

Report from the Berkshire Transportation Advisory Committee to the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization

~ From the Meeting Held on March 1, 2007 ~

Summary of Items Discussed

- An informative workshop was given by BRPC and MassHighway staff regarding the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The process – from the creation of Project Need Forms by municipalities and MassHighway, to the identification of project goals, objectives and constituents, to public outreach. Discussion was held regarding project engineering, and staff highlighted the importance of towns' proceeding through the process at an appropriate pace, due to the current backlog of projects awaiting funding.

A follow-up discussion was held regarding the issues that can arise with project engineering and management, and examples were provided by TAC members of recent projects that experienced problems.

- A discussion was held regarding the four-year TIP length:
 - Staff pointed out that current funding levels are more conservative than they have been in the past, and that funding levels will not likely increase for at least ten years.
 - A comment was made that engineering concepts may become outdated by the time a project is ready for funding.
 - Staff pointed out the importance for communities of close communication with MassHighway and the BRPC so that projects can be evaluated as necessary, and additional costs be avoided.
- A discussion was held regarding the letter to the editor regarding the Pittsfield Intermodal Center:
 - Mr. Malnati informed the TAC that as of January 1st, BRTA staff have remained present until the last train arrives.
- A discussion was held regarding project scoring, and the TAC will discuss projects with fairly even scoring, and will review sample projects to discuss design guidelines and evaluation criteria at its next meeting.
- A discussion was held regarding the TAC's role to the MPO.
 - Staff pointed out that the MPO is the decision-making body, and seeks a broad range of opinions from the region. The TAC provides input from communities through the TAC report.

- The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 3rd at 5:30.

Majority Report on Issues Brought to a Motion

- The Minutes of the January 18th, 2007 TAC Meeting were approved unanimously by the TAC.

Minority Report on Issues Brought to Motion

No minority dissenting opinions were expressed.