

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF April 13, 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; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Alice Livdahl, Hubbardston; Janet Tice, Shirley; Richard Maki, Sterling; Veronica Kell, Townsend; Elizabeth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; George Kahale, MART

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3

Non-Members

Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty

II. Public Comments

The Chair asked the attendees from MassDOT, why during the Chapter 90 submittal season, an upgrade to the MaPIT system is being conducted? He expressed frustration with the timing and how it effects what he needs to do. C. Klem indicated that he was unaware of the upgrade until he heard it mentioned at another region. He did not know why it was timed as such but he did hear that it should not take any longer than this week.

III. Approval of March 9, 2022 Minutes

J. Tice raised a question regarding the truck numbers mentioned under the presentation by G. Snow and that they did not reflect the total truck numbers mentioned. B. Harris indicated that staff would check the figures and correct the minutes. A motion was made to accept the March 9, 2022 MJTC Meeting Minutes with the corrections discussed. Consensus was given to accept the minutes with the updates as mentioned.

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

- Discussion on Draft Amendment #3 to the FFY 2022 Highway Element
- MJTC Recommendation to the Montachusett MPO

B. Harris reviewed with the members Draft TIP Amendment #3 that involves two (2) projects in the FFY 2022 Highway Element. MassDOT Highway proposed the amendment for projects #608850 Petersham and #609529 Leominster.

For the first project #608850 Petersham - Bridge Replacement, P-08-002, Glen Valley Road Over the East Branch of the Swift River. The cost needs to be increased in FFY 2022 due to increases in the rising price of steel. The project includes a steel beam superstructure with the use of steel H-piles in the proposed integral pile supported abutments. The project is currently listed under Section 2A - State Prioritized Reliability Projects in FFY 2022 with a cost of \$2,005,591. It has increased to \$2,844,044 or by \$793,453 approximately 39%.

The second project is #609529 Leominster - Viscoloid Avenue Improvements to a Safe Routes to School Project. The cost needs to be adjusted in FFY 2022 due to increases as a result of changes in the scope. There has been an increase between the combined 25%/75% submittal and the 75% resubmission due to the addition of sidewalks throughout the length of the project. There was also an increase between the 75% resubmission and 100% submission due to the inclusion of a few smaller sections of additional sidewalks and the re-location of sidewalks in some locations to avoid the need to relocate utility poles. The cost went from \$2,232,523 to \$3,094,619. An increase of \$826,096 or approximately 39%. This project is also under Section 2A - State Prioritized Reliability Projects in FFY 2022.

Both projects do not affect our Target projects or our fiscal constraint. The MPO voted last month to release this Amendment #3 for a 21-day public review and comment period that began on March 25, 2022 and will close on April 14, 2022. To date there have been no comments received. We are looking for a recommendation from the MJTC to the MPO as to whether or not TIP Amendment #3 should be endorsed by the MPO.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend that the MPO endorse TIP Amendment #3 as presented. Consensus was given to recommend endorsement by the MPO.

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

- Updates and Discussion on Full Draft TIP Document
- MJTC Draft TIP Recommendation

B. Doherty provided the members with review of the full draft TIP. He indicated that the document will be presented to the MPO for their review and, hopefully, release for a 21-day public review and comment period. After a brief discussion of the changes between last months TIP and the draft, B. Doherty then reviewed in detail the projects listed in each fiscal year as well as in the Appendix. The fiscal year target projects are fiscally constrained as required for the TIP. Additionally, the Transit section as well as the statewide funded sections were reviewed and discussed with the members. If the MPO releases the draft TIP for comment, we anticipate that the comment period will begin on April 26th and run until May 16th.

After review of the draft TIP, it was the consensus of the MJTC that the recommendation to the MPO would be to release the full document for public review and comment.

