



## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee held **Wednesday, March 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
- Alaa Abusallah – Town of Leicester
- Ann Sullivan – MassDOT District 3
- Karin Valentine-Goins – WalkBike Worcester

### **Ex-Officio Members**

- Chris Klem

### **CMRPC Staff Present:**

- Sujatha Krishnan
- Rich Rydant
- Yahaira Graxirena
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Eric Gemperline
- Sarah O'Brien

### **Other Individuals Present:**

- Michael Fisher – BL Companies
- Greg Russel - VHB



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 and February 23, 2022 meeting minutes**

Minutes for January 26, 2022, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. Chairperson Menard entertains a motion to approve the January 26, 2022, meeting minutes. Ms. Sullivan makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded by Ethan Belding. The vote is unanimous in favor of approval.

Next Chairperson Menard entertained a motion to approve meeting minutes from February 23, 2022. Mr. Payant makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Sullivan seconds the motion. The vote is unanimous in favor of approving of the minutes, with one abstention from Ms. Valentine-Goins.

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

#### **ACTION ITEM: Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO**

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item.

TIP Development Workshop held last week at CMMPO. Staff provides options MPO members with options of preferred projects to be selected and programmed on the draft TIP 2023-2027.

Worksheets showing each year of programming was presented. Worksheets contained project code ID, municipality where it is located, facility of project, brief description of the project, performance measure scoring, greenhouse gas saving from projects, current TIP year, current cost, and current program cost associated within that year and any of the options that staff has come up with options A through D, and the likely funding source for that project. The regional target budget is provided by MassDOT.

Normally in Year 2 through Year 5, there is a four percent increase in the budget to account for inflation. Year 2023 programs include the following: Spencer - Meadow Road, Charlton/Oxford – Route 20, New Braintree – Ravine Road and Hardwick Road, and Uxbridge – Route 122 (Southern Phase). The Uxbridge – Route 20 project has been pushed back a year. Instead, staff is recommending programming in 2023 the Holden – Shrewsbury Street and Doyle Road pavement rehabilitation project that is currently in 2024. Under Option A presented, there would be around \$600,000 left in the budget for 2024.

In 2024, the Holden project has been moved. Additional projects include Uxbridge – Route 122 (Second Phase), Southbridge (Central/Foster/Hook/Hamilton Street), and West Brookfield – Route 9. Under “Option A” Holden, Southbridge, and West Brookfield would be funded. The Holden project has previously mentioned will be programmed in 2023. Option A will provide for \$5.2 million left to spend. An increase in funding is noticeable after the first year, as the bipartisan infrastructure bill has passed and increased monies available by around \$4 million per year.

The programming options for 2025 include the following: Charlton/Oxford – Route 20, Webster – Route 16/I-395 Ramps/Sutton Road, West Brookfield – Route 9 (Phase II), and Worcester – Chandler Street and May Street. Option A leaves \$6.7 million in the budget.

The following year, 2026 has five programming features: Northbridge – Route 122/Sutton/School/Upton Street, Upton – Route 140 Culvert, Worcester – Chandler Street (Phase 1), Sturbridge – Route 20 and 131, and lastly the CMRPC regional MicroProjects program. Staff recommends choosing Option A and programming all five options which would leave \$6.6 million in the budget.

In the fifth and final year of the TIP, 2027, the programming options include: Worcester – Chandler Street (Phase II), Shrewsbury – Route 20, Uxbridge – Route 16 (Douglas Street), and lastly the CMRPC MicroProjects program. The Shrewsbury – Route 20 project is being completely funded by the State and so targeted money will no longer be necessary for the project. The remaining projects can be programmed with around \$12 million in unspent funds. Staff is asking for a recommendation from the group.

