



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting held **April 22nd, 2026**. The meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Adam Menard – Town of Oxford
- Joanne Clarke - AARP
- Claudia Oliviera De Paiva - Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
- Liz Myska – Visions Consulting L3C
- Alysha Irisari Malo – Town of Douglas
- Thomas Driscoll – 495 Partnership
- Nick Burnham – WRTA
- Daryl Amaral – MassDOT District 2

Ex-Officio Members Present:

- N/A

CMRPC Staff Present:

- Nathan Lewis
- Zach Blais
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Sujatha Krishnan
- Yahaira Graxirena
- Ethan Melad
- Sandy Amoakohene

Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions

Chair Adam Menard opened the meeting at 3:02 PM. A roll call of the CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the roll call of the remaining attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of March 25th, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Minutes for March 25th, 2026, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. Chair Menard entertains a motion to approve the March 25th, 2026, meeting minutes. Nick Burnham makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded by Alysha Malo. The vote was unanimous in favor of approval.

Agenda Item #3 – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Potential Action: Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the DRAFT 2027-2031 TIP.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Mr. Krasnecky provided a brief review of all projects within the FFY 2027-2031 Statewide Highway Project Listing.

Nick Burnham asked how much unspent funds are left and if MassDOT will be able to program anything with that money.

Kevin Krasnecky informed him that there are 9 million in unspent funds and those extra funds will be available in case the Worcester, Chandler, and May Street projects don't go in 2026.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Mr. Krasnecky provided a brief review of all projects within the FFY 2027-2031 Transit Project Listing.

Alysha Malo asked what the Union Station renovations include.

Nick Burnham answered noting a redesign of the fire alarm system at the parking garage.

There were no further questions or comments.

Nick Burnham made a motion and was seconded by Liz Myska to recommend to the CMMPO concerning endorsement of the Draft 2027-2031 TIP.

Agenda Item #4 – Environmental Consultation

Kevin Krasnecky and Zach Blais presented this agenda item. Mr. Krasnecky said that the Environmental Consultation meeting is held annually during the development of the TIP but also includes work activities from the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). An overview of the environmental consultation

process and a summary of the various GIS data layers that staff uses was provided. The data layers are culverts, open space, flood zones, wetlands, and endangered species. The Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MAPIT) was then discussed and how it is used to initiate TIP projects.

As an example, the Route 9 / Route 49 TIP project in Spencer and East Brookfield was discussed. The project goals, existing conditions, and proposed improvements were summarized. A locus map of the project area was shown along with each of the environmental layers that were previously shown. As part of the TIP, an environmental-related funding source is Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ). It is a funding source used for projects that reduce congestion and vehicle emissions. Kevin Krasnecky then talked about the various examples of CMAQ eligible projects and noted numerous projects that have been funded with CMAQ since 2017 and the corresponding amount of potential emission savings.

Next, Mr. Blais provided an update on the CMRPC Culvert Assessment Program. Staff continue to make updates to the CMMPO Culvert Assessment Program Hub and the Dashboard. This year staff will finish culvert assessments in Blackstone and do assessments in Oakham and New Braintree. Since last year's Environmental Consultation, 394 culverts have been assessed in the region. Of the 5,000+ culverts in the CMMPO region, there are currently 1,168 culverts that have been assessed.

In addition to the culvert assessments, staff have assisted the towns of Leicester, Rutland, Warren, and West Brookfield in applying for culvert grants as well as providing a letter of support for the town of Grafton. CMRPC has also applied for a US EDA grant (\$200,000) to conduct an inventory of dams in the CMRPC region. The grant would include an existing conditions report and a final project report.

As for the LRTP, Mr. Blais provided updates about the EV Charging Stations Dashboard. Mr. Krasnecky said that the Dashboard has recently been updated to version 2.1. The update included a new homepage, a redesigned logo, and a modernized design. Additional datasets and functionality enhancements were also added. Version 2.2 and other future updates will be coming soon.

Lastly, Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that the guest presentation for the meeting was Mark Scribner, from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA). Mr. Scribner talked about the Massachusetts EV charging programs and initiatives for 2026.

Alysha Malo asked how towns are prioritized for the culvert assessments and what are the steps to post an assessment to improve culvert.

