

# MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held Remotely via GoToMeeting.com  
Hosted by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission  
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

Minutes January 19, 2022

Stephen Woelfel representing Acting Secretary Jamey Tesler called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

## I. Introduction

### SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist., 3; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; George Kahale, MART; Tom Skwierawski, Fitchburg; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2;

### MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Michelle HO, MassDOT; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Ann Sullivan, MassDOT District 3; Tracey Coppellotti, MassDOT District 3; Chris Timmel, FHWA; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Brian Doheny, Ashburnham; Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Alan Manoian, Ayer; Jasmin Farnacci, Lancaster; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Linda Ellis, Phillipston; Jon Rockwell, Consultant;

### STAFF PRESENT

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

## II. Public Comments

S. Woelfel asked those present if there were any public comments to be made. There were none at this time.

## III. Approval of December 15, 2021 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 15, 2021 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with G. Robertson abstaining.

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

- *Review of Comments Received on Draft FFY 2022 Transit Amendment #1*
- *MPO Action/Endorsement of FFY 2022 Transit TIP Amendment #1*

B. Doherty stated that at the MPO meeting last month, it was 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. B. Doherty indicated that only one comment was received and that was from MART.

B. Mahoney then reviewed the original amendment and the comments from MART based upon the Amendment #1 project listing. She stated that near the end of the comment period, MART met with MassDOT where it was mentioned that they were looking to the RTAs to see if there were any projects that could be brought forward in order to spend the available RTACAP funds. MART then identified

three projects that could be used and ready in FFY 2022 in order to spend down RTACAP funds. MART recognized that this may be an issue for the MPO, but we decided to submit these changes as comments and then let the MPO decide on how they wish to proceed. That was the reason for the comment letter regarding draft TIP Amendment #1.

B. Harris mentioned that at the MJTC meeting last week, the MART comment email was discussed and it was the consensus of the MJTC that the changes reflect what could be considered as major changes, including the new additional project, and based on past amendment actions and the process outlined in the TIP itself, Amendment #1 should go back out for an additional 21 day public comment period.

B. Mahoney stated that MART would then like to have the Amendment #1 be considered on its own and that an Amendment #2 be developed and put out for a 21 day public review and comment period that reflects the changes outlined in the comment email.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the changes indicated in the original FFY TIP Amendment #1. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

A motion was then made and seconded to release as draft FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #2 the changes outlined in the MART comment letter for a 21 day public review and comment period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

It was mentioned to the MPO members present that due to the current meeting circumstances that restrict an in person gathering, the Chair of the MPO, S. Woelfel will sign the endorsement page on behalf of the entire MPO.

#### **V. MassDOT Safety Performance Measures (PM1) – CY 2022**

- *Review & Discussion of State Targets*
- *MPO Action Related to MassDOT PM 1 for CY 2022*

C. Klem from MassDOT/OTP presented to the members that per Federal Highway Administrations regulations, MPO's are required to adopt certain performance measures as developed by their state or as developed through their own analysis. The Safety Performance Measures, PM 1, are required to be reviewed and revised each calendar year. Within PM 1 there are five annual safety performance targets. One each for Total Fatalities, Fatality Rate, Total Incapacitating Injuries, Incapacitating Injuries Rate, and Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Incapacitating Injuries. C. Klem then reviewed the data behind the target analysis as well as the new statewide target figures for calendar year 2022. He stated that due to the unusual circumstances surrounding the pandemic, MassDOT vehicle miles of travel are based on 2019 data while 2020 data was disregarded. From all of this, the CY 2022 projections have a 2.5% reduction from CY2021 resulting in a projection of 340 fatalities. This number is produced as part of the FHWA requirements on performance measures. MassDOT's overarching goal of zero deaths has not changed and will continue to be pursued. C. Klem then reviewed the projection numbers for Total Serious Injuries and Combined Non-Motorized Injuries and Fatalities.

Based upon the FHWA rule, MPOs are asked to either adopt the statewide targets or to develop and report their own target numbers. This is a decision for the MPO. Over the last few years, the Montachusett MPO has voted to adopt the state target figures and to leave the reporting to MassDOT. Adopting the Targets does not commit the MRPC region to achieving the numbers set in the Targets but says that the MRPC agrees with the MassDOT process and their goals to reduce fatalities in the state.

A question was asked regarding the regional fatalities data for 2017 and 2018 and if there was any particular reason why those numbers seem to be so out of place with other years. C. Klem stated that

he does not have an answer for that without going into more analysis of the data through the MassDOT safety portal.

A motion was made to adopt the state PM 1 Targets for CY 2022. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

### *- Review and Discussion of Potential Task Requests from Member Communities*

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. 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 will have a handle on what our PL/FTA combined allocation will be for FFY 2023. At the January 28<sup>th</sup> MARPA/MassDOT meeting, we will receive that information as well as additional guidance on what the UPWP should cover and address.

Based upon our development schedule, we should be presenting some of the equity and environmental justice analysis that is needed for the UPWP.