Chairperson Menard opened the floor for the questions, after first posing two himself, “Some of the early years it appears there have been drop in costs.” Mr. Krasnecky noted some fluctuation did occur in the finances as was learned at TIP Readiness Day. Chairperson Menard’s second question involved extra funds remaining, such as the \$12 million left over in the 2027 budget. Mr. Krasnecky responds that MassDOT will look into options that can fit and hopefully next year more projects will come forward that can move up that year.

Ms. Krishnan adds that a conversation with DCR was had regarding the \$10 million pedestrian bridge over the Blackstone River on the Blackstone River Bikeway. MassDOT and CMRPC met with DCR and MassDOT told DCR to design the project to MassDOT and FHWA standards there could be a change if the design was ready that the project could be funded in 2026 or 2027.

Ms. Sullivan asks if the amount of money available reflects all the IJA funding and upon learning so states that there are new funding sources available that were not available for the last TIP. A good portion of the funding will be utilized for cost increases. Higher increases in bid prices have been seen over the year. The third, fourth, and fifth year of the TIP will continue to look at new programming options. Projects that can be identified as able to move forward in the TIP year should be pursued.

Mr. Payant asks if funding is tied to the fiscal year or if it can roll over. Mr. Krasnecky states they are tied to the fiscal year.

Ms. Valentine-Goins adds to what Ms. Sullivan was stating, “costs are rising, are projects asked to resubmit bids that reflect current costs and do the figures present here, the \$26 million is part of the regular program funding and not part of the discretionary programs. Mr. Krasnecky affirms that she is correct on her second question. Ms. Sullivan adds discretionary is separate and not on a TIP and defers to Mr. Klem for clarification about the discretionary funds. Ms. Krishnan responds to Ms. Valentine-Goins first question by stating that the money reflects the changes in projects’ cost. Many entities can apply for federal discretionary funds separate from the TIP.

Ms. Valentine-Goins asks if projects having been put it in the past, on a national level how do advocacy groups talking about maximizing investing in active transportation, is there any opportunity for funding. Ms. Krishnan states all projects in Massachusetts must meet Healthy Transportation Initiative and MassDOT Grant Programs like Complete Streets and Shared Streets programs are looking into that. All our RPAs are working with MassDOT to best help their communities with funding.

Chairperson Menard asks if there are more questions. There are none. As this is an action item. Mr. Krasnecky asks that committee vote to accept staff's recommendation of programming option A. Ms. Valentine-Goins asks if supporting the action item would mean supporting staff's continued effort to backfill programming. Mr. Krasnecky states it is unlikely that anything else will be programmed for regional target funding and this will be how the draft tip will look in April.

Ms. Sullivan makes a motion to accept Option A, the motion is seconded by Mr. Payant. The vote is unanimous in accepting option A.

#### **Agenda Item# 4 Review of Draft FFY 2023-2027 Statewide Highway Project Listing**

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item.

Statewide Highway Project listings in 2023 include: Worcester – Bridge Preservation over Lincoln Street, Colby Avenue, and Plantation Street, Holden – Pavement rehabilitation on Main Street, Shrewsbury Street, and Doyle Road, from State Police Barracks to Brattle Street, Sturbridge – Bridge replacement, Champeaux Road over Long Pond, and Charlton/Oxford -reconstruction on Route 20, from Richardson's Corner to Route 12.

In 2024 Statewide Highway Project listings include: Spencer – Bridge replacement, North Spencer Road (Route 31) over the Seven Mile River, Upton – Resurfacing and related work on Route 140 and roundabout construction at Route 140, Church Street, and Grove Street, Mendon – Resurfacing and related work on Route 9, Upton/Hopedale – Resurfacing and related work on Route 140, Sutton/Grafton – Bridge reconstruction/rehabilitation carrying Depot Street over the Blackstone River, Southbridge – Bridge replacement, Mill Street over McKinstry Brook and Mill Street over the Quinebaug River, Worcester – Bridge reconstruction of Harrison Street over I-290 and Laurel Steet over I-290, Dudley – Bridge Replacement State Route 131 over the Quinebaug River, Auburn – Resurfacing and related work on I-290 and I-395, Charlton/Oxford – Reconstruction on Route 20 from Richardson's Corner to Route 12, Grafton – Millbury Street improvements, Shrewsbury – Intersection and signal improvement at US 20 (Hartford Turnpike) at Grafton Street, Worcester – Intersection improvements at West Mountain Street at I-190 Frontage Road and Brooks Street extension, Worcester – Pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Pleasant Street

