

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Minutes of April 19, 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; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Highway; John Telepciak, MRPC; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Mohammed Khan, MART; Albert Gallant, Subregion 1; Heather Budrewicz, Subregion 2; Paula Bertram, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4;

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT District 2; Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP; Steve Nims, Ashburnham; Travis Brown, Hubbardston; Alan Mayo, Templeton; Neil Angus, Devens;

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; George Kahale; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; Kaitlyn Olbrich

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments to be made.

III. Approval of March 15, 2017 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the March 15, 2017 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed with P. Duffy abstaining.

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

- *Review and Discussion of Funding Scenarios*
- *Review and Discussion of Transit Projects and Funding*
- *MPO Approval to Release for Public Review and Comment*

B. Harris reviewed several possible funding options for the FFY 2018 to 2022 Highway Elements of the TIP based upon feedback from the last MPO meeting as well as input from MassDOT. He referred members to various handouts that listed project combinations as well as comparisons between scenarios. Within each scenario, he presented the impacts to the Federal Aid targets for the region and whether or not the fiscal year was fiscally constrained.

Members asked several questions regarding the options presented as well as questions related to project readiness, Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) priority scoring and estimated costs as the merits of each scenario was debated. Discussions focused on identified options #3 and #537.

The MPO also focused on maintaining in FFY 2018, the programming of project #608188 Gardner/Leominster/Sterling Intersection Improvements at 3 Locations using Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds from the regional target (\$700,000) and from statewide funds (\$500,000). It was felt that the region should try to leverage the statewide HSIP funds of \$500,000 rather than bear the entire project cost of \$1.2 million with regional target funds if it were moved out of FFY 2018.

A motion was made and seconded to release Option #3 as part of the Draft TIP. The motion failed based on concerns related to project readiness on several FFY 2018 projects.

Discussion was held on the possibility of holding a special MPO meeting in order to address issues related to available funds “left on the table” in each fiscal year.

Additional discussion, followed regarding options #3 and #537 on project placement and target fund balances.

A motion was made and seconded to release option #537 as part of the draft TIP. The motion passed with one no vote from Subregion 2.

The MPO also decided to hold a special meeting before the next Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) on May 10th at which time communities can bring forward any possible projects that may be able to utilize any available target funds.

B. Harris presented information related to the FFY 2018-2022 Transit Element of the TIP. A listing was made available to the MPO members for their review. This listing will be incorporated into the Draft TIP.

A motion was made to release the Transit Element presented as part of the Draft TIP for public comment. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Review of Discussion of Adjustment to FFY 2017 Highway Element*
- *MPO Approval of Adjustment Action*
- *Review and Discussion of Amendment or Adjustment to FFY 2017 Transit Element*

B. Harris reviewed a requested Adjustment to the FFY 2017 Highway Element from MassDOT. The adjustment simply changes a project description and limits for #606575 Interstate Maintenance & Related Work on I-190 from Sterling/Lancaster/Leominster to Sterling only. There is no change to the cost and no impact to the fiscal constraint of 2017 as this involves statewide funds. As such, this would fall under the Adjustment criteria for the TIP and it is therefore being brought to the MPO’s attention.

A motion was made to approve the Adjustment #2 as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Harris then presented to the MPO members a proposed change to the FFY 2017 Transit Element related to the cost changes to two listed projects. The change is based upon updated costs submittals. Based upon the cost amounts to be changes, it is the decision of the MPO as to whether it should be an amendment or adjustment.

D. Mohler recommended that because of the costs changes involved it should be an Amendment to the FFY 2017 Transit Element unless MART is unable to wait 21 days for the amendment.

MART indicated that the 21-day comment period would not be an issue.

A motion was made to release for a 21-day public review and comment period, draft Amendment #4 for the FFY 2017 Transit Element of the FFY 2017-2021 TIP. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI. Montachusett Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- *Review and Discussion of Budgets and Potential Tasks*

B. Harris indicated that the staff is currently working on a Draft 2018 UPWP. The region will see an increase in funding from \$621,347 in FFY 2017 to \$647,248 in FFY 2018 (\$25,901). Any communities interested in a potential study that may be included into the UPWP should contact the staff so that we can begin discussions. He also reviewed some of the tasks that will be maintained in the UPWP as well as some of the topic areas under consideration. We plan to have, for the May MPO meeting, a Draft UPWP that can then be put out for a 21-day public comment and review period.

