



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

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

MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:

David Mohler	MassDOT (Representing Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Bob Malnati	BRTA
Mike Nuvallie	City of North Adams
Randal Fippinger	North Subregion Delegate
John Boyle	North Central Subregion Delegate
Frank Abbott	Southeast Subregion Delegate
Dottie Bonbreak	Southwest Subregion Alternate

Others Present:

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Chris Klem	MassDOT
Annabel Shein	MassDOT
Thomas Matuszko	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Nick Russo	BRPC
Ryan Griffis	BRPC
Sarah Vallieres	BRTA

I. **Call to Order – Introductions**

Mr. Mohler called the meeting to order at 4:04 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 August 27, 2024**

ACTION: Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mrs. Malnati, to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2024, MPO meeting.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie:	Abstain
Mr. Fippinger:	Abstain
Mr. Boyle:	Yea

Mr. Abbott: Abstain

IV. Consideration of an Amendment (1st Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP to add Project 613606 -VRU (vulnerable road user) SYSTEMIC SAFETY PROJECTS NEAR BUS STOPS in the amount of \$2,155,611 and authorize a 21 day public comment period

Ms. Koirala introduced the proposed amendment, which is for section 2A which are federal aid funded state prioritized reliability projects. This amendment is for Districts 1, 2, and 3, which is designated for improvements for vulnerable road users along bus stops in the area. MassDOT conducted an assessment, finding a disproportionate number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatal and serious injuries within 300 ft. of bus stops.

One site in Great Barrington and 3 in Lenox have been identified, and the scope of these improvements would include adding flashing warning signs, high-visibility crosswalks, and curb extensions.

ACTION: Ms. Malnati introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Boyle, to approve the amendment (1st Amendment) to the 2025-2029 TIP to add Project 613606 -VRU (vulnerable road user) SYSTEMIC SAFETY PROJECTS NEAR BUS STOPS in the amount of \$2,155,611 and authorize a 21 day public comment period.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie:	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Mr. Abbott:	Yea
Ms. Bonbreak:	Abstain

V. Presentation on updates to statewide performance measures: PM2 (bridge& pavement condition) and PM3 (reliability, congestion, emissions)

Ms. Shein provided an update on performance measures, noting that MassDOT is in the middle of its second performance period. After sharing information on the number of bridges in Berkshire County, Ms. Shein detailed bridge performance scores over the past four years.

Mr. Klem gave background on the history of the FHWA's required performance measures, which began in 2016, and how the process is undertaken. MassDOT submitted performance measures on October 1st, 2024. However, this only related to Massachusetts' three urbanized areas which meet the criteria of population size and air quality (Springfield, Worcester, and Boston).

After going into detail on the metrics of Level of Travel Time Reliability (LOTTR) and Level of Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR), Mr. Klem noted that Berkshire County is not covered by Springfield's urban boundary regarding the scope of these performance measures. Mr. Klem shared data showing that Massachusetts is expected to meet its 4-year goal of 76% for Interstate and Non-Interstate Travel Time Reliability.

VI. Discussion and possible action on a proposed change to the Berkshire MPO's Memorandum of Understanding requested by BRTA

Ms. Vallieres informed the group that, as part of its regular 3-year review with the Federal Transit Administration, findings showed that the MOU between BRTA and the MPO there were no written provisions for developing and sharing performance information, the MOU did not address BRTAs responsibility in the development and sharing of information of financial plans, the development of the annual list of obligated projects, or a written provision for cooperatively developing and sharing information.

Ms. Vallieres clarified that BRTA, with the MPO and MassDOT, currently do all these things. However, as the MOU was last changed in 2011, it being requested to edit the designated 23 member communities to 30, as well as adding the stated changes from the review in writing.

ACTION: Mr. Fick introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Abbott, to forward the proposed changes to the Berkshire MPO's Memorandum of Understanding to all municipalities as specified therein.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Mohler:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Nuvallie:	Yea
Mr. Fippinger:	Yea
Mr. Boyle:	Yea
Mr. Abbott:	Yea
Ms. Bonbreak:	Yea

VII. **Discussion on bridge conditions and maintenance activities**

Noting that the closure of bridges in the region has become more noticeable, Mr. Russo is compiling resources for local administration on how they can best preserve and maintain their local bridges. Mr. Russo provided an overview of the 'Preserving and Maintaining Bridges in Berkshire County' website. In addition to having quantitative data on Berkshire bridges, their current conditions, and show examples to help demonstrate to visitors how condition ratings are determined. An interactive map is available so visitors can learn about the bridges in their communities. Mr. Russo hopes to continue developing the website over the winter, in which he will flesh out bridge preservation techniques to highlight.

Mr. Boyle asked what the difference between a municipally owned bridge and a privately owned bridge. Mr. Russo stated he would research the topic but was not aware of any privately owned bridges on the website. Mr. Boyle asked if he was aware of any legislative attempts to boost funding for bridge repair, which Mr. Russo listed viable pathways currently available for funding.

Mr. Malnati asked if potential costs would be incorporated into the website, which Mr. Russo said a future goal would be estimating the cost-per-mile for bridge repairs and replacements in Berkshire County, in addition to other utilities for a general toolbox of resources.

VIII. **Status reports from Member Agencies**

Mr. Frieri gave a brief overview of FY24, detailing the four projects which include three bridge replacement projects and one road reconstruction project. The bridge replacements in Alford and Cheshire are under construction, and the New Marlborough has a bid opening scheduled for November 13th. The road replacement in Pittsfield was opened today.

For FY25, five projects are scheduled, which consist of a bridge preservation in Adams at 75% design, and a bridge replacement in Lanesborough currently in its final design. Due to increasing costs, a TIP amendment will be necessary. Other projects include a bridge replacement in Lee, which is currently under design, the reconstruction of Ashland Stret in North Adams is at 100% design, and a bridge preservation in Noeth Adams, has been determined by MassDOT will likely not be ready for advertising in

2025.

Mr. Boyle asked if there were any updates on extending the rail trail. Mr. Moore responded that they were working on geographic information. Unfortunately, there were currently facing an obstacle from environmental permitting, likely delaying the project until spring.

Mr. Malnati had no comment on behalf of BRTA.

Mr. Kus had three topics to discuss. The first was the state's Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office will be holding an event on November 14th. The second was the RFP for microtransit study has been released, although it was originally scheduled to close on October 31, however multiple consultants had requests to extend the deadline by an additional two weeks. The due date for proposals is November 14th. The third was the Safe Streets for All study document was approaching draft form. It will be released for public comment on November 4th. A public meeting is scheduled for November 6th at the Berkshire Innovation Center.

Mr. Klem commented that MassDOT was preparing to release the draft of its new Public Participation Plan in the coming weeks, which will incorporate a short survey gauging respondents' experiences interacting with MassDOT.

IX. **Other Business**

Mr. Klem commented that MassDOT was preparing to release the draft of its new Public Participation Plan within the next few weeks.

X. **Next Meeting date – November 26th, 2024**

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on November 26th, 2024.

ACTION: Mr. Boyle motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bonbreak. Mr. Mohler adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m.

Documents and Exhibits Used:

- [Agenda](#)
- [BMPO Meeting Minutes August 27 2024 Draft](#)
- [BRTA BMPO MOU letter](#)
- [Draft BMPO MOU Oct 2024](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2025-2029 TIP 1st Amendment Proposed](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)