

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, September 25, 2018 1:30 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)
Larysa Bernstein	City of North Adams (Representing Mayor Bernard)
John Boyle	Northcentral Towns Representative
Harvey Droseh	Northcentral Towns Alternate Representative
Kyle Hanlon	BRPC Chair
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Jim Huebner	Southeast Berkshire Towns Representative
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative
John Duval	North Towns Representative
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Gabriel Sherman	MassDOT Planning

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 1:30PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM August 28, 2018

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to approve the meeting minutes for the August 28, 2018 MPO meeting.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES (PM3)

Building on past MPO discussions of adopting different performance measures, Mr. Coughlin updated members on PM3 (Performance Measure 3) or the 'System Performance Measures'. These measures relate to overall efficiency of the transportation system and freight movement. Back in January, the

MPO adopted a set of performance measures relating to safety – these fall under the PM1 category. PM2 performance measures – relating to pavement and bridge condition – will be discussed next month.

For the Berkshire Region, two measures of reliability will be reviewed. The first measure is 'level of travel time reliability' (LOTTR) which applies to the Interstate system (I-90 for Berkshires) along with the non-Interstate National Highway System (NHS). The second measure is the 'level of truck travel time reliability' (TTTR) which only applies to the Interstate system. Two other measures related to congestion will not be considered as they do not apply to the Berkshire's.

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to contextualize the system performance measure development and adoption process. The Federal Highway Administration establishes performance measures. State DOT's examine statewide trends in relation to the measure, after which the state develops a performance target. MPO's determine to adopt the statewide target or establish their own performance targets.

In the context of PM3, the Federal Highway Administration recommends State DOT's use the National Performance Management data set which provides travel times on the NHS to help establish PM3 targets. Data on travel times is limited, and therefore, state DOT's are encouraged to set conservative targets.

Mr. Coughlin outlined the process of measuring reliability. LOTTR is a measure of how long it takes to drive along a given segment of road. The metric used is the 'percentage of person miles traveled that are reliable.' Using travel times provided by the National Performance Management data set, the 50th and 80th percentile travel times are reviewed at four designated times during the day/week, and the ratio of these values determines if a segment of road is 'reliable.' If the ratio is at or below 1.50, the segment is deemed 'reliable.' Statewide, 80% of NHS lane miles are shown to be reliable and 68% of statewide Interstate miles are shown to be reliable. As a result of limited data, the statewide performance targets seek to maintain these current values.

Mr. Drosehn asked a clarifying question on the routes that are included in the Interstate system. In the Berkshire's, the only Interstate route for the region is I-90.

Mr. Coughlin continued with mentioning that 100% of I-90 lane miles in the Berkshires are deemed reliable and the non-Interstate system, NHS, is at 95% reliability in the Berkshires.

The second measure, TTTR applies only to I-90 in the Berkshires and solely to Interstate routes statewide. This measure looks at the ratio of the 95th percentile and the 50th percentile truck travel time. The ratio for five different time periods during the day/week is computed and an index is generated as a weighted average of the largest period for each segment and its weight. Statewide the value of this measure is 1.85, and the target is to keep this value at 1.85. In the Berkshires, this value is 1.29 – meaning the Berkshire's is exceeding the statewide target.

Mr. Coughlin concluded by recommending that the MPO adopt and support the statewide performance measure targets.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Huebner to adopt the statewide PM3 performance measure targets.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Coughlin provided a brief synopsis of BRPC's efforts to update the county's long-range Regional Transportation Plan. The public 'Transportation Needs' survey has been available for a few weeks online. To date, there have been about 450 responses. Late last week and early this week, approximately 4,200 post cards were sent out through every-door-direct-mail to MA EJ designated communities. A review of the previous RTP has been conducted. Mr. Coughlin extended an invitation for two MPO members to sit down with staff and to review the 'big picture' goals of the previous RTP and moving forward with an updated RTP. Mr. Lovejoy and Mr. Boyle agreed to participate.

6. UPDATE ON I-90 INTERCHANGE STUDY

Mr. Kus updated members on the I-90 interchange study effort. In early September, the I-90 interchange working group met and decided to carry three project design options forward through the process for further evaluation. Those projects include:

- Alternative #4 – Algeria Road, Otis
- Alternative #5 – Blandford Maintenance Facility, Blandford
- Alternative #6 – Blandford Service Center, Blandford

The consultant team has provided several interchange concepts for review. All interchange design concepts have been reviewed by the working group and MassDOT. All traffic counts have been completed, and most of the data has been collected and analyzed. Transportation modeling has been initiated, however, an effort to ascertain new demographic data to refine the modeling has set the project back about 2 months from its original deadline. The next open house meeting is scheduled for late fall. If the project remains on schedule, it should be wrapped up by February 2019. No target date has been set for implementing the interchange.

7. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri updated the MPO on District 1 Projects. All projects for 2018 TIP have been put out to bid. One project, the North Adams, Williamstown – Design Contract got a notice to proceed (NTP) on July 18, 2018. TIP 2019 projects were reviewed, and status updates provided.

Mr. Kus reviewed BRPC's monthly activity report.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Comment period for MassDOT Pedestrian Plan closes October 17th, 2018. There was no other business.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next MPO meeting will be on October 23, 2018.

Mr. Huebner motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hanlon. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 2:07 PM

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft August MPO meeting minutes
- System Performance Measures: Congestion, Reliability, and Emission presentation
- I-90 Interchange Study: Working Group Meeting #3 MassDOT presentation.
- MassDOT projects status report
- MPO work activity updates