

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of January 25, 2017

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

David Mohler, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Highway; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Heather Budrewicz, Subregion 2; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Gordon Robertson, Leominster

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

David Chandler, FHWA; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Steve Nims, Ashburnham; Gary Luca, Ayer; Sue Kennedy, Ayer; Thatcher Kezer, Devens; Mohammed Khan, MART; Greg Dumas, Sterling

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, George Snow, George Kahale, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty, Kaitlyn Olbrich, Glenn Eaton

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of December 14, 2016 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 14, 2016 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with A. Frost abstaining.

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

- *Review and Discussion Regarding TIP Amendment #2 –Transit Element*
- *MPO Endorsement of TIP Amendment #2*
- *Discussion Regarding TIP Amendment #3 – Highway & Transit Elements*
- *MPO Release of TIP Amendment #3 for Public Review & Comment Period*

B. Harris indicated that FFY 2017 Transit Element TIP Amendment #2 was out for a 30 day public review and comment period that concluded on January 17th. During that time, no comments were received regarding the amendment. Unfortunately, the MJTC meeting scheduled for last week was cancelled due to the weather so we do not have a recommendation from them. However, in the past the MJTC has been supportive of Transit amendments that improve services in the region.

A motion was made to endorse the FFY 2017 Transit Element TIP Amendment #2. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris then discussed with the MPO actions needed on both the FFY 2017 Highway and Transit Elements in order to address issues related to several projects. On the Highway Element side, he reviewed recent actions by MassDOT that allowed for two of our FFY 2017 projects to be advertised in FFY 2016 due to federal aid re-distribution funds being made available to the Commonwealth in late August/September 2016. The advertisement of these two projects leaves us approximately \$2.6 million

under our target for FY 2017. In order to address this, various options have been examined and the MPO needs to recommend one for us to put an amendment out for public comment.

The MPO then discussed the options available, the needs of the candidate projects, their status and whether any other project was advanced enough to be considered. MassDOT indicated that it is comfortable with the progress of project #606124 Summer Street and does not have an issue with the shifting of funds between the two fiscal years. D. Mohler also indicated that it is MassDOT's preference, in general, that before you advance a new project you would look for a project already in the TIP but it remains a local decision.

The MPO then decided to:

- Advance project #607770 Lunenburg Route 13 Resurfacing from FFY 2019 to FFY 2017, and;
- Increase the funding amount for project #606124 Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street in FFY 2017 (with a corresponding reduction in funding in FFY 2018) by approximately \$1 million dollars in order to zero out available target funds in FFY 2017.

A motion was made to endorse the release of a FFY 2017 Highway TIP Amendment #3 for a 30 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Mahoney then discussed the need for the FFY 2017 Transit Element Amendment #3. MART received a discretionary grant award for a Rides to Wellness Grant which is 5310 funding. In order to get the funds, it needs to be in the FFY 2017 TIP. The funds will be for a research software project related to better scheduling among the users.

A motion was made to endorse the release of a FFY 2017 Transit TIP Amendment #3 for a 30 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris indicated that the 30 day comment period will begin on January 30th and end on February 28th.

B. Mahoney asked if the next MPO meeting can be moved up as MART would like to get this approved as soon as possible in order to commence on the project.

D. Mohler then asked if the MPO is comfortable with it, that there be a motion to put this back on the table and do two Amendments with one for the Highway Amendment for a 30 day comment period and the Transit Amendment for a 15 day comment period. The shorter comment period would be based on the fact that this is a grant award that cannot be used on anything else and it benefits elderly users.

A motion was made to put the item back on the table and to separate the comment periods into 15 days for the Transit Element and 30 days for the Highway Element. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett Public Participation Plan

- *Review and Discussion of Amendment to Change Public Comment Periods from 30 Days to 21 Days*
- *MPO Release of PPP Amendment for 45 Day Public Review & Comment Period*

The Public Participation Plan for the Montachusett MPO outlines the process for public involvement in the development of key documents, specifically, the Regional Transportation Plans (RTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The PPP outlines the process that the MPO uses to reach out to persons identified under the regulations and laws of Title VI, Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the Americans With

Disabilities Act (ADA) and as well any other traditionally underrepresented population. As part of the PPP, key documents and amendments are released for 30 day public review and comment periods. In order to maintain a more consistent MPO meeting schedule, and allow for MPO staff to address and prepare responses to any comments, MassDOT has asked that each MPO consider reducing the 30 day comment period to 21 days. Therefore, the proposed PPP Amendment #1 will change any reference to the public comment period to 21 days from the current 30 days contained within the PPP. As stated in the PPP, any changes to this document must undergo a 45 day public review and comment period.

