaster and Townsend.

XI. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 21, 2018 at 1:00 PM here in the MRPC offices.

B. Mahoney indicated to the MPO that MART will be filming a training video over the next few days on their buses and around town.

T. Murphy asked whether Complete Street grant decisions have been made yet. A. Frost indicated that we have no information at this time but will look into it.

XII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 1 24 2018 Agenda

12 20 17 MPO Minutes

Draft Transit FFY 2018 Amendment #2 REVISED 12 20 2017

FFY 2018 Amendment #3 Summary 1 24 2018

Master List TIP 2019 2023 Projects 1 2 2018

Coordinated Human-Services Update - MPO Presentation - 1-24-2018

MPO Subregion Mtg List & Agenda 1 24 2018

Population Projection Memo to Communities 1 19 2018

Safety PM Rule Final

State Safety PM Summary

State Rail Mtg Notice 1 23 2018

Trail Meeting Memo