



MINUTES OF THE Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

*Meeting Held Via Zoom Video Communications*

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

**MPO Representatives/Alternates Present:**

Derek Shooster	MassDOT (Representing Acting Secretary Phil Eng)
Francisca Heming	MassDOT District 1 (Representing Highway Administrator Gulliver)
Malcolm Fick	BRPC
Robert Malnati	BRTA
Ricardo Morales	City of Pittsfield
William Shanahan	City of North Adams
Jay Meczycor	North Subregion
Ron DeAngelis	North Central Subregion
Dottie Bonbrake	South Subregion

**Others Present:**

Peter Frieri	MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore	MassDOT District 1
Marya Kozik	City of Adams North
Tom Matuszko	BRPC
Clete Kus	BRPC
Anuja Koirala	BRPC
Nicholas Russo	BRPC
Brittany Ebeling	BEAT

**I. Call to Order – Introductions**

Mr. Shooster called the meeting to order. 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 of September 23, 2025**

**ACTION:** Mr. Shanahan introduced a motion, seconded by Ms. Bonbrake, to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2025, MPO meeting.

**Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:**

Mr. Shooster:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Abstain
Mr. Malnati:	Abstain
Mr. Morales:	Yea
Mr. Shanahan:	Yea
Mr. Meczywor:	Yea
Mr. DeAngelis:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Abstain

**IV. Consideration of Administrative Adjustments to the FFY 2026-2030 TIP for the following: HIGHWAY SECTION – FFY 2026, Remove \$5,902,763 of STBG funding from project 608547, Egremont Mt. Washington Road Phase I; FFY 2027, remove \$11,099,573 of STBG funding from project 608547, Egremont Mt. Washington Road Phase I; Reduce STBG funding for project 609292, Pittsfield East Street (from Elm to Lyman Street) in the amount of \$416,182 (FFY 2027); add earmark discretionary funding HPP-100 in the amount of \$416,182 (FFY 2027) ; add earmark discretionary funding, HPP-100, in the amount of \$500,000 (FFY 2027) for project 609394 Adams-Cheshire pavement preservation on Route 8 (FFY 2027); and reduce NHPP funding for project 609394 Adams-Cheshire pavement preservation on Route 8 (FFY 2027) by \$500,000.**

Ms. Koirala detailed the proposed adjustments to the 2026-2030 TIP, including: a reduction of \$5,902,763 for the reconstruction of Mount Washington Road in Egremont due to a low bid resulting in reduced cost. Originally scheduled for 2027, the reconstruction of Mount Washington Road in Egremont was programmed for a value of \$11,099,573, but due to the low bid this additional funding is unnecessary. With remaining earmarked funds made available, \$416,182 will be assigned to the reconstruction of East Street in Pittsfield.

Prior to the vote Ms. Koirala sought clarification that the Egremont project had been awarded, which Mr. Moore confirmed it had. Mr. Morales asked how funds for Egremont would be utilized in the event of unforeseen circumstances, which Mr. Shooster stated for all federal projects a 10% contingency is included.

**ACTION:** Ms. Bonbrake introduced a motion, seconded by Mr. Fick, to approve administrative adjustments to the FFY 2026-2030 TIP.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Shooster:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales:	Yea
Mr. Shanahan:	Yea
Mr. Meczywor:	Yea
Mr. DeAngelis:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

**V. Consideration of an amendment to the FFY 2026-2030 TIP for the following: HIGHWAY SECTION – FFY 2026, Project 609277, North Adams Ashland Street, increase STBG funding by \$5,902,763; Project S133324, North Adams Adventure Trail, Project add \$1,250,000 in earmark discretionary (Other FA) funds; Project S 13364 I-90 Mass Pike Wildlife Crossings, add \$1,374,464 of earmark discretionary OF-100 funds; Project S 13364 I-90 Mass Pike Wildlife Crossings, add \$391,440 in earmark discretionary NFA funds; and project 609277, North Adams Ashland Street, add STBG funds in the amount of \$4,994,080 (FFY 2027). Authorize a 21-day public comment period.**

It was decided that the reconstruction of Mount Washington Road in Egremont project is to be moved to the reconstruction of Ashland Street in North Adams, which had originally been programmed for \$445,968, for a new value of \$6,348,731. Originally schedule for 2025, the following programs are being moved to 2026: the Adventure Trail in North Adams will have an earmarked budget of \$1,250,000 – as will the Wildlife Crossing on I-90, which also has a non-federal aid funded discretionary earmark of \$391,440. With the remaining funds from the reconstruction of Mount Washington Road in Egremont, \$4,994,080 will be programmed to the reconstruction of Ashland Street in North Adams.

