



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) meeting held **Wednesday, October 18th, 2023**. This meeting was held virtually using Zoom.

- **CMMPO Members Present:**

1. David Mohler – MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, designee to Acting MassDOT Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
2. Ann Sullivan – MassDOT Highway Division District #3, designee to MassDOT Highway Division Administrator Jonathon Gulliver
3. Joshua Rickman – WRTA Administrator
4. Bob Hassinger – designee to CMRPC Commission Chair
5. Brian Pigeon – designee to City Manager Eric Batista
6. Jesse Limanek – Sutton, Southeast Subregion Representative
7. John Daniel – Southbridge, Southwest Subregion Representative

- **CMMPO Ex-Officio Members Present:**

1. Chris Klem, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
2. Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning

- **Guests:**

1. Ann Marie Foley, Grafton, Southeast Subregion Alternate
2. Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District #3
3. Robert King
4. Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District #2
5. Peg Dean, Southbridge
6. Alex Salcedo, MassBike

- **CMRPC Staff**

1. Sujatha Krishnan, Deputy Director – Transportation
2. Kevin Krasnecky, Project Manager – Transportation
3. Zack Blais, Associate Planner – Transportation
4. Rich Rydant, Project Manager – Transportation
5. Yahaira Graxirena, Project Manager – Transportation

6. Connie Mellis, Project Manager – Transportation
7. Nathan Lewis, Public Outreach Coordinator – Transportation
8. Adam Wriggins, Assistant Planner – Transportation
9. Tyler Distefano, Transit Planner – Transportation

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, 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 – Introductions

CMMPO Chair David Mohler opened the meeting at 4:00 PM. A roll call of CMMPO members was announced, followed by the rest of attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of July 19, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the July 19, 2023, meeting of the CMMPO were considered for approval. Jesse Limanek motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Brian Pigeon. A roll call vote was announced, and members voted to approve the minutes.

David Mohler – Yes

Brian Pigeon – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Jesse Limanek – Yes

Joshua Rickman – Abstain

John Daniel – Abstain

Bob Hassinger – Yes

Agenda Item #3 – Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item #4 – CMMPO Subregional Representative Election Results

David Mohler welcomed the new and reelected members to the CMMPO. These members include Joshua Rickman (WRTA), Jesse Limanek (Southeast Subregion), Ann Marie Foley (Southeast Subregion), John Daniel (Southwest Subregion), Bill Borowski (Southwest Subregion), and Jared Grigg (West Subregion).

Kevin Krasnecky said that the election meetings for the Southeast and Southwest subregions were held virtually in September and mentioned the towns that attended the meetings. In addition, the Alternate position for the West Subregion was vacant so Mr. Krasnecky reached out to those communities and Jared Grigg, from the town of Spencer, is now the Alternate for the West Subregion.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #5 – CMMPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Progress Update

Rich Rydant & Sujatha Krishnan provided the update to the proposed revisions to the CMMPO MOU. Mr. Rydant briefly explained the areas that would be updated throughout the document, which was last approved in May 2021. These changes include adding language on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL); updating the “transportation disadvantaged” communities to also include language on Regional Environmental Justice Plus (REJ+) communities; noting the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in the text; updating the “self-selection process” and meeting attendance consistency sections; adding language on virtual/hybrid public meetings; and other language improvements and updates.

David Mohler suggested that staff add the approval of the updated CMMPO MOU as an action item at the November CMMPO meeting and if more time is needed by the members, then the approval can be pushed back. Chris Klem noted that Joshua Barber has been filling in as the FHWA liaison since Chris Timmel has left.

Brian Pigeon asked when members would receive a copy of the updated CMMPO MOU for review. Ms. Krishnan replied that at least 10 days before the November CMMPO meeting.

There were no other questions or comments.

Agenda Item #6 – E-Bike Pilot Program Update/Presentation

Alex Salcedo, from MassBike Coalition, presented on the Worcester E-Bike Pilot Program.

