

# MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MMPO) MEETING

Held Remotely via GoToMeeting.com  
Hosted by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission  
464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, MA 01453

FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

Mar 10 2022 9:05 am

## Minutes February 16, 2022

Due to technical difficulties, Derek Krevat assumed the duties of Stephen Woelfel and is representing Secretary Jamey Tesler. D. Krevat called the remote meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

### I. Introduction

#### SIGNATORIES PRESENT

Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT OTP; Arthur Frost, MassDOT Dist., 3; Guy Corbosiero, MRPC; George Kahale, MART; Tom Skwierawski, Fitchburg; Trevor Beauregard, Gardner; Gordon Robertson, Leominster; Rosemarie Meissner, Subregion 2; Tim Kilhart, Subregion 3

#### MEMBERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

Derek Krevat, MassDOT OTP; Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Derek Shooster, MassDOT OTP; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT Dist. 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT Dist. 3; Chris Timmel, FHWA; Chris McGowan, Ayer; Alan Manoian, Ayer; Jasmin Farnacci, Lancaster; Mark Piermarini, Leominster; Bob Szocik, Templeton; Tom Bigelow, Green International; Jon Rockwell, TEC, Inc.

#### STAFF PRESENT

Brad Harris; Brian Doherty; George Snow; Sheri Bean

### II. Public Comments

D. Krevat asked those present if there were any public comments to be made. There were none at this time.

### III. Approval of January 19, 2022 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January 19, 2022 MPO Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded and passed with T. Kilhart abstaining.

### IV. Montachusett FFY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- *Review of Comments Received on Draft Amendment #2 to the FFY 2022 Transit Element*
- *MPO Action/Endorsement of FFY 2022 Transit TIP Amendment #2*

B. Harris stated that at the last MPO meeting, we discussed TIP Amendment #1 and the comments received for that document. At that time, a comment from MART had included two additional project cost changes and an additional new project. MART at that MPO meeting, asked that the comments for Amendment #1 be treated as or looked at as a new TIP Amendment so as not to delay the endorsement of TIP Amendment #1. The MPO then decided to release TIP Amendment #2 that reflects the changes MART had previously identified. So, the MPO voted to endorse TIP Amendment #1 and then voted to release TIP Amendment #2 for a 21-day public review and comment period. That comment period began on January 25<sup>th</sup> and closed on February 14<sup>th</sup>. No comments were received during this time period. The MJTC at their meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup> reviewed TIP Amendment #2 and after a brief

discussion came consensus on a recommendation that the MPO endorse FFY 2022 TIP Amendment #2 as presented.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse FFY TIP Amendment #2. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **V. FFY 2023 Unified Work Planning Program (UPWP)**

- *Discussion on Budget, Federal & State Requirements, and Tasks*

S. Bean discussed with the members the local task requests that have been received. We have received six official requests and we are expecting an additional one from Sterling. For the six requests, one is from Leominster for an intersection analysis, one from Townsend for an intersection review and analysis: one from Shirley for a freight/truck study. We are partnering this with a similar request from Lunenburg; and finally, there are two other requests from Lunenburg to examine two separate intersections. We may be hearing from Sterling on another possible intersection examination. We plan to send out determination letters before the next MPO meeting.

S. Bean then discussed the initial results of the Environmental Justice and Title VI equity analysis conducted for the UPWP. The latest definitions for EJ and Title VI populations from FHWA and FTA were examined, and the data was then mapped. This led to a map that highlights where past UPWP tasks have been conducted and where we need to increase our outreach. S. Bean also discussed the latest information that was received related to our PL and FTA allotments for FFY 2023. The total budget for this UPWP will be \$876, 231. This is an increase from FFY 2022 of \$128,252. This will be the amount that we will be building the FFY 2023 program year budget on.

A question was asked if the MPO could receive an update on the status of the last UPWP tasks. S. Bean indicated that that would not be a problem and we will put something together for next month.

#### **VI. Montachusett FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- *Update of Project Listings, Costs & Status*
- *Presentation on Project #610681 Clinton, Reconstruction of Route 62*

B. Doherty gave a brief update on the projects under review for the new TIP. He reviewed the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) used to prioritize target projects. In addition, the project statuses were updated based upon a recent TIP Day meeting with MassDOT. B. Doherty then discussed the new regional target figures provided to us from MassDOT. These figures will be used to develop a fiscally constrained TIP. The new figures are different from what we saw last year. There is an approximately \$2 million increase in each year's target number. The increased funds are a result of funding in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which was passed in November. He then reviewed the project listing for each federal fiscal year with the new target figures in order to illustrate how things look at this point.

As part of the discussion, B. Doherty talked about one project in Westminster scheduled for FFY 2023. There may be some environmental issues that may impact its readiness for 2023. We should have more information at next month's meeting. Also, next month, we will have a discussion on funding scenarios as we seek to develop a fiscally constrained TIP.

B. Doherty then introduced Christopher McGowan from the town of Clinton and Thomas Bigelow from Green International who provided an update to the members on project #610681 in Clinton, the Reconstruction of Route 62.

