



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting held **September 25, 2024**. This meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Adam Menard – Town of Auburn
- Connor McCormack – Town of Millbury
- Thomas Ruta – MassDOT District 2
- Claudia Paiva – Latino Education Institute
- Joanne Clarke – AARP
- Matt Benoit – Town of Douglas
- Sandy Amoakohene - WDPH/CMRPHA
- Thomas Coyne - WRTA

Ex-Officio Members Present:

- N/A

CMRPC Staff Present:

- Yahaira Graxirena
- Rich Rydant
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Sujatha Krishnan
- Nathan Lewis

Guest:

- N/A

The CMMPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The CMMPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, military service, or gender identity or expression. Any person who believes himself/herself or any specific class of persons have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI or related statutes or regulations may, himself/herself or via a representative, file a complaint with the CMMPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. Contact the CMMPO Title VI Coordinator at (508) 459-3313 or titleVIcoordinator@cmrpc.org, to obtain a copy of the CMMPO Complaint Procedure and forms, or visit <http://cmrpc.org/title-vi-policy> to review online.

Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions

Chair Adam Menard opened the meeting at 3:10 PM. A roll call of CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the rest of the attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – CMMPO Federal Certification

Mrs. Sujatha Krishnan presented the item.

Krishnan provided an overview of the CMMPO on-site Federal Certification Review, outlining the agenda for the meeting. The review included discussions with FTA and FHWA personnel on a wide range of topics covered by CMRPC, from congestion management to civil rights and interagency coordination.

As the Federal Certification occurs every four years, CMRPC used this opportunity to update the federal agencies and highlight additional items beyond the set agenda.

A debrief call is expected within the next week to finalize details. A draft document will be available by mid-October, with the final report anticipated by the end of October. Our federal partners have also confirmed they will attend the MPO meeting in November to present their findings.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #3 – Age-Friendly Action Plan Presentation

Mrs. Yahaira Graxirena presented the updates related to CMRPC's Age-Friendly Action Plan.

CMRPC released the Age and Dementia Friendly Regional Action Plan last year, developed in collaboration with the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative and funded by the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. The plan aims to foster collaboration among many organizations working with older adults in the region and is a significant component of CMRPC's broader regional plan, *Imagine 2050*.

CMRPC adopted the Age Friendly Framework, used by AARP and others, which includes eight domains of livability addressing both built and social environments. Following extensive outreach, listening sessions, and surveys, our regional plan focuses on five key domains: transportation, housing, community and health services, communication, and information and regionalized services.

The transportation goals include A) Expansion of transportation services in rural communities. B) Investments in accessible, equitable, safe, and convenient multimodal

infrastructure. C) Support financial sustainability and maintenance of older adult transportation services. D) Bolster participation and recreation opportunities through transportation access.

Mrs. Graxirena proceeded to present updates of work completed or in progress under each goal. The updates provided just a snapshot of CMRPC's involvement in the transportation domain over the past year. Many organizations contributed to these efforts. CMRPC will share the draft with the partner organizations to gather updates on action items.

Also, CMRPC held the kickoff meeting for the "How Happy is the Heart of Massachusetts?" study, funded by the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging initiative, aimed at addressing social isolation and loneliness among older adults in Central Massachusetts. Following these updates, we plan to host a public event in early December to present the year's accomplishments and outline next year's work plan.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #4 – MicroProjects FFY 2026 Updates

Mrs. Yahaira Graxirena presented the MicroProjects Program.

The MicroProjects Program provides funding for first-and last-mile solutions, community transportation, and small, non-traditional transportation projects, such as bike-sharing facilities. The program has three primary goals: improving access, creating connections, and addressing gaps in the transportation network. Specifically, the program aims to enhance access to essential services, increase connections to existing transit systems, and fill gaps in underserved areas or lack transportation options.

Since the program is funded with federal dollars and programmed through the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), eligible entities include municipalities and regional transit authorities. Additionally, Councils on Aging and other non-profit organizations that provide transportation services may apply if they do so in partnership with a municipality or a regional transit authority. Applicants must provide evidence that a municipality within the CMMPO region or a regional transit authority has agreed to serve as the project proponent and fiscal manager.