In 2025 the following projects are scheduled to be programmed: Holden – Bridge replacement at Salisbury Street over Providence and Worcester Railroad, Auburn – Bridge replacement at Route 20 (WB) Washington Street over I-395, Worcester – Superstructure replacement at I-290 East Central Street, Hardwick/New Braintree – Bridge Replacement at Creamery Road over the Ware River, Sutton – Bridge replacement at Manchaug Road over Mumford River, Uxbridge to Worcester – Guide and traffic sign replacement on a section of Route 146, Charlton/Oxford – Reconstruction on Route 20 from Richardson's Corner to Route 12, Webster – Intersection improvements at I-395 Ramps (Exit 2) at Route 16 and Sutton Road.

In 2026 – Auburn – Bridge replacement at Oxford Street over Kettle Brook, Shrewsbury – Rehabilitation and box widening on Route 20 from Route 9 to South Street, Barre – Bridge replacement at Old Coldbrook Road over the Prince River, Uxbridge – Bridge replacement at Homeward Avenue over Providence and Worcester Railroad, Oxford – Interstate maintenance and related work on I-395, Charlton – Bridge replacement at US 20 Sturbridge Road over Cady Brook, and Sturbridge – Improvements at Burgess Elementary School (Safe Routes to School).

In 2027, Oxford – Bridge replacement Leicester Road over the French River, Sturbridge/Charlton – Intersection improvements on Route 49 at Putnam Road, Walker Pond Road and Route 20, and lastly Southbridge/Dudley – Resurfacing and related work on Route 131.

Upon presenting the projects, Mr. Krasnecky asks for questions. Ms. Valentine-Goins asks if Pleasant Street project in 2024 in Worcester is from Tatnuck Square to the Paxton line. Mr. Krasnecky does not know. Ms. Sullivan says it goes just outside of Tatnuck Square to the Paxton town line. Chairperson Menard asks if there are further questions and if the materials are available online. Mr. Krasnecky says they are available online. Chairperson Menard moves to the next item.

#### **Agenda Item #5 Review of Draft FFY 2023-2027 Transit Project Listing**

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item.

Following a slightly different format, but overall similar layout Mr. Krasnecky presented the Draft FFY 2023-2027 Transit Project Listings. Projects scheduled to be programmed in 2023 include: WRTA purchasing of 8 buses, support equipment for fixed route and demand response, spare parts for revenue rolling stock, fixed route bus shelters, bus stop and electronic signage for fixed route, renovations, and maintenance to WRTA Hub, rehabilitation of Union Station, operating assistance, renovations, and maintenance to WRTA Maintenance and Operations Facility, and one additional 35' bus. The total cost is \$23,895,103.

In 2024 the following projects are scheduled to be programmed: WRTA operating assistance – fixed route, buy replacement 35 FT bus (7), buy replacement support vehicles (3), purchase support equipment for fixed route and demand response, purchase spare parts for revenue rolling stock, purchase fixed route bus shelters, purchase bus stop and electronic signage for fixed route, renovations and maintenance to WRTA Hub, rehabilitation of Union Station, renovations and maintenance to WRTA Maintenance and Operations Facility, and buy replacement 35 FT bus (1). The total cost is \$24,430,070.

In 2025 programming is much of the same with the following scheduled: WRTA operating assistance – fixed route, buy replacement 35 FT bus (1), buy replacement support vehicles (1), purchase support equipment for fixed route and demand response, purchase spare parts for revenue rolling stock, purchase fixed route bus shelters, purchase bus stop and electronic signage for fixed route, renovations and maintenance to WRTA Hub, rehabilitation of Union Station, renovations and maintenance to WRTA Maintenance and Operations Facility, buy replacement van (7), and buy replacement of 35 FT bus (6). The total cost is \$26,452,835.

