



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

Meeting Materials: <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/berkshire-mpo-virtual-meeting-2/>

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

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| Stephen Woelfel | MassDOT (Representing Secretary Jamey Tesler) |
| John Boyle | North Central Towns Representative |
| John Duval | BRPC Chair |
| Zac Feury | City of North Adams |
| Francisca Heming | MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver) |
| Christine Hoyt | North Towns Alternate |
| Sheila Irwin | Chair of BRTA |
| Kent Lew | Southeast Towns Representative |
| Jim Lovejoy | Southwest Towns Representative |

Others Present:

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|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ray Bolduc | North Central Towns Alternate |
| Robert Faulkner | CHA |
| Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen | Visitor |
| Peter Frieri | MassDOT District 1 |
| Justin Gilmore | BRPC |
| Michelle Ho | MassDOT OTP |
| Chris Klem | MassDOT OTP |
| Anuja Koirala | BRPC |
| Derek Krevat | MassDOT OTP |
| Thomas Matuszko | BRPC |
| George McGurn | Town of Egremont |
| Mark Moore | MassDOT District 1 |
| John Morgan | CHA |
| Jim Noe | Egremont Highway Superintendent |
| Larry Parnass | Visitor |
| Andrew Reovan | FHWA |
| Nick Russo | BRPC |
| Steve Savaria | Fuss & O'Neill |
| Derek Shooster | MassDOT OTP |

I. Introductions

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Meeting attendees introduced themselves via a roll call conducted by Ms. Koirala.

II. Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 18th, 2022 (Action Item)

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy to approve the meeting minutes from the January 18th meeting.

Ms. Koirala conducted a roll call:

Stephen Woelfel – Yea
Francisca Heming – Yea
John Duval – Yea
Sheila Irving – Yea
Zac Feury – Yea
Christine Hoyt – Yea
John Boyle – Yea
Kent Lew – Yea
Jim Lovejoy – Yea

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Discussion on the development of the 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program and project evaluation scores

Ms. Koirala began by mentioning that the 2023-2027 TIP process began in earnest in January, with project solicitation/update letters sent around to each Berkshire community. On February 11th, MassDOT District 1 staff along with Berkshire MPO staff went through the process of scoring and ranking the TIP projects that have been approved by PRC. Ms. Koirala outlined the [TIP Project Evaluation](#) handout, describing the eight metrics or criteria used to score TIP projects. The criteria used to score projects includes road condition, mobility, regional connectivity, goods movement, safety, environment, GHG emissions, and livability. Ms. Koirala reviewed the score each project received, along with project cost, design status, anticipated program date, and the buckets of funding each project pulls from.

Ms. Koirala mentioned that TIP bike and pedestrian projects were also evaluated. These projects are located on the second page of the [TIP Project Evaluation](#) handout. The bike and pedestrian projects do not compete for the statewide regional target monies. Ms. Koirala stated that of the four active bike/ped projects, three are listed in the 2023-2027 TIP.

Ms. Koirala mentioned that the [TIP Projects Description Sheet](#) goes into more detail on how each project was scored and justification for each project score given. Questions or comments about the handout can be directed to Anuja at akoirala@berkshireplanning.org.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair allowed town officials from Egremont along with the Town's engineering consultants from CHA to discuss the Mount Washington Road project (I.D. 608547). Robert Faulkner from CHA provided a brief presentation on the project highlighting existing conditions and background. Mount Washington Road is 1 of 4 roads leading into the Town of Mount Washington, is the only road providing access to Mount Washington in the state of MA, and this road is 1 of 6 town-owned roads that is eligible for TIP funding. The western most portion of the road represents the area of most concern. Mr. Faulkner proceeded to review photos showing the overall deteriorating conditions of the roadway, including ponding, potholes, irregular cross sections, slope erosion and the limited space for snow removal. The project identified needed upgrades to the three bridges that are located along the 3.5-mile-long corridor.

Mr. Faulkner mentioned that as part of the 25% design submission, this project was originally conceived of as one TIP project, beginning at Route 41, and terminating at the Mount Washington Town line. In an effort to prioritize the western most portion of this project, the Town has considered (and approved) splitting the project into two separate projects, one focusing on the western most portion of the roadway, just as you start going up the hill on Mount Washington Road, and the other dealing with the eastern portion of the roadway that also contains three bridges. Splitting the project into two means improvements to the western most portion of the roadway would be about an \$8.4 million project, while improvements to

the eastern portion of the roadway (excluding bridge improvements) will cost about \$7 million.

