



## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee held **Wednesday, January 25, 2023**. This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

### **CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:**

- Jeremy Thompson – 495/Metrowest Partnership
- Karin Valentine-Goins, WalkBike Worcester
- Ethan Belding, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging
- Aala Abusalah, Town of Leicester
- Sandy Amoakohene, Division of Public Health, City of Worcester
- Ann Sullivan – MassDOT District 3
- Sarah Bradbury – MassDOT District 3
- Daryl Amaral – MassDOT District 2
- Benjamin Berger – MassDOT District 2

### **Ex Officio Members Present:**

Guests:

- Sheila Cuddy, Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation
- Jen Healy, Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation
- Councilor David Adams, Town of Southbridge

### **CMRPC Staff Present:**

- Sujatha Krishnan
- Yahaira Graxirena
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Rob Raymond
- Rich Rydant
- Greer Jarvis

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### **Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions**

Jeremy Thompson opened the meeting at 3:02 PM. A roll call of CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the rest of the attendees.

### **Agenda Item #2 – Approval of November 30, 2022 meeting minutes**

Minutes for November 30, 2022, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. Mr. Thompson entertains a motion to approve the November 30, 2022, meeting minutes. Mr. Belding makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded by Sarah Bradbury. The vote is unanimous in favor of approval.

### **Agenda Item #3 – CMMPO TIP Amendment #3 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit**

- **Potential Action:** Approval of Proposed Amendment #3 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List

Kevin Krasnecky reminded the members that proposed Amendment #3 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List was released for the 21-day public review and comment period. The amendment is to add the MassDOT Community Transit Grant Awards to FFY2023. There are 4 awards:

1. Project #T00235: Town of Shrewsbury – funding for operation of Shrewsbury Council on Aging vehicle with a focus on out-of-town trips for a total of \$50,000
2. Project #T00237: WRTA – Holden demand response service for a total of \$24,000.
3. Project #T00238: WRTA – Midday demand response service for a total of \$30,000.
4. Project #T00239: WRTA – ReadyBus service for a total of \$90,000.

All projects are half funded through Federal funds and the other half is funded either with statewide funds or local match. The public meeting is scheduled for February 6 and will be held virtually.

Mr. Thompson entertains a motion to approve the proposed amendment. Ms. Abusalah makes a motion and Mr. Belding seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously. There were no comments or questions.

### **Agenda Item #4 – Safety Performance Measures**

CMRPC staff, Kevin Krasnecky, presented the 2023 safety targets as staff will be looking for CMMPO members to set the regional safety targets for 2023.

Setting regional safety targets was required under MAP-21 (Section 1203) and is continued with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Setting the targets requires annual coordination with MPO's. MPO's must either establish their own set of quantifiable performance targets every year or adopt the State's performance targets. Once targets have been set, MPOs must incorporate them into their Certification Documents. For CY 2023, the five Statewide safety targets are:

- Total Fatalities: 355
- Fatality rate per 100 million VMT: 0.59
- Total Serious Injuries: 2,569
- Serious Injury Rate: 4.25 per 100 million VMT

- Total Combined Non-Motorist Injuries and Fatalities: 437

MassDOT's overarching goal is towards zero deaths. The Performance Measures are presented in five-year rolling averages and the trendline has been established using historical data. The non-motorized definition includes wheelchairs, rolling blades, skaters, and other motorized devices. Per federal requirements, the term "Serious Injuries" is used instead of "Incapacitating Injuries". The BIL requires "performance targets to demonstrate constant or improved performance".

During the pandemic shutdowns in 2020 and the lingering impacts in 2021, 2020 and 2021 fatalities and serious injuries increased relative to previous years. Also, it was noted that 2022 data was not yet complete and therefore was not used for target setting purposes. For fatalities, MassDOT was unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets, so they set their targets by projecting 2022 fatalities to be equal to 3% higher than the state's lowest year in recent history, and projecting 2023 fatalities to be equal to 3% lower than the lowest year. This methodology was developed in order to project a future downward trend based on the data available at the time. The fatality rate is calculated using the five-year average fatalities divided by a five-year average VMT's. For MassDOT the CY 2023 total fatality safety target is 355 and the rate is 0.59. Using a similar process for the CMMPO fatalities, the CY 2023 total fatality safety target is 33 and the rate is 0.59.

