

# MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

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

Minutes of January 16, 2019

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

## I. Introduction

### SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist. 3; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; John Telepciak, MRPC; Bonnie Mahoney, MART; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Mary Jo Bohart, Fitchburg; Jamie Toale, Subregion 3; Phil Duffy, Subregion 4

### MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Peter Lowitt, DEC; Tim Kilhart, Harvard DPW; Travis Brown, Hubbardston DPW; Nicolas Bosonetto, VHB; Brandon Wilcoy, FHWA; Jeff Hoynoski, MassDOT Dist. 2; Bonnie Lawrence, Shirley; Tracy Murphy, Winchendon; Chelsey Patriss, CHNA 9

### STAFF PRESENT

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

## II. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

## III. Approval of December 19, 2018 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 19, 2018 MPO Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

- *Potential TIP Amendment/Adjustment to Highway and Transit Elements*
- *MPO Action Related to Potential TIP Amendment*

B. Harris referenced a handout summarizing proposed Amendment #2 to the 2019 – 2023 Highway TIP. The proposed amendment would adjust project cost to project #608620 Athol-Bridge Replacement, Washington Ave over Athol Pond Outlet. The current cost of \$2,485,419 would be amended to \$2,158,529, a decrease of \$326,890. The comment period should begin on January 25<sup>th</sup> and will close on February 14<sup>th</sup>. B. Mahoney referenced a handout summarizing Amendment #2 to the 2019 – 2023 Transit TIP. MART added replacement cutaways under 5310 at a total cost of \$522,800. Three grants were awarded to The Arc of Opportunity and GAAMA Inc. under Other Non-Federal at a total cost of \$298,300. MART made some changes by shifting funds from rehab/renovate of facilities/shop equipment and van purchases at reduced costs to purchasing two medium duty buses at a total cost of \$735,000.

A motion was made and seconded to release Amendment #2 to the 2019 – 2023 TIP for public review and comment as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

## V. MassDOT Safety Performance Measures – CY 2019

### - State and Regional Information Discussion

D. Krevat referenced a handout on the statewide CY 2019 Safety Performance Targets. The five annual safety performance targets (Targets) are *Total Fatalities*, *Fatality Rate*, *Total Incapacitating Injuries*, *Incapacitating Injuries Rate*, and *Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Incapacitating Injuries*. Total Fatality numbers will remain flat at 352 fatalities through 2019 while the Fatality Rate will drop to 0.58 in 2019 partly due to a 0.3% increase in VMT. Total Incapacitating Injuries and the Incapacitating Injuries Rate are trending downward. The Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Incapacitating Injuries is increasing for a variety of possible factors including mode shift, lack of infrastructure, and distracted driving. MassDOT is setting the Target to flatline through 2019 as a way to reflect setting the goal to reduce the upward trend through adopting the Vision Zero mentality of getting the numbers to zero. The MPOs are required to adopt these Targets and make a statement that the Program of Projects on the TIP and other planning efforts are working toward achieving the Targets. 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. B. Harris indicated that this information is for this meeting and a formal vote to adopt the statewide Targets will be taken at the next MPO meeting.

G. Snow referenced a handout on the MRPC region *Total Fatalities*, and the *Fatality Rate* Safety Performance Measures for the MRPC region through 2016. The Figures graphically represent the MRPC region safety performance information found in the *Safety Performance Figures by MPO* table from the MassDOT handout. Both Figures present the fatalities information for the MRPC region and present the information the same way as the Total Fatalities figure in the MassDOT handout minus the Projected CY18 and CY19 Targets. The top Figure shows that on average, fatalities have occurred at or very near the same total over the years from 2008 to 2016. Only one 5-year period averaged less than 15 fatalities per year with only one less fatality. On average, MRPC region fatalities represent 4% of the state's total fatalities. The bottom Figure shows the MRPC region Fatality Rate versus the State Fatality Rate. On average, the MRPC region Rate runs 7% higher the state's Rate. The lowest difference is 3% for the 08-12 5-year period while the highest is 10% for the 09-13 5-year period. Since the 09-13 5-year period, the MRPC region Rate has declined 5% and is trending downwards toward the state Rate. The decrease is at least partly due to an increase in VMT as opposed to a decrease in fatalities.

## VI. Montachusett FFY 2020 – 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- List of Potential Federal Aid Target Projects
- Identification of Projects for MPO Presentation

B. Doherty referenced the Montachusett MPO FFY 2020-2024 TIP Target Eligible Projects handout. B. Doherty described the projects listed in the table. Project 601957: Ashburnham – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 101 was assigned a new Project Number (to 609244) due to changes in the scope of the project.

B. Harris stated that the next step is to meet with MassDOT on TIP Readiness Day to review the projects and obtain up to date project info such as the project design status and any other issues that may need clarification. Once this information has been gathered, MRPC staff will begin to develop a set of TIP scenarios. The MRPC expects to receive TIP target figures by the end of this month. Existing projects on the current TIP appear to be on track to move forward to the new TIP. Several Target eligible projects will be presented at a future MPO meeting based on projects the MPO would be interested in learning more about. Three projects were discussed - Project # 604499: Leominster, Route 12 (Central Street), Project # 608888: Gardner, Pearson Boulevard; Project # 608793: Hubbardston, Route 68.