VI. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- Updates and Discussion on Full Draft UPWP Document
- MJTC Draft TIP Recommendation

S. Bean updated the members on the development of the full draft UPWP. She presented the final results of the equity and geographic analyses conduct for this UPWP. This included a look back at tasks conducted over the past five years. From this review, staff was able to identify which communities we should target in our outreach for future studies. She then highlighted several of the tasks within the UPWP. This included the Regional Transportation Update, the Housing Coordination Plan, Intersection Analysis, a Freight Study in several communities and as part of transit planning the Public Transit Coordination Plan Update. The budget for the FFY 2023 UPWP overall as well as for the individual tasks was then discussed with the members. S. Bean indicated that since last month, we have received an update to our FTA section 5303 funds that has increased our overall by an additional \$50,000, This resulted in changes to several transit related tasks in the UPWP.

A question was asked about the Coordination Plan and if towns that are not part of MART will be included in that work. G. Kahale indicated that all MRPC communities as well as MART communities will be part of this plan. An additional question was asked if Townsend, as part of the Lowell Regional Transit Authority, should be attending any other meetings. Staff responded that yes, Townsend should attend the LRTA Advisory Board meetings to discuss services to Townsend.

After review of the draft UPWP, it was the consensus of the MJTC that the recommendation to the MPO would be to release the full document for public review and comment.

VII. Contract Status Reports

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

B. Harris mentioned again the increase we recently received in FTA 5303 funds that will be included in the new UPWP. Additionally, we have met with MART to discuss the current ADA Bus Stop study in Gardner as well as the results of the Fitchburg/Leominster ADA study.

G. Kahale stated MART is in the process of installing a new fare box system on its buses in order to be more reliable and efficient. Automatic vending machines will also be installed in several locations to purchase passes and fares. MART is also in the process of updating its current fixed route schedules and are asking for information from the public regarding areas that need to be served or places that should be added to the routes, etc. Individuals are encouraged to get in touch with MART.

A question was asked regarding service to commuter rail lines and the RTA jurisdiction the town belongs to. Townsend is part of the LRTA, but we are considered by MBTA to be an adjacent community because we are next to Shirley and the Fitchburg rail line. If we wanted bus service to the rail, it would be by LRTA and would that mean the bus service would take us to Lowell and the Lowell commuter rail. Who should Townsend talk with to discuss this issue? As a follow up, it was asked if there was a process for the town to possibly join MART if it wished. It was suggested that the best place to start would be to contact MART and George Kahale and then they could discuss all of these issues with the town.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris stated the next MPO will be next week on April 20th at 1:00 pm. The major action item will be a discussion on a possible FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #4 related to changes to the Highway and Transit elements. The proposed changes will not impact our fiscal constraint related to target projects. In addition, they will also seek to release the draft TIP and UPWP for public review and comment. The comment period will likely run from Tuesday April 26th to Monday May 16th.

MRPC is currently seeking interns for the upcoming count season. Most of the work will be in data collection based on our current work program. Information is also be posted to the MRPC website. If you know anyone that might be interested, please have them check the website.

Finally, there is a handout from the consulting firm of Weston & Sampson and the city of Fitchburg related to a public meeting on *FLOOD REDUCTION FOR FALULAH & BAKER BROOK*. The discussion will focus on project priorities for reducing flooding on John Fitch Highway and the rest of the Falulah/Baker Brook watershed. The meeting is tonight at 6:00 pm. Information of registering is on the handout as well on our website under Announcements.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MJTC Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022 at 2:30 pm.

A question was asked about a presentation at a recent MPO meeting on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and whether that can be presented to the MJTC. B. Harris answered yes, we are planning on giving that presentation at an upcoming MJTC meeting.

IX. Adjournment

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

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 4 13 2022 Agenda
- 3 9 2022 MJTC minutes
- 3 9 2022 MJTC minutes CORRECTED
- 4 DRAFT FFY 2022 Highway Amendment #3 Summary
- 4 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #3
- 5 Draft Target Listing
- 5 Statewide Program PrelimProjects 3_9_22
- 5 Transit Prelim 3_9_22
- 6 FFY 2023 UPWP Summary
- 7 MVP-Event_Flyer_Fitchburg-EngSpan