



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

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

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Derek Krevat	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Bob Malnati	BRTA
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield
Randal Fippinger	North Subregion Delegate
John Boyle	North Central Subregion Delegate
Dottie Bonbrake	Southwest Subregion Delegate

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Nick Russo	BRPC
Courtney Moorhouse	BRPC
Bobby Quintos	BRTA
Jeff Maxtutis	BETA Group
Austin Pszeny	BETA Group
Angela Sirois-Pitel	The Nature Conservancy

I. Call to Order – Introductions

Mr. Krevat 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 comments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 31, 2024

ACTION: Mr. Malnati introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the minutes of the December 31, 2024, MPO meeting.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

IV. Approval of an amendment (3rd Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP for changes to the Highway and Transit sections identified below and authorize Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO members

HIGHWAY: Project S13165 Adams/N Adams Ashuwillticook Trail Extension (design only), add \$635,554 in funding from HPP

TRANSIT: 1) Project BRTAA011921 BRTA HVAC Replacement; add \$100,000 of RTACAP funding and \$400,000 in 5339 funding, 2) Project BRTAA01192 Repair Work for ITC HVAC; add \$102,429 in 5339 funding and \$25,607 in RTACAP funding, 3) Project BRTAA011704 40' Bus, Delete \$126,483 in RTACAP funds and \$505,924 in 5339D funds and 4) Project RTD0011289 < 30' Bus Replacement (3), Remove \$360,000 in 5307 funds and remove \$90,000 in RTACAP funds.

Ms. Koirala reminded members that the third amendment for FY24 TIP was released at the last MPO meeting and that no public comments have been received, as well as no updates from BRTA. Ms. Koirala briefly detailed the eight projects in facility and vehicle maintenance, fleet upgrades, and vehicle replacement, before asking the group if there were any questions, which there were none. Moving on, Ms. Koirala noted that under highway TIP there was one new project to be added for 2025, which was the Adams-North Adams Ashuwillticook Trail Extension (design only), which was to add \$635,554 in funding from HPP.

Mr. Morales joined the meeting.

ACTION: Ms. Bonbrake introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the amendment (3rd Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP for changes to the Highway and Transit sections identified below and authorize Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO members.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

V. Consideration of an amendment (4th Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP for changes to the Highway section identified below and authorize a 21-day comment period

HIGHWAY: 1) Add Project S13176 Stockbridge Wildlife Crossing in the amount of \$1,717,000 in earmark discretionary OF 100 funds; 2) add Project S13188 Pittsfield Reconnecting Communities Grant in the amount of \$1,600,000 in earmark discretionary RCP funds; 3) Add Project S13176 Stockbridge Wildlife Crossing in the amount of \$429,250 with non-federal aid funds and 4) add Project

S13188 Pittsfield Reconnecting Communities Grant in the amount of \$400,000 with non-federal aid funds.

Ms. Koirala introduced the fourth proposed amendment, consisting of a wildlife crossing in Stockbridge to the amount of \$1,717,000 in earmark discretionary OF 100 funds, as well as a Pittsfield Reconnecting Communities – Deconstructing Urban Renewal in Pittsfield Grant in the amount of \$1,600,000 in earmark discretionary RCP funds. This project will assist in connecting the West side of Pittsfield with downtown which there is currently an arterial highway.

Mr. Moore asked if the wildlife crossing was meant to be in Becket rather than Stockbridge, which Ms. Koirala answered was a question for OTP, as this was the information that was received. Mr. Moore replied they could make an inquiry during the comment process. Mr. Krevat shared these concerns and said that a response during the comment period was the best course.

ACTION: Mr. Malnati introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Morales, to approve amendment (4th Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP for changes to the Highway section identified below and authorize a 21-day comment period.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

VI. Approval of an Administrative Adjustment to the 2025 UPWP for the purpose of adding Pittsfield's Reconnecting Communities planning grant

Mr. Kus provided additional details on Pittsfield's Reconnecting Communities planning grant previously discussed by Ms. Koirala – explaining that this new program will need to be reflected in the 2025 UPWP for staff to work on it. Mr. Krevat concurred that it was standing operating procedure for new grants to be reflected in the UPWP.

ACTION: Mr. Morales introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the Administrative Adjustment to the 2025 UPWP for the purpose of adding Pittsfield's Reconnecting Communities planning grant.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

VII. Consideration and approval to add additional culverts to the project listing for inclusion in MassDOT's Resilience Improvement Plan

Ms. Sirois-Pitel of The Nature Conservancy, and on behalf of a series of regional planners and conservations partners, has identified six additional culvert projects, in addition to those approved at the previous MPO meeting, that would improve aquatic passage and reduce flood risk for communities.

