

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, March 28, 2017 5:30 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

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
Bob Malnati	Berkshire Regional Transit Authority
David Turocy	City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Linda Tyer)
Steve Woelfel, Chair	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)

Others Present:

David Chandler	Federal Highway Administration
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Emily Lindsey	BRPC
Andy McKeever	iBerkshires
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Gabriel Sherman	MassDOT

On the Phone:

Laurel Scialabba	North Central Representative
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1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Woelfel 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 FEBRUARY 28, 2017

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Hanlon, to approve the meeting minutes for the February 28, 2017 meeting of the Berkshire MPO, as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried by majority with two abstentions (Turocy, Malnati).

4. REPORT FROM THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 21, 2017

Mr. Kus provided the MPO with a brief report on the discussions at the TAC meeting on March 21, 2017.

5. ENDORSEMENT OF AMENDMENT #1 TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Ms. Lindsey 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. 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.

Mr. Woelfel added this will also make it easier for committees to digest the comments by providing them complete comments a week before the meeting.

Mr. Turocy inquired if this 21-day count was calendar days or work days. Ms. Lindsey confirmed it was calendar days.

Mr. Chandler asked if any comments had been received, Ms. Lindsey confirmed no comments were received.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Turocy, to approve Amendment #1 to the Public Participation Plan.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carries unanimously.

6. DISCUSSION ON PROJECT EVALUATION SCORES AND PRELIMINARY PROJECT LISTING FOR THE FY 2018-2022 TIP AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

Ms. Koirala presented the committee with information regarding the scenarios for the FY 2018-2022 TIP. Ms. Koirala began by reviewing the handout which listed a single scenario for FY 2018-2021. She noted there had been several changes from the adopted FY 2017-2021 TIP which addressed the Lenox Walker Street project increase and to accommodate this increase had to be split over two years. Additionally, BMC Area improvement project was moved to FY 2019.

Ms. Koirala then focused on the potential funding scenarios for FY 2022. She presented nine different scenarios, although she said only four were feasible given the requirement to program the entire project, and five scenarios included projects that exceeded the FY 2022 targets. Ms. Koirala recommended Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, although Scenario 6 and Scenario 7 would also work.

Ms. Koirala noted the potential to program one of the larger projects in FY 2022-2023 given Scenario 2 leaves funding on the table.

Mr. Malnati suggested Scenario 2, based on the TAC recommendation, while Mr. Turocy expressed the City's preference for Scenario 1. Mr. Turocy said Scenario 1 was much more beneficial for the City given its proximity to potential development and improvements that are needed to the Woodlawn intersection. Mr. Lovejoy noted his preference for Scenario 2 because the capacity for small towns to see larger improvements was so limited, he liked that Egremont would receive improvements to their town center. Mr. Huebner seconded Mr. Lovejoy's comments and liked to see projects go to smaller communities, and there was a definite benefit to having leftover FY 2022 funds to potentially program one of the larger projects in next year's TIP.

Mr. Woelfel inquired as to whether project readiness had impacted anything in years FY 2018-2021. Ms. Koirala confirmed there had been a few changes, and those were reflected in the handout.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Huebner, to direct staff to move forward with Scenario 2.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried by majority with one opposed (Turocy).

7. DISCUSSION ON CRITICAL RURAL AND URBAN FREIGHT CORRIDORS

Ms. Lindsey reviewed the process of identifying Critical Rural Freight Corridors and Critical Urban Freight Corridors within the mileage allotment provided by MassDOT, 31.44 miles and 1.79 miles respectively. Ms. Lindsey presented the proposed network, which included the full apportionment of miles, and noted that it was based on the discussions with the TAC and MPO last month, and responses from communities after a solicitation was sent out.

She highlighted the proposed network's inclusion of currently programmed TIP projects, and projects which have gone through MassDOT's PRC. She also identified two local projects, Route 41 in West Stockbridge and Algeria Road in Otis, as these both connect to freight generators and are anticipated to occur soon. She said the TAC and MPO are expected to review and recommend the proposed network be released for public comment at their April meetings and then the final network will be determined at the May MPO meeting. She reported that MassDOT is still developing guidance about this program and funding; staff worked to develop the corridors so they would be flexible to accommodate a variety of scenarios.

8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri reviewed the project status report for Berkshire projects. Mr. Hoegland inquired as to why the year for the Williamstown trail project is FY 2018 in the MassDOT handout vs in the proposed FY 2018-2022 TIP. Mr. Fieri noted as soon as the new TIP is adopted, the information on the project status sheet would be updated, but currently reflects the adopted TIP.

Mr. Kus noted he will be developing the FY 2018 UPWP in the coming months and asked MPO members to let him know if there were any special studies they would like staff to consider for the work program. Mr. Lovejoy requested staff consider how Berkshire communities use their Chapter 90 allocation. He said at a recent MMA meeting MassDOT suggested communities aren't spending their allocations; Mr. Lovejoy believes that communities do not spend all of it every year because the amount is so little they are forced to save years of allocation to complete any meaningful projects. Mr. Lovejoy noted the Chapter 90 allocation was a very small portion of the overall state CIP and the total Chapter 90 pot should be increased to meet the needs of communities, at least \$300 million statewide to start.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE/MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The next MPO meeting will be on April 25, 2017. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 5:59 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- FY 2018-2022 TIP Project Evaluation Scores/Project List
- FY 2018-2022 TIP Funding Scenario FY 2018-2021
- FY 2018-2022 TIP Funding Scenario FY 2022
- FY 2018-2022 TIP Schedule
- Critical Rural/Urban Freight Corridors
- MassDOT Project Status Report