



## **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, June 27, 2024 using Zoom.

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

1. Bob Hassinger, Grafton, Committee Chairperson
2. Brian Pigeon, Worcester
3. Rick Baker, Boylston
4. Otto Lies, Holden

### **CMRPC Staff Present:**

1. Rich Rydant
2. Kevin Krasnecky
3. Eric Gemperline
4. Connie Mellis
5. Yahaira Graxirena

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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 30, 2024 T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the May 30, 2024 meeting were considered for approval. Brian Pigeon motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Rick Baker. Members voted to approve the minutes, with one abstention from Rick Baker.

### Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no public comments.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Proposed 2024-2028 TIP Transit Amendment #8.

Prior to Kevin Krasnecky summarizing the Proposed Amendment #8, Connie Mellis provided an overview of the MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program. Ms. Mellis said the Community Transit Grant Program was an annual competitive grant program offered by MassDOT to meet the mobility needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The program provides funds for the purchase of vehicles, mobility management activities, and operating costs. Transit authorities, municipalities, Councils on Aging (COAs), non-profit organizations, and private operators of public transit are all eligible to apply.

For capital projects, such as vehicles, MassDOT covers 80% of the cost and it requires a 20% match. Transit authorities can get their vehicles fully covered. The drivers of the vehicles will need to participate in mandatory driver training. For operating projects, the funding can be used to operate a transportation service that expands mobility to older adults and people with disabilities. The grant can pay up to 50% of the cost of operating the service and covers one year of operations. For mobility management projects, funds can be used to pay the salary of a staff person who helps older adults and people with disabilities.

Next, Mr. Krasnecky said that Proposed Amendment #8 was released for a 21-day public review and comment period by the CMMPO at their June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Amendment included the following changes to the Transit project listing.

- Add **WRTA011875 – WRTA – Purchase of Type E (6) Vans** to FFY 2024 and FFY 2025 for a total project cost of \$661,440. \$505,072 of 5310 funds will be programmed in FFY 2024 and \$156,368 in GOBOND funds will be programmed in FFY 2025.
- Add **WRTA011876 – Town of Millbury COA – Purchase of Type A-EV Van (1)** to FFY 2023 and FFY 2025 for a total project cost of \$109,926. \$21,985 in LF funds will be

programmed in FFY 2024 and \$87,941 in GOBOND funds will be programmed in FFY 2025.

There were no comments or questions.

**On a motion from Brian Pigeon and a second from Rick Baker, the members unanimously voted to recommend endorsement of the Proposed 2024-2028 TIP Amendment #8 to the CMMPO.**

### **Active Transportation Updates**

Yahaira Graxirena presented this agenda 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.

Lastly, 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 Boston Worcester Air Line Trail (BWALT) ArcGIS Online Story Map and attended a public meeting with abutters. Further, staff have 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.

### **Data Collection Updates**

Eric Gemperline presented this agenda item. Mr. Gemperline provided an update on CMRPC's data collection activities. For traffic counting, staff have nine (9) Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs), 1 Radar Recorder, and 2 Turning Movement Count (TMC) cameras. The ATRs collect volume, speed, and classification data and are conducted on federal-aid eligible roads. Staff attempts approximately 300 locations per year and the data is used in a range of planning efforts including Corridor Profile studies, TIP scoring, and signal warrant analysis.

For Culverts, these are assessed using the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocols. The type of data collected includes inlet & outlet dimensions and additional conditions like substrate, physical barriers, water depth/velocity, and internal structures. The collected data is uploaded to the NAACC Data Center and is subsequently scored to determine the “aquatic passability” of the culvert. Over the last two years, staff have completed assessments in West Brookfield and Berlin and are currently assessing culverts in both Berlin and Boylston.

Pavement data is collected on federal-aid eligible roads using the windshield survey technique looking for different distresses. An Overall Condition Index (OCI) is given to each road segment based on the distresses. The pavement survey segments serve as the base for all “Management Systems Analysis”. Communities can also request CMRPC staff to conduct a local pavement management system under a contractual arrangement.

Staff also conduct walking surveys of bicycle & pedestrian infrastructure that includes sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian-related signage and bike parking locations along federal-aid eligible roads. Local plans are also completed for towns upon request such as Complete Streets Prioritization Plans, local sidewalk prioritization plans, and walk safety audits. A bike parking inventory is also being completed in partnership with the City of Worcester.

Lastly, the staff currently has three drone pilots. Drones are used for imagery, before and after images, orthomosaic maps, 3D models, and corridor maps. Potential future uses for the drones include pavement analysis for culverts, soil volume measurements, and any other advanced techniques that can be used to benefit CMRPC’s communities.

There were no comments or questions.

### **Staff Updates**

Rich Rydant provided the staff updates. Mr. Rydant said staff responded to US DOT concerning various materials for their desk review prior to the CMMPO Certification scheduled for September 10<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for CMRPC staff to respond was June 27<sup>th</sup>. Numerous materials and links to the recently improved CMRPC agency website were provided on various potential federal review topics. Next, Mr. Rydant announced that the City of Gardner was awarded a \$1.253 million US DOT RAISE grant. CMRPC staff assisted with the grant application which was for a parking garage design in the downtown. As the grant award was just for the design, additional money will be needed for construction. Lastly, Mr. Rydant said that the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning are working on a “limited” update to the RI Long-Range Transportation Plan. Rhode Island staff will engage the public with workshops, stakeholder meetings, community events, surveys, etc. “Moving Forward 2050” is the name of the document.

### **New Business**

There was no new business.

**Next Meetings**

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, July 24, 2024 at 3:00 PM
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, July 25, 2024 at 6:00 PM

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Brian Pigeon and a second from Rick Baker, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:43 PM.