



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee held **Wednesday, January 26, 2021**. This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Adam Menard – Chair, Town of Auburn
- Chris Payant – Vicechair, Town of Westborough
- Alaa Abusalah – Town of Leicester Town
- Sandy Amoakohene – City of Worcester DPH
- Jeremy Thompson – 495/MetroWest Partnership
- Karin Valentine Goins – Walk Bike Worcester
- Ethan Belding – Central Mass Agency of Aging
- Ann Sullivan – MassDOT District 3
- Sarah Bradbury – MassDOT District 3
- Daryl Amaral – MassDOT District 2
- Thomas Coyne – WRTA

Ex-Officio Members

- Chris Klem

CMRPC Staff Present:

- Sujatha Krishnan
- Rich Rydant
- Yahaira Graxirena
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Eric Gemperline
- Faye Rhault
- Ian McElwee
- Mary Hannah Smith

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Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions

Chairperson Adam Menard opened the meeting at 3:00 PM. A roll call of CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the rest of the attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of December 1, 2021, meeting minutes

Minutes for December 1, 2021, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval.

Jeremy Thompson made the motion to approve the meeting minutes and was seconded by Ann Sullivan.

The vote was unanimous in favor of approving the minutes.

Agenda Item #3 – Presentation on CY 2022 Safety Performance Measures (PM1)

Action Item: Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO adoption of State's targets

Eric Gemperline presented this item.

Setting regional safety targets is a requirement and setting the targets for 2022 is a coordinated effort with the Federal Highway Administration, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization. These safety targets were first required under MAP-21 (Section 1203) and continued with the FAST Act. It requires annual coordination of target setting with MPOs. MPOs have the choice of establishing their own quantifiable performance target measures every year or adopt the State's performance targets, which is for the entirety of the Commonwealth and no quantifiable target would be required for the region as CMMPO would join in on the State effort. Regardless of which performance safety targets are adopted, they must be set and incorporated into certification documents.

There are five statewide safety targets for the 2022 calendar year:

- Total fatalities: 340
- Fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled: 0.56
- Total serious injuries: 2,504
- Serious injury rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled: 4.11
- Total combined non-motorist injuries and fatalities: 471

The safety performance target measures are presented in five year rolling averages and the trend line has been established using historical data. MassDOT anticipates a decrease in fatalities due to joint initiatives across the agency related to sustainable transportation, a commitment to FHWA Every Day Count initiatives, strategies and legislative proposals included in the 2018 Strategic Highway Safety Plan as well as Statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans amongst other counter measures.

Due to reduced vehicle miles traveled as a result of the pandemic, 2021 projections were based off 2019 trends and 2020 data was disregarded. For 2022 projections are based on a 2.5% reduction in fatalities from CY21 resulting in a five-year average projection of 340 fatalities for the State. The fatality rate spiked in 2020 with a drop in VMT, the State has set the current projection of 0.56 fatalities per 100

million VMT. For the CMMPO, staff based subregional calculation projections of the State formula resulting in a projection of 32 fatalities and a fatality rate of 0.58 per 100 million VMT.

Due to the VMT changes as a result of the pandemic, the CY target for total serious injuries for the State was set at 2,504. The serious injury rate is anticipated to drop from 4.17 injuries per 100 VMT in 17'-21' to 4.11 injuries per 100 VMT in 18'-21'. For the CMMPO, serious injuries are projected to go up from 234 to 238 with an increase in injury rate, going from 4.13 injuries per 100 million VMT to 4.23 injuries per 100 million VMT.

Much like the other safety performance targets, the pandemic influenced the total number of non-motorized fatalities and injuries. Because of the high fluctuations in the data, for MassDOT's CY22 target, the CY21 data was set to equal the average of CY17, CY18, and CY19. A two percent reduction is projected off calculated three-year average, giving the State a 5-year average target of 471 total combined fatalities and serious injuries for non-motorists. The CMMPO region is in line with the State the projected target is 28 total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities. Ms. Valentine-Goins has concerns about the numbers going up as it goes against all national data. She notes that bicycle and pedestrian crashes have gone up and is skeptical of the data. Ms. Valentine-Goins asks the committee if anyone else shares her concerns.

Chris Klem from MassDOT states that the numbers presented are not a reflection of the data received. The data is in the process of being updated. Mr. Klem notes that Mr. Gemperline's statement of CY21 being set at the average of CY17, CY18, and CY19 is correct and that that average is reduced by 2.5% to set the targets for CY22. The numbers were developed and reported as part of an exercise for FHWA and that the overarching goal is towards zero deaths. If the data from the last two years was considered, large fluctuations would be an incredible anomaly based on behavioral patterns and data would mess up future averages. The numbers being reported are not a direct reflection of what is going on and were developed for the reporting exercise.

