



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee held **Wednesday, November 30, 2023**. This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Adam Menard – Chairperson, Town of Auburn
- Chris Payant – Vicechair, Town of Westborough
- Sarah Bradbury – MassDOT District 3
- Daryl Amaral – MassDOT District 2
- Jeremy Thompson – 495/Metrowest Partnership
- Ann Sullivan – MassDOT District 3
- Benjamin Berger (Alternate, MassDOT District 3)
- Thomas Coyne - WRTA

Ex Officio Member:

- Chris Klem – MassDOT, Office of Transportation Planning

CMRPC Staff Present:

- Yahaira Graxirena
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Eric Gemperline
- Rich Rydant
- Greer Jarvis

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Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions

Chairperson Adam Menard opened the meeting at 3:05 PM. A roll call of CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the rest of the attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of October 26, 2022 meeting minutes

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

Agenda Item #3 – CMMPO TIP Amendment #2 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit

- **Potential Action:** Approval of Proposed Amendment #2 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List

Kevin Krasnecky reminded the members that proposed Amendment #2 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List was for a cost increase of Project #RTD0010843 in FFY 2023. This Project is for the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) to buy and replace 35 FT buses (8). As part of the proposed Amendment, the Federal funds will increase \$1,200,000 and the State funds (TDC) will increase \$240,000. The updated total project cost is \$5,541,148. Additionally, the project description will change from (8) to (9).

Mr. Krasnecky noted that the Proposed Amendment #2 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List was recently voted in favor by the CMMPO Advisory and the CMRPC Transportation Committee to be endorsed by the CMMPO. In addition, a virtual meeting was held on December 6. At this virtual meeting there were comments regarding what types of buses were being purchased as part of the Amendment and that they would like to see electric vehicles purchased by the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) in the future. Additionally, an official comment letter was received from the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), encouraging the CMMPO and WRTA to consider purchasing electric buses for their fleet in future TIPs. The WRTA responded to the CLF comment letter, noting that purchasing electric buses are in WRTA future.

Chairperson Menard entertains a motion to approve the proposed amendment. Mr. Coyne makes the motion and Vicechair Payant seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #4 – CMMPO TIP Microprojects Update

This item was presented by Yahaira Graxirena.

A brief recap was provided of the major goals of the Microprojects: “Access – To support access to essential services, including access to jobs, education health services, and healthy food”, “Connections - To create first-and-last mile connections to transit and other modes of transportation”, and “Gaps – To fill the gaps within the transportation network”.

After conversations with MassDOT’s Office of Transportation Planning it was decided microprojects would be funded through TIP using CMAQ funds and it would be specifically for capital purchases and in some cases transit operations. Only transit authorities or municipalities can apply through the TIP. Other

applicants would need to file a joint application with either WRTA or municipalities. Microprojects are used to address needs in the region. 2024-28 TIP process is looked and the following categories will be focused on: bikeshare, microtransit, vans/shuttles/, and TDM strategies.

Currently, the final edits to the application are being made and once finalized the application form will be sent to Mass OTP and FHWA for approval. Once approved, the grant will be shared with municipalities and employers. The following steps would include a virtual information session about the Microproject program in December. January through March will allow for applications and presentations for potential projects. In May through June is when the final evaluation of the applications will be made with the CMMPO endorsement following afterwards.

There were no questions, Chairperson Menard just asked to be notified when applications are ready.

Agenda Item #5 – CMMPO LRTP Update

This item was presented by Yahaira Graxirena

Yahaira updated the group that since the last CMMPO meeting, staff have had a successful meeting with MassDOT OTP, District #3, and District #2 to understand the State's priorities so staff can add them to the LRTP. Additional stakeholder meetings have been completed and over 200 surveys have been completed. Staff is also reaching out to MassDOT regarding their LRTP to see how staff can combine their public outreach strategy with the State LRTP plan. The December CMMPO meeting will include an update regarding what staff have heard from the public.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item #6 – Age Friendly Central Mass Update

This item was presented by Faye Rhault

An update was provided on the process of designating Worcester as an 'Age-friendly community'. In 2030, nearly 1 and 5 people will be over the age of 65 with projections for central Massachusetts hitting those thresholds before the Nation. In response to this projected shift, the World Health Organization launched the network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities in 2006 as an international effort to promote livable communities through preemptive and adaptive planning strategies, which is administered across the United State through AARP.

The towns of North Brookfield and Barre are currently designated age friendly communities with AARP approved Action Plans, and the Town of Uxbridge and the City of Worcester have emerging age friendly community status meaning they are in development or engagement phases of the program approaching a permanent designation. Additionally, several communities have received a dementia friendly designation.

As the initiative progresses, a website was developed to store survey responses and more information about the program. The initiative involved six age-friendly meetings across the region to better understand the needs of older adults.

Some interesting results from the age-friendly survey included the following: the survey was highly over-represented by residents in the City of Worcester and the Central Subregion, and the survey results were largely over represented by women (80%), those age 60-69 (19.4%) and 70-79 (27.2%), and White respondents (92%). However, there was an even spread for income.

The transportation results were the focus of this presentation and indicated limited transportation services in rural/suburban communities, limited WRTA service area in terms of the region as a whole, the need for on-demand transit services, transportation to medical appointments, and public infrastructure, and local services, among others as priorities for the region.

Most respondents were aware of some sort of public transportation option either provided by the regional transit authority or the Senior Center, although roughly 90% of respondents do not use public transportation. When asked to rate their community in public transportation service, 38% of respondents rated the public transit poor in providing affordable and convenient service, while 39% rated it poor in providing timely public transit, and 32% identified public transit as unsafe. Additionally, 49% of respondents claimed to not have convenient access to information about alternative transportations like schedules, how to reserve rides, among others.

Aside from operating a personal vehicle, 56% of respondents claim to walk and 53% claim to rely on a family member or friendly for transportation to appointments or other activities.

The following overarching goals that relate to transportation that were identified in the survey are: Expanding transportation services in rural communities, investing in accessible, equitable, and connected multi-modal infrastructure, supporting financial sustainability and maintenance of localized and municipal older adult transportation services, bolstering participation and recreational opportunities through transportation access, and coordinating with the WRTA to expand and improve transit access.

The Age Friendly Action Plan, while a stand alone document, will be incorporated in other planning initiatives including Imagine 2050 and 2050 Connections.

There were no questions.

Agenda Item #7 – New Business

No Updates are available.

Agenda Item #8 – Adjournment

At 4:35 PM Chairperson Menard entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. Coyne made the motion and was seconded by Ms. Sullilvan. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Eric Gemperline, Transportation Associate Planner.