In 2026 the following is programmed: WRTA operating assistance – fixed route, buy replacement 35 FT bus (2), buy replacement support vehicles (2), purchase support equipment for fixed route and demand response, purchase spare parts for revenue rolling stock, fixed route bus shelters, purchased bus stop and electronic signage for fixed route, renovations and maintenance to WRTA Hub, rehabilitation of Union Station, buy replacement 35 FT bus (1). The total cost is \$24,722,696.

Finally, 2027 is scheduled to program WRTA operating assistance – fixed route, buy replacement van (7), purchase support equipment for fixed route and demand response, purchase spare parts for revenue rolling stock, fixed route bus shelters, purchased bus stop and electronic signage for fixed route, renovations, and maintenance to WRTA Hub, and the rehabilitation of Union Station. The total cost is

\$25,490,153. Mr. Krasnecky asks if anyone has questions. Chairperson Menard has one question regarding funding for Union Station and if the funding was for the new tracks at the station. Mr. Krasnecky replies that it is just for regular maintenance and upkeep.

### **Agenda Item #6 FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

This item was presented by Sujatha Krishnan.

Along with increases to the TIP target there will be a small increase in planning funds. In terms of funds available, there is an increase from \$1,202,452 in FY 2022 to \$1,394,388 in FY 2023 representing an increase of twelve percent.

Highlighted numbers on the budget sheet. On the left-hand side on categories that the staff works on. Numbers in orange show a reduction from the previous year. In the next year, the funding is back to normal funding levels as shown in green. Other items getting an increase involve elements related to the long-range transportation plan. Ms. Krishnan asks for questions on the budget. There are none. Ms. Krishnan then presents highlights.

The highlights tasks and products will be listed in bullet format for ease of comprehension.

#### **Management and Support**

- Lead the facilitation of the Statewide MPOs Data User Group.
- Continue participation in the MARPA PL funding formula discussion.
- CMRPC transportation grants and related work.
- Review of various existing MOUs as a result of "BIL." These include the CMMPO MOU and the UZA MOU.
- Transportation staff support of new 2050 long range transportation plan (LRTP) effort.

#### **TIP**

- 2024– 2028 TIP Development.
- 2023 – 2027 Amendments/Adjustments.
- Bi-annual TIP projects status update meetings (July/December)
- Inclusion of TIP project proponents in Project Scoring exercise.
- Annual Environmental Consultation session

#### **Title VI and Environmental Justice**

- Transportation Justice definition (EJ + disadvantage communities data variables) will require update with new Census data and other sources as needed.
- LRTP Equity Analysis
- Annual MassDOT T6 report



### **Public Participation**

- Develop LRTP Public Participation Action Plan (to include the goals for outreach, branding, strategies and methods, the metrics, social media content calendar, meeting schedule, template presentation, notices, translations, etc.)
- Perform the LRTP Public Outreach activities.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

- 2020 Census data downloads and analysis for the LRTP.
- Collect and analyze additional data sets as needed for the development of the LRTP
- Park and Ride Utilization data (continued **coordination with MassDOT**)
- Accessibility to Destinations: MassDOT Accessibility dataset
- Usage of Conveyal tool to inform planning activities
- Asset Management Data Collection
- Annual traffic counting
- Transit: data collection and mapping of bus stops, routes, and ridership
- Safety: Top 100 crash location listing
- Economic Development: identification and mapping of Priority Development Areas (PDA's), 43D Priority Development Sites, and Transformative Development Initiative Districts (TDI's)
- Title VI & Environmental Justice: collection and mapping of data on vulnerable populations
- Affordable Housing: collection and mapping of locations
- Resiliency: Identify areas that are disproportionately at risk of climate change impacts.

