



## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee held **Wednesday, February 23, 2022**. This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

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

- Adam Menard – Chair, Town of Auburn
- Chris Payant – Vicechair, Town of Westborough
- Sandy Amoakohene – City of Worcester DPH
- Jeremy Thompson – 495/MetroWest Partnership
- Ethan Belding – Central Mass Agency of Aging
- 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

### **Other Individuals Present:**

- Brian Pigeon, City of Worcester
- Stephen Rolle, City of Worcester
- Andy Truman, Town of Shrewsbury

The CMMPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The CMMPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, military service, or gender identity or expression. Any person who believes himself/herself or any specific class of persons have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may, himself/herself or via a representative, file a complaint with the CMMPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. Contact the CMMPO Title VI Coordinator at (508) 459-3313 or [titleVIcoordinator@cmrpc.org](mailto:titleVIcoordinator@cmrpc.org), to obtain a copy of the CMMPO Complaint Procedure and forms, or visit <http://cmrpc.org/title-vi-policy> to review online.

### **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 January 26, 2022, meeting minutes**

Minutes for January 26, 2022, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. There was a typo with the date of the agenda minutes. Chairperson Menard asks for the vote to be moved to the following meeting once the errors are corrected.

### **Agenda Item #3 – FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The following items were presented under the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program: TIP/UPWP Updates from MassDOT MARPA Meeting, 2023-2027 TIP Readiness Day Updates, and TIP MicroProjects Program Update.

Sujatha Krishnan, Kevin Krasnecky, and Yahaira Graxirena presented elements for this item.

#### **TIP/UPWP Updates from MassDOT MARPA Meeting presented by Sujatha Krishnan.**

Every year CMRPC gets information from MassDOT as to what to expect for funding for the annual work program and targets for the TIP. This year is different with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) that was passed by the federal government last November. The current targets for yearly TIP funding being set around \$22 million, that money is what the MPO and Advisory Committee gets to recommend projects on. With the new infrastructure bill, all MPOs in the State are expected to see an increase of about twenty percent, or \$4 million in the region.

FHWA, FTA, and MassDOT want to see where projects are coming from. There should be clear connections between LRTP, studies related to the UPWP, and recent community master plans. Performance based planning is a big component of the TIP guidance. Performance target setting and planning for transit asset management and public transportation agency safety plan. Some highlights from the guidance include:

- TIP Project Scoring: Involving project proponents in project scoring

- Creative Use of Regional Target Funds: Microprojects

- Equity Analysis (Geographic, Social, and EJ)

- Community Outreach: Virtual public involvement, Non-traditional stakeholders, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

In terms of UPWP finances, there was a total increase of 16.1% for annual funding for the annual work program which equates to a \$200,000 increase for staffing and other work for studies. The current budget is \$1.2 million, but with increases in funding, it is expected to be \$1.4 million.

The UPWP is like the setup of the TIP. There should be connections to various documents including long range transportation plan, past UPWPs, statewide modal plans, municipal plans, other regional plans. There should be linkages between land-use, housing, and transportation.

Ms. Krishnan concludes with some housekeeping. The MoU is current and FFY 23 will provide the 4<sup>th</sup> update to the LRTP that looks out to 2050.

No questions were had once chairperson Menard open the floor.

### **2023-2027 TIP Readiness Day Updates presented by Kevin Krasnecky**

On February 8, 2022, MassDOT held TIP Readiness Day in which all RPA's get together with MassDOT to discuss the status of currently programmed TIP projects and provide a recommendation of when they should be programmed in the upcoming FFY 23-27 TIP.

All projects that are currently in FFY 2022 are on pace to be advertised this fiscal year. The Rutland project needs the Town to keep on the right-of-way work and continue the process of land acquirement related to the project to meet advertisement for this fiscal year.

For FFY 2023, the Uxbridge project will likely not be ready and instead will be moved to FFY 2024. The State right-of-way for this project will not be ready for 2023. All other target projects are expected to stay in this year.

There were some cost increases for most projects in the TIP, though none were significant. There is a hope that increased funding will cover increased costs.

Current status of projects are as followed:

#### **FFY 2023**

Worcester Bridge Reconstruction – needs design submission to moved forward.

Spencer Bridge Project – needs to progress on town side, will not be ready for FFY 2023

Upton Project – Changes in project scope, right of way and environmental sections state they will not make FFY 2023.

