

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of February 15, 2017

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

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Arthur Frost, MassDOT Highway; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT; John Telepciak, MRPC; Mohammed Khan, MART; Albert Gallant, Subregion 1; Heather Budrewicz, Subregion 2; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Noreen Piazza, Subregion 4; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Tim Kilhart, Hubbardston; Mark King, Weston & Sampson; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Steve Nims, Ashburnham; Doug Walsh, Athol; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Keith Hickey, Winchendon; Bonnie Mahoney, MART

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris, George Kahale, Sheri Bean, Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of January 25, 2017 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January 25, 2017 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with N. Piazza abstaining.

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

- *Review and Discussion of Comments to TIP Amendment #3 –Transit Element*
- *MPO Endorsement of TIP Amendment #3*

B. Harris indicated that FFY 2017 Transit Element TIP Amendment #3 was out for an abbreviated 15 day public review and comment period that concluded on February 13th. During that time, no comments were received regarding the amendment.

A motion was made to endorse the FFY 2017 Transit Element TIP Amendment #3. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Program

- *Review of Federal Aid Target Projects Prioritization Scoring*
- *Target Estimates for FFY 2018-2022*

B. Harris indicated that as part of the development of the next TIP, there will be four presentations on projects that will be eligible for the federal aid target funds we receive for the federal fiscal years of the TIP. Before the presentations, B. Harris reviewed various handouts related to the identified target eligible TIP projects, their preliminary Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scores and the recently received target funding estimates for our region.

The following four project were then presented to the MPO and discussed.

1. Ashburnham #601957 - Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 101. The original description indicated the following:
The project begins 200 feet south of Stowell Road continuing 4.5 miles southerly to the Gardner Town Line. The project consists of box widening, milling and resurfacing with minor areas of full depth reconstruction.

Based upon the presentation, the project description has been updated to:

The project begins just west of Corey Hill Road continuing 1.9 miles to the Gardner Town Line. The project consists of bike lanes, sidewalks, resurfacing, restoration or rehabilitation, drainage improvements and areas of full depth reconstruction. The estimated cost is approximately \$5 million with contingencies and design could be ready by FFY 2018.

2. Athol #608723 - Intersection Improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue. The town indicated that this project is located at a particularly problematic intersection along the banks of the Millers River and would include drainage improvements. In addition, it would benefit a residential/commercial re-use project, public transit and help promote eco-tourism to Tulley Lake. The design is estimated to take approximately four years with an estimated cost of \$4.5 million.
3. Winchendon #608548 - Improvements & Related Work on Central Street (Route 202), from Front Street to Maple Street (0.5 Miles). This is a complete streets project that will improve accommodations for all users. The roadway will be resurfaced for improved bicycle use with marked bicycle lanes, new and reconstructed sidewalks are proposed for improved pedestrian access, and new wheelchair ramps and crosswalks will be installed. In addition, drainage improvements will be made along with sewer and water work. There is no right-of-way (ROW) with this project and the design is estimated to be completed in FFY 2019 or 2020. Estimated coast with contingencies is \$3.56 million. This is part of an overall project to address the downtown area.
4. Winchendon #608728 - Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 202, from the Templeton Town Line to Main Street (3.1 Miles). This project was developed by MassDOT District 2 to address a stretch of roadway that has not been resurfaced since 1994. Work will include adjusting and/or rebuilding drainage structures, new signage, safety controls and other incidental items. The project is 100% designed and has an estimated cost of \$1,673,375.

Discussion occurred for each project after their respective presentations.

