



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, February 29, 2024 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. 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 January 25, 2024 T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the January 25, 2024 meeting were considered for approval. Dick Williams motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Rick Baker. Members voted to approve the minutes.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Proposed Amendment #4 to the 2024-2028 TIP Highway Project Listing.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Proposed Amendment #4 included changes to the FFY 2024 to FFY 2028 TIP Highway list. The changes include:

- #612874 Shrewsbury-Worcester-Bridge Preservation, S-14-115 (1RA & 1RB), I-290 (EB & WB) Over Combination of Lake Quinsigamond and Lake Avenue North
 - Move project from FFY 2024 to FFY 2025
- Increase cost of #606517 West Brookfield – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 9, from Ware T.L. to 850' West of Welcome Road (Phase 1)
 - New Total Project Cost: \$9,661,739
 - Decrease STBG funding: \$638,190
 - Add TAP funding: \$648,738
 - Add Statewide TAP funding: \$1,574,365

There were no comments or questions.

On a motion from Dick Williams and a second from Rick Baker, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of Proposed Amendment #4 to the 2024-2028 TIP Highway project listing.

- 2025-2029 TIP Readiness Day Updates

Kevin Krasnecky provided updates from TIP Readiness Day on February 6, 2024. Mr. Krasnecky discussed the status of numerous projects and their recommended programming year. The following updates were provided:

- **Uxbridge #608174 – Reconstruction of Route 122 (South Main St):** Still on track for 2024.

- **Shrewsbury/Worcester #612874 – Bridge Maintenance, I-290 over Lake Quinsigamond & Lake Ave North:** Recommended pushing back to 2025 because of scope change.
- **Worcester #608961 – Intersection Improvements on Chandler St & May St:** MassDOT waiting on WSU to review design. Recommended pushing back to 2026/2027. Staff looking to keep project in 2025 and will schedule meeting with the City of Worcester.
- **Southbridge #608862 – Bridge Replacement, Mill St over McKinstry Brook and Quinebaug River:** Design has been delayed and was recommended to push back to 2026.
- **Upton #608490 – Route 140 Resurfacing & Roundabout Construction:** Many Right of Way and utility concerns. Recommended pushing back to 2026.
- **Dudley #609186 – Bridge Replacement, Route 131 over Quinebaug River:** Need design and Right of Way submission. Recommended pushing back to 2026.
- **Worcester #612608 – Flood Relief on Route 20:** Could potentially move up to 2024, depending on design and Right of Way submissions.
- **Auburn #612192 – Bridge Replacement, US 20 WB over I-395:** Still need design and Right of Way submissions. Might need to push back to 2026.
- **Worcester #608990 & 612011 – Chandler St Improvements Phase I & II:** Large project and a lot of Right of Way. Phase I recommended pushing back to 2027. Phase II could potentially move back to 2028.
- **Northbridge #609441 – Intersection Improvements at Route 122 & School St:** Municipal Right of Way concerns need to be resolved. Recommended pushing back to 2027. Staff would like to keep in 2026 and will schedule a meeting with the town.
- **Charlton #612181 – Bridge Replacement, US 20 over Cady Brook:** 25% design due 3/9/24 and needs hydraulic study. Recommended pushing back to 2027.
- **Shrewsbury #607764 – Intersection Improvements at US 20 & Grafton St:** MassDOT to meet on this project to find best path forward. Need to be consistent with Route 20 Corridor Plan. Recommended pushing back to 2027.
- **Auburn #612191 – Bridge Replacement, Oxford St over Kettle Brook:** Need design and Right of Way submissions. Recommended pushing back to 2027.
- **Grafton #612510 – Bridge Replacement, Route 140 over MBTA Railroad:** 25% design due on 5/5/24. Potentially push back to 2027.
- **East Brookfield #612629 – Route 9 Resurfacing:** Project is being deactivated and this section of Route 9 will be resurfaced under Districtwide resurfacing contract.

- **Charlton/Sturbridge #611967 – Route 49 Intersection Improvements:** 25% design expected to be completed soon. Recommended to stay in 2027 but could potentially move up to 2026.
- **West Brookfield #613143 – Bridge Replacement, Long Hill Rd over Quaboag River:** Could potentially advance as soon as 2027.

