



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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## MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, March 26, 2024

*Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications*

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

### MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Derek Krevat	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Shelia Irvin	BRTA
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield
Mike Nuvallie	City of North Adams
John Boyle	North Central Subregion Delegate
Gordon Bailey	Southeast Subregion Delegate
George McGurn	Southwest Subregion Alternate

### Others Present:

Tom Matuszko	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Nick Russo	BRPC
Ryan Griffis	BRPC
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA
Derek Krevat	MassDOT
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Mark Moore	MassDOT
Peter Frieri	MassDOT
Derek Shooster	MassDOT

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

Mr. Krevat called the meeting to order at 4:01 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 February 27, 2024**

**ACTION:** Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Nuvallie, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2024 MPO meeting.

### Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Irvin:	Abstain
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea
Mr. Bailey	Abstain
Mr. McGurn	Yea

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

Ms. Koirala began by presenting three potential scenarios based upon project scores, recommendations by MADOT, and funds available from TIP. Ms. Koirala detailed the identified projects by their project ID, town/city, associated costs utilizing available funding, and anticipated start and completion dates. As an important note, Ms. Koirala mentioned that due to rising costs, projects are regularly increasing at 4% per year, however TIP funding until 2029 will remain the same.

Ms. Koirala began by presenting Scenario 1, which is based on the current TIP, explaining that all existing projects would likely utilize any remaining funds because of rising costs. Projects in 2024 would include (Pittsfield, East St). For 2025 in this – and every scenario – will be (North Adams, Ashland St), and would complete in 2026. A minor project in (Williamstown, Route 7) would be moved to 2026 – and this is also the case in all scenarios. And (Egremont, Mt Washington) will begin in 2026 and end in 2027. Beginning in 2027, (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) will end the 2028, at which point (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) will begin and end in 2029. Due to financial restraints, many projects were removed back one year. Mr. Krevat asked about remaining funds to program for 2025, noting that many MPOs face these issues regularly. Mr. Bailey asked whether Ashland Street project could be accelerated because it's design phase is complete, which Ms. Koirala noted that right-of-way and other underlying issues would like this unfeasible, and invited Mr. Moore to comment on how these are being addressed.

Ms. Koirala continued the presentation by tracking the growing funds which remain to be programmed. Moving forward, Ms. Koirala ended the presentation on scenario 1 by noting that could not be approved by MADOT due to a litany of issues which she detailed.

Ms. Koirala began presenting Scenario 2, which is the preferred version, which includes (Pittsfield, East St) as the sole project for 2024, and no changes for 2025 and 2026. For the following year, (Egremont, Mt Washington) would still finish in 2027 along with (Pittsfield, East St). In 2028 (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) will begin and end in 2029, which is when (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) would begin.

Ms. Koirala explained that changes were influenced by increasing costs, and as such some projects would need to be completed earlier than others to maintain and fully utilize anticipated funds. From Scenario 2, Ms. Koirala noted that while listed projects may cost less than available funds provide, due to increasing costs it is unlikely any funds would be necessary for their completion.

Mr. Morales asked whether any consideration was given to the construction time for projects – taking into fact some projects are in the same corridor, stacking projects could produce significant travel delays. Ms. Koirala said that this was factored into the plans, and that alternative routes should alleviate any increases to traffic. Mr. Moore seconded Mr. Morales concerns but did not note any potential improvements.

Mr. Krevat requested Ms. Koirala again detail the differences between Scenarios 2 and 3, with the only significant changes are to 2028, which is when (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) would begin, and end in 2029, which is when (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) would start. After, Mr. Krevat requested why Scenario 2 was preferred, which she described in detail.

**ACTION:** Mr. Morales introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Bailey, to approve Scenario 2.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Krevat:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Ms. Irvin:	Yea
Mr. Morales	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie	Yea

Mr. Boyle                      Yea  
Mr. Bailey                     Yea  
Mr. McGurn                  Yea

Ms. Koirala then began to discuss BRTA projects funded through STIP. BRTA is anticipating grant funding in 2025 for vehicle replacement and maintenance, operating assistance, preventative maintenance, and bus shelter amenities. In 2026, there are many similar projects to the prior year, including further fleet upgrades and vehicles and software replacements.

Mr. Fick followed up by asking if BRTA was making headway to adopt EV and non-GHG emitting vehicles, which Ms. Irvin replied by noting the BRTA has received grant funding in the past to do so and currently has 3 hybrid EV busses in their fleet – and is currently considering hydrogen power as current EV range are not sufficient.

## **V. Update on the Safe Streets and Roads safety initiative**

Mr. Russo detailed the history of the SS4A grant and initiative to create a high-injury network by BETA Group. Once necessary work is completed, public involvement opportunities will be scheduled for the spring/summer. After which a draft action plan will be completed and then implementation can be addressed. A final action plan will be complete and submitted by the end of the year. Updates will be shared with the group and will also be released through the *Common Ground* newsletter.

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

Mr. Moore provided a detailed presentation on the five projects being advanced in District 1 by MassDOT in Alford, Pittsfield, Cheshire, Lee, and New Marlborough, and their intended revisions and cost increases.

Ms. Vallieres reiterated BRTA's commitment to adopting more non-GHG emitting vehicles, and mentioned that to celebrate BRTA's 50 years in-service, buses have been wrapped in vintage designs from the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Mr. Kus commented that considerations for next year's UPWP is expected to commence in the next month, so any desired changes should be communicated soon. As well, a virtual public meeting for the Northern-Tier rail study will take place on March 28 and people are invited to attend. And the community one-stop grant, MassWorks grant, letter of interest are due April 30<sup>th</sup> and full applications are due June 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **VII. Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **VIII. Next Meeting date – April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

**ACTION:** Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Nuwallie. Mr. Krevat adjourned the meeting at 4:57 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](#)