

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held at
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

Minutes of December 19, 2018

S. Woelfel representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. Introduction

SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Stephanie Lahtinen, Subregion 2

MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Mark Wetzel, Ayer; Steve Nims, Ashburnham; Robert Szocik, Templeton; Nicolas Bosonetto, VHB; Cassie Chase Ostrander, FHWA; Mike Bolduc, MassDOT Dist. 2

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; Brian Doherty; George Kahale; Sheri Bean; George Snow; Jason Stanton

II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of November 28, 2018 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the November 28, 2018 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Montachusett FFY 2019 – 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review and Discussion of Comments on TIP Amendment #1*
- *MPO Action to Endorse TIP Amendment #1*

B. Harris referenced a handout summarizing proposed Amendment #1 to the 2019 – 2023 TIP. The proposed amendment would adjust project cost to project #608612 Athol-Bridge Replacement, Crescent Street over Millers River. The current cost of \$7,860,160 would be amended to \$4,500,000, a decrease of \$3,360,160. The comment period began on November 29th and closed on December 19th. During the comment period, MassDOT sent in an updated project cost of \$5,015,411.50. This adjustment has been incorporated into the TIP amendment document for approval. It was also noted that both the MJTC and the MRPC boards voted to recommend that the MPO endorse the amendment as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to approve Amendment #1 to the 2019 – 2023 TIP as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

V. Montachusett 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

- *Review and Discussion on Revised Goals, Objectives and Strategies*
- *Presentation of RTP Website and Story Maps*

B. Harris indicated that the MRPC is in the process of updating the 2016 Regional Transportation Plan. As part of this update, staff has been reviewing and updating the Goals and Objectives that were included in the 2016 plan. The MJTC has been reviewing the current Goals and Objectives and have made some adjustments/updates. A handout was presented that shows the Goals, Objectives and Strategies that were proposed by the MJTC. The Strategies were added into the document because it was felt by the staff and the MJTC that some of the past Objectives were best suited as Strategies.

The public will be able to review and comment on the information presented throughout the RTP update development. As part of that, the MRPC has developed a website and online application for RTP information and comments. Jason Stanton, GIS Director, gave a presentation regarding the functionality of the RTP website and application. This information is not currently available yet. It is expected to “go live” within the next week or so. Changes and adjustments can be made to the website and/or application based on comments received. MPO members are encouraged to check out the site and submit any comments or suggestions if needed.

B.Mahoney asked if this information would stay on the MRPC website moving forward even after the RTP is approved. B.Harris indicated that we could certainly continue to keep this information available on our website.

M.Wetzel asked about how MRPC will address the comments that are made and possibly limit comments to not have numerous duplications. B.Harris mentioned that there hasn't been considerations to limiting comments at this time. This may be something to consider. The goal is to have people help us establish priorities and possible future projects based on their comments.

VI. Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) Update

- Review of Revised Project TEC

B. Doherty presented on the updated TEC scoring criteria. This scoring mechanism is used to score all future projects to help prioritize for TIP funding. The proposed changes were reviewed by the MJTC over the past few months and changes/edits have been made based on comments received. The final draft was presented as a handout to the MPO. B. Doherty reviewed each category that is included in the TEC scoring along with the proposed changes. Those categories include Condition, Mobility, Safety, Community Effects and Support, Land Use and Economic Development, and Environmental Effects. MRPC staff has scored a few projects with the proposed scoring criteria to see if there is a drastic difference in scores from the previous scoring method. There doesn't appear to be a significant difference. A final TEC scoring criteria is expected to come out in January and will be implemented to score and prioritize projects for the upcoming TIP.

