



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, May 30, 2024 using Zoom.

T-Committee Members Present:

1. Bob Hassinger, Grafton, Committee Chairperson
2. Brian Pigeon, Worcester
3. Keith Tuttle, Rutland (attended as a guest)

CMRPC Staff Present:

1. Rich Rydant
2. Kevin Krasnecky
3. Tyler Distefano
4. Connie Mellis

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Around-the-Room Introductions

Committee Chairperson Bob Hassinger opened the meeting at 6:00 PM and asked for around the room introductions.

Approval of the April 25, 2024 T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the April 25, 2024 meeting were considered for approval. Brian Pigeon motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Bob Hassinger. All members voted to approve the minutes.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.

Tyler Distefano presented this agenda item. Mr. Distefano said the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan was released for a 21-day public review and comment by the CMMPO at their May 15th meeting. Next, Mr. Distefano provided a brief presentation on the Plan, which consisted of an overview, changes since the last updates in 2019, an overview of each section, and Plan recommendations. The Plan considers several recommendations related to transportation and coordination, including service changes, information access, improved transit planning, fare and service equity, transit partnerships, and more. Lastly, the Plan is expected to be endorsed by the CMMPO at their June 20th meeting.

Rich Rydant commented that the Draft document is available on the CMRPC website. Brian Pigeon also commented that he read the draft Plan, and it looked good.

On a motion from Brian Pigeon and a second from Bob Hassinger, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan to the CMMPO.

FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Draft FFY 2025 UPWP.

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item. Mr. Rydant began by reviewing the highlights and some new focus areas in the UPWP, which included housing coordination, TIP Design Funding, pedestrian and bicycle plan updates, CMMPO certification, and the public participation plan, among others. Next, Mr. Rydant reviewed the FFY 2025 UPWP budget in which two additional tasks were added. The two tasks are a Regional Housing and Transportation Plan and the Vernon Street (Route 122A) over I-290 Planning Study. For both plans, consultants will be hired

to create the plans, work with stakeholders, collect data, evaluate issues, and provide recommendations and/or potential projects. Lastly, Mr. Rydant said a public meeting will be held on June 3rd and the CMMPO is expected to endorse the FFY 2025 UPWP at their June 20th meeting.

There were no comments.

On a motion from Brian Pigeon and a second from Bob Hassinger, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of the Draft FFY 2025 UPWP to the CMMPO.

TIP Design Funding Presentation

➤ **Action Item:** General Concurrence of Draft Policy.

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item. Mr. Rydant began by giving an overview of the FHWA and MassDOT guidance regarding TIP design funding. Design funding is only for new design activities, the construction project should also be programmed in the TIP, and the community would enter into a reimbursable contract with MassDOT as well hire a MassDOT prequalified A&E firm. The community would also be responsible for the 20% local match as the TIP would only cover 80%.

Next, Mr. Rydant explained the additional policy highlights that staff will require. The highlights included:

- CMRPC staff available to assist communities with Project prioritization and filing.
- Project must have Project Review Committee (PRC) approval.
- Program begins in FFY 2025 (if funding available).
- Max total design funding cap is \$1M/year.
- Same project scoring used as construction project.
- It is a one-time award, no amendments for design cost increases.
- Project must be on Federal-Aid eligible roadway.
- Select Board or City Council support required including a letter of support.
- Funding prioritization considers various equity measures.
- Community's commitment needed to fully fund design if additional funding needed as well as required follow through on designed construction of project.

Lastly, Mr. Rydant said the final policy will be brought to the CMMPO for concurrence at their June 20th meeting. In Summer 2024, staff will work with communities to educate them on the new funding and policy. Subsequently, the FFY 2026 TIP application packet will also include the established design funding application.

Brian Pigeon commented that this program is a great idea, and it should provide for more of a pipeline of projects for the TIP.

Bob Hassinger asked the members if anyone did not concur with the TIP Design Policy highlights that were presented. As there were no objections, all members present concurred with the TIP Design Policy.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant provided the staff updates. Mr. Rydant said that the staff (with MRPC approval) is assisting the City of Gardner with a grant application for \$3.5 million for a Main Street housing project. In Warren, staff successfully submitted a Mass DER grant for two culverts to fund a detailed engineering analysis of the troublesome structures. Also, staff is working in the Blackstone Valley to investigate the potential for future expansion and connectivity of the partially completed Blackstone River Bikeway.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Brian Pigeon and a second from Bob Hassinger, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:45 PM.