



## **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, April 28, 2022 in-person at the CMRPC Office and also using Zoom.

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

1. Bob Hassinger, Grafton, Committee Chairperson
2. Matt Stencel, Sutton
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 March 31, 2022 T-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the March 31, 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.

### **2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning Endorsement of Proposed Amendment #4 to the Highway Project Listing.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item to the group. Mr. Krasnecky noted that the Proposed Amendment #4 to the 2022-2026 TIP highway project listing was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Proposed Amendment calls for an addition of a statewide project to FFY 2022. The project is being added to the Bridge Systematic Maintenance program with a total cost of \$8,741,567. The new project is:

- OXFORD – STRUCTURAL STEEL CLEANING, PAINTING & VARIOUS REPAIRS OF OVERHEAD BRIDGES ON I-395: O-06-033 (1PX), O-06-034 (1PY), O-06-035 (1Q2) & O-06-040 (1QD)

Mr. Krasnecky also said that there is a virtual public meeting to discuss Proposed Amendment #4 on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 5:00 PM. There were no questions regarding this amendment.

**On a motion from Brian Pigeon and a second from Dick Williams, the members unanimously voted to recommend Endorsement of Proposed Amendment #4 to the 2022 – 2026 TIP Highway project listing.**

### **2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning Endorsement of the Draft 2023-2027 TIP.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item to the group. Mr. Krasnecky began by saying that the Draft 2023-2027 TIP was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Krasnecky also noted that besides the project listings, staff compiled a TIP summary document and accompanying Technical Appendix, as required. Next, Mr. Krasnecky briefly mentioned all of the regional target and statewide projects included in the draft highway project listing. Dick Williams asked about the Holden Salisbury Street bridge project. Rich Rydant said the bridge would likely be widened for bike and pedestrian accommodations. It could also be raised to allow for double-stack rail cars, but it is unknown at

this time. Mr. Williams also asked if the P&W still owned the rail as included in the project description. Mr. Rydant said the Genesee & Wyoming (G&W) Inc. now owns the rail line.

Mr. Krasnecky then discussed the Draft 2023-2027 TIP transit project listing. It was noted that the same types of projects are included in all five years of the listing. The projects include purchasing numerous new buses as well as some new vans and support vehicles. Other projects include the purchasing of new support equipment, spare parts, bus shelters, and electronic signage. The remaining projects are for operating assistance for the fixed-route service, renovations to the WRTA Hub and Operations & Maintenance Facility, and ongoing Union Station rehabilitation improvements. Total funding for each year is \$23.9 Million in 2023, \$24.4 Million in 2024, \$26.4 Million in 2025, \$24.7 Million in 2026, and \$25.5 Million in 2027.

Dick Williams asked if the new bus purchases are for the expansion of service or simply to replace the older buses. Mr. Krasnecky responded by saying the new buses to be purchased will only replace the existing fleet.

**On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Matt Stencel, the members unanimously voted to recommend Endorsement of the Draft 2023 – 2027 TIP.**

#### **CMRPC Air Quality Module – Presentation & Discussion**

Zack Blais presented on a new “Air Quality Module”, part of the ongoing “Environmental Toolbox Series”. The Air Quality Module focused on the topic of public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.

In brief, the Module reviewed current federal and state goals for EV charging infrastructure; the basics of what an EV is; the basics of what EV charging infrastructure is; the current landscape of EV charging in the region; ways to think about expanding public EV charging infrastructure in the region’s communities; as well as which grants and other funding opportunities can help procure and install EV charging infrastructure. The purpose of the module is to provide the region with a foundation to begin identifying potential locations for public EV charging infrastructure in their communities, beyond those that currently exist.

Transportation produces the most emissions out of any other economic sector, and EVs have been emerging as a popular tool to help dramatically curb transportation emissions. Recently, both federal and state goals have been set for either EV adoption or EV charging infrastructure. While the federal government has set goals for EV charging infrastructure, the Commonwealth currently does not have a goal for a specific amount of EV charging infrastructure to reach in the planning region. Despite that, careful planning and an equitable expansion of EV charging infrastructure can help increase the rate of EV adoption in the Commonwealth, as well as help improve air quality.

