



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO) meeting held **Wednesday, December 18th, 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. Betsy Goodrich – designee to City Manager Eric Batista
6. Michelle Conlin – Shrewsbury, Northeast Subregion Representative
7. Jared Grigg – Spencer, West Subregion Representative

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

1. Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
2. Kirstie Hostetter, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

- **Guests:**

1. Brad Kadelski, Brookfield, West Subregion Alternate
2. Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District #3
3. Thomas Ruta, MassDOT District #2
4. Isabel McCauley, MassDOT District #3
5. Harold Piehl, Charlton
6. Nick Burnham, WRTA
7. Eleanor

- **CMRPC Staff**

1. Sujatha Krishnan, Deputy Director – Transportation
2. Kevin Krasnecky, Project Manager – Transportation
3. Rich Rydant, Director of MPO Activities – Transportation
4. Zack Blais, Principal Planner – Transportation

5. Nate Lewis, Assistant Planner – Transportation
6. Jeff Howland, Senior Transportation and Planning Engineer – Transportation
7. Yahaira Graxirena, Project Manager – Transportation
8. Adam Wriggins, Associate 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 November 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Bob Hassinger made a motion and was seconded by Josh Rickman to approve the November 20, 2024 meeting minutes. All members present voted unanimously to approve the November 20, 2024 meeting minutes.

Steve Woelfel – Yes
Ann Sullivan – Yes
Josh Rickman – Yes
Bob Hassinger – Yes

Betsy Goodrich – Yes
Michelle Conlin – Yes
Brad Kadelski – Yes

Agenda Item #3 – Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Item #4 – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Potential Action:** Approval of Proposed Amendment #2 to the FFY 2025 to FFY 2029 TIP Highway Project Listing

Kevin Krasnecky presented the proposed Amendment #2, which included three updates:

1. In FFY 2025, change description of regional target project #S12938 to: Worcester – Intersection Improvements at Lake Avenue and Bigelow David Parkway (Formerly Hamilton Street) (Design Only, Ref 613648).
a. Also reduce funding amount from \$1 million to \$500,000
2. Add Project #S13102 – Worcester – Mill Street Planning and Design Earmark to FFY 2025 in the amount of \$2.5 million of HPP funding
3. Add Project #S13118 – Worcester – SS4A Action Plan and Worcester Main Street South Demonstration Project to FFY 2025 in the amount of \$600,000 of SS4A funding

Mr. Krasnecky noted that both the CMMPO Advisory Committee and CMPRC’s Transportation Committee recommended endorsement. Also, a public meeting was held on December 10, 2024. Further, the City of Worcester provided a support letter for the approval of Amendment #2. Following the presented updates, Jared Grigg asked what HPP funding stood for. Mr. Krasnecky replied that it is High Priority Projects.

There were no other comments or questions.

Michelle Conlin made a motion and was seconded by Ann Sullivan to approve the Proposed Amendment #2 to the FFY 2025 to FFY 2029 TIP Highway Project Listing. All members presented voted unanimously to approve Proposed Amendment #2.

Steve Woelfel – Yes

Ann Sullivan – Yes

Josh Rickman – Yes
Bob Hassinger – Yes
Betsy Goodrich – Yes

Michelle Conlin – Yes
Jared Grigg – Yes

- Potential FFY 2030 TIP Candidate Projects

Kevin Krasnecky presented a listing of three potential FFY 2030 TIP candidate projects. The projects included:

- #613875: Auburn/Worcester – Improvements on Route 20 (Washington Street), from 1,000 FT east of Commerce Drive to Auburn/Worcester TL, \$6,512,940
- #613873: Sturbridge – Improvements on Route 20 (Charlton Road) from 1,000 FT east of Hall Road to east of the I-84 Ramps, \$6,559,461
- #613261: Worcester – Lincoln Street Transit Infrastructure Improvements, \$3,335,000

Following the summary of potential FFY 2030 projects, Jared Grigg asked what the roadblock is to getting TIP funding to smaller, rural towns. Mr. Krasnecky replied that at this point, a few communities have mentioned potential projects but have not yet been initiated and approved by the MassDOT Project Review Committee (PRC), and projects must be approved by MassDOT PRC before they can be considered for TIP funding. Mr. Grigg followed up by asking if any projects had been denied. Ann Sullivan replied that the problem smaller towns face is not denial, but the cost of design. Design is costly and difficult for smaller towns to handle, leading projects to fall apart. With that, the TIP design funding program started in FFY 2025 to help smaller towns.