VII. Updates

- MassDOT Highway Division

M. Bolduc stated that the Winchendon Rt. 202 project was advertised last October and the bid opening will be in February. There are two Athol bridges in 2019 – Washington Ave over the Athol Pond outlet is at 100% design and they're currently working on PS&E, and Crescent Street over the Millers River, which was the amendment that was just voted on, the 100% design just came in a few weeks ago which triggered the amendment. In 2021, the Templeton roundabout is expected to be at 25% design by early next year. Winchendon Central Street (Rt. 202) project is at 25% design and they are working towards a design public hearing. There was a design public hearing for the Templeton Rout 68 project last week. It is anticipated that this will be a TIP project but it is currently unfunded.

S. Bradbury indicated that the Westminster Route 2A at Route 140 intersection improvements project was advertised on December 1st. Lancaster/Harvard/Littleton resurfacing related work on Route 2 was advertised on December 8th. Clinton Route 110 (High St) project is at 100% design and PS&E is due February 1st. The District is waiting on revised 25% design plans for the Twin Cities Rail Trail. Hubbardston Route 68 resurfacing is at 75% design and waiting for PS&E. Hubbardston Evergreen Road over Mason Brook is at 25% design and the 75% design plans are due January 1st. Townsend West Meadow Road over Locke Brook is at 75% design and they're waiting for 100% design plans in February. Lunenburg Route 2A over Pearl Hill Brook is at 25% design.

- *Transit*

G. Kahale stated that MART is continuing to work on the Ayer parking facility. They went out for re-bid on December 6th. The first round of bids exceeded the available funding so a re-bid was necessary. Final sub-bid is due on January 9th and general contractor bids are due January 23. If this process is successful then the notification for contractor work will go out on January 30th. MART is already working on some small projects in Ayer that are part of the parking facility project – drainage improvements at Depot Sq., and the Town of Ayer is working on utility replacement in the area.

MART is also working on evaluating the bus routes. Due to funding cuts, a new route for Athol recently came out. The new service started on December 3rd and so far, it appears to be successful and has the same number of riders for one shuttle that it had previously for two shuttles. The Fitchburg/Leominster routes have also had some adjustments that started on December 3rd which seem to be going well. Another small adjustment may be made to accommodate some riders based on comments received. The monthly pass cost will also increase starting in January 2019.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris mentioned that notices have been sent out to communities to solicit volunteers for MPO Representatives and Alternates. Interested BOS members were given a deadline of December 14th to let us know of their willingness to volunteer. A selection meeting will then be scheduled after the first of the year to reach a consensus in each subregion on the Representative and Alternate. Terms will begin in September 2019 and run for three years. So far, we have heard from Subregion 3 with two individuals volunteering for Representative and Alternate (Jamie Toale, Lunenburg and Kara McGuire Minar, Harvard) and Subregion 1 (Sue Lisio, Townsend). MRPC will reach out to communities once again to see if we can get some more volunteers.

Staff attended a meeting in Boston on the Future of Transportation that included a presentation and panel discussion on the report of Governor Baker's Commission on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth. S. Bean mentioned that the presentation included a summary of the full report and she will be requesting the PowerPoint slides from the meeting.

A handout of the upcoming 2020-2024 TIP schedule was provided. The anticipated endorsement date will be in May 2019 with a draft going out in April. The project list and updated TEC scores for each project will be on the January MPO and MJTC agenda.

An updated 2019 calendar was also provided that includes all MPO, MRPC, and MJTC meetings for 2019. The previous version that was handed out at the November MPO meeting had incorrect information.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

J. Telepciak mentioned that the MRPC received the contract from the State for the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program funding. The next MRPC meeting will be held on January 3rd where we will talk with commissioners about what services are needed for the DLTA program. Project solicitation will go out to communities by the end of January.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled January 16th at 1:00 PM in MRPC offices.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING

MPO 12 19 2018 Agenda

MPO 11 28 2018 Minutes

Proposed Amendment #1 to 2019 – 2023 TIP

Draft 2020 RTP Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Draft Revised TEC version 4

FFY 2020-2024 TIP Development Schedule

2019 Calendar of MRPC Meetings version 2