

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday July 26, 2011 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MPO Representatives and Alternates Present:

David Mohler, MassDOT (Representing Secretary Mullan)
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator Francis DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire Delegate)
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Ruberto)
John Goerlach, Town of Dalton (North Central Berkshire Alternate)
Bob Malnati, BRTA
James Mullen, BRPC
Mike Ouellette, Town of Adams (North Berkshire Delegate)
Gordon Bailey, Southeast Delegate

Others Present:

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Justin Diagle, MassDOT District 1
Nat Karns, BRPC
Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Douglas Plachcinski, BRPC

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:04

2. MINUTES OF June 28, 2011

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Mullen, supported by Mr. Moore, to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2011.

VOICE VOTE: 7 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE 2012 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP) TO THE MPO AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Plachcinski reviewed the 2012 RTP Executive Summary. Mr. Plachcinski explained how BRPC distributes the documents, could receive public comments through August 29th, 2011, and will conduct a public hearing on August 18th at 6:00 p.m.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, supported by Mr. Malnati, to release the draft 2012 RTP for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 7 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

5. PRESENTATION OF THE 2012-2015 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO THE MPO AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Koirala presented the funding target amounts, the existing '12-'14 program, and two alternatives for '15. One alternative for '15 is a set of improvements around the BMC campus in Pittsfield and the other alternative leaves some funds in '15 unprogrammed. Mr. Lovejoy indicated that Pittsfield would again be the recipient of funds under the '15 scenario for BMC improvements. Mr. Karns suggested that it was still important to assign the funds to the best extent possible so that all potential projects could best prepare. Mr. Karns also indicated that the BMC area improvements would need more detailed analysis and require right-of-way acquisition. Mr. Collingwood presented that although Pittsfield had the capabilities of delivering the BMC project, it was acceptable to the City to defer programming the project for '15 or beyond.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, supported by Mr. Goerlach, to release the 2012-2015 TIP for road projects, leaving a balance of '15 funds unprogrammed, for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes
MOTION CARRIED

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Malnati, supported by Mr. Mullen, to release the 2012-2015 TIP for transit for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes
MOTION CARRIED

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Moore, supported by Mr. Malnati, to release the complete 2012-2015 TIP for including all federally funded transportation projects, leaving a balance of '15 road funds unprogrammed, for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes
MOTION CARRIED

6. PRESENTATION OF THE FFY 2012 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) TO THE MPO AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Kus summarized the UPWP for the upcoming year from October 2011 through September 2012. There are four general categories to the UPWP. Priorities in the Management tasks are participation, meeting management, and the following year's TIP and UPWP. Data and technical support include GIS, modeling, pavement management, and traffic counts. Planning studies include following up on the Lee Area Traffic Study, Hubbard Avenue, and local finance options. Other priorities are incident management, freight and goods movements, the transportation element to the North Adams comprehensive plan, and transit planning. Other activities include land use/transportation study, Scenic Byways, and other local technical activities. Mr. Kus described the zoning implementation of the 7/20

access management study recommendations. There was a brief discussion regarding the size and scale of the Scenic Byway tasks.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, supported by Mr. Mullen, to release the 2012 Draft UPWP for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE TIP AMENDMENT

Mrs. Koirala presented two projects for the 2011 year in the TIP that included bridge repairs in the Berkshires that include five (5) bridge structures and a total of \$12M. Mr. Moore and Mr. Frieri described the projects as rectifying structurally deficient bridges and increasing bridge clearance to allow for double-stack rail cars on the east-west CSX rail corridor

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Mullen, supported by Mr. Lovejoy, to release the proposed 2011 TIP amendments for the thirty (30) day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON BRTA STATE OF GOOD REPAIR AND LIVABILITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

Mr. Malnati outlined the grant applications including what they requested including service vehicles within the Livability grant application (\$2.1M). The 'State of Good Repair' (\$4.3M) application focused on underground tanks and ITS improvements. ITS focuses on passenger counters, automated vehicle locators/GPS systems, and passenger information systems.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Mullen, supported by Mr. Lovejoy, endorse BRTA's grant applications for the State of Good Repair and Livability grant programs.

VOICE VOTE: 9 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

9. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION BRTA TIGER GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE HOUSATONIC RAILROAD

Mr. Kus explained the program, how grant applications are scored, and the grant timeline. There were questions about the scope of work and funding. Mr. Karns explained that the current focus was to improve the Pittsfield section of the HRRC to a 50 year service life. The current estimates are approximately \$10M. Mr. Bailey suggested that a more refined proposal be returned for comment and to investigate how improvements could also proceed outside Pittsfield, particularly with the PCB program. Mr. Karns reminded the group that a public agency would have to be the application and the administrator of the grant if awarded.

NO ACTION

10. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri provided an update on the status of improvement projects within the region, most specifically projects that changed status or are slated for the FFY 2011 and 12.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for August 30, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- June meeting minutes
- RTP Executive Summary
- 2012-2015 TIP
- 2012 UPWP
- TIP Amendment staff report / materials
- BRTA grant application information
- TIGER grant application information
- Project status report from MassDOT District I