Bob Hassinger commented that were a lot of statewide projects being pushed back this year.

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation to the CMMPO concerning the ranking of FFY 2029 projects.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this agenda item. Mr. Krasnecky told the group that the scoring was completed for four (4) FFY 2029 candidate projects which are Rutland (Route 122/Pleasantdale Road), West Brookfield (Route 9-Phase 3), Westborough (Route 30), and Worcester (Lake Avenue/Bigelow Davis Parkway).

Next, Mr. Krasnecky began to summarize the scoring criteria for all the candidate projects. Once finished, Mr. Krasnecky pointed out that the Rutland project scored the lowest with a total of 8 out of 27 points. The other projects tied with a score of 15, out of a possible 27 points. Mr. Krasnecky then asked the group to provide their rankings of the candidate projects to determine which ones should be programmed in FFY 2029.

Rick Baker asked what a typical score is for TIP projects. Mr. Krasnecky said that the average score was probably between 10 and 15 points. There have only been a few projects that scored over 20 points. Rich Rydant also provided some additional information about the candidate projects for the committee to consider. Jeff Howland asked what the target funding is for FFY 2029. Mr. Krasnecky said it was around \$32 Million. Rick Baker asked if one of the projects were not programmed, would the community stop designing it. Mr. Rydant said that if a project was not programmed then the community would still likely continue the design and pursue funding next year. Jeff Howland asked if the CMMPO normally funds state highway projects with target funds. Mr. Rydant said that yes, they have been funded before.

On a motion from Jeff Howland and a second from Dick Williams, the members unanimously voted to recommend to the CMMPO to support the TIP projects of Rutland, West Brookfield, Westborough, and the Micro-Projects funding as the first priority, followed by the Worcester project as the second priority.

- TIP Design Funding Update

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item. Some communities struggle to come up with design and engineering funds for projects due to lack of Chapter 90 funds. Therefore, MPOs have worked with MassDOT to create a process to make federal funding available for design and engineering usage for project host communities. Only new projects are available for this funding assistance and FHWA and MassDOT have provided guidance. The candidate community would need to do a reimbursable contract

with MassDOT and the local match (20%) would be the responsibility of the community. The subsequent construction of the project should also be programmed on the TIP/STIP, there should be coordination with utility providers and rail operators, and there should be hiring of MassDOT prequalified A&E firms.

Further, the project would need to be initially approved by MassDOT's Project Review Committee (PRC). This new program will begin in FFY 2025, if there are available funds, and will have a maximum total design funding cap of \$1 million per year. The candidate projects will be screened using the same scoring criteria as any TIP construction project.

Next steps include setting aside design funding at the CMMPO's March TIP workshop, finalizing CMMPO Guidance during Summer 2024, and including the new guidance in the application form in the "call for projects" packet for the FFY 2026 TIP.

There were no comments or questions.

TIP/UPWP Guidance Summary

Rich Rydant presented this agenda item. As part of this guidance, the CMRPC have kept up with all federal certification review findings; public participation continues to be a primary focus of our work; staff are currently working on updating the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan; staff are working on ways to spend de-obligated Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds; staff are continuing to account for all earmarks or non-FHWA/discretionary grants; and staff are planning to set our own regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets or adopt the state targets.

There are several new focus areas, including housing coordination; TIP design funding; updating both the pedestrian and bicycle plans; CMMPO federal certification proceedings; and a possible update to the CMMPO's Public Participation Plan.

There were no questions or comments.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant provided updates on various federal grants. The Safe Street 4 All grant will be kicking off shortly. The staff is currently working with the City of Worcester on this effort. Staff are still waiting to hear on the results of the Reconnecting Communities and Thriving Communities grants. Staff are also assisting with RAISE grants for Southbridge, Worcester, and, with the approval of MRPC, the city of Gardner. Lastly, the successful E-BIKE program will be starting a second phase this year which will include additional communities besides Worcester.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – March 27, 2024 at 3:00 PM

- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, March 28, 2024 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.