



## **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, June 29, 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
6. Jeff Howland, New Braintree

### **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 6:00 PM and asked for around the room introductions.

### **Approval of the May 25, 2023 T-Committee Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the May 25, 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.

### **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 2023-2027 TIP Transit Amendment #8.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Mr. Krasnecky noted that Amendment #8 was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Proposed Amendment #8 includes the addition of several projects as part of the Community Transit Grant Program (FTA 5310) Vehicle Awards. These projects included:

- Add WRTA011548 – WRTA Buy Replacement Van (5-1 type E) to FFY 2023 in the amount of \$106,000 under 5310 funding source.
- Add WRTA011549 – WRTA Buy Replacement Vans (5-1 type E2a) to FFY 2023 and 2024. \$93,360 of 5310 funding will be added to 2023 and \$23,340 of GOBOND funding will be added in 2024. The total cost of the project is \$116,700.
- Add WRTA011550 – WRTA Buy Replacement Vans (5-3 LF) to FFY 2023 and 2024. \$453,413 of 5310 funding will be added to 2023 and \$106,555 of GOBOND funding will be added to 2024. The total cost of the project is \$559,968.
- Add WRTA011570 – Town of Uxbridge – Buy Replacement Van (5310 Carryover) to FFY 2023 in the amount of \$78,604 under 5310 funding source.
- Add WRTA011574 – Town of Millville – Buy Expansion Van (5310) to FFY 2023 in the amount of \$78,604. \$62,883 is 5310 funding and 15,721 is LF funding.

Jeff Howland noted that the dollar amounts for the Town of Millville on the summary sheet did not add up to the total amount listed. Mr. Krasnecky said it was a typographic error and that the total cost of \$78,604 is the correct amount. The correct amounts were listed on the Transit project listing. Dick Williams asked if the new vans were electric. Mr. Krasnecky said that they were not electric. Otto Lies commented that he recently talked to the WRTA Administrator,

Dennis Lipka, about the number of electric buses that the WRTA will be purchasing over the next few years and how they will charge them. Mr. Lies suggested that someone from the WRTA provide a presentation at a future T-Committee meeting regarding the electric buses and the charging procedures.

**On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Jeff Howland, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of the Proposed 2023-2027 TIP Transit Amendment #8.**

### **Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

- **Potential Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning endorsement of the Draft LRTP, 2050 Connections.

Rich Rydant presented this item. There was a brief description of the Table of Contents, and the first chapter breaks down what the LRTP is, what public outreach has been done, and discusses the five programmatic areas. The second chapter reviews the planning considerations, which include scenario planning, planning factors, emphasis areas, and resources. The third chapter identifies linkages, which include land use projections and the transportation impacts as well as linking the document to the CMRPC Regional Plan *Imagine2050*. The fourth chapter reviews the planning areas, modes, and related programmatic areas. The included modes are freight, transit, non-motorized transportation, highways, and airports. The planning areas are safety, congestion management, asset management, environment, and emerging technologies.

Chapter five has all the needs of the region for each programmatic area and prioritizes them into various studies, initiatives, and projects. These needs were developed from regional workshops, equity analysis, greenhouse gas savings, modal plans, and much more. Public meetings and a web map were also utilized to help identify the various needs and priorities. The sixth chapter is the financial plan, which is broken down by the five programmatic areas: active transportation, major infrastructure projects, system maintenance and operations, transit support, and climate change and resiliency. The anticipated funding between 2024 and 2050 is \$1,025,467,044. Both highway and transit financials are included in the chapter. Mr. Rydant also noted the listing of major infrastructure (MI) highway projects for each of the 5-year bands of the LRTP out to 2050. Additionally, major transit projects were also summarized. Lastly, chapter 7 includes the air quality conformity and GHG assessment. This chapter shows the overall emissions reductions from all the MI projects. The results show a reduction in GHG emissions and improvements in air quality in the region.

Mr. Rydant noted that a virtual public meeting for the draft LRTP will be hosted by staff on July 10, 2023 at 5 PM.

Dick Williams commented that Route 49 was not one of the Major Infrastructure (MI) projects included in the LRTP. Rick Baker asked how many public comments does staff expect to receive

and if any of them will be negative. Mr. Rydant anticipates minimal comments from the public but will likely receive comments from MassDOT and our federal partners FHWA & FTA. Staff does not anticipate any drastic or major changes to the final document.

**On a motion from Jeff Howland and a second from Rick Baker, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), 2050 Connections.**

### **Trails Accessibility Project Presentation**

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. The presentation was about the CMRPC Inclusive and Accessible Trails Toolkit Project that RCCP staff is currently working on. The goal of the project is to create an Inclusion and Accessibility Trail Guide. This guide will serve as a toolkit to assess and improve knowledge, accessibility, and utilization of trails across the region. The hope is to increase outdoor recreational opportunities for all populations and the project is funded with a Mass Trails Grant provided by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The Toolkit aims to create a rating/grading system for trails; provide recommendations for improving access to trails; develop mapping criteria to highlight accessibility concerns along trails; and demonstrate examples of the toolkit being utilized on seven trails in the region. Potential users of the Toolkit include local governments, land trusts, trail committees, trail users, and other landowners.

There will be a Youth Trails Stewardship Pilot Program to help with the effort in which CMRPC will partner with the YMCA. The youth will assist with the Toolkit, which will include developing ranking criteria and performing trail audits. They will also assist with general trail mapping activities and the program will also conduct a trail walk in the region, which will include a trail event for all ages.

Several aspects are being considered for accessibility. These include knowledge and awareness of a trail; location of and transportation access to a trail; physical features of a trail; and comfort while on a trail. There have been two previous trail dialogue events and another sometime in September 2023 to go over the trail audit results and overview of the finalized grading rubric.

Next steps of the project include finalizing a draft rubric, forming the Youth Stewardship Program, completing the trail audits on seven trails in the region by the end of July/early August, and completing the Toolkit and presenting the findings by Fall 2023. The project is expected to be fully completed by December 2023.

Bob Hassinger noted that a popular trail in Grafton might have to be shut down unless the land trust can find the money to make it handicap accessible. Dick Williams asked if it is the State

Parks or the watershed that run the trails. Mr. Krasnecky said he was unaware of the ownership.

### **Staff Updates**

Rich Rydant mentioned that the MassDOT's Moving Together Conference will be held in Boston on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the new location of the Sheraton Boston Hotel. Additionally, there is an article in the CMRPC newsletter about the I-495/I-290 interchange. Staff are currently assisting the town of Berlin and MassDOT with potential mitigation efforts regarding the diversion of Interstate traffic to local roadways due to the interchange construction.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

### **Next Meetings**

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, July 19, 2023 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – July 26, 2023 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Dick Williams and a second from Jeff Howland, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:53 PM.