

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Tuesday, March 24, 2020 4:00 PM
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office – VIRTUAL MEETING
1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

David Mohler	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Stephanie Pollack)
John Duval	North Towns Representative
Kyle Hanlon	BRPC Chair
Francesca Hemming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Jim Huebner	Southeast Towns Representative
Sheila Irving	Chair of BRTA
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Towns Representative
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Tom Matuszko	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves via a roll call conducted by Mr. Kus.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 25, 2020 (ACTION ITEM)

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Morales, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to approve the meeting minutes from the February 25th, 2020 MPO meeting.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously. Kyle Hanlon and Sheila Irving abstained from voting.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT (3RD AMENDMENT) TO THE 2020 – 2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CHANGES TO PROJECT COSTS) AND AUTHORIZE A 21-DAY COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the 3rd amendment to the 2020-2024 TIP. Three projects require amendments (one regional target project and two statewide projects). In year 2020, the Adams Pavement Rehabilitation & Related Work project has undergone a cost increase of about \$1,565,375. Currently, the project cost pushes the Berkshire region over our regional target. Therefore, having

the project go through advanced construction in 2020 and be completed in 2021 seems like an appropriate course to stay within our regional target.

The second project requiring an amendment is the Great Barrington Intersection & Signal Improvements on US 7 at SR23 & SR41 project. The project cost has increased by \$875,747. This project is not funded through regional target money and therefore, the additional cost will be added through statewide money.

The third project requiring an amendment is the Williamstown Mohawk Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Construction project. The project is funded through statewide CMAQ funding and the project cost has decreased by \$429,625.

Ms. Koirala proceeded to explain that there would be remaining funds from FFY 2020 (\$361,003) under the regional target fund, and that those funds will be carried over into FFY 2021.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Hanlon, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy to approve the 3rd amendment to the 2020 – 2024 TIP and authorize a 21-day comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE PRELIMINARY PROJECT LISTING FOR THE 2021 – 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala briefly reviewed that at the last MPO meeting, MPO members voted to have Ms. Koirala consider developing FFY 2021 – 2025 TIP scenarios with projects that received a project score of 4 and above by the PRC. As scenarios were being developed, it was discovered that there was not enough money available to program projects that are already included in the TIP. This is a result of a combination of factors including listed projects not being ready to advance, the level funding the region receives and project cost increases. Due to these factors, no new projects were incorporated into the 2021 – 2025 TIP, but rather, projects already listed in the 2020 – 2024 TIP have been spread out over the 2021 – 2025 TIP in order to complete these projects and stay within regional targets. Therefore, the scenarios under review for today will outline different configurations for funding projects, with some projects being shifted to a different FFY. Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the FFY 2021 – 2025 Berkshire MPO TIP Development handout – reviewing the highlighted projects which signify projects that have experienced cost updates.

At the previous TAC meeting, TAC members made the recommendation that the MPO should consider programming Scenario #1 – however, due to the project cost updates, Scenario #1 shows that in FFY 2022 the region will go over our regional target – therefore, in order to stay within our regional targets, Ms. Koirala developed Scenario #1A which shifts many of the projects programmed in the 2020-2024 TIP by one year.

Mr. Morales asked why the Pittsfield, BMC Area Improvements project was moved from FFY 2022 to FFY 2023 – as this project is a priority for Pittsfield and has remained on schedule.

Ms. Koirala responded by stating that due to the project increases from other projects, there was no other option to move the Pittsfield, BMC Area Improvements project to FFY 2023 to stay within our regional targets.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Hanlon, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy to instruct staff to approve and include Scenario #1A in the final TIP document.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the STIP Investments Report: Berkshire Region handout, which shows other projects that are being funded through statewide money.

6. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri proceeded to update MPO members on District 1 projects outlined in the MassDOT District One Project Update handout.

Mr. Kus provided a few updates related to passenger rail efforts. Mr. Kus mentioned that he attended a meeting with the MassDOT Rail and Transit Administrator Astrid Glenn in regards to the East/West Rail Study. The meeting was positive, and BRPC had an opportunity to express concerns over ridership estimates. With respect to the Berkshire Flyer, staff had conversations with Amtrak, and staff are working to ensure the required corridor capacity analysis is conducted.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE – APRIL 28, 2020

The next MPO meeting will be on April 28th, 2020.

ACTION: Mr. Hanlon motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morales. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:43 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Meeting Agenda
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2020 – 2024 TIP 3rd Amendment
- 2021 – 2025 Berkshire TIP Project Evaluation: Results of MPO Staff Evaluation of Highway Projects, February 7th, 2020, sorted by Total Project Score Page 1 & 2.
- FFY 2021 – 2025 – Berkshire MPO TIP Development: TIP Funding by Federal Fiscal Year
- MassDOT: STIP Investments Report – Berkshire Region
- Berkshire MPO 03/24/2020 – MassDOT District One Project Update