#### **FFY 2024**

Target projects listed in West Brookfield, Southbridge, and Holden are still expected to be programmed in FFY 2024. Due to Uxbridge project moving back a year, District 3 is discussing with design consultant for Town of Holden to see if their project can move up a year and switch with Uxbridge, so funding is not loss for a year.

All Statewide projects listed are expected to stay in 2024. Spencer and East Brookfield Route 9 resurfacing will likely to be split into two projects, one for each town.

#### **FFY 2025**

All projects, Webster, Worcester (Chandler Street and May Street), West Brookfield (phase two) are expected to remain same year. The cost for the West Brookfield project went down. Other costs remained same.

Statewide projects in FFY 2025 most likely to stay on same year. Worcester (Intersection at West Mountain and 190, Frontage Road and Brooks Street Extension) could potentially move up a year depending on progress targets are made during design process.

#### FFY 2026

All current projects in Upton, Worcester (Chandler Phase 1), Northbridge intersection improvements, Sturbridge roundabout construction, and CMMPO micro projects are expected to be listed in 2026. It is early in the process and there has been no change in cost.

All information learned about projects' readiness is used to help decide programming options to be discussed during the TIP workshop scheduled for March MPO meeting to determine which projects will be programmed.

Mr. Krasnecky concludes his presentation.

Chairperson Menard open the floor for questions. There are no questions.

#### **TIP MicroProjects Program Update presented by Yahaira Graxirena**

MicroProjects are a low-cost transportation improvement project that align with the CMMPO's goals and objectives as outlined in Mobility2040. The 2026 TIP year includes an allocation of \$400,000 for MicroProjects, which is 2% of regional targets as endorsed by the CMMPO last year.

MicroProjects should be able to address regional, sub-regional or local priorities. It's envisioned that these projects will support safety, congestion mitigation, and address connectivity gaps as well as first-last mile connections.

Additionally, they present an opportunity to maximize the impact in our region's communities and distribute the benefits of transportation projects equitably.

In the last year, a survey was prepared and distributed to gather more information and have a better idea of the immediate needs in our member communities. Conversations were had with the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning and other RPA's/MPO's about the MicroProjects including the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

The survey revealed that the grant process can be difficult and challenging and some survey respondents were dejected at the process and not receiving a grant. However, survey respondents expressed their interest in projects related to pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, bikesharing stations, transit shelters, transportation services for older adults, culvert replacement projects and electric vehicle charging stations.

Right now, the MicroProjects Program is at the junction of planning and implementation. The key to implementation is to have an understanding of how the Boston MPO Community Connections Program work.

In the case of the Community Connections Program, they set aside \$2 million for each TIP year. The bulk of the funds come from CMAQ, as a result, all projects need to present measurable air quality benefits.

The funds can be used for capital purchases and operation costs. Project proponents must cover installation costs or administration costs. The share is 80% / 20%. Proponents can request funds for multiple years, but they need to show a path to financial sustainability by year 3, which is typical in transit operations grants.

Operation funds are only available for new transit services, including new fixed-routes, microtransit, shuttles and partnerships with transportation network companies.

Municipalities and transit authorities are the eligible entities that can apply. The Boston MPO was very interested in fostering partnerships with local organizations, as a result, non-profits and TMA's can apply to the Program if they submit a joint application in which a municipality or a transit agency agreed to serve as project proponent and fiscal manager.

In terms of the types of projects that are eligible under this program are bikesharing stations and bikes, bicycle parking and shelters, bicycle lanes (specifically white and green paint), bus only lanes (red paint), Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and transit services, as we mentioned before.

In addition to this, proponents can take advantage of the MAPC Collective Purchasing Program to purchase bicycle-related equipment. This Program is available to all municipalities in the Commonwealth, which provides opportunities for cost savings.

Besides understanding how the Community Connections Program work, we need to take into consideration the external forces or recent changes in the legislation and new grant funds that were not available when the MicroProjects were conceived.

One of these external factors is the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) signed in November 2021. The new infrastructure bill includes changes to existing programs, like CMAQ, Transportation Alternatives and HSIP. But most of all, it includes new formula grant programs and discretionary grants available to states, MPOs and local jurisdictions.

Some of the new programs are highlighted here:

The National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI), which purpose is to build a network of EV charging stations to facilitate long-distance travel. Massachusetts will receive \$63M over 5 years.