For serious injuries, MassDOT was also unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets, although the methodology to set the serious injury targets differed from the way fatality targets were defined. In this case, the targets were developed by projecting the 2022 annual serious injuries to be equal to the lowest year in recent history and the 2023 annual serious injuries to continue downward at a roughly 10% annual decrease, which reflects the average decrease in the years in which the state experienced reductions in serious traffic injuries. This methodology was developed in order to project future downward trends based on the data available at the time. The serious injury rate is calculated using the five-year average fatalities divided by the five year average VMT's. For MassDOT the CY 2023 total serious injuries safety target is 2,569 and the rate is 4.25. Using a similar process for the CMMPO, the total serious injuries safety target is 243 and the rate is 4.37.

For total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities, MassDOT was also unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets. To set the total combined non-motorized injuries & fatalities, the fatality methodology was used to set the CY 2023 target. For MassDOT the CY 2023 total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities total is 437. Using a similar process for the CMMPO, the CY 2023 total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities total is 29.

As for the next steps, MPOs must either set their own five quantifiable safety targets or adopt MassDOT's safety targets as an action item by February 28, 2023. Once adopted, the safety targets must be included in the FFY 2024-2028 TIP's. Mr. Krasnecky noted that in recent years all MPO's have adopted the MassDOT targets.

Ms. Valentine-Goins mentions that she is always shocked by the targets that the state is aiming for, because the numbers are horrific. Ms. Amoakohene requests to see again the slide about the combined non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. Mr. Thompson entertains a motion to recommend the

adoption of the statewide safety targets. Ms. Bradbury makes a motion and Mr. Belding seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

#### **Agenda Item #5– CMMPO FFY 2024-208 TIP Microprojects Presentation**

CMRPC staff Yahaira Graxirena, presented information about the MicroProjects Program, and the coordination efforts with MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning to make the program a reality and allow municipalities and organizations to apply for this program for capital projects and transit operations in the FFY2024-2028 TIP. Ms. Graxirena presented the guests applicants and they proceed to present their MicroProjects proposals.

The Councilor David Adams presented the MicroProjects proposal for the Town of Southbridge. It was evaluated by the Economic Development Committee and the Senior Center. After several meetings to discuss transit options for Southbridge, it was decided that given all the current options available, the best approach will be to do some marketing and information campaign to increase awareness of all the transit alternatives available in the Town of southbridge. The proposal was presented in the Council Meeting and it was decided to move forward with the application and cover the 20% match with ARPA funds. Education is the key and that the information gets out to the public.

The second presenters were from the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation. Jen Healy presented the application on behalf of the Town of Ware that runs the Quaboag Connector since 2017. They operate curb-to-curb demand response services in 10 rural towns in the western boarder of the CMMPO region, including Hardwick, Warren, West Brookfield and Brookfield. They are requesting funds to purchase a new hybrid minivan to add to the fleet of vehicles. The services are highly needed in the Quaboag region. They have grown substantially, from 5 monthly rides in 2017, to an average of 752 monthly rides during the pandemic. Currently, the monthly average is around 1,100 monthly rides. They provide transportation for older adults in partnership with the Ware Senior Center and operate the Palmer Ride to Work Program for low-income workers, and partner with Bay State Health to provide trips for long distance trips to medical appointments as a result of the closing of the Mary Lane Hospital in Ware. The team works hard to connect people with other transportation alternatives across the Commonwealth, including providing rides to nearest WRTA or PVTA bus stops. They also operate the B79 route from Amherst to Union Station in Worcester. The ask is for a vehicle, the average trip length is about 7 miles, longer than city transit trips, and that means a lot of wear and tear in the vehicles. The vehicles are aging and they can only accommodate from 2 to 3 riders at a time. They have transit software that allows the service to be more efficient in terms of pick-ups and drop-offs, but with the new vehicle they can expand the current capacity. The vehicle will be hybrid to cut down on fuel consumption and make the system more sustainable. The rural areas currently don't have the infrastructure to support an electric fleet.

Ms. Krishnan congratulated the Town of Southbridge and the Quaboag Valley CDC for applying to the MicroProjects Program. Ms. Krishnan also mentioned that the Quaboag Connector service area includes towns that are not in the CMMPO region and that would be useful to the CMMPO, as part of this program, to develop metrics to track the number of trips and miles completed in the CMMPO region.