Jim Noe underscored the safety concerns he has with the western portion of the road and reiterated his support for prioritizing this project to become a part of the TIP as soon as possible. Mr. McGurn agreed. Mr. Lovejoy also voiced his support for this project, mentioning that this road is vital for accessing several state parks. Mr. Faulkner concluded by showing a brief video showing the conditions of the Mount Washington roadway.

Mr. Woelfel mentioned that as we begin putting together the TIP next month, MPO members are encouraged to remember this presentation and consider this project as the final 2023-2027 TIP list is assembled.

Next, Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the [Regional Targets handout](#). The first table at the top shows the amount of funding (target) for each FFY of the 2023-2027 TIP. The total cost of all the projects for a given TIP year cannot exceed the regional target (funding amount) for that specified year. Mr. Koirala proceeded to review the regional targets for each year. The larger table at the bottom shows the cost of each project for each TIP year, the score the project received, the current design status of the project, and the funding source utilized.

Ms. Koirala asked representatives from District 1 on when she might get updated cost estimates specifically as it relates to the Egremont Mount Washington Road project being split into two projects, which will influence the scenarios Ms. Koirala will develop.

Mr. Moore stated that if the Town wants to split the project into two and program the western portion of the project, excluding any work being done to the bridges, to go with CHA's estimate of about \$8.5 million. Mr. Moore suggested keeping the project number for now and splitting the project into two after the fact.

Mr. McGurn reiterated that the Egremont Selectboard voted last week to split the project into two and to prioritize the western most portion for immediate improvement.

Ms. Koirala concluded reviewing the [Regional Targets handout](#).

Next, Ms. Koirala briefly reviewed a [TIP scenario](#) to show initial thoughts and potential monies remaining after the first and following years of the 2023-2027 TIP. This scenario is based on the current TIP (2022-2026).

This scenario is just a starting point and does not reflect the end point.

Mr. Lovejoy reiterated his support for getting the Egremont Mount Washington Road project on to the 2023-2027 TIP.

Mr. Woelfel asked Mr. Lovejoy if it would be fair to say that he would like to see the Mount Washington Road project programmed into one of the 2023-2027 TIP scenarios to be presented next month.

Mr. Lovejoy stated that he would.

Ms. Koirala said she would, and also stated that she would like information from MassDOT if, in the scenario, the Mount Washington Road project (western most portion) can be an advanced construction project based on the \$8.5 million cost.

Mr. Boyle voiced his frustration that the Town of Dalton has not been making progress on hiring an engineer and advancing progress on the Dalton Division Road project, which has been on the TIP since 2016.

Mr. Woelfel asked if it would make sense to consider a scenario that does not include the Dalton Division

Road project being programmed in the 2023-2027 TIP.

Mr. Boyle mentioned that if he were in Ms. Koirala's position, that's what he would do.

With respect to the advanced construction on the Mount Washington Road project, folks from OTP and District 1 will have to get guidance from FHWA on that question.

Ms. Koirala will work on developing additional scenarios and will plan to discuss these at the next meeting.

V. Presentation on the IMPACT traffic safety portal and discussion on traffic safety initiatives

In an abbreviated presentation, Mr. Russo reviewed MassDOT's [IMPACT](#) traffic safety portal available online. Mr. Russo gave a quick demonstration on how to use the interactive data dashboards. There is a Strategic Highway Safety Program (SHSP) emphasis area, which are based on the performance measures from the FAST Act that the MPO discussed last meeting. There is a statewide crash by severity and year tab, geocoding performance metrics tab, and a fatal crash information tab. Most of the information can be queried at the state, county, and municipal level.

Mr. Russo also briefly reviewed the Data Query and Visualization Tool, which is a powerful tool that will allow the user to sort by all types of different criteria about crashes across the state.

VI. Status Reports from Member Agencies

Mr. Frieri provided a brief [update on District One projects to the MPO](#).

VII. Other Business

There was no other business.

VIII. Next Meeting date – March 22, 2022

The next MPO meeting will be held on March 22, 2022.

ACTION: Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Draft MPO January 18, 2022, Meeting Minutes](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023-2027 TIP Projects Evaluation Scores](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023-2027 TIP Projects Description Sheet](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023-2027 TIP Development – Regional Targets](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023-2027 TIP Development Scenario 1](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023-2027 TIP Schedule](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)