There were no other comments or questions.

Agenda Item #5 – WRTA Proposed Service Changes Presentation

Nick Burnham presented the WRTA’s proposed service changes to their fixed-route schedule to enhance reliability. The main reason for these changes is to ensure the fixed-route buses are running on time, which is one of the primary complaints of riders. CSched, which is a transit consulting agency, was provided one year’s worth of raw data to help perform a comprehensive review of WRTA bus operations, and used the data to re-calibrate route schedules for efficiency while ensuring proper rest and recovery time for operators. No additional vehicles or increases in the operating budget are being planned. These updates provide CMTM with the tools to streamline the schedule change process within HASTUS, which is the WRTA’s scheduling software. Mr. Burnham provided examples of two routes and their proposed changes to help increase efficiency (Route 3 and Route 5). The current and proposed schedules were compared.

Currently, the WRTA are reviewing and preparing the final version of schedule recommendations for public review and comment. The proposed schedule changes will be posted on the WRTA website. In addition to that, WRTA will host public meetings, both virtual and in-person, as well as information sessions at the Hub to gather public feedback. The WRTA administration will present the public review findings at the February WRTA Advisory Board Meeting, and the board will either vote to endorse or modify the recommendations. If endorsed, service changes will tentatively begin at the end of April 2025.

Jared Grigg asked if WRTA are planning to post the proposed schedule changes at bus stops in the city. Mr. Burnham replied that because there are so many stops this is not feasible, but they are planning to post at the bus stop shelters, where at least 30-40% of users go. Also, flyers with the changes will be posted on all buses.

Josh Rickman commented that this change is a big effort by the WRTA and is one of their first important steps to a better future with more reliable service in combination with meaningful public input.

There were no other comments or questions.

Agenda Item #6 – CMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan Update

Adam Wriggins presented updates to the development of the 2025 CMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan. The goals of the plan include continuing the development of a safe regional bike network that encourages mode shift; identifying short- and long-term potential improvements; and supporting local communities in the implementation of bike projects while addressing current connectivity gaps in the regional network. To develop the plan, CMRPC staff will engage with communities and perform outreach; perform data collection, analysis, and mapping; conduct an access to destinations analysis; and conduct a safety analysis.

The timeline of the plan includes data collection and community outreach in the fall/winter of 2024; subregional meetings with town planners in winter/spring 2025; data analysis and plan development in spring 2025; and releasing the document for public document and a final plan in summer 2025.

Thus far, community engagement will include a web page with an interactive map for public input; a Bicycle Plan Advisory Committee; Subregional meetings; Stakeholder meetings; and looking at past survey results from the previous bicycle plan, 2050 Connections LRTP, and MassBike.

Several maps were displayed to show results from the 2018 Bicycle Plan, the Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI), Complete Streets Projects, and Bicycle Crash Clusters in Worcester.

Upcoming next steps include Subregional meetings, access to destinations analysis, safety analysis, and analyzing Replica data.

Jared Grigg asked how CMRPC staff track bike lane usage. Mr. Wriggins replied that staff use video cameras that track bicyclists, as well as use other resources. Derek Shooster commented that when the FFY 2026 to FFY 2030 TIP projects are released, it would be interesting to overlay those with the projects and see how they correlate. Steve Woelfel also commented that CMRPC staff could coordinate with Pete Sutton, the MassDOT bike and pedestrian planner, for any needed assistance.

Agenda Item #7 – Staff Updates

Sujatha Krishna announced that the FHWA Federal Certification Approval Letter was received, certifying the CMMPO for the next four years. Ms. Krishnan also announced that two new transportation staff members were recently hired: Jordan Hollinger and Sandy Amoakohene.

Agenda Item #8 – New Business

There was no new business announced.

Agenda Item #9 – Next Meetings

- CMMPO Committee meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 4:00 PM
- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 3:00 PM

Agenda Item #10 – Adjournment

Bob Hassinger made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Jared Grigg. The meeting concluded at 4:50 PM.

Meeting Minutes prepared by: Zack Blais, Transportation Principal Planner