Ms. Valentine-Goins has questions and concerns about the numbers, Mr. Klem offers to share the performance target methodology. There is an overall confusion in how the numbers were presented, as they reflect safety target goals, not necessarily the real numbers. Due to the decrease in VMT in 2020 and 2021 and the increase in fatalities and serious injuries, if those performance targets continued to use the data from 2020 and 2021, there would be a regression away from the overarching goal of zero deaths and set the targets behind what is to be expected in terms of data.

Chairperson Menard asks for more input from the committee. Mr. Payant echoes the concerns of Ms. Valentine-Goins, noting that the trend line is going down in the slide and appears to not be entirely accurate of the situation.

Chairperson Menard agrees with Ms. Valentine-Goins and Mr. Payant.

Mr. Payant asks what is specifically being voted on and if voting is an endorsement of the numbers and if there was something that could be qualified the vote.

Ms. Valentine-Goins asks about the timeline and if the vote is urgent. She would like to be supplied with further information and methodology offered by Mr. Klem.

Mr. Krasnecky states that vote is to follow MassDOT state targets set in the presentation or for the CMMPO to create their own quantifiable safety performance targets. At the MPO meeting it will be voted on whether to go with the State or the create a new set of targets. This presentation will be given to the Transportation Committee tomorrow night seeking recommendations. There will not be another meeting before the MPO acts on the endorsement.

Ms. Sullivan from MassDOT states that the vote is either the CMMPO does its own thing and develops its own data and sets its own targets or joins with MassDOT. If CMMPO does it as part of MassDOT, the CMMPO will feed data to MassDOT and they will do the bulk of the analysis. This vote is about the process and whether to join MassDOT or do it alone, not on the numbers being reported.

Ms. Valentine-Goins agrees that it makes sense to join the majority in reported, but still would like more explanation of why the numbers for the methodology were chosen.

Chairperson Menard states that it appears that it would be appropriate to recommend the state numbers with a note regarding the numbers and how they trend.

Ms. Sullivan states the vote is about the process and not about the data and does not want people to feel like they are supporting something that they do not agree with based on the data.

Ms. Graxirena invites members of the Advisory Committee to join the MPO meeting and voice their concerns during the public comment period and will send the committee members the methodology as provided by MassDOT.

Chairperson Menard asks for a motion to recommend joining with the State for reporting safety numbers. Ms. Sullivans makes the motion to approve, and Mr. Payant seconds the motion. Chairperson Menard asks for a vote. The vote is unanimous in favor.

Agenda Item #4 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program

Action Item: Seeking recommendation convening CMMPO endorsement of TIP Amendment #2

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item.

The first project to be presented would be the MassDOT's Shrewsbury Rehabilitation and Box Widening on Route 20, from Route 9 to South Street (Project File Number 610825). The master plan study was conducted in January 2020 by HSH for MassDOT and the Town of Shrewsbury. The study examined the 5.1-mile segment of Route 20 in Shrewsbury from Northborough to Worcester town lines. The report looked at safety and congestion concerns as well as potential future development. The study generated a preferred roadway and cross-section. A one-mile segment from Route 9 to South Street was selected by MassDOT to be evaluated for roadway improvement alternatives as an early-action plan.

There are existing issues in the road segment including congestion, speeding, and crashes including a HSIP crash cluster at Route 20 and Walnut Street from the 2013-2015 report. The project will provide three cross-sections' alternatives and public involvement efforts prior to beginning of 25% design. So far, the project as completed a wetland delineation report (8/21), geotechnical memo and pavement cores (10/21), road safety audit (9/21), three meetings on cross-section alternatives, alternatives

analysis report (12/21) which generated the two cross-section alternatives and traffic modeling for both alternatives based on expected 2041 traffic volumes and developments.

The cross-section alternatives consisted of various configurations for travel lanes, turning lanes, and pedestrian accommodations. Intersection improvements for Route 20 at South/Green Street would add two turning lanes totaling four lanes for the western approach. South bound on South Street would add a left turn lane. Heading east would add an additional through lane to the intersection. The northbound approach on Green Street would stay the same. In addition, there is a proposed improvement to the intersection of Route 20 at Valente Drive that would include a left/through lane added to the northbound movement of Valente Drive through a signal.

The Walnut Street to Valente Drive connector is needed as Walnut Street will be a right turn only into it. This requires a cross street from Walnut Street to Valente Drive to use the Valente Drive signalized intersection. Another proposal is a round-a-bout for the intersection, which is more expensive upfront but has lower upkeep costs.

The next steps included the finalized preferred alternative (Winter 2022), public involvement (Spring 2022), begin 25% design, advertise construction contract in the first quarter of fiscal year 2027 driven by right-of-way acquisition. Mr. Krasnecky concluded with the estimated cost of the project is \$15.4 million. Projects costs could range from \$13 to \$15.6 million depending on which design is chosen.

