

Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Wednesday, April 30, 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)
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire)
Bruce Collingwood, Pittsfield
Jim Huebner, Washington (Southeast Berkshire Alternate)
John Boyle, Dalton (North Central Berkshire)
Sheila Irvin, BRPC
Ron Turbin, Williamstown (North Berkshire Delegate)

Others Present:

Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Nat Karns, BRPC
Joe Sokul, Great Barrington
Sean VanDeusen, Lenox
Doug Plachcinski, BRPC
Sam Haupt, Peru (TAC/BRPC)
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Bill Palmer, MassDOT
Kevin Wright, FHWA
Andy McKeever, iBerkshires

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 18, 2014

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the MPO meeting minutes for March 18, 2014.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES, TWO ABSTENTIONS

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

4. REPORT FROM APRIL 15, 2014 TAC MEETING

Mr. Haupt reviewed the TAC meeting report including the staff reports on a potential grant application and the initial TIP development and project scoring, initially promoting Washington Mountain Road for programming in 2018 and beyond, but concerned because that project would require advanced construct through three years.

5. APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2014-2017 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) ADDING FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ASHWILLTICOOK RAIL TRAIL EXTENSION FROM HOOSAC STREET TO LIME STREET BECAUSE OF INCREASED PROJECT COSTS

Ms. Koirala informed the group that the project was CMAQ eligible and Mr. Frieri stated that the project's 100% design submission had a revised cost estimate of \$2.7M. Ms Koirala suggested the MPO wait a month before taking action on this proposed amendment to allow District 1 to review the plans and verify the most current cost estimates. Mr. Moore implied that Adams was still acquiring right-of-way and a month's delay would not be problematic. No action is taken.

6. DISCUSSION ON 2015-2018 TIP PROJECT EVALUATION SCORES AND PRELIMINARY PROJECT LISTING

Ms. Koirala reviewed the timeline for project submission and the initial scoring for the 20 proposed projects. She explained the project scoring spreadsheets and why each project received points for the different criterion. Anuja then went through each year of the road project TIP and explained the funding for projects like the Housatonic Street reconstruction in Dalton and the BMC area improvement project in Pittsfield. She then explained the funding that was available in 2018 for programming. Mr. Bench asked if there were any other projects submitted that were smaller in funding amount and Ms. Koirala confirmed there were not.

Ms. Koirala then explained what projects were eligible for 2018 funding because they were under the available funding amount or because they were more than a the region's total allocation for that year and would take more than one construction season to complete. From that list projects that scored less than 2 on the project rankings were eliminated. Projects also should be farther along in the design process. Mr. Bench reiterated that a project should be small enough to be completed with existing funding in 2018 or take more than a year to complete. Mr. Bench also reminded the group that all the years of the TIP were up for discussion.

Mr. Lovejoy asked for additional information on the projects, like a paragraph description. Mr. Lovejoy also asked why the Walker Street project in Lenox was not considered because it was a small project cost and that was something the MPO had desired for project submissions. Ms. Koirala explained it could not be programmed given the year 2018 constraints. Mr. Frieri pointed out the history of the Adams projects and suggested that the revised project limits needed new project forms submitted to the Project Review Committee so they would be eligible in the future.

Following this MPO meeting, BRPC would develop a Washington Mountain Road alternative depending on low long construction could take. Mr. Haupt pointed out that the TAC was not particularly supportive of any other project and it was time to have a more rural project. There was a short discussion where Mr. Bench stated he was exploring alternative funding resources for the Washington Mountain Road project outside of waiting until year 2018 in the TIP.

Mr. Malnati reviewed the transit portion of the TIP, including vehicle replacements and compressed natural gas upgrades. There are maintenance requirements at BRTA's properties. BRTA is moving towards smaller buses and implementing newer technologies. Mr. Lovejoy asked for some information on the benefits of CNG.

7. UPDATE ON THE 2015 UPWP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Mr. Kus explained the development of the UPWP and mentioned the different planning studies that BRPC would participate in, which were also provided in a handout. He reminded the MPO that they should submit any requests for studies. Mr. Lovejoy mentioned that the MassDOT project selection was very interested in pavement assessments and Mr. Kus reinforced that pavement management will continue as a work task in the UPWP.

8. AUTHORIZE A 30 DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE BERKSHIRE MPO'S TITLE VI PLAN

Mr. Kus explained the reasoning and necessity for the Title VI Plan which included making sure that the MPO followed practices against discrimination. The Plan is required because the MPO and BRPC are subrecipients of Federal funding. Mr. Kus will be the Title VI coordinator. BRPC will make arrangements to have interpreters available to communicate with individuals with limited English proficiency. All aspects of the MPO will comply with non-discrimination practices. BRPC will have to provide an annual report to MassDOT.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Lovejoy, seconded by Mr. Huebner to release the draft Title VI for a 30 day comment period.

9. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri reviewed the MassDOT District 1 project update spreadsheet. The Adams roundabout project is moving forward with 100% design submitted. The BMC Area Improvements will be under design contract soon. There are also three bridge projects moving forward.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

The MPO did not discuss other business

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date is tentatively May 20, 2014.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- March 18 meeting minutes
- 2014-2017 TIP amendment
- District 1 project update spreadsheet
- 2015-2018 TIP development materials including timeline, project summaries, initial project scoring, alternatives and funding targets.
- Draft Title VI Plan
- UPWP planning study outline
- Memo on HSIP performance measures

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski
Senior Transportation Planner