

Minutes of the Berkshire Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

May 19, 2020 at 4:00 PM

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) Office – **VIRTUAL MEETING**

1 Fenn St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA

TAC Representatives/Alternates:

Sam Haupt, Chair	Town of Peru
Bill Elovirta	Town of Becket
Dan Filiault	Town of Dalton
Kyle Hanlon	BRPC Chair

Others Present:

Eammon Coughlin	BRPC
Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Steve Savaria	Fuss & O'Neill

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kus called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

In lieu of formal introductions, Mr. Kus introduced meeting attendees.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 14, 2020 TAC MEETING

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Hanlon, seconded by Mr. Filiault to approve the meeting minutes from the April 14, 2020 TAC meeting.

4. DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT 2021 – 2025 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO

Ms. Koirala stated that at the previous MPO meeting, the MPO release the draft 2021-2025 TIP document for a 21-day public comment period. That comment period ends today at the end of this TAC meeting. Ms. Koirala mentioned that there were no comments received from the public, and one comment was received from MassDOT.

Ms. Koirala proceeded to briefly review the draft 2021-2025 TIP document, outlining Highway, Bicycle and Pedestrian, and Transit projects listed for each year along with cost and funding source. Ms. Koirala mentioned that nothing in the draft TIP has changed since the last time the TAC met.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Filiault, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to recommend the MPO adopt the draft 2021 – 2025 TIP document as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE 2020 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE MPO

Mr. Kus directed TAC members to the 2021 UPWP Focus Areas handout and proceeded to update members on continuing and new work tasks to be incorporated into the 2021 UPWP. The UPWP is typically broken down into four main areas: Management Certification, Technical Support, Planning Studies and Ongoing Work.

Key highlights include Special Studies work efforts, encompassing Autonomous Vehicle research/analysis/impacts on rural communities, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Study (finalize study – may be carried over to 2021 UPWP) for Berkshire County, Housatonic Line Intra County Services Feasibility Study, and Regional Bottleneck Analyses.

Bike and pedestrian tasks are going to continue on, with a key update including the Mapping of County Wide Trails as well as providing assistance to the City of Pittsfield on their recent grant award to conduct a Berkshire Bikeshare Feasibility Study. Updates will also occur on a Berkshire Region Pedestrian Plan. Staff also hope to work towards a Bikeshare Pilot Program by the end of 2021.

Transportation and community system preservation task (TCSP), focusing on Access Management and Model Bylaws, has received little interest from Berkshire communities and funding at the federal level has all but evaporated. This task will not continue forward into the 2021 UPWP.

Culvert Assessments is a new task that will be incorporated into the 2021 UPWP. Small bridge and culvert replacement projects have been a big issue for Berkshire communities. A significant portion of these crossing structures are in need of repair/replacement and climate change is expected to exacerbate deficiencies. This topic has also been raised by a number of communities, particular those participating in the State's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program.

Work on the regional transit tasks will continue. Safety Initiatives including Road Safety Audits (East St./Pomeroy Ave and First St./Fenn St.) will also continue. Climate Change tasks will largely continue forward as well. Other sub-tasks falling under the following tasks will continue forward into the 2021 UPWP: Title VI, Performance Measures, Passenger & Freight Rail Planning (regional and statewide), and Berkshire Flyer Marketing and Service Implementation,

Two new tasks, Expansion of Transit & Rail Service (promoting micro-transit in rural areas, advocating for east-west rail service, TMA assistance and increasing rideshare opportunities within the region) and Outreach & Interregional Coordination (participation in statewide efforts, collaborating with neighboring RPAs MPOs and assisting in COVID-19 recovery efforts) will be added to the 2021 UPWP.

Mr. Kus proceeded to review the budgetary allocations to each task and sub-task for FFY 2021. The dollar amounts for the Management & Certification and Technical Support tasks will not change much from the current to the next (2021) FFY. Dollars allocated to the Planning Studies task, and specifically Special Studies and Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning sub-tasks, have increased – reflecting the expected time and efforts required to accomplish. Ongoing Activities are also receiving a slight increase – again, reflecting anticipated time and effort to complete. Lastly, \$15,000 is programmed toward Direct Expenses, which includes activities such as travel. A finalized draft document will be

completed soon, and the MPO hold a vote to finalize the 2021 UPWP in a few months.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Filiault, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to recommend the MPO approve the 2021 UPWP document as presented.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

6. UPDATE ON BIKESHARE STUDY

Mr. Coughlin briefly updated TAC members on bikeshare feasibility efforts. A few months ago, BRPC assisted the City of Pittsfield with an application for funding through MassDOT's Workforce Transportation Program. The Town's of Lenox, Great Barrington and West Stockbridge also agreed to provide matching funds if the grant was awarded – which it was.

Through this grant program – the City of Pittsfield was able to secure \$60,000 to conduct a countywide bikeshare feasibility study. With the matching funds provided by Pittsfield and the three towns listed above, the total award amounts to \$75,000. This is an exciting opportunity and staff are hopeful these efforts will move the county one step closer to initiating a pilot electric bikeshare service. BRPC staff have been working with the City of Pittsfield to develop an RFP to solicit proposals from vendors to conduct the study and assist in designing the system. The RFP will hopefully be sent out in the coming weeks.

7. MEMBER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mr. Frieri proceeded to update TAC members on District 1 projects outlined in the MassDOT District One Project Update handout.

Mr. Kus mentioned that following next weeks MPO meeting on May 26, 2020 – BRPC will be hosting for MassDOT the CIP open-house. There is a link to that virtual meeting on BRPC's website.

There were no other member items for discussion.

8. NEXT MEETING – JUNE 16, 2020

There may not be a need for the TAC to meet in June – therefore, the next TAC meeting is TBD.

ACTION: Motion by Mr. Filiault, seconded by Mr. Hanlon to adjourn.

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried.

Mr. Haupt adjourned the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Minutes April 14, 2020
- BMPO Draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP Document
- BMPO Draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP Project Listing
- BMPO Draft FFY 2021-2025 Transit TIP Listing
- 2021 UPWP Focus Areas and Budget

- MassDOT District 1 Update
- CIP Public Meeting Flyer

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