C. McGowan stated that the town of Clinton has doing a lot of work with state and local funds to improve the main roads in town. This is especially true of the major feeder roads into the town. We are also trying to make the roads more walkable and bikeable. This project is along Route 62 that provides access to Sterling from the Leominster/I-190 area. T. Bigelow from Green International then reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the project limits, its planned upgrades to the road, bicycle, and pedestrian networks and to the overall safety of the roadway. The goals of the project are to address safety issues along the corridor; upgrade Sterling Street to design standards in line with its functional designation; implement Complete Street features; improve pavement conditions, drainage infrastructure and driveway access management. T. Bigelow also indicated that this project is the highest prioritized project in the region that is not included in a particular FFY. We have submitted 25% designs to MassDOT and have just received their comments back. So we will be working to address these comments and we feel it can be ready for FFY 2024.

D. Krevat asked about the bicycle lanes and width and if it will be painted or if there is a buffer. T. Bigelow responded that they are planned to be two feet wide and painted.

## VII. Updates

### - *MassDOT Highway Division*

A. Frost of MassDOT District 3 provided the following updates on FFY 2022. Project #608779 Lancaster Route 117 at Route 70 is at PS&E and has an ad date of March 12, 2022. Project #608793 in Hubbardston on Route 68 has an ad date of June 4, 2022.

D. Amaral of MassDOT District 2 provided the following update; in FFY 2022 project #608850 Petersham Glen Valley Road Bridge Replacement over the East Branch of the Swift River is at PS&E with a current ad date of June 11, 2022 with a cost of \$2,467,088; in FFY 2023, project #608784 Templeton Roundabout at Patriots Road/South Main Street/North Main Street/Gardner Road is at 75% design, 100% is due on February 25<sup>th</sup>; right of way plans are under review with an ad date of January 14, 2023, with an estimated cost of \$2,037,795; in FFY 2024, project #609107 Phillipston-Templeton Pavement Preservation on Route 2 is at PS&E which was submitted on January 24<sup>th</sup>, ad date is November 11, 2023 with a cost of \$10,300,466; and in FFY 2026, project #608424 Templeton Reconstruction of Route 68 from King Phillip Trail to the Phillipston Town Line, design is at 75%, 100% is due June 23<sup>rd</sup> with an ad date of January 10, 2026 and an estimated cost of \$6,063,291.

### - *Transit*

G. Kahale stated that MART is currently reviewing all routes and schedules in order to make updates to the service. Last month MART extended the Winchendon service to Heywood Hospital and Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner.

### - *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*

B. Harris stated that the MJTC met last week on February 9<sup>th</sup>. As mentioned previously, there is a vacant Chair position. It was the consensus of the MJTC to leave the position open until the next election cycle that will begin in May with the selection of a Nominating Committee leading to a July election. The Vice Chair, Tim Kilhart of Athol, will act as the Chair in the interim.

There is a handout announcing a MassDOT website that provides a strategy for reducing speeds on roadways for the purpose of creating safer roads. The Safe Speeds homepage states that MassDOT “is committed to helping realize safer speeds across the Commonwealth to prevent serious crashes. Our goal is zero fatalities and serious injuries.” Part of this strategy addresses the role of setting speed limits which can be found through a link on this website. The MRPC encourages member communities to

examine the Safe Speeds website to learn more about implementing the safe speed measures and the opportunities to seek grant funding.

There is a reminder for the “MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Program”. This is the fourth round of the program. Applications are due by March 1<sup>st</sup> and are to be submitted via an online form. This flyer and information are also available on the MRPC website under Announcements.

Finally, there is a press release from the Baker – Polito Administration on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) that outlines the expected funds for MA and the various programs that are to be impacted. The release outlines initial plans to make significant and additional investments into roads, bridges, public transportation, and environmental infrastructure projects across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts is anticipated to receive over \$9.5 billion over 5 years.

The next MJTC meeting will be on Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm.

- *Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)*

G. Corbosiero stated that he only had one item. The MRPC has begun the budget process. A preliminary budget was discussed last month, and we will be working on it through June.

D. Krevat announced to the members a save the date for that the MassDOT Innovation Conference. It will occur May 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in Worcester at the DCU Center and it will be available online as well as in person.

#### **VIII. Administrative Matters**

- *Next MPO Meeting*

B. Harris stated that the next scheduled MPO meeting is on March 16, 2022 at 1:00 pm.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

#### **DOCUMENT/EXHIBITS PRESENTED AT MEETING**

MPO 2 16 2022 Agenda

MPO 1 19 2022 Minutes

4 FFY 2022 Transit Amendment #2 1 19 2022

4 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #2

5 FFY 2023 PL FTA Budgets Comparison 2 2 2022

5 UPWP Equity analysis 2022

6 Blank TEC Sheet

6 FFY 2023 2027 TEC Scores

6 Montachusett Federal Target Comparison 23 to 27

6 Project Master List 23-27

7 Baker-Polito Administration Outlines Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding Plans for MA 2 3 2022

7 culvert\_replacement\_municipal\_assistance\_grant\_2\_14\_2022

7 MassDOT Safe Speeds Website2

7 Shared Street Announcement 1 11 2022