

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, June 25, 2013 4:00 PM

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

MPO Representatives and Alternates Voting:

Clinton Bench, MassDOT (Representing Secretary Davey)
Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire)
Bruce Collingwood, Pittsfield
Gordon Bailey, Lee (Southeast Berkshire)
Mike Ouellette, Adams (North Berkshire)
John Boyle, Dalton (North Central Berkshire)
Sheila Irvin, BRPC

Others Present:

Doug Plachcinski, BRPC
Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Nat Karns, BRPC
Bill Palmer, MassDOT
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Jane Winn, BEAT
Joe Sokul, Great Barrington

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. MINUTES OF MAY 21, 2013

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the May 21, 2013 minutes.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED (FOUR ABSTENTIONS: NILES, IRVIN, NUVALLE, AND BOYLE)

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

4. DISCUSSION ON 2008-2010 CRASH DATA AND HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.

Mr. Plachcinski presented the report on regional crash data from 2008-2010 and intersections that qualify for HSIP funded improvements. He discussed MassDOT's statewide efforts and goals, HSIP qualification, Berkshire eligible intersections, and HSIP project status in the current TIP. The Center and Linden intersection scores the highest in the region and is the only intersection in the Berkshires that is in the State's top 200 for EPDO score. Mr. Plachcinski indicated BRPC would solicit communities with eligible intersections for projects. He also discusses the Road Safety Audits for two current projects, Main Street in Great Barrington and South Street in Pittsfield.

Mr. Plachcinski described specific improvements for pedestrian visibility at Mr. Lovejoy's request. Mr. Frieri stated that the Walker Street intersection at Veteran's Memorial Highway

in Lenox was a promising candidate intersection. Mrs. Winn asked if BRPC could share the data with the Berkshire Environmental Action Team in order to better understand vehicle-animal crashes. Mr. Plachcinski replied he would be glad to get the data to BEAT. Mr. Niles pointed out that District One was using the newest signals to improve conditions at the intersection of Holmes Road and Pittsfield Road in Lenox. Mr. Bench asked Mr. Plachcinski to include a sample crash reporting form in his follow up presentation at a subsequent MPO meeting.

5. APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2013-2016 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENT AND AUTHORIZE CHAIR TO SIGN CERTIFICATION ON BEHALF OF THE MPO MEMBERS.

Ms. Koirala presented the TIP amendment and described each of the changes from the previously adopted TIP. Mr. Bench and Mr. Frieri explained why a bridge in Sheffield was removed from the amendment and that it used statewide funding, not Berkshire regional target funding.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Bailey, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the amended 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program and authorize the MPO Chair to sign the certification.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

6. APPROVAL THE 2014-2017 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AND AUTHORIZE CHAIR TO SIGN CERTIFICATION ON BEHALF OF THE MPO MEMBERS.

Ms. Koirala presented the new TIP and outlined the capital road projects it contains. She reviewed comments from MassDOT and FHWA sent to BRPC during the public comment period. She also outlined the transit portion of the TIP investment in the Berkshires.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Bailey, to approve the 2014 UPWP as presented
VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

7. APPROVAL OF THE 2014 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZE CHAIR TO SIGN CERTIFICATION ON BEHALF OF THE MPO MEMBERS

Mr. Kus outlined the 2014 UPWP and described specific portions. He mentioned an updated feasibility study for the Ashuwillticook Trail extension through North Adams. BRPC would also like to produce model bylaws and standards for access management. BRPC's climate change activities will focus on stream crossings. BRPC proposes to update the National Functional Classification System designations for roads county-wide. Federal and State comments received during the public comment period were general and reference MAP 21 and other planning guidelines including federal perform management and national performance goals.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Bailey, to approve the 2014 UPWP as presented.

Mr. Bench and the MPO discussed whether the Chair could sign certification documents on his/her own, and Mr. Karns confirmed that they could.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED

8. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON UPWP BUDGET REALLOCATION.

Mr. Kus presented the need to increase a budget line item by \$2,000 in the 2013 UPWP related to developing the TIP. MassDOT asked that BRPC discuss changes in the UPWP like this one with the MPO. The funds would be shifted from the direct expense account that is not allocated to a particular task. BRPC uses much of its direct expense account for traffic counts. Mr. Bench expressed that this dollar amount may be too small to discuss with the MPO.

Mr. Karns indicated that MassDOT should provide express guidance about UPWP amendments to the MPO's. Mr. Karns also explained that the adjustments were typically very minor and BRPC always followed FHWA requirements for UPWP budgeting. Mrs. Koirala indicated the complexity of the TIP funding scenarios resulted in spending more staff time on the task than originally budgeted. Mr. Bench stated the MPO did not need to take action on this item.

9. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri updated the MPO on the projects in the TIP, specifically the Dalton Housatonic Street, Lee Tyringham Road, Great Barrington Main Street, Bridge Replacements, and the Route 8 @ Friend Street roundabout in Adams. Mr. Moore indicated that there were some minor design changes to the Tyringham road project, but nothing that would impact the project's permitting status.

Ms. Irvin pointed out BRPC was beginning the outreach for their Housatonic Rail station site study with public meetings in Lee and Great Barrington.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

The MPO did not discuss other business

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

To be determined.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- May 2013 meeting minutes

- 2013-2016 TIP Amendment
- 2014-2017 Draft TIP and Project Information
- District 1 project update spreadsheet
- 2014 UPWP

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner