



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) meeting held **Wednesday, June 20th, 2024**. This meeting was held virtually using Zoom Webinar.

- **CMMPO Members Present:**

1. Steve Woelfel – MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, designee to MassDOT Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt
2. Ann Sullivan – MassDOT Highway Division District #3, designee to MassDOT Highway Division Administrator Jonathon Gulliver
3. Joshua Rickman – WRTA Administrator
4. Bob Hassinger – designee to CMRPC Commission Chair
5. Steve Rolle – designee to City Manager Eric Batista
6. John Daniel – Southbridge, Southwest Subregion Representative

- **CMMPO Ex-Officio Members Present:**

1. Chris Klem, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
2. Joshua Barber, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- **Guests:**

1. Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District #3
2. Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District #2

- **CMRPC Staff**

1. Sujatha Krishnan, Deputy Director – Transportation
2. Kevin Krasnecky, Project Manager – Transportation
3. Zack Blais, Associate Planner – Transportation
4. Rich Rydant, Project Manager – Transportation
5. Yahaira Graxirena, Project Manager – Transportation
6. Connie Mellis, Project Manager – Transportation
7. Tyler Distefano, Assistant Planner – Transportation
8. Nathan Lewis, Assistant Planner – Transportation

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Agenda Item #1 – Introductions

CMMPO Chair Steve Woelfel opened the meeting at 4:00 PM. A roll call of CMMPO members was announced.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of May 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the May 15, 2024, meeting of the CMMPO were considered for approval. Bob Hassinger motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Ann Sullivan. A roll call vote was announced, and members voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Steve Woelfel – Yes

Bob Hassinger – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Steve Rolle – Yes

Joshua Rickman – Yes

John Daniel – Yes

Agenda Item #3 – Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item #4 – FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- **Potential Action:** Approval of the FFY 2025 UPWP

Sujatha Krishnan presented this item. Ms. Krishnan announced that staff are looking for members to vote to endorse the FFY 2025 UPWP. Ms. Krishnan provided a brief presentation to highlight updates to the draft FFY 2025 UPWP that will be included in the endorsed version. One update to the endorsed version includes the addition of a new element: Task 3.10 – Safe Streets for All (SS4A). The purpose of this element is for staff to work on the FY 2025 SS4A grant, which has 2-3 years to spend out the grant. This grant is part of the “Vision Zero” Plan and the Main/South Demonstration project in Worcester. The budget for this element is \$325,000. In addition, a public meeting was held June 3, 2024, and no comments were provided. Moreover, MassDOT OTP provided comments on the draft document during the public review and comment period. Those comments were addressed in the endorsed version.

There were no comments or questions.

Bob Hassinger made a motion and was seconded by Ann Sullivan to approve the Endorsement of the FFY 2025 UPWP. All members present voted unanimously.

Steve Woelfel – Yes

Bob Hassinger – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Steve Rolle – Yes

Joshua Rickman – Yes

John Daniel – Yes

Agenda Item #5 – Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

- **Potential Action:** Approval of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

Tyler Distefano presented this item. Mr. Distefano announced that staff are looking for members to vote to endorse the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. Mr. Distefano provided a brief presentation to highlight the comments that were received during the public review and comment period. The Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) provided several comments that

were all addressed in the endorsed version. In addition, a virtual public meeting was held on June 3, and several comments were received and considered in the endorsed version.

There were no comments or questions.

Bob Hassinger made a motion and was seconded by Joshua Rickman to approve the Endorsement of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. All members present voted unanimously.

Steve Woelfel – Yes

Bob Hassinger – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Steve Rolle – Yes

Joshua Rickman – Yes

John Daniel – Yes

Agenda Item #6 – Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

- **Potential Action:** Release of Proposed Amendment #8 to the FFY 2024 to FFY 2028 TIP Transit Project Listing for 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Proposed Amendment #8 includes adding two Community Transit Grants Program Vehicle Awards to the transit project listing:

- Add **WRTA011875** – WRTA – Purchase of Type E (6) Vans to FFY 2024 and FFY 2025
 - Total Project Cost: \$661,440
 - \$505,072 – 5310 funds programmed in FFY 2024
 - \$156,368 – GOBOND funds programmed in FFY 2025
- Add **WRTA011876** – Town of Millbury COA – Purchase of Type A-EV Van (1) to FFY 2024 and FFY 2025
 - Total Project Cost: \$109,926
 - \$21,985 – LF funds programmed in FFY 2024
 - \$87,941 – GOBOND funds programmed in FFY 2025

There were no comments or questions.

Bob Hassinger made a motion and was seconded by Steve Rolle to release Amendment #8 for 21-Day Public Review and Comment Period. All members present voted unanimously.

Steve Woelfel – Yes

Bob Hassinger – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Steve Rolle – Yes

Joshua Rickman – Yes

John Daniel – Yes

Agenda Item #7 – 2024 CMMPO Federal Certification Kickoff

Joshua Barber, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), presented this item. Mr. Barber provided a brief presentation about the upcoming Federal Certification for the CMMPO. Mr. Barber explained that the FHWA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly review the MPO's transportation planning process at least once every four years to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The CMMPO's last certification review was December 2020. Mr. Barber provided a brief overview of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process, reviewing the four key planning documents (UPWP, PPP, TIP, LRTP),

why the transportation planning process is important (i.e., it helps decide how federal dollars are allocated within the region), and who is involved (i.e., CMRPC, MassDOT, WRTA, MBTA).