After discussion regarding the origin of the request as well as potential impacts, a motion was made to endorse the release of PPP Amendment #1 for a 45 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program

- *Review of Potential Federal Aid Target Projects for the Region*
- *Target Estimates (if available)*

B. Harris reviewed with the MPO a list of projects compiled as part of the development process for the FFY 2018-2022 TIP. The list is divided up to highlight those projects that are considered federal aid target fund eligible, those that are bridge projects and those that are planned to be implemented with statewide funds. The target eligible project list also contains their prior Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) score and their status in the FFY 2017-2021 TIP. There are also six projects with no TEC score or TIP notation; these are new projects to be considered in this TIP cycle. The next step will be for us to review the TEC scores for each project, update any score as necessary and present to the MPO a prioritized list for discussion.

B. Harris also mentioned that we had hoped to have available the federal aid target estimates for the next TIP but as of now they are not ready. MassDOT hope to have them out by the end of the month.

Discussion occurred related to possible federal aid target funds and how much might be available.

VII. Montachusett MPO Meeting Schedule

- *Review and Discussion of Change to Monthly Meeting Schedule*
- *MPO Signatory Preferences*
- *MPO Adoption of Meeting Schedule*

B. Harris mentioned that at the last MPO meeting we had discussed the possibility of moving the regular meeting date of the MPO from the current Second Wednesday of the month to the Third Wednesday of the month based upon a request from MassDOT. This change would help MassDOT coordinate meetings across the state in order to improve their ability to provide effective involvement. MRPC conducted a survey of MPO signatories to determine their preference. The results of the survey were as follows: 10 responses; 2 responses for the Third Wednesday; 0 responses for the Fourth Wednesday; and 8 responses with no preference.

After brief discussion, the MPO approved changing the regular scheduled meeting date to the Third Wednesday of the month at 1:00 PM.

VIII. Updates

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost indicated that the 100% plans have been reviewed for Summer Street and they now feel confident that this project can be ready for advertisement in the summer; Gardner Matthews Street was

advertised on November 26, 2016 and Hubbardston Route 68 is scheduled for advertisement at the end of March 2017.

J. Hoynoski indicated that projects in District 2 for 2017 have been advertised and the other projects are under review and their status is the same as last meeting.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale indicated that for the Ayer parking facility, MART has hired Weston & Sampson and they are currently working on the design. MART has also been working with Devens Enterprise and Mass Development to establish a limited bus service between Fitchburg and Leominster and the businesses and industries in Devens. This will also connect with Mount Wachusett Community College and current reverse commute services. T. Kezer indicated that Devens businesses have had critical issues finding enough people to fill their needs and we are in discussions with MART and the companies to create a public/private partnership where one-third of the cost will come from those private businesses.

B. Mahoney indicated MART will finalize its new bus schedule by February 1st and then we will be putting out a new color schedule and brochure shortly afterward.

- *MJTC*

B. Harris indicated there was no January meeting due to the weather. The next MJTC will be at 7:00 PM on February 15 at MRPC. There is a handout related to an Open House being held on January 26th at Union Station in Worcester on the Mass Freight Plan. The public is welcomed to attend and this is the first open house others will be scheduled. Also, in the past we discussed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking related to MPO Coordination. A final rule was put out in December. We will be talking with MassDOT about having a future presentation and discussion on what this may mean to the Montachusett MPO.

- *MRPC*

J. Telepciak indicated that the MRPC has also changed its meeting schedule to the first Thursday of the month to encourage more membership and attendance. G. Eaton asked a question of MassDOT regarding a variable message sign located on Route 2 near the Templeton/Phillipston line and its recent removal. J. Hoynoski indicated that it was removed as part of a Districtwide contract related to variable message signs and a new one will be installed at or near that location. B. Harris indicated that the MRPC has out a request for services proposals from communities for the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. The MRPC has established two rounds for proposal submittals of January 30th and April 3rd.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

The next MPO meeting will be held on Wednesday February 15th at 1:00 PM.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:46 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 1 25 2017 Agenda
12 14 16 MPO Minutes
MPO Action Summary 1 25 2017
Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment
Transit FFY 2017 Amendment #2 12 19 2016
MPO Action Summary Adj & Amendments 1 25 2017
MPO Amendment 3 w Transit Summary 1 25 2017
FFY 2018 2022 TIP Project List 1 6 2017
PPP Summary Comment Period Amendment 2017
MPO Meeting Date Survey Results 1 25 2017
2017 Interim Meeting Calendar