Chairperson Menard asks for questions, there are none. Mr. Krasnecky presents the second project, reconstruction of Douglas Street (Route 16), MassDOT project number 610931. Route 16 in this area is an urban arterial and a main east-west connector in the town. The project limit is nearly two miles long (9,875 linear feet), the consultant is advancing design to 25%. Project goals include multi-modal accommodations, corridor safety improvements, limit impacts to ROW/environmental resources, and incorporate resilient design practices such as evaluating culverts, extending pavement life, and incorporating green infrastructure.

The current project schedule is to have the Pre-25% MassDOT submission completed in Spring 2022, 25% MassDOT submission in Summer 2022, 25% design public hearing in Winter 2022, and a final design is to be determined.

The corridor suffers from poor pavement condition caused by utility patches and there are no bicycle or pedestrian accommodations along the corridor. Along the corridor it is typical to encounter shoulder deterioration, unprotected structures, and inconsistent roadway widths between 10- and 13-foot travel lanes. The estimated total cost is \$6.25M.

There are three concepts under consideration, a bicycle track with sidewalk, separated bicycle lanes with sidewalk, and a shared used path. Alternative 1 includes a bi-directional bicycle lane with sidewalk. Alternative 2 includes bicycle lanes with a sidewalk. Alternative 3 consists of only a shared-use path.

Regarding ROW, the existing ROW appears sufficient for the corridor with minor encroachments near Main Street and there are no major concerns for advancement of the project, though some temporary easements might be required. Mr. Krasnecky concludes his presentation.

Chairperson Menard asks the committee if there are questions. There are none. Mr. Krasnecky begins his final presentation, Envisioning Chandler Street. The project includes design and engineering services for roadway and traffic improvements of Chandler Street in Worcester. The corridor is between Park Avenue and Main Street. The project was first brought to the MPO as one project, due to the high costs, the project was broken into smaller pieces in 2021. The first piece between Main Street and Queen Street was programmed in the 2026 TIP. This is the second phase from Queen Street to Park Avenue. The area just east of the corridor has recently been redeveloped with the Kelley Square project and the new ballpark and this project would fall in line with improvements in the area. The corridor is mixed-use and considered a high priority for the City. Phase 2 construction would be from Queen Street to Park Avenue and consist of a total of three signalized intersections. The conceptual construction cost estimate is ~\$4.2M.

Current operational and safety issues in the corridor include inadequate traffic control, outdated traffic signal equipment, lack of left turn accommodations and controls, intersection sightline issues, excessive vehicle speed (mid-corridor), traffic congestion and delay (Park Avenue), inadequate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations that consist of non-ADA compliant ramps and crosswalks, and long pedestrian crossing distances. There are several crash clusters from 2015-2017 in the corridor.

Some proposed improvements include the following: a road diet (one travel lane each direction plus center turn lane), protected bicycle facilities, bike boxes at intersections, ADA compliant ramps and curbs extensions, enhancements for midblock crossings, improved streetscapes, consolidated bus stops, upgraded traffic signal systems, left-turn lanes at key intersections, consolidated and formalized bus stops, while retaining some on-street parking.

The tentative contract schedule is as follows: the road safety audit, traffic modelling and analysis, and alternative concept development were all completed in 2021. The preliminary engineering design phase 1 and 2 to be completed by April 2022. The public hearing will occur in September 2022. The final engineering design phase 1 is slated for October 2023. Construction plans, specifications, and estimates phase is scheduled to be completed in February 2024. Lastly, final engineering design phase 2 and construction plans, specifications, and estimates phase 2 is still to be determined. Mr. Krasnecky concludes his presentation by asking the committee for questions.

Chairperson Menard opens the floor for questions. Ms. Valentine-Goins has a comment on the project, the corridor is neighborhood and through corridor. The goal is to bring a neighborhood feel back to the project. Ms. Valentine-Goins asks about a green median for the project. Mr. Krasnecky does not know.

Chairperson thanks Mr. Krasnecky for his presentation and moves on to the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item #5 – CMRPC Regional Plan “Imagine 2050”

Mary-Hannah Smith presented this item with help from Ian McElwee

The new regional plan is “Imagine 2050”. The last regional plan was in 2000. The Regional Plan was launched in September and is currently being worked on. The plan builds from current work and will be an integrated regional planning across multiple topics: Social equity, land-use and housing, civic and municipal capacity, environmental planning, economic development, mobility, and public safety.

Imagine 2050 is currently in the visioning portion of the plan, which is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of Fiscal year 2022.

Imagine 2050 will be informed by the APA's Three major pillars – Economy (November), Environment (January), Equity (March). Expanding these three pillars are five cross-cutting themes: infrastructure, education, quality of life, sustainability and resiliency, and community vitality that will shape the document.