### **Community Technical Assistance**

- Support communities in the development of the TIP projects and monitor current committed projects.
- Support communities in the grant writing process and identification of potential projects under the MassDOT Municipal Transportation Grant Programs, and subsequent evaluation.
- Data collection, analysis, mapping and Socio-Economic projections assistance
- Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools program assistance
- Municipal culvert and small bridge grant assistance
- IMAGINE2050 Regional Plan Assistance: Infrastructure priorities.

### **Corridor Profile Study**

- Choose new (FY23) Corridor Profile candidate.
- Complete work on the Rte. 62 Berlin – Corridor study.

### **Congestion Management Process**

- 2023 CMP Progress Report.
- Continue to Evaluate CMP strategy effectiveness techniques.
- Create a prioritized listing of bottleneck locations – RITIS data.

### **Safety and Security**

- Update annual PM1 and analyze current safety data trends.
- Participate in the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) efforts.
- Participate and provide feedback on numerous Safety emphasis areas as part of the SHSP.
- Conduct/Participate in Road Safety Audits.

### **Asset Management**

- Prioritize locations from the CMRPC Asset Management System for the development of the LRTP
- Roadway Maintenance – financial scenario planning for the LRTP.
- Fully incorporate EV charging infrastructure and bicycle infrastructure into the CMRPC asset management system.

### **Regional Transportation Model**

- Travel Demand Model runs for the 2050 LRTP
- Equity Analysis of the proposed LRTP projects
- Modeling analysis to assist with freight planning and ongoing series of trucking accommodation studies.
- Modeling analysis to create a prioritized listing of bottleneck locations
- Modeling analysis to produce results for truck percentages and V/C ratios (bottlenecks) for the Highway Trucking Accommodation study for the Southeast subregion.

### **Performance Management Analysis and Reporting**

- Update the annual PM System Performance Report.
- Incorporate Performance Management Metrics and Targets into the LRTP.
- Reflect the BTL’s new 8 transportation planning areas within the existing regional process.

- Further refine measures and targets for the regionally-customized PM for Stormwater and Travel & Tourism.

### **Livability**

- Develop livability portions of the CMMPO's upcoming Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Coordinate with RCCP staff and community/regional stakeholder to pursue a Regional Age-Friendly Designation through DTLA funding
- Collaborate and support MassBike's Worcester E-Bike Program by conducting data collection and analysis of ridership.
- Continue ongoing support to regional trail stakeholders - BWALT, Blackstone Heritage Corridor, Wachusett Greenways, etc.
- Support RCCP staff with 2021 MassTrails Grant (*trail accessibility toolkit*).
- Continue to work with partner agencies and stakeholders on bicycle and pedestrian related events and planning efforts and on broad-based community initiatives to promote livability, access to essential services, and alternative modes of travel like:
  - Demonstration/pop-up projects
  - Bikeshare/micromobility
  - Bay State Bike Month

### **L RTP Development**

- Development of next LRTP for 2050.
- Development & implementation of proactive public outreach aspect.
- Data gathering and analysis to develop various modal and programmatic priorities.
- Development of a fiscally constrained plan.
- Work closely with communities in the region to identify opportunities for MicroProjects

### **Freight Planning**

- Conduct Highway Trucking Accommodation study for the Southeast subregion.
- Participate in passenger rail efforts in the greater region, including the proposed expansion of East-West passenger rail and the ongoing Northern Corridor Passenger Service Assessment Study

### **Climate Change – Resiliency, Sustainability, Vulnerability**

- Continue to use environmental data to help identify vulnerable culverts due to climate change and extreme weather events - New

- Continue electric vehicle (EV) charging research and help guide communities to identify potential charging locations and grant/funding opportunities to help fund installation - New
- Continue to study the equitable distribution of EV charging infrastructure - New
- Study the equitable distribution of CMAQ projects in region.

