



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, June 30, 2022 in-person at the CMRPC Office and also 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
3. Zack Blais

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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 26, 2022 T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the May 26, 2022 meeting were considered for approval. Jeff Howland motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Dick Williams. 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 #6 to the Highway Project Listing.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item to the group. Mr. Krasnecky noted that the Proposed Amendment #6 to the 2022-2026 TIP highway project listing was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their June 15th meeting. The Proposed Amendment calls for the following changes to the highway project listing.

Highway Project Listing (FFY 2022)

- Increase cost of Project #608432 – Rutland – Reconstruction of Route 56 (Pommogussett Road) by \$1,028,660. The updated target funding is \$7,181,881 of STBG and the additional Statewide STBG funding is \$81,269. The new total project cost is \$7,263,150.

Dick Williams commented that the cost increase seems like too much for this project. Jeff Howland asked what caused the cost increase. Mr. Krasnecky noted that it was due to cost of materials, utility relocation, and additional drainage work. Bob Hassinger asked how this affects the overall budget for the year. Mr. Krasnecky said that the remaining target funds would be used for this increase and there would be zero dollars remaining in FFY 2022.

On a motion from Jeff Howland and a second from Brian Pigeon, the members voted 4-2 to recommend Endorsement of Proposed Amendment #6 to the 2022 – 2026 TIP Highway project listing.

CMMPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – Presentation & Discussion

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item to the group. The timeline for the LRTP, named 2050 Connections, will include a kick-off and public outreach effort in June/July 2022. Following this, staff will develop a needs assessment by September 2022 and then scenario planning by December 2022. By March 2023 staff will work on validating LRTP priorities and the financial plan. The LRTP will include a substantial amount of public outreach and stakeholder

engagement. By June 2023 staff plans to release the Draft LRTP for public comments and will approach the CMMPO to endorse the LRTP by July 2023.

The strategy for the development of the LRTP will focus on the three key areas of planning, actors, and implementation. For planning, it is important to reflect on where the CMMPO is currently at and what it plans to accomplish by 2050. In terms of actors, the development of the LRTP will focus heavily on who is at the table, who is on the sideline, and who is missing. It is very important to include everyone that wishes to participate in the process and development of the LRTP. Finally, when implementing the LRTP, staff must work to attempt to guarantee the best use of the resources available in the region.

The structure of the LRTP will include five programmatic areas. These include:

- Major Infrastructure Projects
- Asset Management and Operations
- Livability and Healthy Aging
- Transit Mobility and Management
- Climate Change and Resiliency

As was previously mentioned, public involvement will be a substantial piece of the development of the LRTP. Staff will work heavily with the public to inform, consult, involve, partner, empower, and co-create with them in the development process. Methods to do so will include surveys, community events, interviews, and targeted outreach, among others. Staff will use data to determine areas of opportunity and regional priorities, conduct regional workshops to identify and validate Regionally Significant projects, use surveys to interact with the public to identify priorities, identify scenarios to help determine the best mix of projects to accomplish regional goals for 2050, engage in virtual public involvement to increase long-term engagement with the public and partner communities, and involve underserved and under-represented populations that face transportation disadvantages.

Performance management data sources will continue to be used in the development of this plan, which include pavement conditions, accessibility to jobs, culvert assessments, truck travel time and reliability, and ADA ramp conditions, among many others.

Workshops will be held in each transportation planning subregion and will also include surveys to help determine the status of needs included in the LRTP, multimodal recommendations, projects with regional significance, as well as local priorities.

The scenario planning effort of the LRTP development will include 4 options:

- *No-Build Option* – what if everything continues as is without any improvements to the transportation network?
- *Build Option 1* – what if all the projects listed in the LRTP are built?

- *Build Option 2* – what if some of the projects listed in the LRTP are built?
- *Build Option X, Y, Z* – what are the impacts to transportation disadvantaged populations, financial constraints, emissions reductions, population and employment projections, among others?

Mentioned above, transportation disadvantaged populations consist of more than just identified Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods. They are defined as “those individuals that are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation services and are dependent on others to access healthcare, employment, education, shopping, social activities, and other life-sustaining activities”. This includes physical or mental disability, age, income, transit dependence, households with no access to a car, households with no access to broadband, and LEP populations.

Currently, staff is working on creating a website for the LRTP, utilizing the ArcGIS Hub application. The LRTP Hub site will be a virtual engagement tool that presents information, data, and opportunities to participate remotely. More information regarding the Hub site will be provided at future meetings.

Bob Hassinger commented about the impacts of railroads on local roads and indicated that the communities could use some help on this topic. Dick Williams asked about the increase of technology in data collection and other work activities. Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that staff use data provided by MassDOT through RITIS for travel time reliability figures for both cars and trucks. This data is used for one of the CMMPO’s congestion performance measures. Rich Rydant also added that staff now uses a recently purchased video camera for conducting Turning Movement Counts (TMCs) at study intersections.

CMRPC Culvert Assessment Website update

Zack Blais presented this agenda item to the group. Mr. Blais gave a brief description of CMRPC’s Culvert Assessment Program Hub. It was noted what type of information is included within the hub site, such as the regional culverts dashboard, West Brookfield Culvert Assessment dashboard, regional culvert and small bridge locations, and other various maps and data layers. Further, several survey and data forms from the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) website are also available for download on the hub site.

Survey forms are also included for the public or towns to fill out and indicate where the problems areas are within the region or in their community. With this data, staff can create a data layer showing the publicly-identified problems areas in the CMMPO region.

Otto Lies asked if staff received the culvert data from the communities or somewhere else. Mr. Blais said the culvert layer was not from the communities. The NAACC places points on a map where streams cross the roadways, but staff can update the layer when we complete surveys in the communities.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant noted that the CMRPC Legislative Affairs Committee recently held a meeting regarding East/West Passenger Rail. Mr. Rydant also said the town of Uxbridge requested a meeting to discuss both shuttle service to commuter rail and the completion of planned regional trails, among other topics. Additionally, Mr. Blais was asked to participate in a peer experience meeting about hybrid and electric vehicles. Lastly, Faye Rhault has been carrying out listening sessions concerning Age Friendly Initiatives and also dealing with the burgeoning Worcester eBike program.

New Business

Otto Lies commented that the town of Holden has about 200 electric vehicles in one of the electricity zones. He reported that along those streets the voltage has dropped and lighting intensity has dipped. It was later determined that the existing transmission lines are not up to current standards and that the town is now replacing these power lines. The existing infrastructure can't handle the current needs.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, July 20, 2022 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, July 27, 2022 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, July 28, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Adjournment

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