

**Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

Tuesday, April 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
Samuel Haupt	BRPC
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Tom Tinlin)
Andy Hogeland	North Berkshire Towns Alternate
Jim Huebner	Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative
Steve Woelfel, Chair	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)
David Turocy	City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Tyer)
Sarah Vallieres	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Nat Karns	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Emily Lindsey	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Laurel Scialabba	Hinsdale Select Board, North-Central Berkshire Towns Alternate
Gabriel Sherman	MassDOT
Jim Sullivan	Hinsdale Road Committee

**1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM MARCH 22, 2016**

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the meeting minutes for the March 22, 2016 meeting of the Berkshire MPO, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**4. REPORT FROM THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING – MARCH 15, 2016**

Mr. Haupt noted the TAC discussed many of the items on the MPO agenda at their March meeting, highlighting the TAC discussion on TIP scenarios and their formal support of Scenario 2 and Scenario A (Skyline Trail).

**5. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND AUTHORIZE A 45-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Lindsey provided the group with a brief description of the Public Participation Plan and highlighted some of the major goals of the Plan. Ms. Lindsey pointed to the attached matrix, which

showed comments received to date, along with a staff response on how the comments were addressed in the draft Plan. She noted that once the Plan was released for the 45-day public comment period, staff would host an Open House on May 25, 2016.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to release the draft Public Participation Plan for a 45-day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**6. APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT #2 TO THE FY 2016-2019 TIP TO INCREASE PROJECT COST TO \$5,515,164 FOR LANESBOROUGH BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, NARRAGANSETT AVE OVER PONTOOSUC LAKE (603778) AND ADD JACOBS LADDER TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY PROJECT IN LEE (SBYWY1) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$65,000 TO FY 2016 AND AUTHORIZE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE CERTIFICATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE MPO MEMBERS**

Ms. Koirala provided the group with a brief description of the amendment to increase the project cost of a Lanesborough Bridge Replacement to \$5,515,164 and noted there had been no comments received on the proposed amendment.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Haupt, seconded by Mr. Huebner, to approve Amendment #2 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**7. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT #3 TO THE FY 2016-2019 TIP AND INITIATE A 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Koirala described a potential amendment to the Center St. and West Housatonic St. intersection improvement project (#607900), but noted there would be no request to act today. Ms. Koirala noted the final project cost is still being worked out and the project sponsor wants to get to a final number before proceeding with the amendment. The project is estimated to have increased in cost by around \$570,000.

**8. DISCUSSION ON PROJECT EVALUATION SCORES AND FUNDING SCENARIOS FOR THE FY 2017-2021 TIP**

Ms. Koirala introduced the scenarios for the FY 2017-2021 TIP, noting this is the first TIP that includes five years of funding. She proposed discussing the scenarios by timeframe, beginning with FY 2017-2019 and concluding with FY 2020-2021. Mr. Woelfel suggested the group provide suggestions for staff to focus on, rather than making a formal motion.

Ms. Koirala presented the first set of scenarios which covered FY 2017-2019. Ms. Koirala noted the delay of Pittsfield's BMC Area Improvements to FY 2018 due to project readiness, leaving \$2,548,340 available for programming in FY 2017. There was concern about the lack of projects that could be ready to go that soon, and Mr. Moore committed to looking at the status of Clarksburg's Rt. 8 project. Mr. Woelfel asked where bicycle/pedestrian and transit projects were and Ms. Koirala said the committee would see that information at their next meeting.

Mr. Karns inquired as to why there are no other projects ready to go, enforcing the notion that the region needs to do a better job prepping projects so we aren't leaving money on the table. Mr. Moore noted several issues with a specific consultant that consistently caused delays in the project

development process for several projects. Mr. Woelfel suggested communities get revised schedules from any consultants to better inform the decision-making process and to get things going. Mr. Lovejoy expressed his desire to support the TAC's suggestion but was concerned about leaving money on the table.

Mr. Huebner inquired what would happen if funds were left unprogrammed, and Mr. Woelfel noted it would likely be redistributed across the state. Ms. Vallieres inquired if these funds could be used for transit, and Ms. Woelfel confirmed it could be flexed depending on the proposed activity. Mr. Hogeland asked if the remaining FY 2017 funds could be used for the bicycle project in Williamstown, Ms. Koirala concurred.

The MPO came to a consensus that staff should move forward using FY 2017-2019 Scenario 3.

Ms. Koirala presented the second set of scenarios for the FY 2020-2021 timeframe. The scenarios were labeled A-D. Ms. Koirala noted the FY 2020 project was the same across all scenarios, and the scenarios differed in the project for FY 2021 as follows: (A) Skyline Trail, Hinsdale, (B) Route 20, Hancock, (C) Route 8, Clarksburg, and (D) Route 23, Otis. Ms. Koirala referred to the list of scored projects and Mr. Moore noted the East St. project has a consultant and is in the mix.

Mr. Karns noted he had no preference, but he recalled the extremely poor condition of the pavement on Skyline Trail. Mr. Haupt noted the TACs overwhelming preference for Scenario A (Skyline Trail). Ms. Scialabba, Mr. Boyle, and Mr. Huebner stated their preference for Scenario A.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle, seconded by Mr. Huebner, for staff to focus on FY 2020-2021 Scenario A.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle, seconded by Mr. Huebner, to retract previous motion.

The MPO directed staff to move forward using Scenario 3 for FY 2017-2019 and Scenario A for FY 2020-2021. No formal action was taken.

## **9. UPDATE ON MASSDOT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. Woelfel presented information on the 2017-2021 MassDOT Capital Investment Program (CIP), a 5-year document that describes cash flow. He noted the CIP is currently out for public comment and there are many upcoming public meetings across the Commonwealth. The meeting in the Berkshires will be held in Pittsfield on May 5, 2016 at the City Hall at 6:00pm. The draft CIP can be viewed online and the entire universe of projects is also available on the website. Mr. Woelfel said MassDOT has added many (200-300) stakeholder groups to their outreach list and hope to engage new participants. Mr. Karns asked about the format of the upcoming meetings and Mr. Woelfel said the format will be more traditional, but online comment forms will also be available.

## **10. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES**

Mr. Frieri reported the project status of TIP projects in the Berkshire MPO area from FY 2015 and FY 2016.

## **11. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Kus requested a UPWP reallocation which would transfer \$6,000 from the Special Studies task to the Transportation Improvement Program task to the TIP task. This reallocation is necessary due to

the increase in TIP activities which now include GHG modelling. Mr. Lovejoy inquired about what potential Special Studies activities this might eliminate, Mr. Kus said there would not be any impacts to the Special Studies underway. Mr. Woelfel noted that today, this was fine to do without a formal vote, but in the future the MPO should adopt UPWP policies which outline processes, guidelines, and thresholds for UPWP reallocations. Mr. Karns noted his interest in allowing small adjustments across tasks.

## **12. NEXT MEETING DATE/MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 24, 2016. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 5:04 PM.

### Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Public Participation Plan Memo
- Public Participation Plan Comment Matrix
- Draft FY 2016-2019 TIP Scenarios
- Draft FY 2020-2021 Scenarios
- FY 2017-2021 TIP Schedule
- TIP Targets and Project Costs
- MassDOT Project Status Report