



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, April 27, 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
3. Rob Raymond

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Around-the-Room Introductions

Committee Chairperson Bob Hassinger opened the meeting at 6:00 PM and asked for around the room introductions.

Approval of the March 30, 2023 T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the March 30, 2023 meeting were considered for approval. Dick Williams motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Otto Lies. All members voted to approve the minutes with one abstention from Brian Pigeon.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning endorsement of the Proposed Amendment #6 to the 2023-2027 TIP Highway Project List.

Kevin Krasnecky reviewed this agenda item with the attendees. Mr. Krasnecky noted that Proposed Amendment #6 to the 2023-2027 TIP highway project listing was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their April 19th meeting. The Proposed Amendment calls for a cost increase for three projects. These projects included:

- Cost increase of \$2,507,579 for Project #609219 – Holden – Pavement Rehabilitation on Main Street, Shrewsbury Street, and Doyle Road, from State Police Barracks to Brattle Street. STBG funds will be increased by \$5,164,257 from \$1,000,000 to a total of \$6,164,257. The new Total Project Cost is \$13,049,700.
- Cost increase of \$3,278,953 for Project #608873 – Spencer – Roadway Rehabilitation of Meadow Road. CMAQ funds will increase by \$163,185, STBG funds will increase by \$1,326,103, and TAP funding will be added in the amount of \$1,790,665. The updated Total Project Cost is \$12,821,789.
- Cost increase of \$1,034,249 for Project #610826 – Sturbridge – Bridge Replacement, S-30-019, Champeaux Road over Long Pond. The Statewide STBG-BR-OFF funding will go from \$2,143,668 to a new Total Project Cost of \$3,177,917.

Dick Williams asked what the reason was for the cost increases of these projects. Mr. Krasnecky noted it was due to the increase in the cost of construction materials.

On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Brian Pigeon, the members unanimously voted to recommend Endorsement of the Proposed Amendment #6 to the 2023-2027 TIP Highway Project Listing.

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning endorsement of the Draft 2024-2028 TIP.

Kevin Krasnecky reviewed this agenda item with the members. Mr. Krasnecky began by saying that the Draft 2024-2028 TIP was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their April 19th meeting. Mr. Krasnecky also noted that besides the project listings, staff compiles a TIP summary document and accompanying Technical Appendix, as required.

Next, Mr. Krasnecky summarized the regional target projects and noted that the statewide projects stayed the same as what was presented at the March meeting. After the highway projects, Mr. Krasnecky discussed the Draft 2024-2028 TIP transit project listing. It was noted that the same types of projects are included in all five years of the project listing. The projects include the purchasing of new support equipment, spare parts, bus shelters, and electronic signage. Other projects include operating assistance for the fixed-route service, renovations to the WRTA Hub and Operations & Maintenance Facility, and ongoing Union Station rehabilitation improvements. Mr. Krasnecky also noted that the WRTA is purchasing 23 new electric buses over the next four years. Additionally, 17 new paratransit vans will be purchased over two years. The total funding for each year is \$38.6 Million in 2024, \$34.6 Million in 2025, \$33 Million in 2026, \$31.9 Million in 2027, and \$29.1 Million in 2028.

Dick Williams asked if the new electric buses will be an improvement over the current ones. Mr. Krasnecky said that they are using a different company and are anticipated to be better.

On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Otto Lies, the members unanimously voted to Endorse the Draft 2024-2028 TIP.

Long Range Transportation Plan

- Socio-Economic Projections

Rob Raymond presented this agenda item. Mr. Raymond started off the presentation saying the Federal regulation requires socioeconomic and population projections to guide the development of the LRTP. This includes how many people will live in the region and where they will live, as well as how many people will work in the region and where they will work. This helps inform the planning process by identifying growth areas, identifying transportation system deficiencies, and helping establish travel/commuting patterns.

MassDOT took the lead in developing the population and employment projections. Additionally, the UMass Donahue Institute and MAPC helped as well as all the RPA's. Between the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI), MAPC, and UrbanSim Model, the projections follow a workflow using data on population, households, household characteristics, MA resident labor force, estimates of incommuters, industry projections, and employment. This whole process

starts at the state, which comes up with state-level forecasts and works with the regions to come up with population, household, and employment projections for each of the planning agencies. From here, the UrbanSim Model is used to allocate growth to 2020 Census Block groups. That projection data is then used for town totals, which are used for the transportation analysis zones that make up the regional travel demand forecasting model, which are different than 2020 Census Blocks.

Regarding national population trends, the U.S. population grew by only 0.1% from July 1, 2020, to July 1, 2021. This can be attributed to decreased international migration, decreased fertility, and increased mortality due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. As for retirement trends, by 2030, more than one in five Americans will be over age 65. This additional information is being used to come up with population and workforce projections at the state level.

Moving on, Mr. Raymond discussed four maps that showed forecasting for towns across the state for percent change for population in households, households with children, workers, and jobs from 2020 to 2050.