A similar situation happens with PROTECT, which is the acronym for "Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation" Program. The main purpose of this program is to promote resiliency, including evacuation routes and resiliency related with coastal communities. This formula fund could potentially fund culvert replacement projects included in the TIP.

The Safe Streets for All is a discretionary grant program which focus primarily on "vision-zero" strategies for the benefit of vulnerable cyclists and pedestrians.

MassDOT launched several grant programs to make the street safer for users. The Shared Streets and Spaces was well received by municipalities across the Commonwealth to do quick-builds or temporary projects related to paths and sidewalks, bicycle facilities, traffic calming and transit improvements. A new round of funds is currently open and is primarily focused on speed management.

Another program is the Local Bottleneck Reduction Grant Program was launched last October to fund innovative solutions to address local congestion at signalized intersections. Municipalities can request funds for retiming signals and other ITS related expenses like Transit Signal Priority, vehicle detection and wireless coordination.

The Community Transit Program is managed by the Rail and Transit Division, and they are charged to distribute FTA Section 5310 funds, also known as Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. With these funds municipalities and RTA's can purchase vehicles, cover the costs related to mobility management and use it for operating costs. To give you an idea of the need for these services, in fiscal year 2021 the program awarded funds to purchase 112 vehicles. In fiscal year 2022, they received requests for purchasing 137 vehicles.

Other state agencies besides MassDOT also have grant programs that can potentially compete with the MicroProjects. For example, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recently awarded \$13 million dollars in funds to install 306 direct current fast charging stations and at least 8 of the CMMPO member communities benefitted from this round of funds.

MassDEP has many grant programs available to municipalities and private entities, not only for EV charging stations, but also to purchase electric vehicle fleets, diesel retrofits, charging stations at campuses and multi-unit dwellings, among other opportunities and incentives.

Another well-known grant program is MassTrails from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. These grants are very flexible, up to \$300,000, and municipalities can use it for planning, design, engineering, permitting, construction and even maintenance.

Last year the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center launched the Accelerating Clean Transportation for All, also known as Act4All. CMRPC partnered with MassBike and local stakeholders who was awarded a grant to incentivize the use of electric bikes among EJ population in the City of Worcester.

Given the context, it is important for the CMMPO to have a clear understanding of the gaps that the MicroProjects can fill. And to have have a clear idea of what is the competitive edge from the municipality perspective and what is the advantage of applying to the CMMPO MicroProjects compared to other available grant programs?

The CMMPO can have a comparable program to the Community Connections Program using CMAQ funds for very specific capital purchases and potential transportation services, like shuttles for major employers, multi-unit dwellings and campuses. Project proponents need to prove the air quality benefit and evaluate performance.

Safety is a major area and many of our communities could benefit from the Program for capital purchases related to pedestrian signal equipment, signs, warning signs, reflectors, chevrons as a matching funding source for larger transportation projects. Another area of opportunity lies in the reduction of lane departure crashes and other single vehicle crashes including wildlife crashes. There's also potential for capital purchases related to striping edge lines, center lines, warning signs, etc.

Resiliency is a very important topic in our region. The Program can potentially fund those culvert replacements that are derived from the CMRPC Culvert Assessment Program. Other opportunities in this area are related to capital purchases for nature-based solutions and bioretention areas.

Transit access is a major ticket item. These projects need to either be initiated by the WRTA or in coordination with the WRTA, the MBTA or any contiguous RTA. Again, it could work in a very similar fashion as the Community Connections Program.

Transportation for older adults is an area of high need across the region. Priority should be given to those included in the Regional Coordinated Plan for Human Service Transportation. Funds could be used for capital purchases, including vehicles and technology. Funds for operations and mobility management can be considered as well.

Lastly, money could be used for ADA accessibility in the region. CMRPC staff maintains a database related to curb ramps conditions in the region. Priority should be given to those curb ramps that have been identified as non-compliant or obsolete. Funds will be available for capital purchases including detectable warning signs, tactile strips, among other equipment. Recommended as a matching fund for a larger transportation improvement project.

The municipalities are responsible for procuring all project materials and if desired, they can undertake a bidding process. It is expected to be a **reimbursement-based process**. In this case MassDOT would reimburse the municipalities after they purchase the materials.

We also know that the Office of Transportation Planning would be able to develop contracts with individual cities and towns that receive awards through the MicroProjects Program, but only for capital purchases. There's a potential for the RPAs to collaborate in a scheme like the MAPC Collective Purchasing Program for other capital purchases that are not currently available via MAPC.

