

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, June 27, 2017 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

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| Larysa Bernstein | City of North Adams (Representing Mayor Alcombright) |
| Kyle Hanlon | BRPC |
| Francisca Heming | MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Tinlin) |
| Andy Hogeland | North Berkshire Towns Representative |
| Jim Huebner | Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative |
| Jim Lovejoy | Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative |
| David Turocy | City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Linda Tyer) |
| Steve Woelfel, Chair | MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack) |

Others Present:

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| Alisa Costa | Working Cities Challenge Pittsfield |
| Peter Frieri | MassDOT District 1 |
| Nat Karns | BRPC |
| Clete Kus | BRPC |
| Anuja Koirala | BRPC |
| Emily Lindsey | BRPC |
| Andy McKeever | iBerkshires |
| Mark Moore | MassDOT District 1 |
| Gabriel Sherman | MassDOT |
| Andrea Sholler | Jacobs Pillow Dance |
| Beth Wallace | Berkshire Community College |

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

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

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Costa, representing the Working Cities Challenge in Pittsfield briefed the group on the Working Cities Challenge and provided an overview of feedback they had received regarding a transportation survey. This survey looked at transportation barriers and challenges in the Berkshires, and included outreach to many local immigrant families. Ms. Costa highlighted the key takeaways: (1) there is a gap in the transit hours for 2nd and 3rd shift workers, later hours are needed to get these people to/from work, (2) there is a need to expand the system to reach key employment centers (i.e. Kripalu), (3) there is an overwhelming need for weekend service, especially as many of the resort/hospitality jobs peak during night/weekends, (4) there is a need for more vehicles to reach more places, and creative planning is a must. She urged the MPO to reach out to her and her stakeholders to engage new partners in the planning process.

Mr. Lovejoy noted that because most of these concerns are with the transit system, and it would have been good to have BRTA present. Mr. Woelfel said this was helpful feedback and it is the goal of the MPO to engage stakeholders like this in the transportation planning process, and staff should ensure materials, especially related to the RTP, are sent out to interested stakeholders. He stressed that the MPO has the Secretary's support to discuss and address these issues holistically, as

transportation is a tool to unlock opportunities for people. Mr. Lovejoy noted there should be some way to utilize technology and data to find a solution to some of these issues and Mr. Woelfel concurred noting the potential use of CMAQ funds to fund out-of-the-box solutions to transport issues. Ms. Wallace said she loved the idea of engaging key regional employers and discussing their unique needs to see what solutions can be explored. The group thanked Ms. Costa for her comment and participation.

Ms. Sholler noted that Jacobs Pillow Dance has jobs that they cannot fill because people cannot get to the Pillow. She requested to be included in continuing discussions on regional transportation. Mr. Karns said the issue of transit for seasonal workers has come up in conversations across disciplines, whether public health, education, tourism, this is something we need to think creatively on as we look at other mechanisms to move people around the Berkshires. Mr. Karns suggested additional participation from BRTA and inquired as to whether MassDOT has any ideas for short-term solutions, as the RTP process is a couple of years out. Mr. Woelfel suggested working with MassDOT and BRTA, furthering community outreach and surveying, and talking to new stakeholders and engaging them throughout the planning process. The group thanked Ms. Sholler for her comment and participation.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM MAY 23, 2017

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Hanlon, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy, to approve the meeting minutes for the May 23, 2017 meeting of the Berkshire MPO, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF THE 2018 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Mr. Kus presented the MPO the draft FFY 2018 UPWP. Mr. Kus noted two comments were received during the comment period. The first was from Ms. Jane Winn, of the Berkshire Environmental Action Team, and her comments primarily addressed bike/pedestrian planning on/along existing roadways. Her interest, though primarily project-based, is part of the bike/ped planning task and BRPC staff routinely works with local planners as roadway projects arise. The second comment was from Mr. David Mohler, of MassDOT, and his comments were mainly editorial, however they were all addressed in the final version.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Hanlon, to approve the 2018 UPWP.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THE MUNICIPAL CULVERT REPLACEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. Kus briefed the MPO on the Municipal Culvert Replacement Assistance Program, a program from the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration, which aims to replace degraded and/or undersized road-stream crossings with better designed culverts or bridges that meet improved ecological and storm resiliency criteria. He noted the no match requirement and the breadth of things it could be used for (incl. design, engineering, construction, etc.). The deadline to apply for this funding round is July 11. Mr. Karns confirmed this was also presented to the Berkshire County Highway Superintendents Association.

6. DISCUSSION ON PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Ms. Lindsey provided the MPO with a brief overview of performance based planning in the regional transportation planning process, including recent changes with the FAST Act. Ms. Lindsey reviewed

the national performance measures and the target-setting process and timeline. She noted the recent presentation of performance measures and targets endorsed by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority at the last meeting, and those outlined in MassDOT's performance tracker. She noted the Berkshire MPO may either chose to adopt the state level targets or develop their own.

Mr. Woelfel noted that MassDOT and the MPO would learn more in the coming months. Mr. Karns confirmed there is a MARPA sub-committee looking at performance measures. He also noted that the measures don't really address how transit is serving folks, rather the vehicle/asset condition, which doesn't necessarily reflect whether the system is working. Mr. Kus informed the MPO that other measures are collected and reported by BRTA in the National Transit Database annually.

Mr. Woelfel suggested the MPO have discussions about the transit operations, as it was certainly in their mission. Mr. Karns suggested taking the opportunity this fall to learn more about the operations, ridership, and opportunities. There was consensus around the table that this was a good idea to begin these conversations.

Mr. Lovejoy inquired as to when a fatality/injury number becomes statistically significant. He said this noting the low absolute numbers across Berkshire County. Ms. Koirala described the way staff uses crash data to calculate weighted rates that look to the accident severity. Mr. Woelfel noted if there were questions or MPO members wanted to learn more about safety data, bridge rating, pavement rating, or other performance measures staff can invite folks from MassDOT to come present. Mr. Karns said staff could present the latest safety data/crash clusters.

7. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri reviewed the project status report for Berkshire projects in FY 2017 and FY 2018. Mr. Karns expressed excitement to see so many projects ready for FY 2018.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kus informed the MPO that this would be the last meeting for Ms. Lindsey as she has accepted another position out of state.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE/MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The next MPO meeting date is to be determined, though likely in September. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 4:48 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- RFR for Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program
- Performance Measures Factsheets
- MassDOT District 1 Project Status Report
- Public Comment re: Working Cities Pittsfield Note/Survey
- 2018 UPWP