



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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## MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, February 27, 2024

*Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications*

*Meeting Materials: <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/berkshire-mpo-meeting-3/>*

### MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Stephen Woelfel	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA
Mike Nuvallie	City of North Adams
Shawn McGrath	North Central Subregion Delegate
George McGurn	Southwest Subregion Alternate

### Others Present:

Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Nick Russo	BRPC
Ryan Griffis	BRPC
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Mark Moore	MassDOT
Peter Frieri	MassDOT
Joshua Barber	FHWA

### **I. Call to Order – Introductions**

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. Meeting attendees introduced themselves via a roll call conducted by Mr. Kus.

### **II. Opportunity for Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 9, 2024**

**ACTION:** Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Ms. Heming, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2024, MPO meeting.

#### Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Woelfel:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Vallieres:	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Mr. McGrath	Yea
Mr. McGurn	Yea

### **IV. Consideration of an Amendment #2 to the 2024-2028 TIP for the Transit section; authorize the Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO members**

Ms. Koirala explained the proposed amendment to the 2024-2028 TIP for the transit section, detailing that and where and how funding would be distributed for the TIP. No action was taken at the previous meeting, and only minor revisions have been made since last time, which Ms. Koirala detailed for attendees. There were no questions.

**ACTION:** Mr. Nuvallie introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. McGurn, to approve the administrative adjustments to the 2024-2028 TIP.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Woelfel:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Vallieres:	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Mr. McGrath	Yea
Mr. McGurn	Yea

## **V. Discussion on the development of the 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program and project evaluation scores**

Ms. Koirala began by reminding attendees that the TIP is an annual process which looks towards the next five years of project implementation. Mentioning that the 2025-2029 TIP process began in earnest on January 5, 2024, with project solicitation/update letters sent around to each Berkshire community. On February 15th, MassDOT OTP, MassDOT District 1 staff along with BRPC staff went through the process of scoring and ranking the TIP projects that have been approved by PRC.

Ms. Koirala explained that of the 17 highway projects approved by the PRC, 15 are considered old or ongoing and only 2 are new to the TIP process. 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 include 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 the TIP Projects Description Sheet goes into more detail on how each project was scored, eligibility for CMAQ or HSIP, most recent PASER rating, and justifications for each given score.

Ms. Koirala mentioned that most projects previously endorsed had not changed considerably since their initial approval. Of the two new projects, the first is the reconstruction of Route 8 (Howland Ave) in Adams, which will implement a proposed road diet. Although only 2 miles in length, there are significant prospective benefits including shared path and road calming, reducing speeds in downtown Adams. The second new project is also for Route 8 – but in Sandisfield. Ms. Koirala mentioned that this project may be approved for 2024 if another is removed due to external factors.

Three bike trail projects are in the current TIP which are scheduled for 2028-2029. Ms. Koirala mentioned that these projects are guided by CMAQ and do not compete for the statewide regional target funds. Mr. Russo had a brief question about the scope the project in Lee, which Ms. Koirala explained that the description would eventually be updated by MassDOT.

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. Ms. 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, the funding source utilized, as well as predicted price increases over four years with 4% inflation per year.

Ms. Koirala commented that the first project in Pittsfield is scheduled for 2024, and Mr. Moore confirmed they are reworking diligently to ensure it would be ready in time. Ms. Koirala noted it would be known by March if the project would be scheduled for 2024 as planned or 2025.

Ms. Koirala continued to explain the following projects, noting that North Adams' project is expected to be delayed due to gas lines. Mr. Nuvallie commented that future discussions with municipal leaders and utilities are scheduled to ensure if needed works could be completed in tandem to accelerate timeline projections.

Ms. Koirala noted that the project for South Maine Street (Route 7) in Great Barrington is a town-owned project, and town leaders are currently mulling whether they wish to move forward with it.

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any further updates or questions. There were none. Questions or comments about the handout can be directed to Ms. Koirala.

## **VI. Status reports from Member Agencies**

Mr. Frieri detailed the projects programs for FY24: first being a bridge replacement in Alfred that has been advertised and a notice to proceed was provided to their contractor in January; second being East St which is expected to be at 100% design in in March, while addressing environmental concerns; third being a bridge replacement in Lee, which was at 74% design in January, and is estimated to cost 3.5 million – and only 1.9 million currently accounted for by the TIP, with the difference deriving from increases in stream restoration, retaining walls, etc.; and fourth being a bridge replacement in New Marlborough which are awaiting 75% design and will likely arrive once signed for.

Ms. Vallieres reported that BRTA has received three busses they were awarded between January and February, and an order for 2 hybrid-electric buses has been placed.

Mr. Kus informed the MPO that BRPC has entered into an agreement with BETA Group for its Safe Streets for All grant, for which they will develop a comprehensive safety plan. A kickoff meeting was held recently and an overview for the MPO will be provided regarding the scope and timeline of this project. Also, MassDOT has announced performance measures relating to greenhouse gases, and hereby requires MPOs to adopt comparable measures as well within 180 days.

## **VII. Other Business**

Mr. Woelfel announced any prospective attendees to the upcoming innovation conference should register soon as capacity would likely be reached imminently.

## **VIII. Next Meeting date – March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**ACTION:** Mr. McGurn motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Nuvallie. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

### **Materials Distributed:**

- [Agenda](#)
- [BMPO January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2024-2028 TIP Transit 2nd Amendment](#)
- [BMPO FY 2025-2029 TIP Schedule](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 TIP Project Evaluation](#)
- [BMPO-FFY-2025-2029-TIP-Project-Evaluation-Description-Sheet](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 TIP Development](#)

- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)