There are three different types of EVs:

- **Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV, mostly referred to as EV)** – powered only by electricity
- **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV)** – can be powered by both electricity and gasoline
- **Hybrid Electric Vehicle** – powered by both electricity and gasoline (does not plug into a charger)

While there are many reasons to go electric and develop EV charging infrastructure, three main benefits of transitioning are 1) improving the environment and air quality, 2) saving money and fuel costs, and 3) improving energy security. Despite the clear benefits EVs offer, major challenges continue to hold people back from transitioning. Other than issues with pricing, both “range anxiety” and “time-to-charge anxiety” pose a major challenge. Due to an inconsistent system of EV charging infrastructure as well as some technology that lacks efficient charging time, potential drivers are worried about purchasing an EV due to not knowing where the next charging station is, and, further, how long it will take them to charge once they get there. An equitable and consistent planning network of EV charging infrastructure can help push through these challenges and help improve EV adoption.

When it comes to charging an EV there are 3 levels of charging: Level 1, Level 2, and DC Fast Charging. In brief, Level 1 is the slowest charging rate, Level 2 is a slightly more efficient charging rate, and DC Fast Charging enables rapid charging:

- **Level 1:** 2 to 5 miles of range per 1 hour of charging
- **Level 2:** 10 to 20 miles of range per 1 hour of charging
- **DC Fast Charging:** 60 to 80 miles of range per 20 minutes of charging

Using an ArcGIS Dashboard, staff showed the current “landscape” of EV charging infrastructure in the CMRPC planning region. Currently, Alternative Fuel Data Center (AFDC) data was used to show that there are at least 142 EV charging station locations in the region; 136 of these are public and 6 are private. The overwhelming majority of these charging stations are networked by ChargePoint about 116 charging stations. Thanks to MassDOT’s Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), data was also used to show EV ownership trends throughout the region, symbolized by different range levels (i.e., 1-150 vehicles). The dashboard developed by staff is a great tool for communities to use to help identify and think about where they could potentially install additional chargers.

Following this, the Module reviewed some ideas to help communities identify new locations for EV charging infrastructure, planning for equity, and what to consider when procuring and installing EV charging infrastructure. A comprehensive list of potential locations for EV charging infrastructure was listed, which included rural corridors, park-and-ride lots, shopping mall parking lots, municipal parking lots, and major corridors, among many others. As the dashboard emphasized, there are massive gaps in the CMRPC planning region and it is

important for the communities to be creative to target locations for new charging infrastructure. Equity must play a key role in this process to ensure that those who have been disproportionately impacted by prior transportation planning decisions and the resulting emissions also see the health and economic benefits of EV charging infrastructure.

For procuring and installing charging infrastructure, there are many things to consider when planning for an EV charging project. For example, costs, signage requirements, parking, type of equipment, needs, operations and maintenance, fees, among others. To conclude, staff reviewed several grants and funding opportunities to help procure and install EV charging infrastructure. These included CMAQ, Green Communities Grant Program, Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program (MassEVIP) Public Access Charging Incentives, MassEVIP DC Fast Charging Incentives, MassEVIP Workplace and Fleet Charging Incentives, National Grid EV charging funding options, and Eversource EV charging funding options.

Moving forward, staff will continue to work to help our communities to identify more specific charging locations and funding options.

Otto Lies commented that he has been following the proliferation of EVs for quite some time. Mr. Lies asked where will the electricity come from to power all of the EV charging stations. Rich Rydant commented that the electrical grid would need to be improved and additional sources would likely be needed. It is largely unknown at this time how the increased usage of electricity will affect the power grid.

### **Staff Updates**

Rich Rydant mentioned the RCCP staff's regional plan "Imagine2050" effort is underway. The first meetings of the Imagine2050 Steering Committee and complementary Technical Advisory Committee were held in February and April, respectively.

### **New Business**

None

### **Next Meetings**

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, May 26, 2022 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.