#### **Transit Planning – WRTA Technical Assistance**

- Assist WRTA with the Mobile Fare Payment System Implementation- Data Analysis/Public Meetings.
- Work with WRTA for the transit planning, project priorities and financials of the LRTP development.
- Prepare FY 2022 fixed route and paratransit data for National Transit Database (NTD) Annual Report and WRTA Audit
- Assist with performance management and data reporting as part of the MOU between MassDOT and WRTA
- Assist WRTA with Community Transit Grants and other federal/state grant opportunities.
- Assist with ongoing service monitoring and changes to services as required
- Coordinate with COAs on various Paratransit related items
- Prepare/administer WRTA customer surveys as needed.
- Continue program to monitor parking utilization rates at MBTA Commuter Rail stations within region.

#### **Agenda Item #6 – Imagine 2050: Equity – Discussion and Presentation**

This item was presented by Yahaira Graxirena.

Ms. Graxirena started the discussion with the unveil of the Imagine 2050 logo, noting its positive, inclusive, and youthful tone that the logo sets. The logo will be used for the regional plan. Ms. Graxirena then transitions to the “Equity” presentation which follows a similar set up to previous Imagine 2050 presentations.

Equity is one of the three major pillars, the other two being economy and environment. Equity is important in sustainable development, and staff should be cognizant of how we are allocating valuable public resources, including funds, services, utilities, land use decisions, education opportunities, just to mention a few; and the degree to which these public resources will impact people’s quality of life and economic opportunities.

There are two dimensions of equity, horizontal (fairness) and vertical (access). Horizontal equity states that people with similar needs and abilities be treated equally. Vertical equity assumes that disadvantaged groups should receive a greater share of resources (or have access to). In planning we

must focus on the needs that have been historically left out of the planning process. This has been an unfair practice. Fairness is the means to treat people equally and impartially without bias.

Policies that fail to recognize the needs from underserved and disadvantaged populations typically perpetuate the status quo and unintentionally perpetuate and/or increase disparities. Even neutral policies can have a disparate impact.

Access on the other hand, refers to the mechanisms and strategies we can use to minimize these disparities, to minimize or eliminate these barriers for future generations. It relates to the social mobility by providing access to opportunities and well-paying jobs, access to clean water and energy options, access to food, housing, mobility options. Equity focuses on outcomes. Planners should promote equity and reflect on the current situation of equity in their communities.

Within communities exist a level of regionalism, equity must be accounted for in this aspect. A local jurisdiction has an obligation to minimize the harm it imposes on other jurisdictions in pursuit of their own objectives. With this background established, Ms. Graxirena transitioned to a brief overview of the region's history to see how inequalities developed.

Much of the region's economy started to pick up with the industrial revolution. Company mills would be set up, along with it a village for the mill's worker and their families. The experience of living in a mill village was very different depending on if you were the mill owner, who controlled the land, the housing stock, the schools and currency, or a simple worker totally dependent to the employer. Many towns in the region bet on mill economic model, but when it crashed, the towns haven't been able to recover. Communities in the region are once again hitching their wagon to a new economic model, distribution centers, and it is still unclear what the future will hold for this new last-mile economy. Other examples of inequity in the region include the Quabbin Reservoir, where the rural communities of Prescott, Enfield, Dana, and Greenwich were lost to provide water for the east and the I-290 interstate, which cut Worcester in two and greatly affected minority communities.

The region is very diverse, it is one region represented by many countries and cultures. Some people choose to come to the region for job opportunities, affordable housing costs, top-notch college education, but others come because of displacement. Whether is war conflicts (Cold War period, the Balkans, Kosovo, Liberia), economic catastrophes, unfair trade agreements, climate catastrophes, among many other reasons. This diversity is also one of the reasons so many languages are spoken in the region. Among the top languages spoken other than English are Spanish, Portuguese, French, Swahili, Vietnamese, Chinese, Polish, Albanian and many more with a diverse proficiency level.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection recently revised the State's thresholds for Environmental Justice population with 2019 ACS data. The definition includes low-income population with an annual median household income 65% or lower than the statewide annual median household income. CMRPC uses regional thresholds to determine if a block group falls into the EJ category or not. In addition to this, as part of the TIP, CMRPC compares the per capita investment in areas with and without EJ populations and are planning to expand the definition by including other disadvantaged populations once the new Census data is available.

