

# Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, March 31, 2015 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

## MPO Representatives/Alternates:

Mark Moore, MassDOT (Representing Acting Highway Administrator Tom Tinlin)

Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (Representing Secretary Pollack)

Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield

John Boyle, North-Central Towns Representative

Jim Lovejoy, Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative

Jim Huebner, Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative

Jeanne Pryor, Southeast Towns Alternate

Sheila Irvin, BRPC

Bob Malnati, BRTA

## Others Present:

Mike Case, Washington

Sarah Vallieres, BRTA

Jane Winn, BEAT

Joe Sokul, Great Barrington

Clete Kus, BRPC

Anuja Koirala, BRPC

Nat Karns, BRPC

Doug Plachcinski, BRPC

Kevin Wright, FHWA

Alex Bardow, MassDOT

Peter Frieri, MassDOT

Mark Devylder, MassDOT

## **1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Lovejoy called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 3, 2015**

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the MPO meeting minutes for February 3, 2015. It was noted that the agenda reference to the meeting date of December 9, 2014 is incorrect, the minutes being recommended for approval are for the meeting of February 3, 2015.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

## **3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **4. PRESENTATION ON BRIDGE PROJECT SELECTION AND PRIORITIZATION**

Mr. Lovejoy introduce Alex Bardow from MassDOT who would be making the presentation. Mr. Bardow started by indicating that previously, there was not objective statewide criteria. The only requirement was that bridges needed to be structurally deficient and be eligible for federal funds. As a result, the question arose as to “are we working on the right bridges.” By establishing criteria, it would remove subjectivity and ensure consistency across the state. The current system which is in place has been used since 2008 and is based on the risk a

bridge has on the transportation network; how bad it is and how quickly it is deteriorating. Detailed information on the software which is used was discussed. The system allows MassDOT to rank both structurally deficient and non-structurally deficient bridges.

Mr. Bardow then explained the framework of the prioritization system which includes three criteria: condition loss, health index change and highway evaluation. He then provide details on the parameters. Following this, the presentation focused on determining the final ranking value, utilizing the prioritization system, bridge program goals, project cost estimating, bridge funding and developing the STIP.

Mr. Lovejoy inquired if a town can get an inventory of their bridges along with the ratings. Mr. Bardow indicated that towns can make this request and MassDOT would generate a report for the town. It was mentioned that MassDOT sends bridge inspections reports each time a bridge inspection is performed. All bridges of 20 feet and longer are required to be inspected every two years. Mr. Niles made mention that even a small amount of maintenance provides a significant benefit. Mr. Huebner inquired if MassDOT inspects culverts having spans less than 20 feet. Mr. Bardow replied that they have done some inspections and he is attempting to start a program to inspect culverts going down to 10 feet. In the past, the bridge section would conduct these inspections but only upon the request of a municipality. The program would align the inspections being performed with the requirements of Chapter 85.

**5. APPROVAL OF THE THIRD AMENDMENT TO THE 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO ADD ASHUWILLTICOOK RAIL TRAIL (HOOSAC STREET TO LIME STREET) INTO YEAR 2015 AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE MPO.**

Ms. Koirala informed the members that the public comment period began on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and no comments were received related to the amendment. The third amendment consists of three components.

- 1) Lee, Tyringham Road -a reduced project cost of \$479,242.
- 2) Dalton, Housatonic Street – project cost increased using \$479,242 from 2015 and added to the first year of project funding and reducing it in the third year (2107). Statewide CMAQ (\$1.5 M) was also added to this project.
- 3) Mt Greylock, Scenic Byway Summit Improvements – adjust and increase funding by \$6,800 to reflect actual project cost.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, second by Mr. Boyle to approve the third amendment to the 2015-2018 TIP.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

**6. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2016 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Mr. Plachcinski began the presentation mentioning new performance measure requirements are required to be included in the plan; however, FHWA and FTA have not yet finalized all rules and requirements related to performance measures. Additionally, the State is also

required to set state-wide targets and they are not close to setting them. In support of the Global Warming Solutions Act, the State recently passed new regulations requiring the evaluation of green-house gas (GHG) emissions, CO<sub>2</sub>, which the RTP must include an analysis.