Mr. Thompson just asked if there were any more questions. No more questions or comments were made about this topic.

**Agenda Item #5 – FFY 2028 Transportation Improvement Program Project Candidates**

This item was presented by Kevin Krasnecky.

- East Brookfield #612629 – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9

The limits of the Route 9 TIP Project #612629 are from the Brookfield Town Line to just West of Route 49 intersection in Spencer, a distance of 3.3 miles. Existing conditions for this project include poor ADA accessibility compliance issues, a lack of bicycle accommodation, poor drainage, and poor pavement conditions. There are several goals for the design of this project, including enhancing vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle safety, mobility, and operations; pavement rehabilitation and curb upgrades; drainage system upgrades; pavement markings and signage updates; and guardrail upgrades. The proposed roadway width for this project is 36 feet. This includes two 11-foot travel lanes, 5-foot bicycle lanes with 2-foot buffers on each side, and 5.5-foot sidewalks on each side. The status of the project is currently at 25% design. For Right of Way, there will be some temporary construction easements, some permanent easements for drainage and utilities relocation, and only minor land takings. For Environmental Permitting, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will be needed in East Brookfield and Spencer, and a NEPA Categorical Exclusion (CE) Checklist will also be needed. The estimated total construction cost for this project is \$8 million. The potential project timeline is a Design Public Hearing in 2023, project final design by 2025, and project construction by 2026.

Karin Valentine-Goins asked about the construction cost. Mr. Krasnecky answered that the construction cost for the project is \$8 million dollars.

- Oxford #611988 – Roadway Rehabilitation on Route 12 (Main Street)

The limits of this TIP Project on Route 12 (Main Street) are from Fairlawn Avenue to Front Street. There are several goals for this project, including the introduction of safe transportation alternatives for all users within the current footprint of the roadway; creating a more accessible Town Center; reducing vehicular speeds through the Town Center; limiting delays at the traffic signal; introducing streetscape and beautification opportunities; and creating an attractive Town Center for the residents and local business owners. Between 2014 and 2020, the Charlton Street and Sutton Avenue intersection experienced 106 crashes and 21 injury crashes. Other current challenges at this project location include high speeds, long pedestrian crossings, lack of ADA-compliant curb ramps, delays at traffic signals, and lack of bicycle accommodations. This project is currently in the preliminary design stage and there are many design options being considered for the project. Some of these options include sidewalk reconstruction, pavement restoration, streetscape beautification, separated bike lanes, bus stops, crosswalks with curb bumpouts or median islands with warning devices, and opportunities for bicycle signals. In addition, alternatives for either upgrading the traffic signal with new geometry or a new roundabout at the Charlton Street/Sutton Avenue intersection are being considered as part of the design. Upcoming project milestones include 25% design submission by Fall 2023, 25% Design Public

Hearing by Spring 2024, 75% Design and Permitting Applications by Summer 2025, 100% Design and PS&E Design Submissions by 2026, and potential Advertisement in the FY 2028.

Karin Valentine-Goins asked if the separated bike lanes is for the entire length of the corridor and it was in both sides. Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that based on the information provided by the consultant, it seems that the bike lane facilities are available on both sides of the road and extend through the corridor. Ms. Valentine-Goins also asked what's the proposed lane width. Mr. Krasnecky mentioned he believed is 11 feet wide travel lanes. The intention of the consultant to do a road diet to reduce the speeds in the corridor.

There were no other comments or questions.

- Spencer #613097 – Intersection Improvements at Route 9 and Route 49

This project is located at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 49. Existing conditions at this location include a lack of pedestrian facilities, lack of bicycle accommodations, poor drainage, high vehicle speeds/large intersection, and poor level of service/long delays on the Route 49 approach, specifically left turning vehicles. Project design goals include providing pedestrian and bicycle amenities; improving driver safety; improving traffic operations and capacity; pavement rehabilitation and curb upgrades; upgrading the drainage systems; and updating pavement markings and signage. There is a proposed concrete paved roundabout included in the design concept. Currently the project is at preliminary 25% design stage. Next steps include a Design Public Hearing and then 75% Design submission. For Right of Way, there are only temporary construction easements and no permanent easements or land takings. For Environmental Permitting, a NOI is needed for the work in the buffer zone and a NEPA CE Checklist is also needed. The estimated project cost is \$5 million. The potential project timeline is the Design Public Hearing in 2023, Final Project Design by 2025, and potential project construction by 2026.