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

### *- Update & Review of Project Listing & 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 MPO that we are now in the process of updating the status of currently identified federal aid target projects. He shared an updated listing that highlighted the latest information on the projects. He indicated that staff will be meeting with MassDOT on what is referred to as TIP Readiness Day at which point all of our potential projects will be discussed and cost and progress updates will be incorporated. Right now, we are scheduled to meet on February 8<sup>th</sup>. We will also be meeting as part of the annual MARPA/MassDOT meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting, we will receive information on our anticipated target figures for FFY 2023 to 2027. We expect to see an increase in each year's allotment due to recent federal legislation, but the magnitude of those changes is not known as of yet. Those figures will be available for the next meeting. Also, next month, we will have a presentation by the town of Clinton's consultant on their Route 62 project.

A question was asked related to the prioritization process and the distribution of projects across the region. B. Doherty explained the TEC process and the equity and environmental justice analysis that has or will be conducted regarding the TIP projects.

T. Skwierawski stated that the city of Fitchburg will be meeting to discuss the use of ARPA funds to finalize the design for the John Fitch Highway project that is currently in the Appendix of the TIP.

## **VIII. Updates**

### *- MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 provided updates on the following projects in FFY 2022: project #608779 Lancaster Route 117 at Route 70 is at final design and has an ad date of March 12, 2022; project #608793 Hubbardston Route 68 is at PS&E with an ad date of June 4, 2022; project #605296 Fitchburg Circle Street Bridge has an ad date of June 11, 2022; project #610729 Gardner-Westminster Route 2 Pavement Preservation has an ad date of June 18, 2022; project #609314 Ashby Intersection

Improvements at Route 31 and Turnpike Road has an ad date of July 30, 2022; two Safe Routes to School projects the first, in Leominster on Viscoloid Avenue has an ad date of May 21, 2022; the second project in Gardner on Elm Street is on hold as it appears Gardner is planning on that becoming an alternative school and there are questions as to if it still meets the program parameters; and a NFA project #610730 Route 2 in Westminster-Fitchburg has a scheduled ad date of December 2022.

D. Amaral of MassDOT District 2 provided the following updates; project #608850 Petersham Glen Valley Road Bridge Replacement over the East Branch of the Swift River PS&E is under review, current ad date is June 11, 2022 with a cost is estimated of \$2,468,000; in FFY 2023, project #608784 Templeton Roundabout at Patriots Road/South Main Street/North Main Street/Gardner Road is at 75% design, right of way plans were received, the current ad date is January 14, 2023, with an estimated cost of \$2,037,000; in FFY 2024, project #609107 Phillipston-Templeton Pavement Preservation on Route 2 is at 75% design with 100% due January 22<sup>nd</sup>, current ad date is November 11, 2023 with a cost of \$9.7 million; there are no District projects in FFY 2025; and in FFY 2026, project #608424 Templeton Reconstruction of Route 68 from King Phillip Trail to the Phillipston Town Line, design is at 75% with an ad date of January 10, 2026 with an estimated cost of \$6.03 million.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale mentioned that MART has the launched the “Follow Your Bus” app. The app provides users with real time bus tracking information and alert notification. The graphical interface allows the user to see where the bus is currently located and when it will arrive at their location. MART is already receiving positive feedback from users.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that the MJTC met on January 12<sup>th</sup>. MJTC began discussion on the TIP and UPWP. We expect a project presentation next month as previously mentioned. Next meeting is Wednesday February 9<sup>th</sup>. Meeting notices will go out 1 week beforehand and the registration information will also be available on the MRPC website. One note, the MJTC has an open Chair position. The prior chair is no longer with the city of Fitchburg hence the vacancy. As of now, the Vice Chair will be fulfilling the role of Chair. Officer elections will take place in July.

There are 2 handouts for the MPO. The first is 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.

The second handout is on the recent announcement on the 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.

Finally, we want to remind all that the deadline for submittal for the 2022 Mass Trails Grant program is approaching. Further information can also be found under Announcements on our webpage.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Corbosiero stated that the MRPC will soon receive our latest District Local Technical Assistance contract from the Massachusetts Department of Community Development. MRPC will then issue its annual request for delivery of services to all member communities later this month. The MRPC also welcomes three new employees to the Planning and Development Department: Jeffrey Legros Principal Planner; Tyler Godin Regional Planner; and Ryan Doherty Economic Development Intern. They join our existing staff: Karen Chapman, Planning and Development Director and Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner. Finally, the MRPC has begun the development process for the FY 2023 budget that will conclude in June.

**IX. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next scheduled MPO meeting is on February 16, 2022 at 1:00 pm.

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

**DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 1 19 2022 Agenda

MPO 12 15 2021 Minutes

4 FFY 2022 Transit Amendment #2 1 19 2022

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 Safety Performance Targets for RPAs 11.8.21

5 UPDATED - Safety Performance Measures CY22 - Regional Partner Handout

6 Draft UPWP Schedule FFY 2022

6 Project solicitation memo

7 Draft TIP Schedule FFY 2023 2027

7 Project Master List 23-27

7 TIP Development Memo 11 2 2021

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Shared Street Announcement 1 11 2022