B. Harris discussed current UPWP task efforts based upon a question from the MPO.

VII. Montachusett Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFC) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFC)

- *Review of CUFCs and CRFCs for the Region and their Implications*
- *MPO Approval to Release for Public Review and Comment*

B. Doherty discussed the State Freight Plan currently being updated by MassDOT. MassDOT has reached out to MPO's to allow them to propose roadways for designation as Critical Freight Corridors. These Freight Corridors are public roads which provide access and connection with ports, public transportation facilities or other intermodal transportation facilities. National Highway Freight Program funds may be used for projects that contribute to the efficient movement of freight on these corridors. The MRPC region has been given a target of 14.75 miles of *Critical Rural Freight Corridor* (CRFCs) and 3.84 miles of *Critical Urban Freight Corridor* (CUFCs) to designate in the region. Staff has reviewed the criteria for a critical freight corridor, the available mileage for the region and the urban and rural areas across the region. These proposals have been sent to MassDOT and they also need to be put out for a 21-day public review and comment period.

N. Angus asked a question related to Devens and the roads into Devens, in particular Barnum Road.

B. Doherty indicated that we will look into it and provide some information to MassDOT regarding its eligibility.

A motion was made to release for a 21-day public review and comment period, the draft CRFCs and CUFCs for the Montachusett region. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VIII. Updates

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

J. Hoynoski indicated that the Royalston bridge project on Stockwell Road over Lawrence Brook is at 75% and are expecting the 100% soon; Winchendon North Royalston Road bridge over Tarbell Brook was advertised with a bid opening on September 26th; and Winchendon Route 12 resurfacing project was advertised and the bid opening is 8/8/2017.

S. Bradbury indicated that the Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project has a current advertise date in August but the PS&E is expected this week so the ad date is expected to move up; Lunenburg Chase Road (Route 13) PS&E is expected at any time so once it is reviewed it should be ready to go this spring; Gardner Matthews Street was advertised in November; Hubbardston Route 68 should be advertised this weekend; Sterling resurfacing on I-190 should be advertised late spring.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale mentioned that contractor for the Wachusett Station is working on the punch list and will hopefully be completed by the end of June; Weston & Sampson has presented a concept to the town of

Ayer for the commuter parking facility, the town approved a deck to be built that will accommodate about 200 vehicles. Hopefully bids will go out at the end of this year with construction to begin in 2018.

M. Khan indicated that starting on April 24th, MART is starting service to Devens between Fitchburg/Leominster to bring employees to the available jobs in the area. Shirley and Ayer are interested in also utilizing those buses to expand service to shopping areas.

- *MJTC*

B. Harris indicated the next MJTC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 10th and that will have the special TIP meeting beforehand at 6:00 PM; a nominating committee will be selected to draw up a slate of officers for the upcoming year; and in the past, we had mentioned a possible bike rack purchase program for the region. We will be looking at this for possibly next federal fiscal year, however, for this year, any interested community can take advantage of a program run by the MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council). This is a non-reimbursable program that runs until the end of 2017. Information is available in a handout on costs, products and procedures.

- *MRPC*

J. Telepciak indicated that the MRPC is close to a fully approved lease with the Doyle Conservation Center for new office space. Once that is completed, we will then give 90-day notice to MART so that we can move around the first of July.

B. Harris also indicated that we are looking for two traffic interns to work for us this summer and if anyone knows someone who might be interested to get in touch with the MRPC.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

The next MPO meeting will be held on Wednesday May 17th at 1:00 PM.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 4 15 2017 Agenda
3 15 17 MPO Minutes
2018 2022 Option 1 AND 1A 4 5 2017
2018 2022 Option 1 AND 2 4 5 2017
2018 2022 Option 1 AND 3 4 5 2017
2018 2022 Option 1 AND 4 4 11 2017
2018 2022 Option 1 AND 535 4 11 2017
2018 2022 Option Summary Comparison 4 19 2017
DRAFT TIP Option Summary 535 On 4 19 17
TRANSIT 2018 2022 TIP List 4 13 2017
FFY 2017 Transit Amendment or Adjustment 4 19 2017
FFY 2018 PL & 2016 UPWP Budget
Freight Corridor Designation
MPO FFY 2017 TIP Adjustment 2 Summary 4 19 2017