

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 November 16, 2022

Derek Krevat called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Ann Sullivan, MassDOT Dist. 3; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; George Kahale, MART; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Andrew Wang, MassDOT OTP; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Dist. 2; Chris Timmel, FHWA; Alan S. Manoian, Ayer; Derek Shooster, MassDOT OTP; Rebecca Merrell, Ashburnham; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Tracy Murphy, Westminster; Beth Suedmeyer, DEC

STAFF PRESENT

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

II. Public Comments

D Krevat asked those present if there were any public comments to be made. There were none.

III. Approval of October, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the October 19, 2022 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan Update

- *Update by MassDOT OTP*

C Klem stated that MassDOT is working on performing more targeted outreach within the regions with groups that may not have traditionally had their voices heard in long range plans. C Klem and MRPC staff will be having a conversation on this issue sometime in the next week or so.

D Krevat encouraged those that haven't signed up for the MassDOT Beyond Mobility plan mailing list can do so at <https://www.mass.gov/beyond-mobility> to receive plan updates. Some plan material and documents will be available shortly.

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

- *Discussion on Possible Transit and Highway TIP Amendment #2*
- *MPO Action Related to Transit and Highway TIP Amendment #2*
- *Review of Comments on Draft Amendment #1 to the Highway Element*
- *MPO Action Related to Amendment #1*

B Mahoney stated that the reason for this TIP amendment is that pricing for construction projects and other needs such as new vehicles have changed. B Mahoney listed several projects that have changed or been canceled and the new vehicles that will be purchased will be electric.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to release Transit TIP Amendment #2 for a 21-day public review and comment period.

G Snow stated that 2023 TIP Amendment #1 was presented to the MPO at the October 19th MPO meeting for action to release the amendment for a 21-day public review and comment period. The amendment is for Project #609314 which is a roundabout project at the Greenville and Turnpike Roads intersection in Ashby. The amendment calls for the removal of the project from consideration in the TIP due to the successful advertisement of the project on August 27th. A motion was passed by the MPO to release the Amendment for a 21-day period. No comments were received as of the end of business on November 15th. At the November 9th MJTC mtg, the MJTC passed a recommendation to the MPO that the amendment receive MPO endorsement. The action being sought is a vote from the MPO to endorse the Amendment.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse Highway TIP Amendment #1.

VI. MART Updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)

- *Presentation and Discussion by MART*
- *MPO Action Related to PTASP as Needed*

B Mahoney stated that MART is required to review their Public Safety Transportation Plan every year and decide if there are changes that are required. Changes that were required due to the fact that Mohammed Khan has retired, and Bruno Fisher has become the new administrator. However, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that was passed by Congress earlier this year also had some mandatory changes that were required to the safety plan. The most important change that was the BIL required any agency that served an urban area of 200,000 population or more had to form an official safety committee. MART has formed a safety committee through an MOU that was signed with the local HEU 690 union that has started having meetings to review the existing plan, make whatever modifications need to be made, and then approve the finalized plan. MART is required to give a copy to MassDOT, present it to the MPO and receive final approval by the MART advisory board which needs to be done before December 31st of 2022. B Mahoney listed many of the changes that have been made in the plan.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the MPO to endorse the changes to the PTASP.

VII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- Goals, Objectives, Strategies Discussion
- Performance Measures Discussion

B Doherty presented an update to the 2020 RTP Vision, Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures. Staff has been seeking input from the MJTC and will continue this process over the next few meetings. Staff has begun the RTP public outreach workshops. Two were completed on Monday followed by two on Tuesday. Those workshops were held for the four Subregions. On Thursday staff will have a workshop with the cities of Fitchburg, Gardner, and Leominster. A transit workshop will be held on 11/29/2022. Additional workshops will be held as the RTP process moves forward. Finally, the RTP survey is live on the MRPC website. Staff encourages everyone in the MRPC region to complete the survey by going to MRPC.org. The survey is available on the MRPC homepage.

VIII. Updates

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

D Amaral of MassDOT District 2 provided the following updates. For FFY 23, Project# 608784 - Templeton Roundabout at the intersection of Patriots / South / Main / North and Gardner Road, design is at 100% and 100% review is completed, and PS&E is due on November 23rd and the current add date is January 21st, 2023. Project# 609107 – Rt 2 Phillipston, and Templeton Pavement Preservation and related work was advertised on November 4th and the bid opening is December 13th. For FFY 24, Project# 608723 - Athol Intersection improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Ave is at 75% design rating and now waiting 75% response to comments, 100% is due January 20th 2023 and the current add date is January 6th, 2024.