ACTION: Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve additional culverts to the project listing for inclusion in MassDOT's Resilience Improvement Plan.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

VIII. Accept/endorse the Berkshire County's Safe Travel and Equity Plan for our Streets (STEPS) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, approve a proclamation for Vision Zero in Berkshire County and authorize the Chairman to sign the proclamation

Mr. Russo announced that the final draft of the Safe Travel and Equity Plan for our Streets (STEPS) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan was recently finalized and provided a brief overview of the executive summary. Mr. Russo went on to describe in detail the components and proposed goals of the plan.

ACTION: Ms. Bonbrake introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to accept/endorse the Berkshire County's Safe Travel and Equity Plan for our Streets (STEPS) Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, approve a proclamation for Vision Zero in Berkshire County and authorize the Chairman to sign the proclamation.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

IX. Overview of the FFY 2026-2030 TIP Development Schedule

Ms. Koirala provided background on the Transportation Improvement Program and anticipated timeline for developing this year's projects. Ms. Koirala stated she had sent solicitation letters and data forms to municipalities and other entities on January 7, with a due date of February 3 – with few responses having been received so far. Projects received will be evaluated by BRPC and MassDOT staff by February 13. Projects evaluation scores and the preliminary TIP listing will be reviewed by the MPO at the next scheduled meeting on February 25. The MPO will make a decision on alternative projects on March 25, and will be released for public comments on April 22.

X. Receive a presentation by BRTA on the benefits of Fuel Cell Electric Buses (FCBEB) vs: Battery Electric Buses (BEB)

Mr. Malnati introduced Mr. Quintos who is the new manager of Berkshire Transit

Management. Mr. Quintos provided details of BRTA's proposed transition to hydrogen fuel cell buses, their reasoning, and comparisons to other potential fuel sources. After giving a detailed description of how hydrogen fuel cell buses are powered, examples from other transit authorities and how they operate their hydrogen fuel cell buses were given and described in detail. Mr. Quintos provided an overview of how necessary infrastructure would support hydrogen fuel cell buses and what an implementation in Berkshire County may look like. After detailing existing vehicle performance, Mr. Quintos described how and where hydrogen fuel cell buses would be viable, followed by answering frequently asked questions related to sustainability and costs.

Mr. Fick asked if there were opportunities to refuel buses during the day, which Mr. Quintos responded that there is no need to. Asking for clarification of the earlier statement that hydrogen fuel cell buses were not viable for many routes, Mr. Quintos replied that he was referring to electric buses in that earlier statement.

Mr. Fippinger asked what the risk was if the current administration were to eliminate subsidies for renewable fuels. Mr. Quintos stated that grants applied for by BRTA were intended to terminate at the end of this fiscal year, and that the state is independently supporting this transition to meet its own mandates. Mr. Fippinger also asked if a projected timeline for a full transition is available, which Mr. Quintos replied fully investing in infrastructure would not be financially viable for at least five years until all vehicles are transitioned.

XI. Status reports from Member Agencies

Mr. Frieri gave an overview of the status of TIP projects in FY24, with nearly \$26M being advertised for construction. A notice to proceed was recently issued to ET&L Corp. for the bridge replacement in New Marlborough on 1/16/25, as well as one for J.H Maxymillian to proceed on the reconstruction of East St. from Lynam St to Merrill Rd. in Pittsfield on 1/22/25. A 100% design submittal for the bridge preservation on Quality St. in Adams was submitted on 1/24/25, and a notice to proceed was issued to J.H Maxymillian for the bridge replacement in Lanesborough on 1/27/25. Although at 100% design, it is anticipated the bridge replacement in Lee will be delayed. The reconstruction of Ashland St. in North Adams is also at 100% design, and submittal is anticipated for mid-February. And as previously discussed, the bridge preservation in North Adams will not be advertised this year.

Mr. Kus announced BRPC is moving forward with its microtransit feasibility study, with a steering committee being assembled to provide feedback during an information session. The MPO will be kept up to date on any actions taken. Mr. Kus reminded the MPO that grant funding was awarded for the Adventure Trail project, but with changes in administration any actions will be closely monitored to ensure the project moves forward.

Mr. Boyle asked Mr. Kus about MPO representation, which Mr. Kus responded that there have been no changes to representation structure.

XII. Other Business

Ms. Klem acknowledged the annual MARPA meeting took place last week, and any useful information will be shared with BRPC and the MPO. The Municipal Empowerment Act 2.0 is currently being considered which would authorize the Open Meeting Law to be satisfied by virtual meetings.

XIII. Next Meeting date – February 25th, 2025

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on February 25th, 2025.

ACTION: Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bonbrake. Mr. Krevat adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Documents and Exhibits Used:

- [Agenda](#)
- [BMPO December 31, 2024 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 Transit TIP 3rd Amendment](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 Highway TIP 4th Amendment](#)
- [RCP FY24 Pittsfield](#)
- [Additional Project Inclusion in MassDOT RIP](#)
- [BRPC Safety Action Plan](#)
- [Draft Vision Zero Proclamation](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2026-2030 TIP Tentative Schedule](#)
- [BRTA Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Bus Presentation](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)