

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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MEETING

Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday May 29, 2012, 4:00 PM

In the BRPC Conference Room, 1 Fenn Street, 2nd Floor
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MINUTES (Revised 7/10/12)

MPO Representatives and Alternates:

Gordon Bailey, Town of Lee (Southeast Berkshire Delegate)
John Boyle, Town of Dalton (North Central Berkshire Delegate)
Michael Canales, City of North Adams (representing Mayor Alcombright)
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (representing Mayor Bianchi)
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire Delegate)
Bob Malnati, BRTA
David Mohler, MassDOT (representing Secretary Davey)
James Mullen, Town of New Marlborough (BRPC)
Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator DePaola)
Ron Turbin, Town of Williamstown (North Berkshire Delegate)

Others Present:

Chris Cornwell, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (Town of Dalton Consultant)
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1
Justin Diagle, MassDOT District 1
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Jim Huebner, Town of Washington
Nat Karns, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Clete Kus, BRPC
Dave Lavislette, Town of Dalton
Andrew Lehmann, MassDOT
Eric Magazu, BRPC
Fred Mastroianni, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (Town of Dalton Consultant)
Ed Nardi, Town of Tyringham
Peter Niles, MassDOT
Chris Pompei, Town of Lee
Ken Walto, Town of Dalton
Alan Wilcox, Town of Tyringham
Jane Winn, BEAT

1. **CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:02

2. **Minutes from April 24, 2012 MPO meeting**

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle to approve the minutes from 4/24. The motion was withdrawn.

A request was made to adjust the attendance list. Concerns were raised on the conclusion of discussions at the 4/24 meeting concerning Agenda Item 6, which were not accurately reflected in the minutes.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Turbin to table the approval of the minutes until the next Berkshire MPO meeting, supported by Mr. Boyle.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

3. **Opportunity for Public Comment**

The Town of Dalton and its engineering consultants from Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. presented the merits of including the Housatonic Street (Dalton) project on the TIP beginning in FY14. The town stressed the important attractions of the area, including major corporations and public schools at either end of the road, and the high volume of traffic along the corridor (12,000+ users per day). This corridor is important for the Region's economic development, it is an important alternate route through town, the sidewalks not adequate and there are safety issues. The design effort is on track for construction in the season that coincides with FY 2014 funding.

The Town of Lee spoke about the merits of including the Tyringham Road (Lee) project on the TIP beginning in FY14. There are significant land use changes, safety issues, and regional accessibility difficulties that the projects will remediate. The project began early in the last decade and is at 100% design. Report from the Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting of May 15, 2012.

Mr. Kus mentioned that the committee endorsed the Regional Coordinated Public Service Transportation Plan. The TAC also recommended releasing the proposed TIP for comment based on the revised scenarios without the Pittsfield projects and Scenario 2 based on the quality of the Tyringham Road (Lee). Pavement on Tyringham Road is of poor condition. Scenario 2A features the improvements of the Berkshire Medical Center. The TAC also endorsed releasing the UPWP for public comment.

4. **Consideration of the Draft Berkshire Regional Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)_**

Mr. Kus discussed the Human Services Transportation Plan and its applicability to

the elderly, low income and disabled persons. New census data data, changes in needs, and federal requirements necessitated the update of the Human Services Transportation Plan. BRPC did not make substantive changes to the document that was presented at the last meeting. The TAC endorsed the HSTP at their May meeting.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy to approve the plan as presented, supported by Mr. Niles.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

5. Discussion on the Draft 2013 -2016 Transportation Improvement Program plan (TIP) and authorize staff to initiate a 30 day comment period.

Mr. Wilcox asked if diverted traffic, particularly a significant number of trucks, from the closed Meadow Street Bridge in Lee, onto Tyringham Road makes the road deteriorate faster. Tyringham Road is a major collector from the Massachusetts Turnpike to communities southeast. Mr. Bailey spoke about the town's plans for a temporary fix for the bridge. The design work for the Meadow Street Bridge is starting and the permanent replacement bridge will be completed in about three years.

