

# Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, December 9, 2014 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

## MPO Representatives/Alternates:

Clinton Bench, MassDOT (Representing Secretary Davey)

Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1 (Representing Administrator DePaola)

Bruce Collingwood, Pittsfield

John Duval, North Berkshire Towns Representative

John Boyle, North-Central Towns Representative

Jim Huebner, Southeast Towns Representative

Jim Lovejoy, Southwest Berkshire Towns Representative

Andy Hogeland, North Berkshire Towns Alternate

Sheila Irvin, BRPC

## Others Present:

Clete Kus, BRPC

Anuja Koirala, BRPC

Nat Karns, BRPC

Doug Plachcinski, BRPC

Dustin Rhue, MassDOT

Andy McKeever, iBerkshires

Jane Winn, BEAT

## **1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 28, 2014**

Mr. Kus presented changes to the draft minutes.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Collingwood, to approve the MPO meeting minutes for October 28, 2014, as amended.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES, ONE ABSTENTION (J.Huebner).

## **3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments

## **4. APPROVAL OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO ADD MT. GREYLOCK SUMMIT IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (SCENIC BYWAY) AND AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE MPO.**

Mr. Bench explained the TIP as it relates to the MPO. Ms. Koirala reviewed the proposed TIP amendment for the project and stated that was originally in 2014 of the previous TIP for \$990K for design and construction. It was not included in the current TIP as its status in terms of moving towards construction was not known. The project is funded through Scenic Byways and will improve Bascom Lodge and the Veterans' War Memorial. There were no public comments. Mr. Frieri indicated that the DCR was holding a public information meeting in the near future.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle to approve 2015-2018 TIP amendment and authorize the Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO. Unanimously approved

**5. INTRODUCTION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2015-2018 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO ADD A PORTION OF THE ASHUWILLTICOOK RAIL TRAIL, FORM HOOSAC STREET TO LIME STREET, AND AUTHORIZE A 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD.**

Mr. Frieri described the design and status of the project. He indicated that funding was in place for completion of the trail portion of the facility, the funding for the rail extension remains unidentified. Mr. Karns indicated that the status of rail projects is unknown and asked for a status update on all rail projects in the Berkshires. Mr. Bench sought clarification on the inquiry and then indicated that he would request a briefing from the Rail and Transit section and report back at the next meeting. Mr. Huebner inquired about how much use the trail gets. Mr. Plachcinski indicated that he would attempt to obtain trail user counts from DCR.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Huebner, seconded by Mr. Lovejoy to release the 2015-2018 TIP amendment for public comment. Unanimously approved

**6. APPROVAL OF THE BERKSHIRE REGIONAL COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN.**

Ms. Koirala explained that the purpose of the Coordinated Plan was to identify needs and services for the Federal funding programs that were available to the Berkshires, typically complimenting existing funded transportation initiatives. Ms. Koirala reviewed the region's existing public transportation initiatives, gaps in the system, potential projects/services, and funding resources. She explained the feedback received from the public hearing for the Plan and presentations to the Regional Coordinating Council (different transportation service agencies). Specific demographic analyses in the Plan focused on Environmental Justice and Title VI populations. The plan also provided recommended service and capital public transportation projects for funding.

Mr. Bench complimented Ms. Koirala on the completeness and thoroughness of the plan. He suggested that the region was well positioned to access potential grant resources because of the approval of the document. There were no comments from the public, which Ms. Koirala attributed to an involved public process to develop the document.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle to approve the Coordinated Plan. Unanimously approved.

**7. UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2016 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Mr. Plachcinski provided an update of the RTP efforts including some input on performance measures. He mentioned the public input survey and some of BRPC's other outreach efforts, as well as preliminary feedback from the survey. A discussion ensued over the funding shortfall which results in the inability to construct all required projects identified in the plan. Mr. Lovejoy stressed the need to examine regional transportation finances. Mr. Bench described potential options for revenue, but that other regions typically did not address funding issues within the document. Mr. Karns suggested monetizing the needs and potential revenues as a part of analysis. The discussion concluded with Mr. Bench providing suggestions to further engage customers at a public meeting at the Intermodal Center.

**8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES**

Mr. Frieri reviewed the MassDOT District 1 project update spreadsheet, including the Fiscal Year 2015 project statuses. He also mentioned 2014 projects that went to bid. The Lee Bikeway planning effort began. There are four highway projects and three bridge projects that will begin procurement with 2015 federal funding. Mr. Frieri also reviewed bridges which are funded with emergency repair funds. There is a total of about \$16M of bridge projects within the region. Mr. Bench committed to having representatives from MassDOT's bridge section make a presentation on Bridge Prioritization and Funding at a future MPO meeting.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS**

The MPO did not discuss any other business.

**10. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting date will be January 27, 2015.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Two (2) TIP amendments with supportive paperwork
- October MPO Meeting minutes
- Draft Coordinated Public Transportation Human Services Plan
- 2016 RTP Update Memorandum
- District 1 project update spreadsheet

Respectfully submitted,  
Douglas Plachcinski  
Senior Transportation Planner