The CMMPO has allocated \$400,000 annually for this program, sourced from Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. CMAQ funding is intended for local transportation projects that reduce emissions, meaning proposed projects must demonstrate air quality benefits. CMAQ funds cover up to 80% of project costs, with proponents required to provide a 20% local match. For multi-year projects, the local match is expected to increase

annually. The application process for Federal Fiscal Year 2026 funding will be opening soon.

Mrs. Graxirena mentioned that the projects will undergo the Commonwealth's CMAQ Consultation Review, conducted by MassDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This review evaluates all projects requesting CMAQ funds at the state level. The outcomes of this evaluation, combined with recommendations from the CMMPO Advisory Committee and feedback from MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning and FHWA, will inform the CMMPO's decision on which projects to include in the draft TIP, to be released for public review next year.

There were no comments or questions.

Agenda Item #5 – Advisory Committee Updates

Mrs. Yahaira Graxirena presented the Advisory Committee Updates.

Moving forward, as part of the agenda, we are introducing updates from committee members. This will provide an opportunity for members to share updates, events, and relevant information. Additionally, we aim to highlight the work of committee members and foster cross-collaboration beyond the typical CMMPO business. Members are also encouraged to bring forward topics or agenda items for discussion at future meetings.

Adam Menard asked the board if anyone had any updates to share.

He also requested a presentation about the MPO--what it does and how it can support municipalities.

Joanne Clark mentioned that she recently gave a presentation on Elderly Health Systems and expressed interest in presenting at the next meeting.

Mrs. Graxirena noted that the November and December committee meeting dates fall on holidays. Staff will send out a doodle poll to find an alternative date and gauge whether members would prefer to meet in person or virtually.

Adam Menard suggested that it would be nice to meet in person occasionally, and Conor McCormack agreed.

Agenda Item #5 – Staff Updates

Eric Gemperline has stepped down, and Nathan Lewis will be moderating future meetings. Moving forward, Nathan Lewis will handle all meeting moderation, emails, and communications related to the CMMPO Advisory Committee meetings.

Agenda Item #6 – New Business

Mrs. Yahaira Graxirena provided several updates:

- **Safe Routes to School Signs and Lines Grant:** The October deadline is approaching for the Signs and Lines Grant, which provides funding for low-cost construction projects. If you have any signage or minor infrastructure needs the grant offers up to \$10,000 and includes design assistance.
- **International Walk to School Day:** October 9th marks International Walk to School Day, and schools will be organizing events throughout the month. Additionally, October is the application deadline for the Safe Routes to School program.
- **Safe Routes to School Regional Dialogue:** On October 22nd, CMRPC will host a regional dialogue featuring coordinators from our region presenting on the Safe Routes to School program.
- **Moving Together Conference:** The Moving Together Conference will take place on October 23rd at the Sheraton Boston Hotel.
- **MassTrails Conference:** The MassTrails Conference is scheduled for October 24th- 26th. The main conference will be on October 26th, but “Municipal Friday” will be held on the 25th, with CMRPC hosting a session on economic development. On Saturday, October 26th, CMRPC will moderate a panel discussing regional trail projects.

Sujatha Krishnan provided additional updates:

- MassDOT is offering free Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) assemblies to improve pedestrian safety on locally owned roadways.

Questions and Discussions:

Sandy Amoakohene asked if notifications about the RRFB program would be sent to all communities in the region, such as planners, or if she would need to relay the information herself.

Sujatha confirmed that all municipalities will receive the communication.

Joanne Clark inquired about the Walk Audits in Worcester and how to get in touch with those organizing the audits.

Sujatha responded that requesting walk audits at specific locations within the City of Worcester she needed to contact the Division of Transportation and Mobility directly and that we could provide the contact information if necessary.

Agenda Item #7 Next Meetings

Adam Menard presented this item. The next meetings will take place:

- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, October 23rd, 2024, at 3:00 PM
- CMMPO Meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, October 16th, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Agenda Item #8 Meeting Minutes

Minutes for the June 26, 2024, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. Chair Menard entertains a motion to approve the June 26, 2024, meeting minutes. Mr. McCormack makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded by Mr. Benoit. The vote was unanimous in favor of approval.

Agenda Item #9 – Adjournment

At 3:44 PM Chair Menard entertained a motion to adjourn. Mr. McCormack made the motion and was seconded by Ms. Amoakohene. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Nathan Lewis, Public Outreach Coordinator