CMRPC staff Rich Rydant presented a comment about the cost of the Oxford project proposed earlier is estimated at \$8.5 million dollars. Ms. Krishnan, mentioned that during the next meeting the group will score the projects presented today, including the MicroProjects presented during this meeting.

#### **Agenda Item #6 – Long Range Transportation Plan: 2050 Socio-Economic Projections**

CMRPC staff, Rob Raymond, presented on socio-economic updates being done for the state. MassDOT is leading this statewide effort and they have formed a committee of all the RPA's and MPO's. To develop the projections, MassDOT partnered with the UMass Donahue Institute and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Federal regulation requires socioeconomic and population projections to guide the development of the LRTP, so these projections will be used for the CMMPO Long Range Transportation Plan, 2050 Connections. These projections will help us understand how many people live in the region, where people will live in the region, how many people work in the region, and where people will work in the region, and more. Using these projections and answering these questions will help inform the planning process by identifying growth areas and establishing travel and commuting patterns.

The main products of this process are population projections, households projections, economic/jobs projections, and labor force projections. These projections will be made out from the town level to 2050 in five-year increments. Age, gender, and race information will also be used.

Certain National population trends are impacting Massachusetts. From July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021, the U.S. population grew by only 0.1%, the slowest rate since the nation's founding. Overall, growth in the U.S. is slowing, boomers are aging into high-mortality cohorts, and millennials are passing out of high-fertility cohorts with no apparent "third wave" coming behind them. These trends are representative of what is happening in Massachusetts.

For population projections, the forecasting methodology is starting with 2020 and aging the population in five-year cohorts out to 2050 and considering births, deaths, and migration at each timeframe. In 2020, the census shows the CMRPC population to be 604,631. Based on the projections, from 2020 to 2050 the CMRPC region will experience population growth, with the highest projected population being in 2040 at 624,210. In 2050, the population is projected to be 621,469.

For households and jobs, both are projected to increase by 2050. In 2020, the census shows the CMRPC region to have 232,512 households. By 2050, CMRPC households are projected to increase to 257,006. In 2020, the census shows the CMRPC region to have 246,770 jobs. By 2050, CMRPC jobs are projected to increase to 255,275.

Moving forward, Development Sites comments are due to MassDOT by January 20<sup>th</sup>. Final population, employment, and household numbers will be released from MassDOT around March or April. The Town level breakdowns will be provided by MassDOT and projections will also be available by gender, age cohorts, and major employment categories.

Mr. Raymond explains that the staff will continue to work in these projections to apply previously computed absolute growth rates to new 2020 Census numbers to develop a customized regional projections. By applying the growth rates from the previous projections, the regionally customized projections will increase to 681,229 by 2050.

Mr. Thompson asked if the slides will be shared with the committee members. He also asked if the projections take into consideration multi-family housing developments and new housing policies. Mr. Raymond mentioned that housing is considered in the allocation model, but not in the total population model. Housing comes into play to place people across the region after the control totals are determined. Mr. Raymond also mentioned that a lot of the housing units used for the model are large scale developments of 500 units or more and we don't have many developments of that size in our region. Also, another alternative is to use annual census data from the local Clerks that do town census in a yearly basis.

There were no more questions or comments.

### **Agenda Item #7 – Staff Updates**



Ms. Graxirena mentioned that we have a job ad for a Livability Planner. This position will work specifically in all non-motorized projects and will work very closely with the bicyclist and pedestrian stakeholders in the region.

**Agenda Item #8 – New Business**

Karin Valentine-Goins mentioned that she is ongoing research with the support of Walk Boston, the Division of Public Health from the City of Worcester and five community groups about walk audits as a tool for civic engagement. There's a community report event at the Senior Center scheduled for Thursday, January 26 at 6PM and all are welcome. CMRPC is well represented on this activity.

**Agenda Item #9 – Adjournment**

At 4:28 PM Mr. Thompson entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Belding made the motion and was seconded by Ms. Bradbury. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Yahaira Graxirena, Transportation Project Manager.