Mr. Plachcinski provided an overview of the 3C process and how the certification documents work together and transitioned to the seven national performance goals established by MAP 21 which will serve as the basis for performance measures. They include: Congestion Reduction, Infrastructure Conditions, Safety, Freight and Economic Vitality, Environmental Sustainability, System Reliability and Reduce Project Delivery and Delays. As each of these performance goals were presented, the underlying intent was discussed including proposed performance targets. The presentation included a discussion on the RTP being fiscally constrained but it will also include an illustrative list depicting the larger need for the area. Findings of the transportation survey were shared. The top four items identified were potholes, bike facilities, sidewalks and increased transit service. The presentation concluded with an overview of the schedule to prepare the draft document and the outreach efforts that have been under taken. Members were encouraged to share any comments or concerns they have with staff.

## **7. OVERVIEW OF THE 2016 -2019 TIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Ms. Koirala provided handouts on project evaluations and the schedule for developing the TIP. Her presentation began with mention that on February 4<sup>th</sup>, BRPC had sent letters to all towns soliciting projects for the new TIP. The deadline to respond back and providing completed project forms was March 4<sup>th</sup>. Projects were evaluated on March 16<sup>th</sup> by MassDOT and BRPC staff. Ms. Koirala provided a detailed explanation related to the evaluation and ranking of the 16 project which were reviewed as well as the funding targets for the 4 years of the TIP. Next, other milestones developing the TIP were stated including finalizing the draft TIP at the end of May so that the public comment period can occur through the month of June and conclude prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> when the TIP is scheduled to be endorsed by The MPO. At the next meeting, staff will provide a preliminary TIP listing of projects.

## **8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES**

Mr. Frieri reviewed the MassDOT District 1 project update spreadsheet which included information on projects that went out to bid in FY 2014 and were funded through the TIP, just over \$10M in projects. All of the projects have gone to construction except for the roundabout

Some additional projects that received state monies and were able to be advertised include Savoy, Route 116, Hancock Route 43 and Monterey, Route 23. A traffic signal improvement project in North Adams, Washington Mtn. Road and one final bridge project were also able to funded, about \$26M for the region, as these project were shovel ready and ready to move forward. Look at 2015 highway, bridge and bike projects, these projects appear to be on schedule. TIP day is up coming; the signal project at Center/W. Housatonic Street seems to be experiencing some difficulties.

Mr. Boyle inquired about a status update for the Dalton Housatonic Street project. Mr. Moore indicated that FHWA is finishing their design review comments and MassDOT is aware that

they will have substantive comments that will require changing the type of retaining wall design to something which is more economical, nothing major, but will take a design effort. Additionally, a geotechnical review is needed to occur, and this review has not yet been completed. Because of the length of time that has occurred, MassDOT indicated that they will be going out for a second design public hearing. It is looking like a July advertising date for this project. Mr. Boyle sought clarification if the projects goes out late in the construction season, would the contract consider that the construction would occur the following construction season. Mr. Moore affirmed the statement and also mentioned that with respect to last year, 40 percent of their program projects were advertised in the last month (of the fiscal year). They are still working on the bid opening for some of these projects at this time.

Bob Malnati took the opportunity to introduce BRTA's new Assistant Administrator, Sarah Vallieres. Sarah will be assuming many of Bob's responsibilities and will also serve as one of BRTA's alternates to the MPO. Mr. Lovejoy and other members welcomed Sarah. Mr. Malnati briefly mentioned that work was still continuing their transit planning study and that BRPC will be asked to review this study documents as it is finalized.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**10. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting date is April 28, 2015.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: passes unanimously

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- February MPO Meeting minutes
- Bridge Project Selection and Prioritization presentation handouts
- Third TIP amendments with supportive paperwork
- TIP evaluation handouts
- 2016 RTP presentation handouts
- District 1 project update spreadsheet