



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

Meeting Materials: <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/berkshire-mpo-virtual-meeting/>

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

Stephen Woelfel	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Jamey Tesler)
John Boyle	North Towns Representative
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Christine Hoyt	North Subregion Alternate
Sheila Irvin	Chair of BRTA
Kent Lew	Southeast Subregion Representative
Rene Wood	Southwest Subregion Alternate

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Justin Gilmore	BRPC
Chris Klem	MassDOT OTP
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Tom Matuszko	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Mike Nuvallie	City of North Adams
Andrew Reovan	FHWA
Nick Russo	BRPC
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA

I. Call to Order – Introductions

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Meeting attendees introduced themselves via a roll call conducted by Mr. Kus.

II. Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 24th, 2022 (Action Item)

ACTION: Motion by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Boyle to approve the meeting minutes from the May 24th, 2022, MPO meeting.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Stephen Woelfel – Yea
Francisca Heming – Yea
Sheila Irvin – Yea
Christine Hoyt – Yea
John Boyle – Yea
Rene Wood – Abstain

VOICE VOTE: Ms. Wood abstained from voting. Motion carried.

IV. Consideration of an amendment (4th amendment) to the 2022-2026 TIP and authorize a 21-day public comment period to add 5310 funding (Action Item)

Mr. Kus mentioned that MassDOT recently made 5310 funding available to the RTA's. This amendment incorporates using 5310 funding related to two expenditures made on behalf of BRTA. The first item relates to the purchase of a replacement bus (<30 feet), and the second item relates to travel training. Staff recommend the MPO release the amendment for a 21-day public comment period.

ACTION: Motion by Ms. Irvin, seconded by Ms. Wood to release the 4th amendment to the 2022-2026 TIP for a 21-day public comment period.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Stephen Woelfel – Yea
Francisca Heming – Yea
Sheila Irvin – Yea
Christine Hoyt – Yea
John Boyle – Yea
Rene Wood – Yea

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

V. Endorsement of the 2023 Unified Planning Work Program and Authorize the Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO members (Action Item)

Mr. Kus stated following the last MPO meeting, the FFY 2023 UPWP draft document was released for a 21-day public comment period. No public comments were received. Comments from FHWA and from MassDOT were received and related more to proper formatting of the UPWP – specifically, including alternative text describing visuals in the document for those that are visually impaired. Protocols relating to MPO delegates and alternate members have been specified, and amendment procedures have been clarified. Other than that, no substantive changes have occurred to the draft document since it was reviewed at the last MPO meeting.

ACTION: Motion by Ms. Irvin, seconded by Ms. Wood to endorse the 2023 UPWP and authorize the Chairman to sign the certification documents on behalf of the MPO.

(Mr. Lew, Southeast Subregion Representative, joined the MPO meeting around this time).

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Stephen Woelfel – Yea
Francisca Heming – Yea
Sheila Irvin – Yea
Christine Hoyt – Yea
John Boyle – Yea
Kent Lew – Abstain
Rene Wood – Yea

VOICE VOTE: Kent Lew abstained from voting. Motion carried.

VI. Presentation and Discussion on Safe Streets for All Program

Mr. Russo proceeded to update MPO members on USDOT's recently released [Safe Streets and Roads for All Program](#) (SS4A). Mr. Russo proceeded to give an overview of the program with the major goal being to develop projects that reduce deaths and serious injuries. The program is open to local governments, including towns, cities, and MPO's. The program operates under the framework of the five pillars of the safe systems approach which includes safer people, safer vehicles, safer roads, safer speeds, and better post-crash care.

The grant program is structured into two funding buckets – the first is referred to as an action plan grant, which provides funding that should be utilized to develop a comprehensive safety action plan. The second bucket of funding is referred to as an implementation grant, which will fund any projects or recommendations that are illustrated in a comprehensive safety action plan.

An action plan grant must be implemented prior to receiving an implementation grant. The deadline for applying for the SS4A funding is Thursday, September 15th with a deadline of August 15th to submit any technical related questions in order to receive an answer before the deadline.

Award amounts will fall within a certain range. For an action plan grant, awards will range from \$200,000 to \$1 million and MPOs are eligible for up to a \$5 million grant. For implementation grants, awards will range from \$3 million and \$30 million, with MPO's being eligible for up to \$50 million. There is a 20% local match require, which can be any source of non-federal money, including state funds and in-kind contributions.

Mr. Russo mentioned that there are no existing plans for Berkshire County that could suffice for an action plan. Mr. Russo mentioned that he believes the most prudent action that could be taken, if there is interest, would be to develop a countywide action plan. This could be done by convening a group of local officials and/or MPO members that represent various regions of the county. This group would work to develop the comprehensive countywide action plan – again, only if there is appetite among municipal officials of Berkshire County. If there is interest among this group – members are encouraged to reach out to Nick at nrusso@berkshireplanning.org.

Ms. Wood asked what the parameters of the program MassDOT is looking for – in terms of identifying projects.

Mr. Russo mentioned that this program is very open ended – addressing the Safe Systems Approach which includes safer people, safer vehicles, safer roads, safer speeds, and better post-crash care. Essentially, improvement projects that relate to these aspects of the safe systems approach will be considered for implementation grants later down the line.

Ms. Wood said she is interested in projects that would reduce vehicle speeds in roads throughout Sheffield and the county. Also of interest, is improving ambulance support and bolstering EMS services in Berkshire County.

Mr. Russo mentioned that those would all likely be eligible under this program.

Mr. Klem added that this grant opportunity will be made available annually until 2026. My. Klem mentioned that he would be available to help coordinate or provide any support necessary.

Mr. Reovan mentioned that if anyone has any questions about the NOFO, he can also serve as a resource for Nick and the group.

VII. Status Reports from Member Agencies

Mr. Frieri provided a brief update on District One projects to the MPO.

Mr. Klem shared that the survey for Beyond Mobility, the survey for the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan, has been extended though the end of July. Mr. Klem encouraged all to fill out the

survey. Next, Mr. Klem mentioned the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Working Group held their second meeting a few weeks ago. A recoding of the meeting along with meeting materials can be found online on MassDOT website. If you missed that meeting, there will be a public information meeting on the study on July 14th and you can register for that meeting on the [project website](#).

Mr. Kus mentioned that the pilot Berkshire Flyer would be kicking off July 8th. The program will continue next season as well.

VIII. Other Business

There was no other business.

IX. Next Meeting date – July 26, 2022

The next MPO meeting will be held on July 26th, 2022.

ACTION: Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Irvin. Mr. Woelfel adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

Materials Distributed:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Draft BMPO May 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2022-2026 TIP 4th Amendment](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2023 UPWP Document](#)