

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, May 26, 2015 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MPO Representatives/Alternates:

Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1 (Representing Acting Highway Administrator Tom Tinlin)

Steve Woefel, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)

Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Bianchi)

John Boyle, North-Central Towns Representative

Jim Lovejoy, Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative

Andy Hogeland, North Berkshire Towns Alternate

Sarah Vallieres, BRTA

Sheila Irvin, BRPC

Others Present:

Roger Bolton, Williamstown

Kevin Wright, FHWA

Clete Kus, BRPC

Anuja Koirala, BRPC

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT

Doug Plachcinski, BRPC

Peter Frieri, MassDOT

Nat Karns, BRPC

Jane Winn, BEAT

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Woefel called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 28, 2015

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the MPO meeting minutes for April 28, 2015.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIES, ONE ABSTENSION

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. REPORT FROM THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 19, 2015

As the TAC Chairman was not in attendance, Mr. Kus provided a summary of the meeting to MPO members. There were three main items which were part of the meeting's agenda: a discussion on project listing for the 2016-2019 TIP, an overview of findings and recommendations of the 2016 RTP and a presentation on the planning studies and initiatives in the proposed 2016 UPWP including the budget. These same items will be discussed at this MPO meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF A FIFTH AMENDMENT TO THE 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

Ms. Koirala discussed the proposed changes to FFY 2015 Transit TIP which comprise the 5th amendment. She referenced handout materials which highlight the proposed changes. Under

Section 5307, the projects proposed to be removed are CNG facility (\$700,000), purchase of replacement vans (5) (\$350,000), and purchase of a replacement van (1) (\$119,600). Also, proposed is adding the purchase of support vehicles (\$100,000) under the same section. Under other non-federal funding, funding for BRTA to acquire miscellaneous support equipment (\$131,607) is proposed.

Chairman Woelfel inquired if anyone had additional question. Mr. Collingwood inquired if there was any information why the CNG facility was being cut; the City has an interest in this project. Sarah Vallieres mentioned that because of the timing BRTA couldn't put the application together. She mentioned that BRTA will look into any other opportunity they will have regarding CNG facility. She also clarified that the BRTA was late in applying for the purchase of replacement vans so the projects needs to be removed from FFY 2015. Mr. Lovejoy inquired where the money would go if these projects are removed from FFY 2015 TIP. Sarah explained the RTACAP (\$140,000) portion of \$700,000 the CNG facility would go towards acquiring miscellaneous support equipment for BRTA, the remaining money would go back to MassDOT.

Mr. Woelfel again inquired if anyone had additional questions. Jane Winn mentioned that CNG buses generate more greenhouse gas compared to hybrid electric buses. She said the BRTA is better off with what they have and should think of purchasing hybrid electric buses in the future. They should not consider a CNG facility which is expensive and is not environmentally friendly.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, second by Mr. Boyle to release the Fifth Amendment to the FFY 2015-2018 TIP for public comment.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES.

6. PRESENTATION ON THE 2016 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN, PROVIDE DIRECTION AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO INITIATE A 30 DAY COMMENT PERIOD.

Chairman Woelfel mentioned that MassDOT is requesting that action on releasing the draft document for public be delayed as they recently established new guidance to require that MPO members have the draft RTP two weeks prior to voting on its release for public comment. Additionally, MassDOT has not completed the required GHG emissions analysis to include in the plan.

Mr. Plachcinski proceeded with the presentation mentioning that \$1.283 billion is the amount of funding that is needed to have the transportation system that is desired and being in good condition. An additional \$275 million will be required for local roads. The amount of revenue that is forecasted over the next 25 years is approximately \$300 million, about 25% of the total that is needed.

The presentation then focused on the 7 national performance goals and focus areas under MAP 21: System Reliability, Congestion Reduction, Freight Movement and Economic Vitality, Infrastructure Condition, Environmental Sustainability, Safety and Reduce Project Delivery Delays. With regards to the \$298 M revenue that is anticipated, the focus of the expenditures will be on fixing the worst roads, replacing transit vehicles, bike path improvements and

intersection/traffic signal improvements. There is still a significant amount of funding needed for additional projects.