## **VII. Montachusett 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

- *Upcoming Workshops and Presentations*
- *Demographic Projection Data*

S. Bean referenced the RTP Public Outreach Workshops handout which announces that a series of six workshops to be held that will focus on the 2020 update of the RTP. The handout includes the communities where the workshops are to be held. As of this date, the workshop locations within the communities are: Fitchburg – MART Facility; Leominster – MRPC; Winchendon – Town Hall; Harvard – Town Hall. The locations in Ayer and Phillipston are in the process of being determined. Also, please contact the MRPC if you know of any groups or organizations within your communities that would be interested in attending any of these workshops and the MRPC will outreach to them with further workshop information. B. Harris discussed the MRPC RTP website that is now live.

B. Harris referenced handouts on MRPC and statewide demographic projection data. There are population, employment, and household projections by community that project to 2040 that were developed by MassDOT with input from the Projections Committee that is comprised of RPAs and other statewide stakeholders. Input and feedback on these projections from MRPC communities is welcomed.

B. Mahoney indicated that MRTA is the RTA for the communities of Athol and Harvard.

P. Lowitt asked about the declining population numbers for Shirley from 2010 to 2020 and the household increase from 2010 to 2020. M. Piermarini made a similar statement about Leominster.

B. Harris stated that the MRPC will review the numbers for possible adjustment.

## **VIII. Updates**

- *MassDOT Highway Division*

J. Hoynoski indicated that the Winchendon Rt. 202 project will have the bid opening on February 26<sup>th</sup>. The Athol bridge project at Washington Ave over the Athol Pond outlet is at PS&E, and the Athol Crescent Street over the Millers River bridge project is at 100% design.

A. Frost indicated that the 100%/PS&E for the Clinton Route 110 (High St) project is due February 1<sup>st</sup> and is expected to be advertised on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Hubbardston Route 68 resurfacing project is at 75% design and the 100%/PS&E is due later this month and is expected to be advertised in June. The Westminster Route 2A at Route 140 intersection improvements project was advertised on December 1<sup>st</sup> and the bid opening is projected for March 26<sup>th</sup>. G. Kahale asked about the status of Twin Cities Rail Trail. A. Frost stated that there are many bridge projects for this trail project. The designing of those bridges is behind schedule but MassDOT is fully committed to the project. MassDOT is looking at portions of the project that can be advertised in fiscal 2019 with the remainder of the project being advertised in a later fiscal year.

- *Transit*

B. Mahoney stated that MART Bus Route 9 in Leominster needs some changes as Reliant Medical has moved to Lancaster Street in Leominster. Reliant Medical has requested bus service to the new facility which has been added to the Route 9 schedule which has caused buses to run late. Adjustments to the schedule are being made which will be published next week and made permanent the week after that. At the same time, the new RMV is also being added to the Route 9 schedule per the request of Mohammed Khan and Mayor Mazzarella.

G. Kahale stated that MART has received sub-bids for electric, masonry, plumbing and water proofing for the Ayer parking facility which were very good. The general contractor bids are due January 23. If this process is successful then the notification for contractor work will go out on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris mentioned that the new TEC has been approved by the MJTC at the last MJTC meeting. He also referred to a MassDOT handout concerning the Draft State Bicycle Transportation Plan which is out for comment until January 31<sup>st</sup>. The plan can also be accessed on the MRPC and MART websites. The MRPC has been working with Mount Wachusett Community College and CHNA 9 which was recently awarded a Transportation for Massachusetts grant to assist the college on enhancing their transportation options for students and staff.

G. Snow attended a meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> concerning the traffic concerns on the Route 2 Exit 18 EB Off Ramp that have occurred since the opening of the North Quabbin Commons commercial development on Route 2A in Athol. Due to a significant increase in traffic volume, residents on Ward Hill Road are experiencing significant delays and safety concerns. At the meeting, District 2 presented draft short and long term improvements. The meeting was well attended by local officials from Athol and Phillipston, District 2 staff, and several residents from Ward Hill Road.

- *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. Two dates are being made available to communities to present proposals. The first is March 4<sup>th</sup> and the second is April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. The awarding of funds will take place on March 7<sup>th</sup> and April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**IX. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris indicated that the next MPO meeting is scheduled February 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM in MRPC offices.

G. Kahale indicated that a correction needs to be made in the footer of the minutes. The date needs to be changed from the November 28, 2018 to December 19, 2018.

**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:58 p.m.

**DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 1 16 2019 Agenda  
MPO 12 19 2018 Minutes  
Proposed Amendment #2 to 2019 – 2023 TIP  
MassDOT CY19 Safety Performance Measure Targets  
MRPC CY19 Safety Performance Measures  
Montachusett MPO FFY 2020-2024 TIP Target Eligible Projects  
RTP Public Outreach Workshops notice  
Demographic Projections by MRPC communities  
Projections Comparison by RPA  
MassDOT Draft State Bicycle Transportation Plan notice  
2019 Calendar of MRPC Meetings version 2