

**Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

Tuesday, January 24, 2017 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates:

Kyle Hanlon	BRPC
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Tinlin)
Andrew Hogeland	North Berkshire Towns Representative
Jim Huebner	Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative
David Mohler, Chair	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)
David Turocy	City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Tyer)
Laurel Scialabba	North-Central Berkshire Towns Representative

Others Present:

David Chandler	Federal Highway Administration
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

**1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**

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

**2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM AUGUST 2, 2016**

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy, to approve the meeting minutes for the August 2, 2016 meeting of the Berkshire MPO, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**4. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT #1 TO THE FY 2017-2021 TRANSPORTION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND INITIATE A 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Koirala described proposed Amendment #1 to the FY 2017-2021 TIP to (1) increase cost of highway project #607551 from \$1,500,612 to \$3,446,487 and (2) add purchase of replacement van (RTD0004395), remove replacement van (RTD0005121), and reduce the cost of state funding for the purchase of a replacement van (RTD0004344) to \$63,436.

Mr. Frieri noted the increased bridge cost, currently at 75% design, is not much more than the estimate at 25% design, however the amount in the TIP had not been updated after 25% design so

this update was necessary. Mr. Mohler had a question regarding the decrease in cost of a transit replacement van, however no BRTA representative was in attendance to answer the question.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Huebner, to release Amendment #1 to the FY 2017-2021 TIP as presented for a 30-day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT #1 TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND INITIATE A 45-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Kus described Amendment #1 to the Public Participation Plan, which proposes shortening the minimum public comment period from 30 days to 21 days for amendments to, and the adoption of, certification documents (RTP, TIP, and UPWP). This amendment is in response to a request from MassDOT, which is proposed to better sync decision-making across the Commonwealth. Mr. Mohler noted this change still allows MPO's to opt for longer comment periods for projects that may require additional time, but 21-day comment periods allow for routine items, like TIP amendments, to be processed at each monthly meeting.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Huebner, to approve release Amendment #1 to the Public Participation Plan as presented for a 45-day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

**6. RECEIVE TENTATIVE FFY 2018-2022 TIP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE**

Ms. Koirala provided the committee with the proposed FFY 2018-2022 TIP development schedule. She noted a solicitation had been sent out in early January and that applications are expected by the closing date, February 3. To date, no project data forms have been received. Ms. Koirala informed the MPO that the staff project evaluations would occur on February 13.

Mr. Mohler said MassDOT had recently received TIP guidance from FHWA and targets were on schedule. Mr. Lovejoy inquired as to whether Egremont had submitted project data forms for Mount Washington Road, Ms. Koirala said she had not received one.

**7. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES**

Mr. Frieri reviewed the project status report for Berkshire projects in years FY 2017 and FY 2018. There are five projects in the current fiscal year all of which are coming along. Mr. Karns noted that any bridge replacement projects over the Housatonic south of the confluence are subject to environmental concerns, Mr. Moore noted MassDOT was aware of the environmental issues. Mr. Karns inquired about potential project delivery issues for the Water St. project in Williamstown, and MassDOT staff said they had checked in earlier this month and were assured things would be on time. Mr. Karns also requested that as BMC area improvement planning meetings include BRPC staff, MassDOT will invite BRPC to participate as meetings are planned.

Mr. Kus pointed MPO members to the handout detailing staff activities from October 1 to present. Mr. Kus reviewed each of the tasks and provided highlights of staff activities to the group. He noted the BRPC sent a letter to the Governor based on discussions the TAC had regarding issues with funding and construction of local bridges. Mr. Karns expects the letter to arrive at the Governor's office this week.

Mr. Karns asked Mr. Mohler to describe the statewide plans that were currently underway and Mr. Mohler listed four statewide plans currently underway: the Bicycle Plan, the Pedestrian Plan, the Freight Plan, and the Rail Plan. Mr. Karns inquired if the Freight Plan includes regulatory and/or policy recommendations, Mr. Sherman confirmed this is in the scope of the planning process. Mr. Karns noted Unistress Corporation is concerned with the permitting and tolling structure on I-90 mentioning that they often go through Connecticut and Rhode Island to get to eastern parts of the Commonwealth. Mr. Sherman assured the group that he had reached out to Unistress and they were invited to serve on the Freight Advisory Committee, a group that will be meeting on Thursday. Mr. Karns also encouraged MassDOT to think about bridge closures and policy related to this as many towns have much longer alternative routes once a bridge is closed.

Mr. Lovejoy thanked MassDOT for the Municipal Small Bridge Program, but expressed concern in addressing smaller facilities, like culverts. He stressed the importance of finding a more cost effective solution that the current process that involves regulatory hurdles and exorbitant costs.

Mr. Chandler noted a typo in the PPP; staff will update.

#### **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **9. NEXT MEETING DATE/MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Kus mentioned that the next meeting will be held on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:37 PM.

#### Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Proposed Amendment #1 to the FY 2017-2021 TIP Highway
- Proposed Amendment #1 to the FY 2017-2021 TIP Transit
- Proposed Amendment #1 to the Public Participation Plan
- MassDOT Project Status Report
- BRPC Staff Activity Report