Mr. Bailey spoke about the matrix and stated that he would have appreciated receiving the evaluation matrix and information in advance of the meeting. Mr. Mullen indicated that it was presented at the BRPC meeting. Mr. Karns stated that greater effort shall be taken to provide this type of information in advance of meetings. Further discussion occurred as a means to explain the information presented in the matrix. Mr. Bailey elaborated more on the need to move forward with Tyringham Road due to the poor condition of the roadway.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Bailey to proceed with the TIP under Scenario 2, supported by Mr. Lovejoy.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Boyle called for a point of order mentioning that the motion was in fact a recession of the vote taken in July 2010 placing Dalton's project in the TIP for construction in 2014. Robert's rules of order require that motions for reconsideration be made, the motion must be made by someone voting in the affirmative on the initial vote and asked that the motion be ruled out of order.

Mr. Mohler stated that it is not a motion to reconsider a previous vote because this is a different document in front of us; which we build every year and that this has been the standard operating procedure as long as he has been involved. Every year the TIP is treated as a new document. It is not a motion to amend a document, it is a motion to release a new, draft document.

Mr. Bailey commented that it is not unusual for an MPO to change their TIP around ever year and that it is not a constant that once a project is on the TIP, it is on forever. Mr. Boyle remained concerned that the entire TIP development

process was flawed.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Mr. Bailey: YES, Mr. Boyle: NO, Mr. Canales: NO, Mr. Collingwood: NO
Mr. Lovejoy: YES, Mr. Malnati: NO, Mr. Mohler: NO, Mr. Mullen: YES
Mr. Niles: YES, Mr. Turbin: YES

Motion failed: 5Y-5N

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle to proceed with the TIP under Scenario 1, support my Mr. Malnati.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Mr. Bailey: NO, Mr. Boyle: YES, Mr. Canales: YES, Mr. Collingwood: YES
Mr. Lovejoy: NO, Mr. Malnati: YES, Mr. Mohler: YES, Mr. Mullen: NO
Mr. Niles: NO, Mr. Turbin: YES

Motion carried: 6Y-4N

Ms. Koirala then provided an explanation of the remaining scenarios: 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d. Mr. Moore provided more details related to the status of projects included under these scenarios. Discussion then focused on the merit of the projects and funding.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle to proceed with the TIP under Scenario 1A, supported by Mr. Malnati.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

The Chairman stated that the MPO adopted the scenario as presented and requested a motion to move Dalton into 2013 to utilize \$399,316 of STP funding that is available.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle to move the Dalton project to FY13, supported by Mr. Collingwood.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

Mr. Malnati discussed transit projects under the TIP. The information is the same as presented at the last meeting with updated figures. Applications have been submitted for competitively awarded funding sources. BRTA is awaiting a reply from MassDOT as to the results of those applications.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Niles to approve the transit TIP, supported by Mr. Boyle.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy to combine highway and transit TIP projects and release the document for public comment, supported by Mr. Boyle.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

6. Receive the Draft 2013 Unified Planning Work Program and authorize staff to initiate a 30 day comment period

Mr. Kus handed out a CD containing the UPWP. There are four focus areas under the UPWP which govern activities for the coming year. First, management and certification. Second, program support activities. Third, planning study areas. Fourth, other activities.

Changes to this year include Task 1.3 to also include Title VI to incorporate civil rights concerns into the process and increases funding. Environmental justice is being considered in all activities. Traffic data collection and travel forecasting are being prioritized. 2010 census data is going to be incorporated. Pavement management is an important priority. The Housatonic River cleanup and high congestion areas are a concern. Passenger rail initiatives are being considered. Route 7 & 23 in Gt. Barrington is being considered for access management. Route 20 is in need of corridor analysis from the Massachusetts Turnpike to the Lenox Route 7 Bypass.

The document has been presented to both the TAC and the BRPC.

A concern was raised about another study to look at the Route 20 corridor. Mr. Karns mentioned that more data is needed to determine whether the corridor poses a transportation problem. Truck traffic as a percent of total traffic is increasing, even while total traffic is decreasing.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Bailey to approve and release for public review, supported by Mr. Lovejoy.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

7. Status reports from Member Agencies

The District reported that the South Street project is under construction. The Ashuwillticook Rail Trail is completely designed. The District is looking for an access permit and pending Army Corps review. The Corps does not have sufficient budget to review project. Right of way is needed.

Gt. Barrington Main Street is close to 75% design. Thirteen million dollars is available for bike path construction. The Lee Bikeway has design funding in FY15.

Walkability conference is on June 18 at the BRPC office. Parking is provided.

8. Other business
9. Next meeting date and agenda

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, July 10, 2012 at 4pm at the office of BRPC, 1 Fenn St., Pittsfield.

ACTION: Motion to adjourn.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.