The envisioned timeline is as follows:

Visioning -> Data Analysis -> Projections -> Scenario Planning -> Sustainability -> Sharing of Plan

This meeting session is focused on the environment. The environment in this plan is defined as the interactions of all living species, climate, and natural resources that affect human life and activity. There are many opportunities for planning to impact the environment from land-use regulations, working with landowners to pursue land preservation strategies, transferring of development rights, seeking developers to revitalize vacant and blighted properties, the use of open space and recreation plans, and taking advantage of funding for projects that support resilience, natural lands, and energy efficiency.

The region's environment has gone through many transitions, starting with the original stewards of the land, the Nipmuc tribe who lived a semi-nomadic in various villages throughout the region. Post-colonization the region became a center for agriculture, manufacturing, and education. The eastern edge of the region has seen large growth in the last half century due to the Boston's influence and the presence of Interstate 495, which is the fastest growing industrial corridor in the state.

The region has seen past development trends that have affected the environment, including the lost of nearly 2,000 acres of natural land per year between 1985 and 1990. Most of this land was used for low density suburban housing. More recently, the region lost between 3,700 acres between 2012 to 2017 to new development. There are bright spots however, with the amount of conserved area in the region rising ten percent from 12% of total land in 1971 to 22% of land area in currently. The period of 2012 to 2019 saw a total 18,741 acres conserved. Uxbridge lost the most acres per square mile from 2012-2017, at 11.4 acres, the most in the State.

CMRPC is completing a regionwide summary and analysis of the land-uses that are allowed in the region. The region is 62% forested and 12% is wetlands. Just 16% of the region is developed, and seven percent is devoted to agriculture. Most of the land in the region is zoned residential (88%). To supplement the land-use analysis, CMRPC is also conducting concentrated zoning diagnostics evaluating the existing bylaws across all 40 CMRPC communities. These assessments are focused on identifying to what extent communities zoning regulations support sustainable development principals.

A SWOT analysis was run on the present-day land-use in the region. Strengths were determined to be large totals of natural and open land, the presence of open space and recreation pans, hazard mitigation planning, regional efforts and collaborative planning in subregions, and lastly local regulations. At the same time of being a strength, local regulations can also be a hinderance. Another large weakness are the fiscal limitations and competing priorities. Opportunities exist for the region regarding climate

change adaptation, climate change mitigation, the adoption of the Community Preservation Act, State grant programs, and renewable energy. Lastly, threats to the region include overpopulation, sprawling development, loss of biodiversity, impacts on water quality, climate change, and public health issues.

Ms. Smith continues her presentation by posing hypothetical situations that will happen if temperatures continue to rise, the summer climate of Worcester in 2080 will be the same as current day Baltimore, which is 8.4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer and 4.4% wetter than Worcester currently is. If changes are made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Worcester could reduce the impacts to be more inline with modern day north New Jersey in 2080.

The State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (2018) states that there are four climate change interactions that will impact Massachusetts: Changes in precipitation, rising temperatures, extreme weather, and sea level rise. 38 of 40 of the CMRPC communities have or are participating in the States in municipal vulnerability preparedness programs. Some highlights of region include the Integrated Planning for Climate Change, Open Space, and Trails in Uxbridge, the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative, and the general infrastructure programs in the region. Ms. Smith concludes her presentation by noting that 33 communities in the region are designated as green and have received over \$14M in funding awarded to date.

Ms. Smith passes hosting duties to Mr. McElwee who will be running the breakout sessions for this meeting.

Ian McElwee ran the Jamboard session:

“What would you like the environment to look like in 30 years? What are the concerns?”

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to parks/green space. • Preserve access to waterways and green spaces. • Wetlands are very important and water recharge / quality of the water • Ability to reduce VMT by switching to work from home model and remote work • More walkable development and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about health of trees as well as water quality and quantity. • We need to limit/reduce single family zoning. • Water Supply • Concern of transition of brick-and-mortar economy to warehouse distribution economy • Air quality and safety impacts around distribution centers

How do you imagine these topics might impact our environment between now and 2050?

Infrastructure	Education	Quality of Life	Sustainability and Resilience	Municipal Services and Community Vitality

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely our infrastructure will need to better accommodate climate change impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nexus between water supply and labor supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is likely our infrastructure will need to better accommodate climate change impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
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Mrs. Graxirena mentioned that she will send the committee members the link to the Jamboard, the presentation slides and the link to the Imagine 2050 webpage for the benefit of the members.

Agenda Item #6 – Staff Updates

There were no staff updates.

Agenda Item #7 – New Business

There was no new business.

Agenda Item #8 – Adjournment

At 4:30 PM Mr. Menard entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Sullivan made the motion to and was seconded by Ms. Valentine-Goins. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Eric Gemperline, Transportation Assistant Planner.