

**MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2016**

J. Wyman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Jon Wyman, Westminster; Doug Walsh, Athol; Michael Pineo, Sterling; Albert Gallant, Winchendon; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Patrick Lawlor, North Central MA Chamber of Commerce; Sue Kennedy, Ayer; Ken Chenis, Lunenburg; Noreen Piazza, Lancaster; Cindy King, Townsend;

Guests

Greg Dumas, Sterling;

Staff

Brad Harris, George Snow, Brian Doherty, Kaitlyn Olbrich, George Kahale

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of October 19, 2016 Minutes

It was the consensus of the MJTC to approve the October 19, 2016 MJTC minutes as printed.

IV. FFY 2017-2021 Montachusett TIP

- Amendment #2 Review & Discussion

B. Harris informed the members that the original intent of this agenda item was to discuss a second amendment to the FFY 2017-2021 TIP; however, at the November 9th MPO meeting, it was decided that no amendment should be put out for public comment until additional information has been obtained regarding the status of certain projects. As discussed at the last MJTC, there are changes to the FFY 2017 Highway Element as a result of two current projects in our TIP that were selected for funding in FFY 2016 through the redistribution of federal highway funds to Massachusetts. As a result, the removal of these two projects leave us \$2,678,965 under our regional target of \$9,256,919 for FFY 2017. The MJTC then recommended the following course of action for the MPO when deciding on a possible Amendment #2:

- a. Review estimated costs of FFY 2017 and 2018 projects for any changes;
- b. Fill in the \$2.6 million gap in FFY 2017 with current projects from 2018, 2019, etc.;
- c. Add the proposed project from MassDOT District 2 in Winchendon on Rt 202 (#608728) to FFY 2017 at \$2.3 million. Utilize any leftover funds on existing projects if possible;
- d. Adjust the Summer St project funding between FFY 2017 and FFY 2018 to “zero out” target funds in FFY 2017. Move any potential FFY 2019 project into FFY 2018 to use up any target funds in FFY 2018 or leave approximately \$2.6 million unallocated in FFY 2018 and then address in the next TIP development process, i.e. the FFY 2018-2022 TIP.

The MPO reviewed 3 possible candidate projects for movement into FFY 2017; however, based upon concerns expressed by MassDOT, there was no clear consensus that these particular projects could be ready in FFY 2017. Additional information was needed before any particular option could be decided upon. As such, the MPO decided to not release a TIP Amendment #2 at this point; rather staff at the MRPC and MassDOT should review and collect additional information on any potential projects that might meet the need for FFY 2017.

S. Bradbury indicated that of the projects identified, the Gardner/Leominster/Sterling HSIP project is a MassDOT District 3 project and it will not be ready for FFY 2017; the Clinton Route 101 project also will not be ready for 2017; and the Lunenburg Route 13 project could be ready but MassDOT is awaiting some additional information. The Winchendon project is from District 2 and it is her understanding that they feel it could be ready for FFY 2017. The Fitchburg/Leominster/Lunenburg Summer Street project is awaiting a resubmittal on the right-of-way plans before it can move onto 100% plans. It could be another month or so before District 3 can be sure if it would be ready for 2017. There does not seem to be a need to rush a possible amendment at this time therefore, the decision to wait on an amendment.

B. Harris then reviewed a draft schedule for the development of the next TIP covering FFY 2018 to 2022. He indicated that the process will begin in January 2017 when a list of target eligible projects is developed for MJTC review.

V. Montachusett Regional Population Projections Analysis

- Review of Projection Method and Results

K. Olbrich gave a presentation entitled "Montachusett Regional Population Projections" that highlighted her work on developing a projection method that could be used by the MRPC to assess and compare to other projection estimates made for our member communities. The presentation highlighted the methodology used, the projection estimates for 2020, 2030 and 2040, and how they compared to state projections developed by the Donahue Institute.

Discussion followed related to the methodology used, the number of variables that influence population change that are hard to model, the difficulty in developing plans and assumptions on the various projections available and how the projections developed will be utilized by the MRPC in future transportation planning efforts.

VI. Contract Status Reports

a. FTA/RTA

G. Kahale stated that Wachusett Station and MBTA layover facility has been substantially completed and the MBTA started limited service on 9/30/16 with two inbound and two abound trains. Full service to the station will start on 11/21/16 with 17 trains arrive and leave the station daily. MART will be operating buses and shuttles to the station to meet nine of the trains from Gardner to the Wachusett Station.

For the Ayer parking project, MART has hired Weston and Sampson to design the facility for 200 spaces. Concept designs should be available for MART in the next month.

A question was asked regarding the express train service to and from Boston and its frequency. G. Kahale indicated that the trains now are full and additional trains would need to be brought up to the MBTA. As demand increases this may be something to consider.

G. Kahale also mentioned that the MRPC is continuing to work with MART on bus route schedules in Athol/Orange and develop shuttle route connections with the commuter rail stations.

b. MassDOT 3C

B. Harris indicated staff has developed a scope of work for two studies dealing with Route 2 in the Athol/Phillipston section. The first study will be an analysis related to the possible implementation of a new interchange with Route 2 at South Athol Road. The second will be a before and after review of the safety conditions on Route 2 that were implemented as part of the Route 2 Safety Improvement Program. This study will see if there are any new safety issues and evaluate how the past improvements have impacted safety. Both studies will include an advisory group of local officials to help guide the studies.

B. Harris referred members to a memo developed based on an email that we sent out to the local planning departments, DPWs, schools and mayors regarding a brief survey related to a potential bike rack purchase program for the region. The memo asked if there is any interest in the program, if so how many racks may they be considering, etc. We have not time frame on the responses but expect to collect input through mid-December.

Staff has attended a second Complete Streets workshop. Communities can receive funding from the state to produce a Complete Streets prioritization plan for their town through a reimbursement program. The MRPC is willing to assist any community in the development of these prioritization plans. Interested municipalities should contact the MRPC to discuss what we can do and how to proceed.

VII. Administrative Matters

The next meeting of the MJTC will be on January 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the MRPC Offices.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

11/16/16 Agenda
10/19/16 Minutes
Draft TIP Schedule 11 2016
MPO Amendment 2 Summary 11 9 2016
TEC Score Updated 2017 TIP 10 19 2016
MBTA Fitchburg Line Commuter Rail Schedule
Gardner News MBTA Article
MART Wachusett Shuttle Schedule
Bike Rack Memo 11 16 2016
2017 Meeting Calendar