



MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)  
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

*Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications*

*Meeting Materials:* <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/transportation-advisory-committee/>

TAC Representatives/Alternates:

Sam Haupt, Chair	Town of Peru	Bill Elovirta	Becket
Peter Frieri	MassDOT D1	Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Mark Moore	MassDOT D1	Clete Kus	BRPC
Chris Klem	MassDOT	Nick Russo	BRPC
George McGurn	Egremont	Ryan Griffis	BRPC
Joe Aberdale	Great Barrington	Malcolm Fick	BRPC

## I. Call to Order

Mr. Haupt called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

## II. Introductions

Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

## III. Approval of the Minutes from the June 20, 2023 TAC meeting

Before voting, Mr. Haupt mentioned that he did not recall being present at the June 20, 2023 meeting, and requested staff to review the recording and update the minutes accordingly.

**ACTION:** Mr. Elovirta motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. McGurn seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## IV. Approval of the Minutes from the February 20, 2024 TAC meeting

**ACTION:** Mr. Elovirta motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. McGurn seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## V. Discussion on the development of the 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program and provide direction on a preferred scenario

Mr. Haupt prefaced the agenda item by reviewing discussions and actions taken at prior meetings. Ms. Koirala then continued by presenting three potential scenarios based upon project scores, recommendations by MADOT, and funds available from TIP. Ms. Koirala detailed the identified projects by their project ID, town/city, associated costs utilizing available funding, and anticipated start and completion dates. As an important note, Ms. Koirala mentioned that due to rising costs, projects are regularly increasing at 4% per year, however TIP funding until 2029 will remain the same.

Ms. Koirala began presenting Scenario 1, which is based on the current TIP, and was noted that no additional

projects were added to this scenario, as all existing projects would likely utilize any remaining funds because of rising costs. Projects in 2024 would include (Pittsfield, East St). For 2025 in this – and every scenario – will be (North Adams, Ashland St), and would complete in 2026. A minor project in (Williamstown, Route 7) would be moved to 2026 – and this is also the case in all scenarios. And (Egremont, Mt Washington) will begin in 2026 and end in 2027. Beginning in 2027, (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) will end the 2028, at which point (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) will begin and end in 2029. Due to financial restraints, many projects were removed back one year.

Ms. Koirala ended the presentation on scenario 1 by noting that could not be approved by MADOT due to a litany of issues which she detailed.

Ms. Koirala began presenting Scenario 2, which is the preferred version, which includes (Pittsfield, East St) as the sole project for 2024, and no changes for 2025 and 2026. For the following year, (Egremont, Mt Washington) would still finish in 2027 along with (Pittsfield, East St). In 2028 (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) will begin and end in 2029, which is when (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) would begin.

Ms. Koirala explained that changes were influenced by increasing costs, and as such some projects would need to be completed earlier than others to maintain and fully utilize anticipated funds. From scenario two, Ms. Koirala noted that while listed projects may cost less than available funds provide, due to increasing costs it is unlikely any funds would be necessary for their completion.

Mr. Haupt asked why some projected costs of projects increased by wider margins than others, which Ms. Koirala deferred to Mr. Frieri and Mr. Moore – which both said were significantly contributed to by inflation.

For scenario 3, the only significant changes are to 2028, which is when (Dalton, Dalton Division Rd) would begin, and end in 2029, which is when (Pittsfield, Merrill Rd) would start.

Mr. Fick had an educational question regarding priority list scores and the criteria which determine those scores, which Ms. Koirala provided a detailed answer for. Mr. Haupt also contributed on how the process has changed and how towns/cities submit requests. Ms. Koirala commented that BRPC continues to work with municipalities to generate projects and will be releasing a survey to collect more detailed information on this process soon.

**ACTION:** Mr. McGurn moved to approve scenario 2, Mr. Elovirta seconded. The recommendation was unanimously approved.

After the vote, Mr. Haupt invited Ms. Koirala to discuss BRTA projects for STIP funds – which primarily funds bridge and bicycle projects for the MPO. A bridge replacement in Adams and a bridge preservation in North Adams is scheduled for 2025. Between 2026 and 2027 several bridge repairs and replacements, highway resiliency, and other roadway improvement projects are scheduled throughout the region. After 2028, several federally funded resiliency and modernization projects are scheduled.

Ms. Koirala then began to discuss BRTA projects funded through STIP. BRTA is anticipating grant funding in 2025 for vehicle replacement and maintenance, operating assistance, preventative maintenance, and bus shelter amenities. In 2026, there are many similar projects to the prior year, including further fleet upgrades and vehicles and software replacements.

At this point, Mr. Haupt noted it would not be necessary to go into details of BRTAs budget, and asked if they had any intention of purchasing any EV busses in the future. Mr. McGurn commented he believed they did purchase two, which Ms. Koirala confirmed. Mr. Haupt continued by noting BRTA should be continued to be lobbied to move away from GhG emitting vehicles – which Mr. Elovirta noted previous attempts were stymied by the purchase of a defective vehicle.

Mr. Klem commented that which the committee does not vote on RTA budgets, comments should be forwarded to BRTA to continue encouraging action on these matters, among other methods.

## **VI. Overview of the Safe Streets and Roads for All safety initiative**

Mr. Russo gave a brief presentation on the current state of the SS4A initiative and intended deliverables as well as projected timelines. Whether the initiative would use year by year increments to reach zero roadway casualties or a projected target date for goal achievement is still being considered. It is expected that the steering committee will meet next month, and developing a high-injury network to address the most dangerous areas will help influence future grant requests to improve roadway safety. Public involvement opportunities will take place during the spring and summer, after which recommendations will be crafted along with a draft action plan. A final action plan will be complete and submitted by the end of the year. Updated will be shared with the group and be released through the *Common Ground* newsletter.

## **VII. Member Items for Discussion**

Mr. Frieri discussed updates to MassDOT District One projects. MADOT advertised the bridge replacement in Alford and Cheshire; updated design submittals which are under review by DOT for (Pittsfield, East St), among other updates; a bridge replacement for Lee is expected to have completed designs by the end of the month; and a bridge replacement in New Marlborough will be able to meet deadlines if it stays on-schedule, and will be monitored accordingly.

## **VIII. Next Meeting Date – April 16, 2024**

The next Berkshire TAC meeting date is scheduled for April 16, 2024 at 4 pm.

**ACTION:** Mr. Elovirta motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Haupt. Mr. Haupt adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.

### **Materials Distributed:**

- [Agenda](#)
- [TAC June 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [TAC February 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 TIP Development – Scenarios](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 TIP State Prioritized projects](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 Transit TIP](#)
- [BMPO FY 2025-2029 TIP Schedule](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)