

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 4:00 PM
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office
1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

David Mohler	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Stephanie Pollack)
John Boyle	North Central Towns Representative
Bill Cooke	Town of Great Barrington
John Duval	North Towns Representative
Francesca Hemming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Sheila Irving	Chair of BRTA
Jim Lovejoy	Southwest Towns Representative
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Derek Krevat	MassDOT OTP
Clete Kus	BRPC

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 MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 26, 2019 (ACTION ITEM)

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Morales to approve the meeting minutes from the December 28th, 2019 MPO meeting.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT (2ND AMENDMENT) TO THE 2020-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TRANSIT AND HIGHWAY) AND INITIATE A 21-DAY COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala proceeded to explain that BRTA was awarded 5310 money to fund four projects – and that the current TIP needs to be amended to reflect these new project funding awards. Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the funding awards, outlined in the Berkshire MPO FFY 2020 – 2024 TIP 2nd Amendment Transit handout.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Morales to approve the 2nd amendment to the 2020 – 2024 TIP and initiate a 21-day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2021 – 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Koirala proceeded to explain that the 2021 – 2025 TIP development process has been initiated. Ms. Koirala proceeded to review the FFY 2021 – 2025 TIP tentative schedule, mentioning that TIP project solicitation letters had been sent out to Berkshire municipalities on January 6th, 2020. To date, forms have been received from MassDOT and Dalton. Project evaluation date is February 6th and therefore, it is essential that municipalities get TIP solicitation forms back to Anuja prior to that date.

6. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLY ACTION ON SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS (ACTION ITEM)

Mr. Coughlin proceeded to explain it is the time of year again when the MPO reviews and possibly adopts safety performance measure targets. Mr. Coughlin proceeded to outline those safety measures – including total fatalities, rate of fatalities, total serious injuries, the rate of total serious injuries, and total number of combined pedestrian and bicycle injuries and fatalities. These performance measures are set by the state and they are informed by current trends in the data – which is limited. The MPO must decide whether to adopt the statewide performance measures and targets set by the state – or create their own. Mr. Coughlin mentioned that over the past year, the Berkshire MPO has decided to adopt the state’s safety performance measures and targets.

Mr. Krevat proceeded to outline statewide trends – with the latest data coming from FFY 2017-2018. Total fatalities and incapacitating injuries are on the decline. Total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities was previously on the rise; however, the new data seem to suggest that number is now declining.

Mr. Coughlin directed the MPO to the Berkshire Region – CY2020 Safety Performance handout, stating that fatalities and serious injuries in the Berkshires is trending downward. The Berkshires has a higher fatality rate, which is common for rural areas, and the region has a lower rate of serious injuries in comparison to the state. With that, Mr. Coughlin proceeded to ask the MPO to adopt the statewide safety performance measures and targets.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle for the Berkshire MPO to adopt the statewide safety performance measures and targets.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. UPDATE ON TRANSPORTATION CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Mr. Kus proceeded to outline the Transportation Climate Initiative, mentioning that within the past few weeks the initiative has been gaining more momentum. Mr. Kus gave a brief overview of what documents have come out to date pertaining to the details of the initiative and proceeded to explain that many aspects of the TCI have yet to be fully fleshed out – such as how revenues generated through the program will ultimately be spent. Mr. Kus mentioned that BRPC has developed a survey to probe how Berkshire residents understand the initiative along with the types of investments residents feel should be funded with revenues generated through the initiative. Mr. Kus urged members of the MPO to take BRPC's 5-minute TCI survey and to spread the word of its existence.

Mr. Lovejoy made the point that although much has been said about the TCI and it has been presented by the media in many different ways – mostly in terms of another tax that will lead to an increase in the cost of gas/diesel – it is nonetheless important to emphasize that joining this initiative will presumably lead to tangible benefits in our transportation systems and capacity to adapt/build resilience to climate change.

8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri proceeded to update MPO members on District 1 projects outlined in the MassDOT District One Project Update handout.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kus proceeded to review the East-West Passenger Rail Study handout provided to MPO members. Mr. Kus explained that this document was just released, and it advertises two upcoming Advisory Commission meetings and a public meeting in February 2020. The first Advisory Commission meeting will be held on February 6th, from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. The public meeting will be held on February 12 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. the second Advisory Commission meeting will be held on February 24th, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Details on location, parking costs, and content to be covered at each meeting can be found on MassDOT's East-West Passenger Rail Study webpage.

Mr. Kus then shifted his attention to informing MPO members of the certification documents produced by BRPC. Certification documents include the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) along with others.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE – FEBRUARY 25, 2020

The next MPO meeting will be on February 25th, 2020.

ACTION: Mr. Lovejoy motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morales. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:41 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Meeting Agenda
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2020 – 2024 TIP 2nd Amendment Transit
- FFY 2021 – 2025 TIP Tentative Schedule
- MassDOT CY20 Safety Performance Measure Targets (PM1)

- Berkshire Region – CY2020 Safety Performance
- BPRC Transportation Climate Initiative Survey Introduction and Survey Link
- Certification of the Berkshire MPO Transportation Planning Process
- East-West Passenger Rail Study – Winter 2020 Update
- Berkshire MPO 1/28/2020 – MassDOT District One Project Update