Mr. Barber announced that the FHWA/FTA will hold the Federal Certification Review for the CMMPO on September 10, 2024, and a certification determination will be made approximately 90 days after the review. Determination categories include certified, certified subject to corrective actions, or not certified. If not certified, funding restrictions may be put in place. Mr. Barber explained to members that they are more than welcome to provide any input regarding the transportation planning and decision-making process administered by the CMMPO.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #8 – TIP Design Funding Policy

- **Potential Action:** Concurrence with TIP Design Funding Policy

Rich Rydant presented this item. Mr. Rydant explained that staff are looking for concurrence from the members regarding the TIP Design Funding Policy. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of Target Funding for design purposes. It is meant to guide the application of a portion of TIP target funds anticipated to be available to the planning region for the design and engineering of an eventual transportation improvement construction project. Mr. Rydant reviewed the nine policy guidelines that a municipality must adhere to if applying for TIP design funding. Below is a brief review of each guideline:

1. Funds available starting in FFY 2025. A maximum total design funding cap of \$1 million per year.
2. TIP funding for design and engineering for new design activities only. A contract with a consultant can only be procured following the award of design funding by CMMPO. Each municipality must hire MassDOT prequalified Architectural & Engineering Firm.
3. Eligible projects must be along Federal-aid eligible highways. A Management System (MS) data integration analysis will be used to assist in selecting the highest priority locations for an improvement project. Efforts should also reflect the needs included in LRTP.
4. MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC) approval of proposed project is required.
5. Municipality must enter into a reimbursable contract with MassDOT in order to receive any awarded TIP design funds.
6. Federal TIP funds will only cover up to 80% of programmed design costs. A local match of 20% is required by municipalities. TIP design funds are considered a one-time award per project, with no opportunity for amendments to cover any incurred cost increases. The municipality must also commit to fully funding any costs beyond the awarded 80%.
7. TIP design funding proposals will be scored and ranked using the same Performance Management-based criteria that has been established by the CMMPO to screen eligible TIP transportation improvement construction projects. Prioritization will be given to Environmental Justice (EJ) and Regional Environmental Justice Plus (REJ+) areas of planning region. Other equity measures are also considered.

8. For a municipality to be awarded TIP design funding, commitment to follow-through on project advertisement/construction within five years of receiving design funding is needed. A letter from the Select Board/City Council stating the commitment is required.
9. As applicable, municipal coordinated with utility providers and railroad operators is required to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential conflicts.

Following the presentation, Chris Klem asked if staff have considered a timeline for the application process and how it fits into the TIP development timeline. Ms. Krishnan replied that CMRPC staff Jeff Howland is currently meeting with towns to discuss this and that the plan is to roll this out in the fall along with the normal TIP cycle.

There were no further comments or questions.

All members voted in concurrence to move along with the presented TIP Design Funding Policy.

Agenda Item #9 – Active Transportation Updates

Yahaira Graxirena presented this item. Ms. Graxirena provided updates on Active Transportation planning. These updates included Complete Streets, Walking, Healthy Aging, Biking, and Trails.

For Complete Streets, staff have completed a Complete Streets policy with the Town of Hardwick and are currently working towards a policy with the Town of Warren.

For Walking, staff have made considerable efforts, including Walk Audits at Woodland Academy and South High Community School, attending Jeff Speck’s Lecture on a walkable Worcester and participation in Worcester’s Vision Zero Committee, attending a placemaking event for Worcester’s Vision Zero at the Vernon Hill School, and attending the WalkMassachusetts Annual Bob Sloane Walk at Union Station.

For Healthy Aging, staff have created a Pedestrian Route Map for the Town of Auburn.

For Biking, staff have also made considerable efforts, including many Bike Month events and rides, a MassBike E-Bike Program Celebration, E-Bike deployments for phase 2, and a “Bike Rodeo” at the Vernon Hill School.

Finally, for Trails, staff have participated in planning efforts at the 7-Arches Bridge in Blackstone, the Charles River Headwaters trail, and the Blackstone River Greenway. Staff have also helped complete the BWALT ArcGIS Online StoryMap and attended the public meeting with abutters. Moreover, staff have also been active in improving trails that are also accessible to schools, playgrounds, and open space within the region’s municipalities.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #10 – Staff Updates

Mr. Rydant announced that staff had been notified that the Rhode Island State Planning Office will be updating its Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and that staff will likely attend one of the public meeting.

Agenda Item #11– New Business

Mr. Klem announced that MassDOT will be hosting a public meeting on June 26 for Central Massachusetts region regarding the FFY 2025 to FFY 2029 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Agenda Item #12 – Next Meetings

- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – June 26, 2024, at 3:00PM
- CMMPO meeting (virtual) – July 17, 2024, at 4:00PM

Agenda Item #13 – Adjournment

Bob Hassinger made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Ann Sullivan. The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes prepared by: Zack Blais, Transportation Principal Planner