



## **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee virtual meeting held Thursday, January 26, 2023 using Zoom.

### **T-Committee Members Present:**

1. Bob Hassinger, Grafton, Committee Chairperson
2. Rick Baker, Boylston
3. Dick Williams, Rutland
4. Otto Lies, Holden
5. Brian Pigeon, Worcester

### **CMRPC Staff Present:**

1. Rich Rydant
2. Kevin Krasnecky

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### **Around-the-Room Introductions**

Committee Chairperson Bob Hassinger opened the meeting at 6:01 PM and asked for around the room introductions.

### **Approval of the December 1, 2022 T-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the December 1, 2022 meeting were considered for approval. Dick Williams motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Otto Lies. All members voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

### **Opportunity for Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Proposed Amendment #3 to the 2023 – 2027 Transit project listing.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item to the members. Proposed Amendment #3 to the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Transit List includes adding the following Community Transit Grant Awards to FFY 2023:

- Project #T00235 – Town of Shrewsbury – Funding of operation of Shrewsbury Council on Aging vehicle with a focus on out-of-town trips for a total of \$50,000.
- Project #T00237 – WRTA – Holden demand response service for a total of \$24,000.
- Project #T00238 – WRTA – Midday demand response service for a total of \$30,000.
- Project #T00239 – WRTA – ReadyBus service for a total of \$90,000.

Mr. Krasnecky noted that this Proposed Amendment #3 was released for a 21-day public review and comment period at the January 18<sup>th</sup> CMMPO meeting.

Dick Williams asked if the town of Rutland needs to pay any fees for the Holden demand service grant. Mr. Krasnecky responded that Rutland does not need to pay anything.

**On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Rick Baker, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of Proposed Amendment #3 to the 2023-2027 TIP Transit project listing.**

- Update on Micro-Project Applications

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item to the members. Mr. Rydant said that the CMMPO put aside \$400,000 in 2026 and 2027 for the Micro-Projects program and projects could also move up if money is available. For this round of applications, staff received two project applications.

Mr. Rydant also noted that there was interest from multiple agencies but they were not ready to move forward with a project at this time. The two projects received were:

- Town of Southbridge: Requesting \$20,000 for marketing the transit services available in the town. That includes WRTA, SCM Elder Bus, Ready, and Quabog Connector. The QCC campus has a night-adult career program at the town's high school, which is not served by the WRTA. (The WRTA made an evaluation, and it will add too much time to the existing route; they will need a second vehicle and that is not financially feasible at this point.) The option to promote the other available transit services was chosen so that people can access the school at night.
- Town of Ware & Quabog Valley Community Development Corporation: Requesting \$75,000 to purchase a hybrid minivan for transit services in rural towns within the CMMPO region. The current fleet already has a high number of miles, and they need to start the replacement process of their assets, plus, with an additional vehicle they can provide more trips.

Dick Williams asked about the potential installation of a sidewalk on Route 122A in Rutland. Mr. Rydant said to contact District #3 for assistance. Also, he will follow up with Yahaira Graxirena to determine if that is an eligible Micro-Project. (Mr. Rydant later verified that sidewalks, although once considered, are not eligible at this time under the new program.)

➤ FFY 2028 TIP Candidate Project Presentations Summary

Kevin Krasnecky provided a summary of the following FFY 2028 TIP candidate projects to the members.

**East Brookfield #612629 – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9:** The limits of the Route 9 TIP Project #612629 are from the Brookfield Town Line to just west of Route 49 in Spencer, a distance of 3.3 miles. Existing conditions to be addressed by this project include poor ADA accessibility compliance issues, a lack of bicycle accommodations, and poor drainage & pavement conditions. There are several goals for the design of this project, including enhancing vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle safety, mobility and operations, pavement rehabilitation and curb upgrades, drainage system upgrades, pavement markings and signage updates; as well as guardrail upgrades. The proposed highway cross-section includes two 11-foot travel lanes, 5-foot bicycle lanes with 2-foot buffers on each side, and 5.5-foot sidewalks on each side. The status of the project is currently at 25% design. For right-of-way requirements, there will be some temporary construction easements, some permanent easements for drainage and utilities relocation, and only minor land takings. For Environmental Permitting, a Notice of Intent (NOI) will be needed in East Brookfield and Spencer, and a NEPA Categorical Exclusion (CE) Checklist will also be required. The estimated total construction cost for this project is \$8 million. The

potential project timeline is a Design Public Hearing in 2023, project final design by 2025, and project construction by 2026 (pending funding availability).

**Oxford #611988 – Roadway Rehabilitation on Route 12 (Main Street):** The limits of this proposed TIP Project on Route 12 (Main Street) are from Fairlawn Avenue to Front Street. There are several goals for this project, including the introduction of safe transportation alternatives for all users within the current footprint of the roadway; creating a more accessible Town Center; reducing vehicular speeds through the Town Center; limiting delays at the traffic signal; introducing streetscape and beautification opportunities; and creating an attractive Town Center for the residents and local business owners. Between 2014 and 2020, the Charlton Street and Sutton Avenue intersection experienced 106 crashes that included 21 injury crashes. Other current challenges at this project location include high travel speeds, lengthy pedestrian crossings, lack of ADA-compliant curb ramps, delays at traffic signals, and lack of bicycle accommodations. This project is currently in the preliminary design stage and there are many design options being considered for the project location. Some of these options include sidewalk reconstruction, pavement restoration, streetscape beautification, separated bike lanes, bus stops, crosswalks with curb bump-outs or median islands with illuminated warning devices, and opportunities for bicycle signals. In addition, alternatives for either upgrading the existing traffic signal with new geometry or a new roundabout at the Charlton Street/Sutton Avenue intersection are being considered as part of the design. Upcoming project milestones include a 25% design submission by Fall 2023, 25% Design Public Hearing by Spring 2024, 75% Design and Permitting Applications by Summer 2025, 100% Design and PS&E Design Submissions by 2026, and potential Advertisement in FY 2028.

