



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Virtual meeting held Thursday, January 30, 2025, using Zoom.

T-Committee Members Present:

1. Bob Hassinger, Grafton, Committee Chairperson
2. Brian Pigeon, Worcester
3. Rick Baker, Boylston
4. Otto Lies, Holden
5. Matt Stencel, Sutton

CMRPC Staff Present:

1. Kevin Krasnecky
2. Rich Rydant
3. Zack Blais

Other Attendees:

1. Bill Scully, Transportation Consultant

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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 December 5, 2024, T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the December 5, 2024, meeting were considered for approval. Brian Pigeon motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Rick Baker. All Members voted to approve the minutes.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

CY 2025 Safety Performance Measures (PM1)

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO adoption of the State's safety targets.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Safety Performance Measures (PM1) require the annual coordination of target setting with MPOs. MPOs must establish their own set of performance targets each year or adopt the state's performance targets (for the entire Commonwealth) and the performance targets must be incorporated into the federal Certification Documents. Regarding PM1, MassDOT's goal is towards zero deaths. The Performance Measures are presented in 5 year rolling averages, and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires the targets to demonstrate constant or improved performance. Additionally, MassDOT also developed a 2023-2027 projection to forecast current trends further into the future.

For CY25, the five statewide (MassDOT) safety targets are:

- Total Fatalities: 365
- Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT: 0.58
- Total Serious Injuries: 2,622
- Serious Injury Rate per 100 Million VMT: 4.17
- Total Combined Non-Motorist Injuries + Fatalities: 497

Mr. Krasnecky then described MassDOT's methodology in setting their safety targets for the above categories. Graphics were displayed for each category showing the historical data and projected targets for the 5-year rolling averages for both the state and the CMMPO region.

For a comparison the CY25 CMMPO safety targets are:

- Total Fatalities: 38
- Fatality Rate per 100 Million VMT: 0.67

- Total Serious Injuries: 279
- Serious Injury Rate per 100 Million VMT: 4.82
- Total Combined Non-Motorist Injuries + Fatalities: 38

The state targets are realistic targets, and short incremental steps must be taken to achieve the Commonwealth's goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries. The CMMPO must set their own safety targets or adopt the MassDOT safety targets by February 28, 2025. The safety targets must also be included in the FFY 2026 to FFY 2030 TIPs.

There were no comments or questions.

On a motion from Rick Baker and a second from Otto Lies, the members unanimously voted to recommend to the CMMPO to adopt the state's safety targets for CY 2025.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- FFY 2030 TIP Candidate Project Presentations Summary

#613875: Auburn/Worcester – Route 20 Improvements: Kevin Krasnecky summarized this project. The project limits are from just east of Commerce Drive in Auburn to just west of the Greenwood Street intersection in Worcester. The project intent is to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to provide safe multimodal access between the housing and commercial sites on Route 20. The project will include the construction of a shared use path and a sidewalk along Route 20; it will reallocate the existing cross-section with some widening; it may necessitate the construction of retaining walls and modifications to the existing bridge cross-section; it will improve pavement makings and signage; and it will strive to minimize impacts to driveways and parking areas of the abutting businesses.

The project is at pre-25% design stage. A design consultant will be assigned soon, and a survey will be conducted. Required environmental permits and ROW acquisition/easements are not yet determined and utility relocations will likely be required. The current cost estimate is \$6,527,690.

Otto Lies commented that MassDOT recently improved Route 122A in Holden and restriped the road from four lanes to two lanes and added bicycle lanes. Mr. Lies noted that it has caused increased congestion. Mr. Krasnecky responded by saying that MassDOT considers all modes when improving the roadway. With the Healthy Transportation Directive, pedestrian and bicycle improvements are required to be included in roadway projects.

#613873: Sturbridge – Route 20 Improvements: Mr. Krasnecky summarized this project. The project limits are from just east of Hall Road to before the I-84 ramps. There was a 2017-2019 HSIP crash cluster in the project area and recent commercial growth in the area has increased the number of left-hand turns, increasing the potential for serious crashes. The long-term goal of MassDOT Highway Division District 3 is to median divide Route 20 to provide strategic

locations for vehicles to reverse direction, therefore this project could potentially include a roundabout at Hall Road to allow vehicles to reverse direction without having to make left turn maneuvers. Potential safety improvements to access properties east of Hall Road will also be investigated.

The project is at the pre-25% design stage. A design consultant will be assigned soon, and a survey will begin. The required design requirements and ROW acquisition/easements are being determined, and some utility relocations will likely be required. The current cost estimate is \$6,579,155.

There were no comments or questions.