VI. Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform – Final Rule

- Review and Discussion of Final Rule & Potential Impacts

B. Harris indicated that on January 19, 2017, the MPO Coordination Planning Area Reform rule went into effect however there are still considerable questions on what this will mean to the MPO's across the country. One thing in the final ruling that did change was the time frame for implementation; it was pushed back until two years after the re-designation of the urban areas based on the 2020 census. This usually happens two (2) years after the census, so we are likely looking at a 2024 timeframe for implementation. There are still a number of questions that need to be addressed regarding coordination among MPOs both within the state and across state lines. The identification of MPOs in urban areas needs to be established, how TIPs and regional transportation plans will be generated and

compiled, etc. Officials from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) did recommend that although final rules have yet to be developed and the time implementation is a number of years off, MPOs should begin to look at their current coordination agreements and begin the discussion process on how these may need to be changed.

N. Tishler from MassDOT indicated that the state has not taken a position yet on this ruling but will be starting to examine the issues involved. As soon as MassDOT has some perspective to share, we will do this but until then we are waiting to see how things shake out.

Discussion followed regarding the urbanized areas, how they are identified, and the discussions needed regarding coordination etc. among MPOs.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

A. Frost indicated that the 100% plans have been reviewed for Summer Street and they expect to advertise in the summer; Gardner Matthews Street was advertised in November 2016 and bid opening should be in May 2017; Hubbardston Route 68 is expected to be advertised in March 2017. The Lunenburg Route 13 project has been reviewed; there are some minor changes needed and the next submission will be the 100% design. Finally, I-190 resurfacing in Sterling is scheduled for advertisement in Summer 2017.

J. Hoynoski indicated that the Templeton Route 68 and the Winchendon Route 140 projects were advertised in 2016; the Royalston bridge project on Stockwell Road is under 75% review; the Winchendon North Royalston Road bridge is at PS&E and will be advertised in March.

A. Frost indicated that he will provide information on the Jackson Road bridge project in Devens for the next meeting.

- Transit

G. Kahale indicated that the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station has opened and that there are now 17 trains inbound and outbound at the station. MART has service to Wachusett Station from Gardner for nine (9) in/out bound trains. Parking at the station has been around 100 per day or approximately one-third full. For the Ayer parking facility, MART has hired Weston & Sampson for 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.

B. Mahoney indicated partial capital apportionments were released about a month ago, and MART has also decided to program its capital projects first so that we don't have to do a lot of adjustments at the end of the fiscal year. Two major projects are still to be done; one is for resealing of the decks at the Fitchburg Parking Garage and the other is for expansion of the parking area at this facility.

T. Beauregard asked a question on how the Gardner to Wachusett Station service is being advertised. T. Beauregard asked for the information to be emailed to him so that he can see about promoting it.

B. Mahoney indicated that the new MART schedule should be available soon that will include the shuttle service and hopefully this improved schedule will help as it ties all of the services together.

- MJTC

B. Harris indicated the next MJTC meeting is scheduled for tonight February 15th. One point of discussion will focus on whether the MJTC wishes to change its meeting date schedule and possibly the start time. The other item that will be discussed is the upcoming new Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as we recently received our PL Allocation for FFY 2018. There is a slight increase in funds to \$647,248 up approximately \$25,000 and we will be asking if any communities are interested in a possible study for their town that we could develop into a work task.

- *MRPC*

B. Harris indicated that our Executive Director is at a conference in Washington, D.C. The MRPC has also released a RFP for new office space. The RFP is available on our website. Finally, the MRPC will be advertising for a new Principal Planner as we were informed that one of our current staff will be leaving us very shortly.

J. Telepciak indicated that the MRPC has started its new meeting schedule and the first meeting was very well attended but it is early so we will see how it goes.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

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

IX. Adjournment

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

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 2 15 2017 Agenda
1 25 17 MPO Minutes
Int Parties Draft TIP & PPP Amendment 1 25 2017
FFY 2017 Transit Amendment #3 Draft Summary
Project Presentation List 2 15 2017
Target List FFY and TEC Sort 2 15 2017
TIP Target Comparison 2017 2018
Ashburnham 601957 TEC Sample
Bulletin16-42MPOCoordinationReformFinalRule_12-27-16