

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, January 26, 2016 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates:

John Boyle	North-Central Berkshire Towns Representative
John Duval	North Berkshire Towns Representative
Samuel Haupt	BRPC
Jim Huebner	Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative
Bob Malnati	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1 (Representing District Highway Administrator)
David Turocy	City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Tyer)
David Mohler, Chair	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Emily Lindsey	BRPC
Andy McKeever	iBerkshires
Janis Akerstrom	City of Pittsfield
Doug Roelfs	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Gabriel Sherman	MassDOT
Sarah Vallieres	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
Jane Winn	Berkshire Environmental Action Team

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Winn noted she was dismayed when she read the minutes of the last MPO meeting where Greenhouse Gas Emissions were referred to as an environmental factor. Ms. Winn stated her belief that GHGs are an infrastructure issue that goes beyond the environment and should retain its own evaluation criteria, as approved at the December meeting of the Berkshire MPO.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 1, 2015

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy, to approve the meeting minutes for the December 1, 2015 meeting of the Berkshire MPO, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries with one abstention (S. Haupt).

4. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE 2016-2019 TIP AMENDMENT #1 AND INITIATE 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ms. Koirala described the two projects that are part of the proposed TIP Amendment. The first proposal was to move the Great Barrington Bridge Replacement (Park St. over Housatonic River) from FY 2015 to FY 2016. The second proposal was to change the project description and amount for

BRTA's purchase of replacement vans from 3 vans, to 5 vans by increasing the total amount from \$299,999 to \$372,000 in FY 2016.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Moore, to release Amendment #1 of the 2016-2019 TIP for a 30-day public comment period, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

5. APPROVE AN ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENT TO THE 2016-2019 TIP

Ms. Koirala described an administrative adjustment, which requires changing the identification number for a Sheffield Bridge Replacement project. Mr. Frieri clarified that this is merely to avoid using a number which had once been used for another project, and does not impact anything other than the ID number.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Malnati, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy, to approve the administrative adjustment to the 2016-2019 TIP, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

6. PRESENTATION ON THE BRTA TRANSIT STUDY AND RECOMMENDED SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Mr. Malnati described recommendations from Berkshire Regional Transit Authority's (BRTA) Regional Transit Plan, which evaluated the existing service and that outlined hypothetical service improvements if additional funding becomes available. The plan outlines \$2.8 million dollars of recommended operating and maintenance improvements to the existing BRTA service.

Mr. Malnati reviewed Chapter 7 of the plan, which describes potential operating and capital improvements along with estimated costs over four stages (from short to long term implementation strategies) for each route. Mr. Malnati reviewed each route's existing and proposed elements by phase. He explained that recommendations from the plan would be reviewed and comments would be solicited before service changes or other recommendations are implemented.

Mr. Duval inquired about on-demand stops, and Mr. Malnati explained the situations, like Shaker village or a Senior Center, where the bus does not stop unless requested by a passenger, or someone who has called/texted the request. There are 25-30 route deviations that BRTA currently operates and BRTA is trying to make it easier to understand where/how to request service at these locations. There is a real-time texting ability to request service currently, though BRTA is looking at ways to market this so more riders will use it.

7. DISCUSSION ON MASSDOT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Mr. Mohler described MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan (CIP), a rolling 5-year plan that identifies investments in the Commonwealth's transportation system. MassDOT is currently developing the FY 2017-2021 CIP, using evaluation criteria based on the recommendation of the Project Selection Advisory Council, a statewide council that Mr. Lovejoy sits on. A score will be presented alongside each project, although the scores will not be the only factor in determination of funding. A draft of the FY 2017-2021 CIP will likely be available in February for comment. Mr. Mohler noted there is an RPA working group, which Nat Karns is participating on, that is looking at streamlining project applications and criteria statewide.

8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri reported the project status of TIP projects in the Berkshire MPO area. There is almost \$12 million programmed for FY 2016. Mr. Fieri noted the construction contract for the Ashuwillticook Extension in Adams was awarded to Maxymillian and that construction would begin this winter. He also noted that the 25% design estimate for FY 2016 Pittsfield intersection project at Center St. and W. Housatonic St. was roughly half a million dollars above the programmed amount. Mr. Mohler suggested waiting to see what happens in terms of resource allocation due to increases expected from the FAST Act.

Ms. Vallieres let the group know that BRTA submitted a request for 5 hybrid busses and that they will find out if they will be awarded in summer of 2016. She will keep the group updated.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kus informed the group about an upcoming Complete Streets 101 workshop on February 4th in Pittsfield. He encouraged members to attend to get an introduction to Complete Streets concepts and receive additional information on the MassDOT Complete Streets Certification Program.

Mr. Kus also presented a draft TIP development schedule to the group and alerted them he would be sending out the TIP project solicitation letter and forms around February 1st for the 2017-2020 TIP.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE/MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2016. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:48 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- TIP Amendment #1 Handouts
- TIP Administrative Adjustment Handout
- Excerpt from Transit Study
- Draft TIP Schedule
- MassDOT District 1 Project Status Update