MassBike was awarded funds by MassCEC in Spring 2022 to conduct an E-Bike Pilot Program in Worcester. 98 participants were selected out of 1,181 applicants to take part in the program. Since then, riding data was collected between August 2022 to August 2023. There has also been one event per month since August 2022 in collaboration with Program Partners. Participants range from 19 to 70 years old, at least half are women, there are a mix of races and education levels, many are currently working with a range of income levels, and most do not own their own home. Aside from just helping to reduce emissions using the E-Bikes, participants have also noticed health benefits too, with many using the bikes on an average of six hours per month. Over the last year, most participants have used E-Bikes for work, recreation, and even shopping. Some have also used them for school and other needs. Between August 2022 and August 2023, there has been a total of 26,267 pounds of CO₂ avoided using the E-Bikes which is equivalence to 99 gallons of gas being burned.

Overall, there have been a mix of reviews of the program and E-Bikes. Users like E-Bikes because they help beat vehicle traffic; it helps them get to work at the same time or even less time as driving; provides great scenery; and gives great exercise. Other reviews highlight operational issues like repeated flat tires due to potholes; the need for more protected bike lanes; and the lack of residential infrastructure for bike parking.

Bob Hassinger asked about whether there were other individuals in the program with other education levels that were not noted in the presentation. Alex Salcedo replied that yes there were, she only put the two highest percentages.

There were no other comments or questions.

Agenda Item #7 – NAACC Culvert Training and Assessments Grant Update

Zack Blais provided updates on a recent culvert training in the region.

CMRPC staff collaborated with the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative and Clark University on a grant to provide North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) culvert training to individuals in and around the CMRPC region. These individuals would be trained to complete the NAACC Lead Observer certification, giving them the ability to assess culverts and upload them to the NAACC database for scoring purposes.

As part of the grant, CMRPC were tasked with assisting with training preparation, which included gathering NAACC crossing codes and address of culverts in the training communities (Northbridge and Sutton); performing public outreach for the training opportunities; and providing an ArcGIS Online Survey123 NAACC Field Data Form for training assessments. CMRPC staff also attended the trainings as

necessary, uploaded the completed training assessments to the NAACC database, and will assist with a presentation to the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative Group.

In total, 16 individuals completed the NAACC Lead Observer certification training and received NAACC Lead Observer accounts on the NAACC website. This included four individuals from the CMRPC region (Sturbridge, Northbridge, and Uxbridge), one individual from the Blackstone Watershed Collaborative, two individuals from VHB, and nine individuals from other communities outside of the CMRPC region (Lexington, Hopkinton, and Kingston). There were about 60 culverts assessed during the training and all the assessments have been uploaded to the NAACC database. The grant expires in December 2023.

There were no comments or questions following the presentation.

Agenda Item #8 – Staff Updates

- Invitation of CMMPO Advisory Committee – Meet and Greet November CMMPO Meeting

Sujatha Krishnan announced that the CMMPO Advisory Committee would be invited to the November CMMPO Meeting to learn more about the CMMPO process, member actions, and how their recommendations make an impact.

- Federal Grants Update

Yahaira Graxirena announced several federal grant opportunities that CMRPC staff have been working on over the last few months. These have included the Safe Streets for All grant for CMRPC; a Rural & Tribal Assistance grant for the City of Gardner to complete the design of a pedestrian bridge over Route 140; assistance with a RAISE grant for the town of Southbridge; a Reconnecting Communities grant with the City of Worcester & MassDOT; a Thriving Communities Program grant for CMRPC in regards to the Blackstone River Bikeway; and an EV Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator Program grant for a few potential communities.

Agenda Item #9 – New Business

It was announced that the November CMMPO Meeting will be hybrid at the MassDOT District #3 building in Worcester, MA.

Agenda Item #10 – Next Meetings

- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – October 25, 2023, at 3:00PM
- CMMPO meeting (hybrid) – November 15, 2023, at 4:00PM

Agenda Item #11 – Adjournment

Bob Hassinger made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Jesse Limanek. The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes prepared by: Zachary Blais, Transportation Associate Planner