The region is getting older. Many of the CMRPC communities are already experiencing an aging population. Communities with older populations often have funding limitations on what they can provide for the aging population. Food insecurity is a problem for all demographics in the region. As of 2019, roughly 8 percent of adults in Massachusetts were food insecure. The proportion doubled during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is significantly higher in households with children, 9% in 2019, 19% in 2020, a higher percentage among Black and Hispanic households. This makes it harder for these communities to be resilient. Community resilience is the capacity of individuals and households within a community to absorb, endure, and recover from the health, social, and economic impacts of a disaster, such as a hurricane or pandemic.

Risk factors include income to Poverty Ratio, limited English proficiency, disability, older adults 65 years old or more, no vehicle access, no broadband internet access, households without a full-time, year-round employment, crowding, and single or zero caregiver household. Variation in individual and household characteristics are determining factors in the different impact of a disaster. Similar trends are seen with the energy burden, affordable housing access, transportation, and the impact of covid, all which disproportionately affected environmental justice communities.

In summary, CMRPC works closely in our communities in a wide array of topics to address disparities in the region, from Housing Production Plans, ADA assessments, CDBG, redevelopment plans, economic development strategies, rural caucus, among other important work. Ms. Graxirena concluded her presentation and introduced Sarah O'Brien, CMRPC Community Planner, who would be operating the jamboard for this portion of the presentation.

Ms. O'Brien started with asking the committee to answer the following question with positive and negative responses, "What would you like equity in the Central Massachusetts region to look like in 30 years? What concerns do you have about equity in 30 years? What should we try to avoid?" and opened the floor to discussion. Ms. Amoakohene was the first to respond, stating that she wants to see more diverse participation in terms of transportation decisions and more diverse residents being civically engaged. Ms. Valentine-Goins wants to see the region less segregated region with more housing opportunities. She would also like to see the benefits of active transportation features be distributed across the community and fairly.

One of the concerns mentioned on the jamboard was "resistance to change; business as usual". Ms. O'Brien moved to the next question, "How do you imagine these topics might impact equity between now and 2050"? The five categories are the same to previous Imagine 2050 3 pillar discussions with infrastructure, education, quality of life, sustainability and resiliency, and municipal services and community vitality being the categories.

Ms. Amoakohene would like to see geographic equity across the board, and have less factors be determined by the place you live. Ms. O'Brien asks the group their thoughts on equity and infrastructure. Ms. Krishnan responds there was talk in the commissioners jamboard session about difference in the equity barrier between urban, suburban, and rural communities in terms of the upcoming discretionary funds and how they are distributed. Depending on the capacity of a town, it can be difficult to apply for competitive funding. Ms. Krishnan also mentions the new housing and zoning requirements for MBTA communities made some communities feel that the process was unequitable, as

they would have to deal with the requirements without direct benefits. Ms. Graxirena informs the group that time is running out and that the jamboard will be available online. This concludes the Imagine 2050 Equity Presentation.

**Agenda Item #6 – Staff Updates Annual Environmental Consultation**

Ms. Krishan provided an update on this item.

The annual environmental consultation is on April 7, 2022. Discussions will be had on the work staff has done mapping electric vehicle charging stations and planning practices. A guest presenter will be discussing the 100 e-bikes the City of Worcester received for their e-bike program and an invitation will go out to all the communities.

**Agenda Item #7 – New Business**

MassDOT Innovation Conference will be happening at the DCU Center.

**Agenda Item #8 – Adjournment**

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

Meeting minutes prepared: Eric Gemperline, Transportation Assistant Planner.