For the next coming months, there should be a development of a guide that explains the MicroProjects Program, the types of projects eligible and how to apply. Distribute the guide to municipalities and organizations. Post the guide in the CMRPC website. Criteria for evaluation still need to be developed and it is expected that there will be ample opportunities for the public to participate.

#### **Agenda Item #4 - 2027 TIP Project Candidates PM Scoring Discussion**

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item

Mr. Krasnecky provided the basic scoring sheet for all current and future TIP projects. At last month meeting, potential projects were given for FFY 2027. The following are the scores for the three projects based off performance measure criteria used a few documents like LRTP, corridor profile studies, performance measure report card on yearly basis, based on performance measure categories. **Safety, State of Good Repair, and Congestion** are three Federally required performance measures. There are seven categories below these three federal categories are regional customized measures: **security, multimodality, sustainability, equity, economic vitality, stormwater management, and travel and tourism**. All categories can provide points for projects.



Moving left to right: on the left **objective columns**, on the right, **Target measures**, projects that were scored are in the middle of the table, Shrewsbury (Route 20), Uxbridge (Route 16 Douglas Street), Worcester (Chandler Street Phase 2), and CMMPO Microprojects. No scoring for microprojects because they are unknown at this point. All project proponents were invited to this meeting to participate in scoring process. On the right side of the table there is the criteria used for the scoring for each of the 10 categories on the left side.

**Safety:** The goal is to reduce number and rate of serious injuries and fatalities, moving towards zero deaths. Points were given for helping to reduce all types of crashes and if the project roadway has a HSIP crash cluster within in the project. All three projects received **1 point** for reduction in all crashes. Shrewsbury and Worcester received **1 point** for being within a HSIP crash cluster.

**State of Good Repair:** Maintain highway infrastructure, 1 point is given if the project is improving roadway pavement. 2 points if the project is improving pavement in poor condition. Worcester and Shrewsbury each received **1 point**. Uxbridge received **2 points** as the condition of pavement is considered poor. Criteria is quantitative based on yearly collected data. Some data, however, is qualitative and related to what is known about the project. The other scoring section in **State of Good Repair** is rehabbing or replacing a bridge or multiple bridges. No scoring in this category as no bridge work is being done.

**Congestion:** Looking to reduce congestion on national highway system. 1 point is given for improving existing signalized intersection, installing new signal control or roundabout, or adding its components. Both Worcester and Shrewsbury got **1 point**. Uxbridge received 0 points for improving intersections. 1 point was given if the roadway was considered unreliable. All roads are considered reliable. 1 point available if eligible for CMAQ fundings. All three projects have potential CMAQ funding associated with, and all projects get **1 point**. Last criteria – 1 point for project on an established primary freight route, 2 points if on a primary freight route that is expected to reduce average freight delay. Worcester and Shrewsbury get **2 points**. Uxbridge gets **1 point**.

**Security:** 1 point for project roadway if the route is considered a primary established evacuation route. 1 point for project roadway in towns hazard mitigation or MVP plans. All three projects, Worcester, Shrewsbury, and Uxbridge received **1 point** for being a primary evacuation route. Shrewsbury and Worcester get a **2 point** for being included in the hazard mitigation program

**Multi-modal:** 1 point is given if project improves existing sidewalks or builds new sidewalks. 1 point is given for improving and building ADA ramps. All projects received the max number of points in this category. 1 point if a project increases bike lane mileage or infrastructure. 1 point of project improves accessibility to fix rate transit. All three projects received points for bicycle infrastructure. Worcester gets **1 point** for the project being along fixed use transit on Chandler Street corridor. **1 point** is given if the project roadway is included in the communities approved complete street prioritization plan. Both Shrewsbury and Uxbridge received **1 point** for the improved complete street prioritization plan. Worcester did not because they don't have a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.

**Sustainability:** 1 point for project in a priority development area. 1 point if project contains extensive environmental mitigation work. Uxbridge and Worcester received 1 point for priority development area. **0 points** were awarded to projects for extensive environmental mitigation

**Equity:** 1 point is given if project is an environmental justice area or vulnerable population area. 1 point given if project is in a community that is below average per capita for distributed target funds. Shrewsbury and Worcester get **1 point** in both categories. Uxbridge does not receive any points.

