

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, April 23, 2019 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Steve Woelfel, Chair	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Secretary Pollack)
John Boyle	North Central Towns Representative
John Duval	North Towns Representative
Kyle Hanlon	BRPC Chair
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Administrator Gulliver)
Jim Huebner	Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative
Sheila Irvin	Chair of BRTA Advisory Board
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative
David Turocy	City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Tyer)

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Planning
Clete Kus	BRPC
John Lozada	MassDOT Civil Rights
Robert Malnati	BRTA Administrator
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Andy McKeever	iBerkshires
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Stephen Savaria	Fuss & O'Neill
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA Deputy Administrator

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 MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 26, 2019 (ACTION ITEM)

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to approve the meeting minutes from the March 26, 2019 MPO meeting. Ms. Hemming mentioned a slight change – Mark Moore was listed as other in the previous meeting minutes when he should have been listed under 'MPO Representatives/Alternatives' and was representing Administrator Gulliver.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION ON PROJECT FINDING SCENARIOS AND PROJECT LISTING FOR THE 2020-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, AUTHORIZE STAFF TO INITIATE A 21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala began by stating that the TIP document is ready for review and will be released today. Ms. Koirala directed MPO members to the 'Berkshire MPO FFY 2020-2024 TIP' handout. Ms. Koirala proceeded to outline the projects contained in the 2020-2024 TIP document, the year the project will be programmed, and the specific source of funding associated with each project.

Ms. Koirala then directed MPO members to the 'Berkshire MPO FFY 2020-2024 Transit TIP document. Ms. Koirala briefly reviewed the transit TIP projects along with their associated funding source.

Mr. Malnati mentioned that 5339 funds are competitive grant funding awards, and BRTA has already been awarded that funding – it just needs to sit in the appropriate TIP year to match with state funding allocated to BRTA. Mr. Malnati mentioned that three separate RTA's share in the Governor's apportionment of 5339 funds, and every 3-years the RTA's alternate between which gets the full amount.

Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the letter from Andy Hogeland concerning the North Adams-Williamstown bicycle/pedestrian trail project. For the current TIP, it was initially scheduled to be programmed in 2019, however one of the amendments that will be reviewed today will propose moving that project to FFY 2020. The letter asks for written explanation from MassDOT that reviews:

- The specific tasks that were not achieved in time to allow for FY 2019 completion,
- The steps that were taken to try to maintain the FY 19 schedule, and
- The steps that will be taken to minimize the chances for any further delays.

Mr. Woelfel mentioned that the Williamstown portion of the project was ready prior to the North Adams portion of the project, and rather than having two separate contracts with different contractors, it made sense to bundle the project and program it for 2020. Moreover, the last quarter of 2019 and the first quarter of 2020 are no different in terms of when they fall on the calendar. Mr. Moore followed up by stating that there were some readiness issues with the project that had initially pushed it back to 2019.

Mr. Matuszko asked about the status of the North Adams section.

Mr. Moore replied by stating that North Adams has cleared 25%, has had it's design public meeting, and now MassDOT is waiting for 75% design, and hopes to receive a revised design schedule from the Town's consultant – thus, the status of the North Adams section remains unknown. However, it is anticipated that the project will be ready for 2020 and will not be delayed any further.

Mr. Woelfel suggested that the project's design status and schedule be confirmed with the consultant for the final TIP document.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to release both the Highway and Transit TIP documents for public review.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT (2ND AMENDMENT) TO THE 2019-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND INITIATE A 21-DAY COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala proceeded to direct MPO members to the 'Berkshire MPO FFY 2019-2023 TIP 2nd Amendment' handout. Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the projects, project cost estimates and cost increases, and project funding source. In the first year of the TIP, there was a project cost increase and the remaining money that had initially been identified will be used to fund Adams/Cheshire/Lanesborough Ashuwillticook Rail Trail resurfacing. That project will also include installing bicycle/pedestrian counters which will give information on the number of people that utilize the rail trail.

There is also a project increase for the Pittsfield Bridge Replacement on Lakeway Drive over Onota Lake as well as the Pittsfield Bridge Replacement along New Road over west branch of the Housatonic River. Mr. Frieri explained that both projects' cost increased because a new, temporary bridge will have to be constructed and then deconstructed for before and after project completion. Project costs now reflect the additional work necessary. Ms. Hemming also mentioned that extensive utility work must occur for these projects, which also led to project increases.

Ms. Koirala proceeded to review project cost increase for the Pittsfield Intersection Improvements at 9 location along SR 8 & SR 9. The North Adams-Williamstown bicycle/pedestrian trail project has been moved to year 2020.

Ms. Koirala mentioned the performance measures amendment, discussed at the last MPO meeting. This amendment to the TIP requires the insertion of language specifying the establishment of new statewide targets based on updated information.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to release amendment 2 for public comment.

6. APPROVAL OF THE PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING AGREEMENT AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN ON BEHALF OF THE MPO (ACTION ITEM)

Mr. Kus directed MPO members to the 'Performance-Based Planning and Programming Agreement' handout, originally disseminated to the MPO in February. Mr. Kus mentioned that this document is an agreement between the MPO's, RPA's and RTA's that outline roles and responsibilities as they relate to performance-based planning and programming. At this point, all relevant parties have had the opportunity to review and comment on this document and staff are recommending the MPO approve and allow the Secretary to sign on behalf of the MPO as a party to this agreement.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to endorse the Performance-Based Planning and Programming Agreement document.

