

**MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING**  
**MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2022**  
**Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC**

B. Harris called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

**I. Introduction**

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Alan Manoian, Ayer; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; Jasmin Farinacci, Lancaster; Linda Ellis Phillipston; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; George Kahale, MART;

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Thomas Ruta, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Chris Klem, MassDOT Planning; Chris Timmel, FHWA

Non-Members

Steven Tyler, Howard Stein Hudson

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty;

**II. Public Comments**

R. Maki wished to inform the group that the town of Sterling is proceeding with a project request for the Route 140/Route 62 intersection. The town has a plan done for them by Green International and will be requesting a 25% contribution from the town at the annual town meeting in May.

**III. Approval of December 8, 2021 Minutes**

A motion was made to accept the December 8, 2021 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

**IV. FFY 2022-2026 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- Discussion on Draft Amendment #1 to the FFY 2022 Transit Element
- MJTC Recommendation to the Montachusett MPO

B. Harris stated that at the MPO last month, the MPO voted to release for a 21-day review and comment period, Amendment #1 to the FFY 2022 Transit Element that was presented by MART. The Amendment consists of a series of changes due to increased costs and revised project estimates. Five separate projects have cost updates in this Amendment. Also, a recent building inspection found that the oil separator for the trench drainage system was incorrectly installed in 2008 and MART was given a fix date of May 2022. Because of this as well as some minor repairs to various MART facilities, they are seeking to add two new projects to FFY 2022. In order to add these projects, they needed to get the funds from another source. MART therefore identified two projects to remove from the FFY 2022 TIP Element; one project to repair the elevators at the Intermodal in Fitchburg and the second to purchase some low floor replacement vehicles. The draft Amendment #1 document was reviewed by the MJTC. The comment period began on December 24<sup>th</sup> and will close on Thursday January 13<sup>th</sup>. As of this date, we have received only one comment letter and that was from MART. In the comment email, MART wished to adjust further the Amendment. The comment letter read that MART has made some additional changes to the TIP Amendment based upon negotiations with MassDOT to make sure that the RTACAP Budget for the state

gets spent down in FY22. MART has significantly increased its IT Budget by \$125,000 and the Access Control System has been increased by \$75,000. MART has also added a new project to upgrade the security system at the Intermodal Facility. Each of these projects are actually existing 2023 projects that have been pulled up into FY22. B. Harris reviewed as revised Amendment #1 based on these comments.

The MJTC discussed the appropriateness of the comment and whether such a change should be considered significant and thus trigger the need for a new 21-day review and comment period.

T. Kilhart stated that in past instances the MJTC has recommended that significant changes have required a new review period. This would appear to meet the guidelines established by the amendment process. It is his opinion that the recommend to the MPO that a new comment period be conducted.

A. Livdahl asked about the removed projects and the reason for it. B. Harris indicated that based upon information from MART, the elevator project at the Intermodal was significantly underestimated while the second project for new vehicles would be a duplicate of a recent project delivery. They do intend to seek these projects in future TIP years.

R. Maki asked what is the source of the increased funding? It was noted that the funds are through the federal 5307 funding program.

It was the consensus of the MJTC, that based upon the magnitude of the comment changes proposed by MART and the guidelines established in the TIP regarding significant changes to an amendment, that the MJTC recommends to the MPO that the comment changes to this FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #1 are considered significant and therefore Amendment #1 should be re-released for an additional 21-day public review and comment period.

#### **V. FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- Discussion on Project Listing, Costs and Status

B. Doherty updated the members on the status of the development and the schedule for the FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He informed the MJTC that they are now beginning the process to update the status of currently identified federal aid target projects. He shared an updated listing that highlighted the latest information on the projects. He then discussed the projects in each FFY. B. Doherty then reviewed the schedule for the next few months and indicated that more data will be available in February. Staff is scheduled to have TIP Readiness Day on February 8<sup>th</sup> just before the next MJTC meeting. Also, the annual MARPA/MassDOT meeting is scheduled for January 28th. So for the February MJTC, we should have the most recent numbers for each project but also our expected target funds for FFY 2023 to 2027. There will also be a presentation by Clinton and their consultant on the status of the Route 62 project #610681 at that meeting. Other communities are encouraged to present to the MJTC and/or the MPO in February and March. Please contact Brian Doherty to coordinate.

Members then discussed some of the projects and their origination and or status. Staff and S. Bradbury indicated that more definitive answers will be forthcoming after TIP Readiness Day is completed. That is when MassDOT and MRPC will review each project and bring everyone up to the same level regarding status, costs and design.

