

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, November 26, 2019 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Jim Lovejoy, Vice Chair	Southwest Towns Representative
John Boyle	North Central Towns Representative
Bill Gop	Town of Lenox
Kyle Hanlon	BRPC Chair
Francesca Hemming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Jim Huebner	Southeast Towns Representative
Sheila Irving	Chair of BRTA
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield
Zachary Feury	City of North Adams

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Derek Krevat	MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
Clete Kus	BRPC
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Stephen Savaria	Fuss & O'Neill

1. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Lovejoy 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 OCTOBER 22, 2019 (ACTION ITEM)

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Morales to approve the meeting minutes from the October 22nd, 2019 MPO meeting.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

4. CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT (1ST AMENDMENT) TO THE 2020-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND INITIATE A 21-DAY* PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala proceeded to explain that there was a change in cost for one of the projects listed in the 2020 – 2024 TIP. The change is a decrease in project cost for Project I.D. 609104 – Lee – Resurfacing and related work on Route 20. The project decrease is expected to be around \$845,668.

Mr. Frieri clarified and mentioned that the original project that had been scoped was much larger, however, when it became time to design the project, it was reduced due to regulatory impacts and other factors that ultimately reduced the project size.

Prior to voting, Mr. Kus mentioned that an abbreviated comment period is being requested and that the MPO can vote on a shortened public comment period as there are provisions that allow for a shortened comment period. Mr. Kus recommended that the MPO vote to reduce this 21-day comment period by one-hour – in order for the MPO to finalize when the MPO would meet next on December 17th, (which would be 20 days and 23 hours from the end of the today’s MPO meeting).

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Boyle, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to approve a 20-day public comment period on the 1st amendment to the 2020-2024 TIP.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSIDERATION OF AN ADJUSTMENT TO THE 2020-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO CORRECT THE NHPP DESIGNATION OF PROJECT 609161 ADAMS BRIDGE MAINTENANCE TO NHPP ON SYSTEM (ACTION ITEM)

Ms. Koirala stated that the source of funding for this project changed from NHPP off-system to NHPP on-system funding. Due to the nature of this change – the MPO is considering an adjustment rather than an amendment.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Heubner, seconded by Mr. Boyle to approve this adjustment to the 2020-2024 TIP.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

6. CONSIDERATION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2020 UPWP TO ADD A NEW TASK, TASK 3.9: BERKSHIRE FLYER/CSX RAIL CORRIDOR CAPACITY ANALYSIS AND SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION AND ADD ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THIS TASK AND INITIATE A 21-DAY* PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (ACTION ITEM)

Mr. Kus mentioned that at this point, most everyone should be aware of the efforts to pilot the Berkshire Flyer service in 2020. Mr. Kus stated that our organization was recently made aware that CSX is requiring a corridor capacity analysis study – which is a specialized type of service – and thus, requires additional funding to bring to fruition. Additionally, in order that all adequate preparations are made for the pilot Berkshire Flyer service next year, additional attention and focus will be required by staff and therefore, additionally funding is requested. Mr. Kus mentioned that were are looking to amend the current UPWP to add this new task and access remaining FY2019 funds –

combined with about \$10,044 of state monies, would give BRPC access to about \$75,000 to facilitate payment for the professional service to conduct this specialized corridor capacity analysis study and to program additional staff time to assist with this effort.

Mr. Kravet asked whether CSX has identified a timeline for when this study needs to be completed?

Mr. Kus stated that CSX has not indicated a timeline – however, the agreements that will need to be in place between Amtrak and CSX in order to pilot the service for next year necessitates a sense of urgency to adequately plan for the pilot service.

Mr. Lovejoy asked whether an independent company or individual would need to be hired in order to complete the corridor capacity analysis?

Mr. Kus stated that yes, a company that has conducted this work in the past will be contracted to perform this service. Mr. Kus continued by mentioned that CSX are really the ones in the driver's seat in terms of who they feel is competent enough to perform this service based on past experience in performing this work for them.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Heubner, seconded by Mr. Boyle to amend the 2020 UPWP to include Task 3.9 with additional funding and to reduce the public comment period to a 20-day public comment period.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

7. RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE I-90 INTERCHANGE STUDY

The I-90 Interchange study presentation scheduled for today's MPO meeting has been canceled. The presentation has been rescheduled to next time the MPO meets.

8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri proceed to update MPO members on District 1 projects. Key highlights include:

- The Adams, Cheshire, Lanesborough resurfacing of the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail – a notice to proceed was issued on November 12th to Maxymillian. Additionally, there was a public informational meeting held on November 15th with representatives from the municipalities along with representative Barrett and the preconstruction meeting for that project is coming up and is scheduled for December 5th.
- The Pittsfield bridge replacement on New Road over the W. Branch Housatonic River – a notice to proceed was issued to Maxymillian on November 12th as well. And the current completion date is May of 2021.

Mr. Kus mentioned that although the MPO did not receive a presentation on the status of the I-90 interchange study, members can go online to MassDOT website and find out information on the state of the study.

Mr. Kus proceeded to mention that the East-West Passenger Rail Study continues to move forward – there is another meeting of the advisory committee scheduled for February/March of 2020.

Mr. Kus also mentioned that BRPC will be initiating the TIP cycle soon – and it will most likely mimic the schedule of last year.

Mr. Kus stated that by February 29th the MPO will have to adopt calendar year 2020 safety targets.

Mr. Kus concluded by stating that earlier today – interviews were conducted to fill the Berkshire Flyer Project Manager position. Interviews went well and hopefully a contract will be completed soon by BRTA to fill that position.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE – DECEMBER 17, 2019

The next MPO meeting will be on December 17th, 2019.

ACTION: Mr. Hanlon motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Boyle. Mr. Lovejoy adjourned the meeting at 4:25 PM.

Materials Distributed:

- Meeting Agenda
- Berkshire MPO FFY 2020 – 2024 TIP 1st Amendment Handout
- Berkshire MPO 11/26/2019 – MassDOT District One Project Updates
- Transportation and Climate Initiative Handout