



MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications

Meeting Materials: <https://berkshireplanning.org/event/berkshire-transportation-advisory-committee-3/>

TAC Representatives/Alternates:

Sam Haupt, Chair	Town of Peru	Peter Frieri	MassDOT D1
Jim Noe	Egremont	Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Joe Aberdale	Great Barrington	Clete Kus	BRPC
Len Tisdale	Lee	Nick Russo	BRPC
Christopher Brittain	Lee	Ryan Griffis	BRPC
		Malcolm Fick	BRPC

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Haupt called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

**II. Introductions**

Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**III. Approval of the Minutes from the April 16, [actual March 19] 2024 TAC meeting**

Before voting, Mr. Haupt mentioned that he did not recall that BRTA had purchased any electric vehicles as stated and requested staff to review the recording and update the minutes accordingly.

Mr. Haupt requested a motion to approve the minutes; however, no motions were made, and it was decided to table this motion until the following meeting.

**IV. Discussion on draft 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program and recommendation to the MPO**

Ms. Koirala began her presentation by recapping scenarios discussed at the previous MPO meeting and that the proposal is currently in its public comment period. Besides comments from MassDOT regarding cost changes, no substantive public comments have been received at this time. Acknowledging that this has been discussed at length in the past, Ms. Koirala prepared a map showcasing the TIP by year, intended project, and environmental justice community threshold. For the 2025-2029 TIP approximately \$280 million has been procured, which will finance 31 transit, 20 bridges, 20 highway, and 2 bike/trail projects. Ms. Koirala explained where and how funding was secured, and that projects were prioritized based on their relative need and other factors.

**ACTION:** Mr. Haupt requested a motion to recommend the MPO approve the 2025-2029 TIP. Mr. Noe motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Tisdale. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. Discussion on Planning Studies/Initiatives and proposed budget for the 2025 UPWP; recommend MPO initiate a 21 day comment period**

Mr. Kus began by recapping his previous presentations on the subject and showing the intended scope and projects covered by the Unified Planning Work Program. Projects include improving facilities for bicycle and pedestrian users, regional transit projects including a microtransit feasibility and implementation study, special studies which involve projects such as hydrogen fuel for transit fleets and a

commuter rail feasibility study for the Housatonic line. Additional projects include safety initiatives such as Safe Streets for All and climate change resiliency, Title VI and environmental justice, freight planning, and expansion of rail service. Mr. Kus ended his presentation with a summarized report on the preliminary budget and stated that the MPO is expected to kick off the comment period shortly by releasing this document to the public.

**ACTION:** Mr. Haupt requested a motion to recommend the MPO to initiate a 21-day comment period. Mr. Aberdale motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Tisdale. The motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. Presentation on the status of Berkshire County bridges**

Mr. Russo presented his report on the status of Berkshire County bridges – of which 13 are fully closed and 4 are reduced to one-lane, in addition to several which have funding targeted through various programs including the TIP and Municipal Small Bridge Program. Mr. Aberdale commented on bridges he known as being shuttered and requested information on how decisions are made to close certain bridges, which Mr. Russo answered to the best of his abilities, not being a highway engineer. Mr. Russo presented his map of bridge closures and list of structurally deficient bridges, going into detail on how ratings are measured.

Mr. Aberdale requested when this data would be available to TAC members, which Mr. Russo explained he would be able to share the document with TAC members once revisions were made, and that the MPO and public would have access to it soon after.

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

Mr. Haupt briefly recapped the recent presentation on the Northern Tier (West-East) passenger rail, expressing his confidence in the project and expressed thanks to Mr. Kus for his continued work.

Mr. Frieri discussed updates to MassDOT District One projects and their respective challenges, including the reconstruction of East St. in Pittsfield and bridge replacements in Alford, Cheshire, and Lee. Mr. Haupt expressed his concern about a possible need for an overlay district for East St. due to potential delays in advertising the project. Mr. Frieri explained that a contingency is in place in case advertising does not occur in the anticipated time.

## **VIII. Next Meeting Date – TBD**

It was decided my members that a meeting next month would not be merited if no additional presentations or substantive comments from the 21-day public comment period were received. Mr. Haupt requested staff keep them informed.

**ACTION:** Mr. Haupt requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Tisdale motioned, seconded by Mr. Noe. Mr. Haupt adjourned the meeting at 5:03 pm.

### **Materials Distributed:**

- [Agenda](#)
- [TAC March 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [TIP Document Berkshire MPO DRAFT FFY 2025-2029 TIP](#)
- [FFY 25 UPWP DRAFT DOC](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)