7. PRESENTATION BY THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS ON ADA TRANSITION PLANS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Mr. Lazada began with some background stating that he co-chairs MassDOT's ADA Transition Plan. In

2013, Mr. Lazada and colleagues built software to conduct curb-ramp assessments and by 2015, an assessment of 27,000 curb cuts across the Commonwealth had been conducted. 6,500 locations were identified as deficient or simply missing. Thus far, approximately 20% of those areas have been addressed and now the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights on ADA Transition Plans is considering a \$20 million rolling fund up until the year 2032 to address problem areas.

Mr. Lazada mentioned that the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights on ADA Transition Plans has been running a course with Baystate Roads for the last few years – ADA Transition Plans Made Easy – and the course provides numerous resources and guidance on creating effective ADA Transition Plans.

Mr. Lazada proceeded to review definitions, such as the term ‘disability,’ going on to mention that 786,000 of Massachusetts’ 6.7 million residents are considered to be individuals with disabilities. Mr. Lazada went on to outline a few examples of the types of infrastructural barriers that individuals with disabilities face, including the poor placement of pedestrian crossing buttons or even the absence of pedestrian crossing traffic signals.

Mr. Lazada proceeded to review major court cases, beyond the ADA, that have established requirements, such as making pedestrian crossing signs available and accessible. The U.S. Department of Justice has oversight over the ADA, and they have a connection to the United States Access Board as well as having their own infrastructure for enforcement which is called Project Civic Access. Over the last number of years DOJ Project Civic Access has been litigating municipalities that have accessibility concerns.

Mr. Lazada then proceeded to review the various elements that should be included in an ADA transition plan. Mr. Lazada mentioned that the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) is a best practice and it is recommended that municipalities look to this guide when implementing ADA changes.

Mr. Lazada then proceeded to review the different elements of multi-year transition plans. Mr. Lazada concluded by reviewing state and federal resources, including funding sources, for successfully designing and carrying-out ADA transition plans.

8. PRESENTATION BY BRTA ON SHARED RIDE ACCESS TO WORK STUDY

Mr. Malnati proceeded to update MPO members on the findings and types of recommendations that McMahon and Associates put forward in the Shared Ride Access to Work Study. This is a follow-up study to a previous study conducted for BRTA and the primary focus is to explore alternative, shared transportation services that might better connect people from where they live to where they work. Mr. Malnati proceeded to review the fixed-route modification recommendations suggested in the study along with other recommendations suggested by the consultant.

9. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON 2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to update MPO members on the status of the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Mr. Coughlin mentioned that RTP development is in its final stages and staff are currently working on drafting the fiscal constraint analysis of the plan – the focus of today’s update.

The RTP is essentially a 20-year budget for projects, and the first 5-years of programmed projects is essentially the TIP document that staff are completing. Mr. Coughlin reviewed the projected funding the

region will received to program highway projects over the life of the RTP. Over the next 20-years, the Berkshire MPO region will receive \$570 million for highway projects. These funds fall into three separate buckets:

- Highway – discretionary reconstruction funds
- Non-Interstate – DOT repaving projects
- Remaining Statewide programs – Programs such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to review bridge funding projections. The percentage of funding specifically allocated to our region comes from two bridge funding sources – Non-Federal Aid Bridge Preservation (\$77 million over 20 years) and a statewide funding pool which allocates \$5 billion statewide for bridges over the next 20 years.

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to review transit funding projections. For transit projects, there are two primary pools of funding – Section 5307 (urban area formula grant) and Section 5311 (formula grant for rural areas) funds. Combined, the two sources of funding provide \$56.2 million to the region over the next 20 years.

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to discuss the project pool beyond the next 5 years – from 2025 to 2040. These are projects that have either been discussed in the past, are still in the design phase, or have only recently been refined from conceptual to defined projects. Mr. Coughlin proceeded to review the unfunded highway, bridge and transit projects that are likely to be programmed in the years 2025-2040.

Following this, Mr. Coughlin outlined the group of unprogrammed projects – projects that due to their estimated cost, design phase and other factors, have no current anticipated source of funding.

Mr. Coughlin concluded by outlining next steps including the timeline for holding a second public meeting to review the draft document, MPO adoption, and final approval by the Federal Highway Administration.

10. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri updated the MPO on District 1 Projects. Key highlights include – all the projects that were advertised last year are either under construction or will be shortly as the weather continues to warm up. All the bridge projects for this year are at final design.

Mr. Kus proceeded to review MPO staff work updates.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Matuszko asked about the Build NOFO out from the Federal government and whether anyone from MassDOT is coordinating that endeavor for the state.

Mr. Woelfel suggested contacting Scott Bosworth who has been the lead in the past few years on those grants or contacting Bryan Pounds for that information.

Mr. Kus mentioned that the next CIP meeting will take place at BRPC following the next MPO meeting. Mr. Kus also mentioned that MPO members should be aware of information sent out by Ms. Koirala

specifying the new round of Community Transit Grants along with an upcoming training relevant to that program.

There was no other business.

12. NEXT MEETING DATE – MAY 28, 2019

The next MPO meeting will be on May 28, 2019.

ACTION: Mr. Hanlon motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Boyle. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Meeting Agenda
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2020-2024 TIP
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2020-2024 Transit TIP
- Delay in TIP for North Adams-Williamstown Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Project 607254 Letter – Andy Hogeland
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2019-2013 TIP 2nd Amendment
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2019-2023 TIP 2nd Amendment – Performance Measures
- Performance-Based Planning and Programming Agreement
- Berkshire MPO 04/23/2019 – MassDOT District One Project Update
- Berkshire MPO Work Activity Update
- 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – PowerPoint Presentation Handout
- MassDOT Capital Investment Plan – 1-page handout