Brian Pigeon commented on the great presentation of the proposed project that the town's consultant did at the recent CMMPO meeting.

**Spencer #613097 – Intersection Improvements at Route 9 and Route 49:** This project is located at the intersection of Route 9 and Route 49. Existing conditions at this location include a lack of pedestrian facilities, lack of bicycle accommodations, poor drainage, high vehicle speeds/large intersection with expansive pavement, and poor level of service/long delays on the Route 49 approach, especially for left turning vehicles. Project design goals include providing pedestrian and bicycle amenities; improving driver safety; improving traffic operations and capacity; pavement rehabilitation and curb upgrades; upgrading the drainage systems; and updating pavement markings and signage. There is a proposed concrete paved roundabout and a shared-use path included in the design concept. Currently the project is at preliminary 25% design stage. Next steps include a Design Public Hearing and then a 75% Design submission. For right-of-way, there are only temporary construction easements envisioned and no permanent easements or land takings. For Environmental Permitting, a NOI is needed for the necessary work in the buffer zone to the Seven Mile river and a NEPA CE

Checklist is also needed. The estimated project cost is \$5 million. The potential project timeline is the Design Public Hearing in 2023, Final Project Design by 2025, and potential project construction by 2026 (pending funding availability).

### **CY 23 Safety Performance Measures – State and Regional Trends**

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of Safety Performance measures.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item to the group. Setting regional safety targets was required under MAP-21 (Section 1203) and is continued with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Setting the targets requires annual coordination with MPOs. MPOs must either establish their own set of quantifiable performance targets each and every year or adopt the State's performance targets. Once targets have been set, MPOs must incorporate them into their Certification Documents. For CY 2023, the five Statewide safety targets are:

- Total Fatalities: 355
- Fatality rate per 100 million VMT: 0.59
- Total Serious Injuries: 2,569
- Serious Injury Rate: 4.25 per 100 million VMT
- Total Combined Non-Motorist Injuries and Fatalities: 437

MassDOT's overarching goal is towards zero deaths. The Performance Measures are presented in five-year rolling averages and the trendline has been established using historical data. The non-motorized definition includes wheelchairs, rolling blades, skaters, and other motorized devices. Per federal requirements, the term "Serious Injuries" is used instead of "Incapacitating Injuries". The BIL requires "performance targets to demonstrate constant or improved performance". During the pandemic shutdowns in 2020 as well as the lingering impacts in 2021, fatalities and serious injuries in 2020 and 2021 actually increased relative to previous years. Further, it was noted that 2022 data was not yet complete and therefore was not used for target setting purposes.

For fatalities, MassDOT was unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets, so they set their targets by projecting 2022 fatalities to be equal to 3% higher than the state's lowest year in recent history, and projecting 2023 fatalities to be equal to 3% lower than the lowest year. This methodology was developed in order to project a future downward trend based on the data available at the time. The fatality rate is calculated using the five-year average fatalities divided by the five-year average of VMT. For MassDOT, the CY 2023 total fatality safety target is 355 and the rate is 0.59. Each were derived using a similar process.

For serious injuries, MassDOT was also unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets, although the methodology to set the serious injury targets differed from the way

fatality targets were defined. In this case, the targets were developed by projecting the 2022 annual serious injuries to be equal to the lowest year in recent history and the 2023 annual serious injuries to continue downward at an approximate 10% annual decrease, which reflects the average decrease in the years in which the state experienced reductions in serious traffic injuries. This methodology was developed in order to project future downward trends based on the data available at the time. The serious injury rate is calculated using the five-year average fatalities divided by the five-year average VMTs. For MassDOT, the CY 2023 total serious injuries safety target is 2,569 and the rate is 4.25. Using a similar process for the CMMPO, the total serious injuries safety target is 243 and the rate is 4.37.

For total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities, MassDOT was also unable to use a pure trendline approach to set CY 2023 targets. To set the total combined non-motorized injuries & fatalities, the fatality methodology was used to set the CY 2023 target. For MassDOT, the CY 2023 combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities total is 437. Using a similar process for the CMMPO, the CY 2023 total combined non-motorized injuries and fatalities total is 29.

As for next steps, MPOs must either set their own five quantifiable safety targets or adopt MassDOT's safety targets as an action item by February 28, 2023. Once adopted, the safety targets must be included in the FFY 2024-2028 TIPs. Mr. Krasnecky noted that in recent years all MPOs have adopted MassDOT targets.

**On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Otto Lies, the members unanimously voted to recommend that the CMMPO adopt MassDOT's CY 2023 Safety (PM1) targets.**

### **Staff Updates**

Rich Rydant noted that staff will be attending the major annual MARPA meeting with MassDOT tomorrow, Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. At the meeting, staff will be receiving guidance on the UPWP, TIP and LRTP Certification documents. Also, on February 7<sup>th</sup>, staff will be attending the annual TIP Readiness Day to discuss the status of all currently programmed TIP projects.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Next Meetings**

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – February 22, 2023 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Otto Lies and a second from Dick Williams, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:50 PM.