The Chair again spoke about the new requirement of providing the draft RTP to MPO two weeks in advance of its release to the public.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, second by Mr. Boyle to table the release of the draft RTP document for public comment.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES.

7. PRESENTATION ON THE 2016 -2019 TIP AND RECOMMENDED FUNDING SCENARIO, PROVIDE DIRECTION AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO INITIATE A 30 DAY COMMENT PERIOD.

Ms. Koirala provided handouts of the FFY 2016-2019 TIP listing of highways, bike & trails, and transit projects. She presented in detail the listing of Berkshire TIP projects as prioritized in the four years of the FFY 2016 – 2019 TIP. She mention that the BRPC has not received the listing of bridge projects for the Berkshire MPO from MassDOT Planning. What is shown in the handouts is based on the current TIP listing of bridge projects for FFY 2016 and 2017.

After she presented the listing of highway, bridges, and bike & Trail projects the Chair inquired if anyone had additional questions. As no one had any questions regarding highway projects she continued presenting the transit projects as listed in the four years of the FFY 2016 - 2019 TIP.

The discussion then focused on the listing of bridges for Berkshire region. Chairman Woelfel said MassDOT will provide listing of bridges soon. Mr. Wadsworth indicated that other MPOs voted on the bridges as listed on the current TIP for FFY 2016 – 2018. Ms. Koirala mentioned that the current Berkshire MPO TIP only has the listing for FFY 2016 & 2017 as presented.

MPO members chose not to release the document for 30 day comment period at this meeting as the document is not complete without the listing of bridge projects for four years. They decided to wait until the bridge listing is included in the document when received from MassDOT.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to table the release of the TIP document until the next MPO meeting.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

8. PRESENTATION ON THE 2016 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZE STAFF TO INITIATE A 30 DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.

Mr. Kus began the presentation mentioning that copies of the draft UPWP have been provided to the members and that this plan has been discussed at the two previous MPO meetings. The UPWP consists of the four main sections: management, technical support, planning studies and other activities. Budget information was presented for each of the tasks; funding essentially remains level. Changes to funding allocations will occur to four tasks: Bike/Ped Planning, Climate Change/GHG, MAP 21 performance measures and \$20K will be programmed for the revised public participation plan. A handout was provided to which outlines the proposed changes. The total amount of PL funds for FFY 2016 is \$496,942.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, second by Mr. Boyle to release the 2016 UPWP for public comment.

Mr. Karns indicated that multiple proposals exist related to interstate natural gas pipelines and concerns exist about the impact which the transport of materials and equipment will have on regional and local roads. It was requested that the special studies task be modified to include this work element. The Chair sought approval from Mr. Lovejoy who made the original motion to accept this change; he did not object.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES.

9. 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; nearly all of the projects have been issued notices to proceed. With respect to FFY 2015; Dalton, Housatonic Street, final touches are being put on the PSE and a second public hearing will be held on June 25th. NHS resurfacing projects, bid openings are scheduled for July. Lenox/Walker Street is on track as are the three bridge projects.

BRTA mentioned their energy efficiency efforts, they are replacing lighting at the intermodal center with high efficiency LED.

The Chairman mentioned that the Project Selection Advisory Councils recommendations are out for public comment, comments are due June 3rd. Mr. Lovejoy shared his thoughts on regional equity with the MPO and expressed appreciation to MassDOT for the additional funding provided to Berkshire County.

Mr. Karns indicated that at the Lee Town Meeting, a resolution was passed to introduce legislation to impose a local gas tax.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is June 30, 2015.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: passes unanimously

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- May MPO Meeting minutes
- Fifth TIP amendment with supportive paperwork
- TIP evaluation and scenario handouts
- 2016 UPWP Handout

- District 1 project update spreadsheet