#### **VI. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

- Discussion on Task Listings and Local Outreach

S. Bean updated the members on the status of the development of the FFY 2023 UPWP. She presented a memo that was distributed to all member communities soliciting possible work tasks for the UPWP. She provided a brief overview of the two requests received to date from the city of Leominster. The first is for the access

intersection to Wal Mart off of Route 117 and the second involves the Merriam Avenue/Whalon Street/Route 2 interchange outside of the Twin City Plaza. We will be sending out a reminder to each community regarding the task requests with a response deadline of February 8<sup>th</sup>. For the next meeting, we should have a better handle on what are PL/FTA combined allocation will be for FFY 2023. This will help us develop our UPWP budgets. At the January 28<sup>th</sup> MARPA/MassDOT meeting, we should receive that information as well as additional guidance on what the UPWP should cover and address.

A question was asked about a walkability study request from the middle school in Townsend south through the center along Route 119 and Route 13 and if it was still on the books. S. Bean indicated that this was part of the request from last year in which the town listed that location as well as a route along Route 119 out towards the High School. We talked to the town and prioritized the Route 119 corridor for the Walkability Study. If this is still an area of concern the town should feel free to submit a new task request.

A question was asked if the Route 13/Route 119 intersection in the center of Townsend is going to be addressed as it was requested last year. B. Harris stated that the town submitted two or three intersections for study last year and the MRPC worked on the Route 119/Canal Street location. We will look to see if at the Route 119/Route 13 location is set for this program year or if we plan to roll it into the next UPWP. We will get back with that information.

## **VII. Contract Status Reports**

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

B. Harris mentioned that the MRPC is continuing to work with MART. Projects of interest include the development of the Transit Element of the TIP as well as the necessary Transit related tasks for the UPWP.

G. Kahale informed the MJTC that MART has launched the Follow Your Bus app. This allows passengers to view the current location of their bus as it goes about its route. There is a flyer that explains how to download the app. MART has a number of individuals using the app.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated staff met recently with the town of Townsend on the Walkability Study. It was presented to the Board of Selectmen, and it was well received.

There is a handout for a joint MassMobility, MassDOT Rail & Transit, and Massachusetts Healthy Aging collaborative webinar titled "*Mobility Management in Massachusetts*". It is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10 am to noon. Registration info is on the handout, and it can also be found under Announcements on the first page of the MRPC website.

A second handout is on the recent announcement on next round of the "MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Program". This is the fourth round of the program that has to date implemented 310 projects and awarded \$33 million to municipalities. Applications are due by March 1<sup>st</sup> and are to be submitted via an online form. This round is adding a new project type, the management of vehicle speeds through design intervention. This "Speed Management" program involves making targeted changes to streets, using identified safety measures, in order to reduce crashes and their severity through safer and more consistent vehicle speeds. This flyer and information is also available on the MRPC website under Announcements.

One last item, the current MJTC Chair is no longer with the City of Fitchburg, so we have an open Chair position. The MJTC can decide to hold an election to fill the position or leave the seat open and have the Vice Chair and Secretary handle Chair responsibilities until the next election season, which begins in May. We can follow up at

the next meeting as to how the MJTC will proceed. As of now, the Vice Chair will be fulfilling the role of Chair. Officer election will take place in July.

A question was asked about the federal ARPA funds and if there was any information as to whether on state numbered routes that are town maintained/owned and there would be additional resurfacing dollars in addition to the regular allotment. B. Harris indicated that he was not aware of this at this time, but we will look into it. We do know that there are considerable funds available and that some will go to infrastructure projects but the hows and whys may not be fully defined. There are others in our office that may be more aware of the program and the funds. We will see if we can have them present something to the MJTC.

D. Amaral, introduced Thomas Ruta the new assistant project engineer at MassDOT District2. He will attending future meetings.

#### **VIII. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

#### **DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:**

- 1 12 2022 Agenda
- 12 8 2021 MJTC minutes
- 4 FY22 TIP Amendment Transit No 1 12 15 2021
- 4 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #1 ENGLISH
- 4 MART Comment Cover & Spreadsheet 1 7 2022
- 5 Draft TIP Schedule FFY 2023 2027
- 5 Project Master List 23-27
- 5 TIP Development Memo 11 2 2021
- 5 TIP Development Memo 11 25 2021 SPANISH
- 6 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022
- 6 Project solicitation memo
- 2022 Meeting Calendar Ver 1
- mass\_mobility\_management\_webinar\_2\_3\_2022
- Shared Street Announcement 1 11 2022