

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2022
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

D. Kilhart called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Mark Archambault, Ayer; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Brian Croteau, Winchendon; George Kahale, MART

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Paula Simmons, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3

Non-Members

Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Joshua Hall, Westminster; Erik Atkins, Green International

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of February 9, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to accept the February 9, 2022 MJTC Meeting Minutes. Consensus was given to accept the minutes as presented.

IV. Route 2 Area Planned Developments - Truck Estimates

G. Snow presented information to the members about three proposed developments in the Lunenburg, Lancaster Route 2 area. At a prior MJTC meeting, the issue was raised about these three large developments and the potential number of truck traffic that would be generated. Utilizing available traffic impact analysis reports for the developments, the estimated truck traffic was discussed. The identified developments included Capital Commerce Center in Lancaster, Industrial Development in Lunenburg and Unified Global Packaging in Lancaster. All together, these projects are a combined 2,111,090 square feet of new development with the potential to generate new truck traffic. This amount of square footage has a potential to generate 363 to 492 new truck trips in the area between Route 70 at Route 2 and Shirley Road at Route 2. Within the various impact reports, 15 locations were identified as being impacted by these developments. Of particular interest, are the access roads to and the on/off ramps to Route 2 east and west bound.

Comments were made regarding the type of trucks expected and the need for MassDOT to be aware of the potential combined effects of these proposals. Staff indicated that as more information becomes available, we will bring it to the MJTC.

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

- Updates to Project Listing, Costs and Status
- FFY 2023-2027 Target Funding Scenarios

– MJTC Funding Scenario Recommendation

B. Doherty provided the members with an update on the development of the draft TIP. He began with a brief presentation of the statewide and transit projects for the TIP. The transit listing is developed by MART and outlines projects ranging from operational costs to vehicle replacement to facility improvements and upgrades. The statewide projects are those anticipated to be funded with funds outside of our target funds. This includes bridges, road rehabilitation and trail development.

B. Doherty then reviewed the latest cost estimates for the identified target funds for each federal fiscal year. In order to develop a fiscally constrained TIP, two separate funding scenarios were developed. He then reviewed each scenario in detail along with the target fund balances for each year. The main difference between the two scenarios revolves around project #607432 Route 140 Rehabilitation in Westminster. There is some concern on whether this project will be ready for advertisement in FFY 2023. If it is moved out of 2023, it will affect what can be listed in the following years. Based upon the latest information from MassDOT and the town, it now seems that many of these issues are being addressed and 2023 does seem like a reasonable timeframe.

After some discussion on the merits of the two scenarios, it was the consensus of the MJTC that Scenario 1 be recommended to the MPO for the development of the draft TIP.

VI. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Update on Local Task Requests
- MJTC Recommendations

S. Bean updated members on the various task requests received from local communities. We received requests from:

- Leominster – Jungle Road/Route 117 intersection analysis
- Townsend – Route 119/13 intersection analysis
- Shirley – Freight/truck study (partnering with Lunenburg & Ayer)
- Lunenburg – Freight/truck study
- Lunenburg – Chase Road/Northfield Rd intersection analysis
- Lunenburg – Route 13/West Street intersection analysis
- Ayer – Freight/Truck study

A further review of the equity analysis conducted as part of the UPWP development process was also discussed. Based upon this review, the communities that ranked the highest under the social equity analysis for UPWP tasks were Ayer, Leominster and Shirley. Under the geographic analysis, the communities of Ayer, Shirley, Lunenburg and Townsend. Based on this, the request from Shirley should rank high in our priorities.

Based on all of this information, we are recommending a Freight Task that will examine issues in Lunenburg, Shirley and Ayer and an Intersection Analysis Task to address the concerns of Leominster, Lunenburg and Townsend. We are also developing a task in conjunction with the MRPC Community Development Department to conduct a Housing coordination Plan. This is based on guidance received from the federal and state agencies. We would like to get your support of the recommendations so that we can move the draft UPWP forward to the MPO.

M. Archambault from Ayer mentioned that Ayer would like to be included in the freight task with Lunenburg and Shirley.

No further comments were made and the MJTC recommended that these tasks be developed for the draft UPWP and presented to the MPO.

VII. Contract Status Reports

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

G. Kahale stated that MART put together an application under the Shared Streets and Spaces program for the purchase, placement and installation of 12 bus shelters in Fitchburg, Athol and Gardner. MART will be changing the fare box system on its buses in order to be more reliable and efficient. Automatic machines will also be installed in several locations to purchase passes and fares. Public meetings will be scheduled in the near future on this new fare system.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the next MPO will be next week on March 16th at 1:00 pm. The major action item will be a discussion on a possible FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #3 related to cost changes to a Safe Routes to School project on Viscoloid Avenue in Leominster. This will not impact our fiscal constraint as this is a State Prioritized Modernization Project. In addition, they will also continue the TIP and UPWP development process. For the TIP they will be selecting a funding scenario for the draft document. We will also be having a presentation on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) the recently passed transportation authorization legislation. We will look to repeat this presentation at an upcoming MJTC.

MRPC staff will begin the process of seeking interns for the upcoming count season. The majority of the work will be in data collection based on our current work program. We will be posting this to the website in the near future.

There is a handout from the consulting firm of Weston & Sampson related to a survey on *FLOOD REDUCTION FOR FALULAH & BAKER BROOK*. The City of Fitchburg is seeking input on priorities for reducing flooding on John Fitch Highway and the rest of the Falulah/Baker Brook watershed. They sent us this notice and asked us to pass along the word to all who might have an interest in this project. The deadline is March 14th and there is a chance to win a gift card.

We received a copy of a letter from the MassDOT PRC to the town of Sterling approving their project request for Rt 140/Rt 62 Intersection Improvements. The project has been assigned it #612612 with an estimated cost of \$3,117,500

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 3 9 2022 Agenda
- 2 9 2022 MJTC minutes
- 4 Truck Trip Discussion Notice for MJTC 3-9-2022
- 4 Truck Trip Presentation for MJTC 3-9-2022
- 5 TIP Target Current Schedule
- 5 TIP Target Scenario 1
- 5 TIP Target Scenario 2
- Weston Sampson Fitchburg Project_Flyer_English