Next, Mr. Raymond discussed the MassDOT/UMDI methodology for population forecasting out to 2050. Five-year age groupings were used with cohorts for births, deaths, and migration. CMRPC also did its own set of forecasting using a separate methodology. This is because MassDOT represents their projections as a bottom, or low forecast; the MassBuilds Database influences projections, but MassBuilds only includes active projects; MassDOT projections have a conservative view of in-migration; MassDOT projections have a conservative view of higher education and the ability of the CMRPC region to retain graduates; and historically, MassDOT projections have been conservative. To build a more optimistic set of projections for the region, CMRPC applied previously computed absolute growth rates to new 2020 census numbers. Therefore, while MassDOT population projections for the region show slight increases in population out to 2040 and then a decrease in population out to 2050, the CMRPC population projections show a steady increase in population all the way out to 2050. Similarly, while MassDOT employment projections indicate only slight growth for the region out to 2050, CMRPC employment projections show steady growth for the region out to 2050.

Following this, Mr. Raymond showed a set of maps for both population and employment projections to show growth in each CMRPC community out to 2050. For each projection there were three sets of maps that were split into three 10-year spans (2020-2030, 2030-2040, and 2040-2050). Growth was symbolized by "Below Average Growth", "Average Growth", and "Above Average Growth". For population projections, there was "Above Average Growth" throughout the majority of the region from 2020 to 2030, however that tapers off to become a majority of "Average Growth" and "Below Average Growth" between 2030 and 2050. For employment projections, the region was split between "Below Average Growth" and "Above Average Growth" from 2020 to 2030. From 2030 to 2040, the region becomes a mix of all types

of employment growth, and from 2040 to 2050, the region experiences a mix of mostly “Average Growth” and “Above Average Growth”.

As for the next steps, staff will input both the MassDOT and CMMPO projections into the CMRPC travel demand model for scenario planning. The RCCP staff will also utilize both MassDOT and CMMPO projections for scenario planning in the CMRPC regional plan, *Imagine 2050*. Further, staff will continue to monitor local, regional, and state datasets in preparation for future LRTPs and other related efforts.

Mr. Williams commented that he sees more growth in Rutland than what the projections are showing.

➤ Financial Plan

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item. First, Mr. Rydant discussed a table that shows regionally-estimated target funds provided by MassDOT until 2050, which are allocated in five-year bands. As part of current TIP funding, total available funding from FY2024 to FY2025 is \$52,397,899. From FY2026 to FY2030, total available funding is \$154,432,094. From FY2031 to FY2035, total available funding is \$174,436,471. From FY2036 to FY2040, total available funding is \$194,518,660. From FY2041 to FY2045, total available funding is \$213,832,411 and from FY2046 to FY2050, total available funding is \$235,849,508. This comes to a total of \$1,025,467,044 in total available funding provided by MassDOT from 2024 to 2050 for the region. As MassDOT only provided funding up to 2044, staff used a 2% increase per year for the remaining years up to 2050.

Mr. Rydant then discussed the table that showed the Programmatic Areas that were established in the previous LRTP, and the percentages and dollars associated with each that were determined by the CMMPO. The table also included information on the percentages and dollar amounts from the TIP (FFYs2022-2028) to show what has actually been allocated within the Programmatic Areas. While some Programmatic Areas align closely between the LRTP and with how TIP funding is actually being spent (Major Infrastructure Projects, Climate Change and Resiliency), there are differences with other areas (System Maintenance and Operations, Active Transportation, and Transit Support).

Staff conducted extensive public outreach as part of the development process for the LRTP, *2050 Connections*. A pie chart was displayed showing a breakdown of public survey results of transportation priorities. These priorities included improving pedestrian infrastructure, improving public transportation, reducing traffic congestion, reducing vehicle crashes, maintaining pavement conditions, stormwater management, expanding bicycle infrastructure, EV charging infrastructure, accommodating freight needs, and expanding trail networks. Using the in-house data management systems, staff were able to run a budgeting scenario for how much it would cost to complete many of the identified potential projects in the region. For

example, it would take about \$100 million to replace 100 culverts, about \$256 million for all planned Complete Streets projects in approved Prioritization Plans, and \$80 million for pavement structural improvements on 74.4 miles of federal-aid roadways with poor pavement conditions.

Considering all the public stakeholder priorities and analysis results, staff crafted two (2) options for target funding percentages for each of the Programmatic Areas. “Option 1” aligns closely with what has been traditionally spent on the TIP (FFY2022-2028). “Option 2” is the transportation planning staff’s preferred option, and it takes both the public comment and data into account to establish a scenario that staff believes works better for the region going forth.

The CMMPO agreed with staff’s preferred “Option 2” for featuring and highlighting in the LRTP. The percentage breakdown by Programmatic Area for “Option 2” is:

- Major Infrastructure Projects – **15%**
- System Maintenance and Operations – **38%**
- Active Transportation – **30%**
- Climate Change and Resiliency – **12%**
- Transit Support – **5%**

Bob Hassinger commented on being cautious of the Maintenance funding for the region as there are a lot of bridges and roadways that need to be continually maintained.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant mentioned that the MassDOT Innovation Conference will be held at the DCU Center next week on May 2nd and May 3rd. Also, the Transportation staff is poised to move to the MassDOT District #3 building in the near future.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – May 24, 2023 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Dick Williams and a second from Otto Lies, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:55 PM.