Before voting Mr. Shanahan asked for clarification as to whether the \$1,250,000 awarded was related to the recent federal earmark, which was confirmed as for design-only by Mr. Shooster

**ACTION:** Mr. Shanahan introduced a motion, seconded by Ms. Bonbrake, to authorize a 21-day public comment period.

Mr. Kus conducted a roll call:

Mr. Shooster:	Yea
Ms. Heming:	Yea
Mr. Fick:	Yea
Mr. Malnati:	Yea
Mr. Morales:	Yea
Mr. Shanahan:	Yea
Mr. Meczywor:	Yea
Mr. DeAngelis:	Yea
Ms. Bonbrake:	Yea

## **VI. Discussion on Link 413 regional commuter bus service**

Mr. Malnati gave a presentation on Link 413, providing a background and history on development of the program to improve bus connectivity with the rest of western Massachusetts – specifically the Pioneer Valley and Franklin County. Submitting a joint application with two other regional transit authorities through MassDOT Regional Transit Innovation Grant in 2024, the 413 Commuter and Regionally Interconnected Bus Network (CRIB) was awarded \$4,460,701 to rehabilitate 7 busses and operate a commuter bus network to increase regional connectivity between BRTA, PVTA, and FRTA. This joint application was resubmitted in 2025 and was awarded \$1,577,607 to continue operations, minus bus rehabilitation. After detailing costs, operations, and how this system is utilized, Mr. Malnati detailed the service area, map, timetables, and designs for the buses.

After ending his presentation, Ms. Ebeling inquired about driver shortages and connectivity between Pittsfield and the Pioneer Valley, and contingencies in the event of service disruptions. After addressing these questions, Ms. Ebeling asked about payment and if tickets would be able to be paid via smartphone, which Mr. Malnati acknowledged there were issues remaining which they would address through customer service and future features to be added. After which, Ms. Ebeling continued by asking about discounted fares and bike storage on buses. Mr. Malnati deferred to Mr. Russo, who acknowledged options were available however not every type of coach bus is compatible – bus is looking at bike parking options nearby bus stops.

Mr. Shanahan expressed his excitement at the future opportunity for improved inter-county connectivity.

## **VII. Discussion on the development of the FFY 2027 – 2031 TIP**

Ms. Koirala went through the 2027-2031 TIP schedule for next year. Mr. Shooster stated the TIP priorities are reflective of the county's priorities as well as the state's.

## **VIII. Updates on Complete Streets Program and activities**

Mr. Russo gave a brief presentation on the complete streets program, including recent changes to the grant and awarding program, and some insight into the recent prioritization plan developed by Lee with assistance from BRPC. Following his presentation, Mr. Shooster asked about the public input tool and whether these projects would be identified for federal aid. Ms. Ebeling inquired about LEAP funding, which Mr. Shooster provided clarification on.

## **IX. Other Business**

Mr. Kus mentioned that MassDOT's Grant Central has revamped to include numerous programs which

are now available and attendees are invited to see whether they are eligible to apply or attend an upcoming orientation meeting on December 4. MPO members were informed that the southern Berkshire bike path feasibility study has received 8 proposals and will be evaluated soon. As well, an impact study for the Northern Tier passenger rail commissioned collaboratively between FRCOG and BRPC was issued for RFP and is hoping to hire a consultant by January. In addition, a traffic safety improvement grant through NHTSA which required matching will not be issued funds though a separate program, however BRPC is pursuing other opportunities and should have an update in January.

Mr. Malnati noted BRTA had been awarded around eight million in funding to replace older buses as well as bus training simulator which should help to address the CDL driver shortage.

Mr. Morales mentioned Pittsfield approved an agreement with Dalton for the Dalton division road project.

**X. Next Meeting date – December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**

The next MPO meeting is scheduled to be held on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025. However, there is a chance this meeting will be cancelled.

**ACTION:** Mr. Shanahan motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morales. Mr. Shooster adjourned the meeting.

**Documents and Exhibits Used:**

- [Agenda](#)
- [BMPO September 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2026-2029 Highway TIP 1st Adjustment & Amendment](#)
- [BMPO FFY 2027-2031 TIP Tentative Schedule](#)
- [MassDOT District 1 TIP Projects Update](#)