

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday June 28, 2011 4:00 PM

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MPO Representatives and Alternates Present:

Clinton Bench, MassDOT (Representing Secretary Mullan)
Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator Francis DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire Representative)
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (Representing Mayor Ruberto)
Bob Malnati, BRTA
James Mullen, BRPC
Mike Ouellette, Town of Adams (North County Delegate)

Others Present:

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Justin Diagle, MassDOT District 1
Janna Brule, BerkshireRides and TAC
Jane Wynn, BEAT
Nat Karns, BRPC
Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Douglas Plachcinski, BRPC

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:02

2. MINUTES OF MAY 24, 2011

ACTION: Motion by Collingwood, supported by Bailey, to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2011.

DISCUSSION: None

VOICE VOTE: 6 Ayes, 1 Abstention

MOTION CARRIED

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

4. APPROVAL OF 2011-2014 TIP AMENDMENT

Mr. Malnati reviewed the amendment and confirmed the figures to Mr. Bench.

ACTION: Motion by Lovejoy, supported by Malnati, to approve the TIP amendment

VOICE VOTE: 7 Ayes

MOTION CARRIED

5. DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Plachcinski presented Chapters 6 and 8 of the RTP. He reviewed the criteria scored for

road and trail projects and indicated that BRTA would help prioritize transit projects once MassDOT provides transit revenue projections. Mr. Plachcinski also reviewed the Chapter 8 recommendations, including discussing enhancing commercial access from the Turnpike to Pittsfield and beyond to North Adams. Mr. Mullen asked about the policy statement and Mr. Plachcinski replied that planning will center on operational improvements with limited new roads or expansion of existing facilities because commercial traffic is a consistent community concern year after year. Mr. Karns provided a history on the concept of better highway access for the County's population centers. Mr. Lovejoy commented on the need for transportation finance reform. Mr. Karns suggested that the Commonwealth and the region should both consider financial options aside from a fixed amount gas tax and address the serious gaps in funding. Mr. Bench acknowledged that the state is going to seriously consider transportation revenues, expenses, and gaps in the near future. Also, additional toll revenues should contribute to maintenance for the Western Pike. Mr. Karns reminded the MPO that the project list and evaluations are not the fiscally constrained list that is contained in Chapter 7. Mr. Karns also mentioned that two key public transportation improvements of weekend service and shortened headways for key routes.

6. DISSCUSSION ON 2012-2015 TIP, PROJECT STATUS, STATUS OF TARGETS

Mr. Bench indicated that MassDOT would provide additional guidance on target amounts within a week. Mrs. Koirala reviewed the TIP document information including the changes for each project year. Mr. Karns indicated that planning work elements include programming HSIP and CMAQ. Mr. Bench indicated that the TIPs and STIP should not have programmed amounts that indicate the project TBD. Mr. Malnati indicated some projects should be moved to the unfunded/supplemental list. Mr. Wadsworth requested that transit projects identify the matching funds source. Mr. Karns and Mr. Bench discussed how to present unfunded projects. The TIP will release for public comment in July.

7. DISCUSSION ON 2012 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

Mr. Kus presented the UPWP material including the core function areas and how BRPC develops the program tasks and hourly budgets were developed, highlighting specific new studies and efforts for 2011-2012. Mr. Karns indicated that the TCSP was considered the same as the former task as corridor and access management. The City of Pittsfield and BRPC may be able to partner on pavement management. Mr. Lovejoy suggested that more of the documents should be online. Mr. Ouellette asked how the UPWP and the RTP interfaced.

8. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

The Regional Sustainability Plan kicks off through BRPC next week. Mr. Malnati discussed BRTA's service changes and improvements along with the public hearings underway. Mr. Frieri provided an update on the status of improvement projects within the region, most specifically projects that changed status or are slated for the FFY 2012. There are some outstanding issues with the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail extension that may slightly alter the project limits due to abutters and cooperation between agencies.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for July 26.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski, AICP
Senior Transportation Planner

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- May meeting minutes
- RTP information Chapters 6 and 8
- TIP project status and target fund updates
- TIP Amendment staff report / materials
- Project status report from MassDOT District I
- UPWP materials