**Economic:** 1 point is given if project improves mobility in an area that is losing job access between 33 and 66 percentiles in the region. 2 points if higher than 66 percentiles. Based on access to jobs data. Shrewsbury gets **2 points**. Worcester and Uxbridge get **1 point**.

**Stormwater management:** 1 point if project improves stormwater infrastructure such as culverts. Projects also receive 1 point in a 100- or 500-year flood zone. Uxbridge gets **1 point** for improving stormwater infrastructure.

**Travel and Tourism:** 1 point if mobility to and from tourist attractions or recreational areas in the project areas. None of the projects received any points.

There is a possible **27 points** rewarded. Shrewsbury and Worcester both scored **17 points**. Uxbridge scored **13 points**. Staff is looking for a recommendation from the committee regarding thoughts on the programming of these four projects for FFY 2027 for the TIP

Jeremy Thompson has two questions, first about the Westborough Pedestrian bridge project had points given because of access to MBTA station. Mr. Krasnecky does not recall that being part of project criteria. Mr. Thompson's second question involved keeping data on priority development areas and if there is a baseline for minimum or maximum threshold for what a priority development area is. Mr. Krasnecky says there is no real criteria, and most data is GIS-based. If a portion of a PDA is included in the project's location, it will be scored.

Ms. Krishnan adds in that CMRPC mapped all PDAs for the 495 Compact communities in conjunction with the local community. If the community believed the area was a development area, they were able to designate it accordingly. Communities were part of the conversation on designating PDAs. Ms. Krishnan asks Mr. Krasnecky to expand on MicroProjects.

Mr. Krasnecky states that MicroProjects went off a 2% regional target, or about \$400,000. This round is looking for another placeholder if it is deemed higher than the Uxbridge, Worcester, or Shrewsbury project. This 2026 placeholder of \$400,000 will be held over for 2027.

Ms. Amoakohene has a question regarding the economic criteria and how the determination is made that shows congestion is impeding on job access. Mr. Krasnecky responds that the data is based on block level data showing how far a vehicle can travel at 2AM in free flow conditions and at 8AM in peak congestion hours.

Chairperson Menard asks if there are anymore questions and if not, to open discussion to begin the ranking of the projects. Chairperson Menard suggests Worcester and MicroProjects as Tier 1, Shrewsbury project as Tier 2, and Uxbridge project as Tier 3.

Mr. Payant asks about the tier ranking system or if it would be easier to rank projects by number. Chairperson Menard states that the tier system is preferred.

Mr. Krasnecky provides the project costs:

Shrewsbury - \$15.4 million

Uxbridge - \$6.25 million

Worcester (Chandler Street Phase 1) \$4.2 million

Microprojects - \$400,000

Mr. Thompson asks if there is a sense of the construction of proposed MicroProject areas, such as EV charging stations, are expected to have similar cost increases like road resurfacing. Mr. Payant notes that it is difficult to rank something that does not have a project tied to it. Based on the criteria, Mr. Payant prefers Worcester, Shrewsbury, Uxbridge, and Microprojects in that order. Mr. Thompson has questions regarding funding and whether these projects will have access to more funding from different sources in the future. Ms. Krishnan wants the Advisory Committee to not worry about the funding, but rank the project based on merits.

Ms. Bradbury clarifies the 20 percent match question that Mr. Thompson had regarding funding. Ms. Bradbury states that 80 percent of the funding is federal, 20 percent is state funds. Safety element sections in MassDOT has statewide priority list and a budget of statewide safety funds. With clarification, Mr. Thompson agrees with Mr. Payant's ranking.

Chairperson Menard asks Mr. Thompson to make a motion to put Shrewsbury and Worcester in Tier 1 and Uxbridge and Microproject into Tier 2. Mr. Thompson makes the motion. Mr. Payant seconds the motion. The vote is unanimous

#### **Agenda Item #5 – Staff Updates**

Safety Targets – When presented to the committee last time, there were questions related to the fatality numbers. The target setting was impacted by the federal filing of data and the numbers will be reviewed next year. Communities should be aware of the DER culvert grant, funding is available for design and construction. The deadline to apply is March 14, 2022.

#### **Agenda Item #6 – New Business**

There was no new business.

#### **Agenda Item #7 – Adjournment**

At 4:30 PM Mr. Menard entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Payant made the motion to and was seconded by Mr. Belding. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Eric Gemperline, Transportation Assistant Planner.