Sujatha Krishnan explained that they pick towns where the town staff or DPW staff are invested in the process. Some towns have taken it upon themselves. CMRPC does train the trainer if there is an inspectional staff that learns how to do the culvert assessment. Next step is looking for grants to fix those culverts.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item #5 – Age Friendly Updates

Sandy Amoakohene and Ethan Melad presented this item.

As part of the 2023 Age Friendly Action Plan, status updates are to be provided every year. First, the status of 5 of the 8 domains of livability focus were reviewed, which include:

- Transportation – CHNA9 Transportation Study is underway, and a Transportation Management Agency (TMA) was formed; CMRPC funded Tri Valley to provide long-haul transportation for medical appointments in Charlton, Douglas, Upton, and other communities; lastly, the WRTA provides Travel Training at Senior Centers for older adults.
- Housing – CMRPC is currently working on a Housing and Transportation Study; Worcester has a property tax abatement for low-income adults; and CMRPC is pursuing funding with partners for a Home Share program that matches older adult homeowners with graduate student renters.
- Community and Health Services – Community health workers are employed by public health entities in Charlton, South Central Mass, and the Blackstone Valley; outreach events to connect older adults to services were organized by various organizations; abs the Worcester Senior Center hosted a behavioral health group for men 65+ and cultural affinity groups.
- Communication and Information – Digital Equity Plans produced for Worcester, Millbury, Brookfield region, and Charlton; Digital Equity Trainings have been held in Worcester; and
- CMRPC developed a best practices guide for local cultural councils and provided guidelines for working with older adults.
- Regional Services

Second, the Discovering the Happy Factor Report was reviewed. It is community-based; focused on social connection, volunteerism, civic engagement, and creating a sense of well-being for older adults; and funded through the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Fund.

Goals of the report include identifying root causes of loneliness and barriers to civic engagement; identifying characteristics of community involvement that bring happiness and sense of belonging to senior adults; 1 on 1 interviews with Central Massachusetts residents age 65+; creating mixed-media materials for municipal leads on strategies to engage older adults and barriers to social connection; increasing meaningful volunteerism and engagement in civic capacities for older adults; and improving quality of life for older adults, migrating poor health outcomes caused by social isolation and/or loneliness.

Key insights from the interviews revealed:

- People wanted to feel useful and connected.
- Volunteering often improves sense of purpose.
- Committee service can feel confusing or unwelcoming without guidance.
- Meetings need to be accessible.
- People respond positively to being asked directly to serve.
- Local communication and publicity is key.

Report recommendations included advertising and marketing, leveraging career and personal strengths, and optimizing board make-ups for recruiting members. For retaining members there should be trainings, meeting basic needs for participation, and member recognition and success planning.

Next steps include engagement with regional COAs, town administrations, public resources to distribute and present the video and awarding mini-grants to support local efforts that address barriers to civic participation.

There were no further questions or comments.

Agenda Item #6 – Staff Updates

- *50th Anniversary of CMMPO*: Sujatha Krishnan announced the 50th anniversary of the CMMPO and provided an overview of its history.
- *Vernon Connected*: Nathan Lewis updated the group about recent and planned upcoming Vernon Connected events over the next couple of months.
- *SS4A*: Sujatha Krishnan updated the group about recent SS4A project updates, including staff one on one meetings with communities and discussing the data and receiving feedback. The demonstration project is currently being reviewed by MEPA. The draft report is planned for November or December.

- *Housing and Transportation Study:* Sujatha Krishnan updated the group that the consultant for the study has recently shared 20+ strategies for the plan and the suitability analysis was completed. A presentation is planned for the CMMPO with draft recommendations in the coming months.

Agenda Item #7 – New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

Agenda Item #8 Next Meetings

Chair Menard announced the schedule for the next meeting:

- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, May 27th, 2026, at 3:00 PM
- CMMPO Meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, May 20th, 2026, at 4:00 PM

Agenda Item #9 – Adjournment

At 4:27 PM Chair Menard called for a motion to adjourn. Nick Burnham made the motion, which Joanne Clarke seconded. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Nathan Lewis, Public Outreach Coordinator

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