#613261: Worcester – Lincoln Street Transit Infrastructure Improvements:

Mr. Krasnecky summarized this project. The project limits are from Burncoat Street to Catherine Street. The project goal is to improve transit service reliability and user experience, ADA compliance, and provide bicycle facilities along the project limits. Three WRTA bus routes utilize the corridor, and experience reoccurring delays due to congestion, especially in the PM peak. The existing bus stop spacing and locations are not ideal, and many locations lack amenities, signage, or roadway striping. The roadway lacks marked pedestrian crossings at several intersections and bus stops and also lacks bicycle facilities.

The corridor contains a Top 200 Crash Cluster and a Top 5% Intersection Crash Cluster for the crash years 2017-2020 (statewide), a Top 5% Bicycle Crash Cluster for 2010-2019 (statewide), and three locations that are Top 5% MPO Crash Locations for Fatal and Serious Injuries.

The proposed work will include transit signal priority, reconstruction of bus stops and amenities, sidewalk repair, the construction of ADA compliant curb ramps, and new bicycle facilities. Existing curb to curb roadway widths will be retained where possible and new pavement markings and signage will be included. The pre-25% design process will evaluate cross-section alternatives and potential parking impacts.

The project is at the pre-25% design state. A design consultant has been assigned and is currently developing a Scope and Fee proposal for design services. The required environmental permits and ROW acquisition/easements are being determined, and utility relocations may be required. The current cost estimate is \$3,335,000.

Bob Hassinger commented about roadways going from four-lanes to two-lanes to accommodate other modes. Mr. Hassinger wonders if the priorities for roadways will change with the new national administration.

CMRPC Priorities for the Massachusetts Statewide Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP)

Zack Blais provided a summary presentation of the FHWA's Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Grant Program and noted that as part of these efforts, a listing of regional priorities has been compiled.

The PROTECT Grant Program aims to strengthen surface transportation projects to be more resilient to natural hazards (i.e., flooding). Within the program there are two different grant types: Planning Grants and Resilience Grants. Planning Grants include resilience planning, the development of Resilience Improvement Plans (RIPs), pre-design and design activities, capacity building, and evacuation planning and preparation. Resilience Grants include resilience improvements to existing surface transportation infrastructure (i.e., elevating bridges, improving drainage), improvements to evacuation routes or adding capacity, and improving coastal infrastructure. For the FY24-FY25 funding period there is about \$500 million available.

Thus far, CMRPC staff have combed through existing plans, like Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plans, to identify hazard locations throughout the region. Using GIS, staff created maps and added prioritization layers (i.e., flood zones, evacuation routes, Environmental Justice) to "tier" locations. Locations with the most priority areas fit into higher "tiers", helping staff to prioritize locations for potential grant application ideas.

In addition, MassDOT are working on a Statewide RIP and solicited transportation resilience projects from the state's MPOs to include in their RIP. These projects would be included on a "regionally-endorsed" list in the plan. The listing of hazard locations that staff derived was sent to MassDOT for their consideration to be included in their RIP.

Regarding the development of a potential PROTECT Grant, the next steps for staff are to conduct additional analysis on the "tiered" locations and work on an application to seek PROTECT grant funds for the assessment and design of at least one location. The deadline for the PROTECT Grant is February 24, 2025.

There were no comments or questions.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant provided the following updates:

- The MARPA/MassDOT meeting was held on 1/23/25. Financial information and guidance for the development of the FFY 2026 UPWP and the 2026-2030 TIP were provided.
- TIP Readiness Day will be held on 2/4/25 with MassDOT to discuss the status of currently programmed TIP projects.
- The RFP for the Vernon Street/I-290 Interchange Transportation Study will be released on Friday (1/31/25). It will be posted on the CMRPC website and the deadline to apply is February 28th.

- Staff have begun working with the town of Hardwick on its Complete Street Prioritization Plan.
- Staff are also working with the town of Oxford on a transportation study to assess the transportation barriers of individuals with disabilities to access food. Interviews with key stakeholders are now underway.
- Staff are submitting two MassTrails applications. One is in Princeton for the design of recreational accessible trails at the Thomas Prince School and the second is for the Charles River Headwaters Greenway in collaboration with MAPC, and the towns of Mendon, Blackstone, and Bellingham for a feasibility study.
- The WRTA is currently getting feedback for a rebranding effort and overall schedule changes to improve on-time performance. The changes are expected to go into effect in late April.
- Staff are working on an update to the Regional Bicycle Plan. Subregional meetings are being scheduled to review local priorities.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 4:00 PM.
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 3:00 PM.
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Matt Stencil and a second from Otto Lies, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:45 PM.