

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, January 28, 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 Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator DePaola)
Jim Lovejoy, Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire)
Bruce Collingwood, Pittsfield
Mike Ouellette, Adams (North Berkshire)
Gordon Bailey, Lee (Southeast Berkshire)
Jim Huebner, Washington (Southeast Berkshire Alternate)
John Boyle, Dalton (North Central Berkshire)
Michael Canales, North Adams
Sam Haupt, Peru (representing BRPC)

TAC Representatives:

Ron Tinkham, Lanesborough
Jonathan Butler, Adams
Mike Case, Washington
Wayne Burkhart, Monterey
Jana Hunkler, BerkshireRides
Lauri Klefos, Berkshire1

Others Present:

Clete Kus, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Nat Karns, BRPC
Bill Palmer, MassDOT
Doug Plachcinski, BRPC
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1
Jane Winn, BEAT

1. CALL TO ORDER-INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Bench called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

3. DISCUSSION ON MAP-21 PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

Mr. Bench prefaced the presentation with a statement that MassDOT has not received any information or notice from FTA or FHWA about the performance measure rulemakings. Mr. Plachcinski presented information regarding the creation of Federal rules for applying performance measures in statewide and metropolitan transportation planning, how BRPC anticipates the rules will affect the MPO, and how potential performance measures can be gleaned from existing planning initiatives and documents. Mr. Lovejoy pointed out that the project selection process for the Berkshires needed to be unique compared to other regions

across the state. Mr. Bench reminded the MPO that there remained a significant obligation to collect data and interpret it to balance regional, statewide, and national priorities. Mr. Karns mentioned that the timelines for rulemaking were not realistic and the MPO would likely be starting the next Regional Transportation Plan before the rules were in place. Mr. Tinkham stressed that the MPO needed to examine fluctuations in seasonal population as well as the anticipated aging of our residents.

4. DISCUSSION ON AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2014-2017 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AND AUTHORIZATION TO BEGIN 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD

There are two proposed amendments within the transit element of the 2014-2017 TIP. The first is a total of \$271,074 in operational funding for BerkshireRides. The second amendment is \$503,424 in 5307 rural transportation operating funds for BRTA. Both amendments are in year 2014 of the TIP. The 5307 amendment is a clarification, while the BerkshireRides funding is new. Mr. Bench clarified the different Federal transit funding programs.

Mr. Frieri discussed two surface transportation projects that require TIP amendments. The first project is the Ashuwillticook extension from Hoosac St. north to Lime St. in Adams. The project was redesigned to incorporate a portion of railroad for the Berkshire Scenic Rail and construction estimates have increased approximately \$740,000. One option may be for the MPO to assign additional funding from the HPP earmark to cover the cost increase. The second project facing a cost increase is the Adams roundabout project at the intersection of Route 8 and Friend St. The project is eligible for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding and the MPO has \$489,451 in HSIP funding it can add to the project that will help bridge the funding gap. Mr. Moore indicated that the Trail extension was more urgent and Mr. Karns suggested adding the Trail extension to the comment period for the proposed transit amendments. Mr. Karns reminded the MPO that adding \$740,000 to this extension would reduce the pot of funding for future bike path projects. Mr. Bench described a couple of different funding alternatives for the Trail extension. Mr. Butler affirmed that Adams was prepared to move forward with the roundabout project.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Oulette, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve releasing the amended 2014-2016 TIP for public comment. Specifically, inserting \$271,074 in operating funding for BerkshireRides in 2014, clarifying \$503,424 in 5307 rural operating funding for BRTA in 2014, and adding \$489,451 in HSIP funding to the Adams roundabout project at Route 8 and Friend St. in 2014.

VOICE VOTE UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MASSDOT'S FY 2014-2018 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN (CIP) AND WE MOVE MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. Kus provided an overview of the \$12.4B 2014-2018 CIP with the first component including a narrative explaining the funding sources and the second component consisting of project tables. Mr. Kus pointed out that more than \$3B of the CIP's funding is proposed for the MBTA. MassDOT District 1 is getting the smallest amount of funding overall, but the highest per capita funding. Mr. Lovejoy pointed out that the Berkshires are not getting the most funding per lane mile of road.

The second document Mr. Kus presented is the Commonwealth's Long Range Transportation Plan entitled "We Move Massachusetts". The plan compares different funding alternatives based on the 2013 Transportation Funding Reform legislation for the horizon years 2023 and 2040. The fiscal analysis is intended to be dynamic over time to consider mode shift priorities and environmental changes. He explained the pavement funding alternative showing that additional investment did not necessarily translate into significant improvements in pavement performance.

Mr. Karns pointed out that the "You Move Massachusetts" public outreach meeting in the Berkshire contained substantial dissatisfaction with BRTA service and that the proposed CIP does little to improve funding for BRTA. Mr. Karns stated that in North Adams 18% of the population does not have their own vehicle and that rural public transportation was particularly challenging and inequitable to MBTA. Mr. Karns mentioned that there was an allocation of \$35M mentioned in the CIP text for acquiring the Housatonic Railroad but the project was not included in the supporting tables. Mr. Bench acknowledged that there should be better coordination between the CIP tables, the document text, and the Statewide TIP. Mr. Huebner noted that Washington Mountain Road was not included in the CIP. Mr. Karns suggested that the CIP and the TIP (&STIP) should follow the same 5-year time period.

Mr. Haupt pointed out that there were no increases in Chapter 90 funds after FY 2014 as a part either document. Mr. Karns reminded the MPO that the municipally maintained roads had greater needs than the state maintained routes. Mr. Niles and Mr. Burkhart agreed that Route 23 in Monterey should also be included in the CIP.

Ms. Hunkler pointed out that 71% of Berkshire households were not close to fixed route service and that BerkshireRides and BRTA worked to promote other public transportation options like paratransit.

Mr. Bench asked interested persons to attend and comment at the public meeting scheduled at the Pittsfield Athenaeum on Monday February 3, at 6 pm.

6. DISCUSSION ON THE 2015-2018 TIP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Ms. Koirala presented the TIP development schedule that was prepared according to the MassDOT guidance. She indicated that project solicitation letters would go out February 3, 2014, with a due date of March 3. Multiple meetings will follow.

7. STATUS REPORTS FROM MEMBER AGENCIES

Mr. Frieri updated the group on additional District 1 projects in the Berkshires, including a century old bridge on Route 2 in Williamstown.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

The MPO did not discuss other business

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Staff indicated that they would contact the MPO with a meeting date that coincided with the 30-day public comment period authorized for the 2014-2017 TIP amendments.

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Staff report on performance measures and presentation
- 2014-2017 TIP amendment materials
- Excerpts from the 2014-2018 MassDOT CIP and “We Move Massachusetts”
- 2015-2018 TIP development schedule
- District 1 project update spreadsheet

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Plachcinski
Senior Transportation Planner