A Sullivan of MassDOT District 3 provided the following updates. Westminster - Route 140, from Patricia Road to Princeton Town Line is at PS&E. Gardner - Roundabout at Elm Street / Pearl Street / Central Street and Green Street, is at 100% design and the PS&E is due November 22nd. Harvard - bridge Project Rt 2 to over Nashua River / Tank Road and Boston and Main Railroad is a book job. No submission has been received and the add date has been moved to April. Fitchburg - Rt 2 is at 75% design. The 100%/PS&E is due December 12th. Ashby - Greenville Road at Turnpike Road was advertised last August. Gardner - Elm Street resurfacing is at 100%, and the PS&E is due December 1st.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale of MART provided the following transit updates. The ITC roof replacement project is underway and anticipate the completion of the project by December. The Ayer Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza has been completed. MART has been awarded \$180,000, for bus shelters through the MassDOT Shared Streets and Safe Spaces program for fiscal year 23. MART will be installing bus shelters in Fitchburg, Gardner, and Athol. MART has recently installed two (2) new bus shelters - one in Gardner, and one in Fitchburg. MART is working on a system wide bus route evaluation and schedule update. MART has updated the older bus route schedule and effective Monday, October 31st, will start the new schedule.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

S Bean provided the following updates. The MJTC met last Wednesday, November 9th. The major topic was a Safe Routes to School presentation and an in-depth review of the RTP goals, strategies, and performance measures was completed. The MJTC will not meet in December, so the next meeting will be on January 11, 2023 at 2:30 PM. There are two handouts for discussion. The first, from MassDOT is the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study newsletter from October 31st. The newsletter discusses the types of railroad signals systems that are in place and how they operate. A brief discussion related to cost estimation and how they are derived was provided. No further information is provided on the next public meeting for this study but when we receive information we will post it on the MRPC website under announcements. The next handout is a brief overview and discussion of the US DOT Thriving Communities Program. The program aims to ensure that disadvantaged communities disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health policy outcomes have the technology, tools and organizational capacity to compete for federal aid and deliver quality infrastructure projects that enable their communities and neighborhoods to thrive. The program facilitates the planning and development of transportation and community revitalization activities and provides tools to ensure that under resourced communities can access the historical funding provided by BIL. The Federal Fiscal year 22 funding offers two separate response opportunities for potential applicants, a letter of interest and a notice of Funding Opportunity that are described in more detail on the handout.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G Corbosiero provided the following updates. The Mass Broadband Institute has officially opened its Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program application to all communities. The program will accomplish two goals - guide municipal decision making and investments that will increase access, adoption, and usage of the internet for the population most impacted by COVID 19. Also, the program will prepare municipalities to submit proposals to existing or forthcoming, state, or federal programs to support digital equity activities. Municipalities can now apply for this program via an online application. MRPC can assist your community to complete your community online application. Don't hesitate to reach out to Karen Chatman, Planning and Development Director and Jeffrey Legros, Principal Planner, or Glenn Eaton, to request assistance. MBI Mass Tech Collaboration will assign a planning assistance organization to your community. MRPC has been approved by Mass Tech to deliver services in the MRPC region. The MRPC welcomes you to attend a Lunch and Learn meeting to be held at noon on Thursday, December 1st, 2022. Registration information can be found on our website, please attend, or feel free to send a call in from the community.

IX. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B Doherty stated that the next scheduled MPO meeting is on December 21, 2022 at 1:00 pm-

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

- MPO 11 16 2022 Agenda
- MPO 10 19 2022 Minutes
- MMPO Transit TIP Revisions Report 11.16.22
- 5 FFY 2023 Highway Amendment #1 Summary
- 5 FFY 2023 Transit TIP Amendment #2 Summary 11 16 2022
- 5 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #1 10 21 2022
- 6 MART 2022 PTASP
- 7 GO&S 6 19 19
- 7 Performance Measures 6 21 19
- 7 Public Survey Print Version
- 7 Workshop flyer UPDATE 10 17 2022
- 8 Northern Tier Oct 2022 Newsletter
- 8 Thriving Communities Info 11 9 2022