



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The minutes of the Central Massachusetts Transportation Planning Committee Hybrid meeting held Thursday, December 5, 2024 using Zoom.

T-Committee Members Present:

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

CMRPC Staff Present:

1. Kevin Krasnecky
2. Rich Rydant
3. Jeff Howland

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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 July 25, 2024, T-Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the July 25, 2024, meeting were considered for approval. Brian Pigeon motioned to accept the minutes and was seconded by Rick Baker. All 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 #2 to the 2025-2029 TIP Highway Project List.

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Mr. Krasnecky said that Amendment #2 was released for a 21-day public comment period at the November 20th CMMPO meeting. Amendment #2 includes the following changes:

- In FFY 2025, change description of regional target project #S12938 CMMPO Project Design Funding Program to Worcester – Intersection Improvements at Lake Avenue and Bigelow Davis Parkway (Formerly Hamilton Street) (Design Only, Ref 61364). Also, reduce the funding amount from \$1,000,000 to \$500,000.
- Add project #S13102 – Worcester – Mill Street Planning & Design Earmark to FFY 2025 in the amount of \$2,500,000 of HPP funding.
- 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.

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 Amendment #2 to the 2025-2029 TIP Highway Project List.

- FFY 2026 to 2030 TIP Development Timeline

Kevin Krasnecky presented this item. Mr. Krasnecky said the development of the 2026-2030 TIP started in November with the Annual Development Letter being sent to communities, committee members, legislators, and other interested stakeholders. During December, the communities with currently programmed projects will be asked to prepare their status update forms for their projects. In January, potential new projects will be presented at the CMMPO

meeting and staff will receive funding targets from MassDOT. TIP Readiness Days are in February when staff meet with MassDOT to discuss the programming status of projects. In March, the TIP Workshop will be held at the CMMPO meeting. The annual TIP Environmental Consultation Session will be held in April as well as the release of the Draft 2026-2030 TIP. Lastly, the 2026-2030 TIP is likely to be endorsed in May and then reviewed and approved by the federal agencies.

There were no comments or questions.

Federal Certification Update

Rich Rydant presented this item. Mr. Rydant provided a brief overview of the federal certification process. US DOT provided a draft CMMPO certification report to staff which includes an executive summary, introduction, scope & methodology, program review and various appendices. The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process as conducted in the Central Massachusetts MPO area of the Worcester, MA-CT UZA fully meets the Federal planning requirements. As a result of the review there are no Corrective Actions. However, there are recommendations that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that the region is performing very well in that are to be commended. Mr. Rydant then summarized the nine (9) recommendations in the various topic areas as well as the one (1) recommendation.

There were no comments or questions.

Staff Updates

Rich Rydant provided the following updates:

- **State Housing Plan – Central Mass Feedback:** The overarching sentiment across the feedback is one of frustration with rising costs, limited availability of affordable housing, and complex regulatory hurdles, combined with hope that innovative solutions, more flexible state support, and targeted local initiatives can address these challenges. The emphasis is on finding practical, sustainable solutions, such as adaptive reuse, cluster housing, and smaller, more affordable homes, while ensuring that communities have the tools and support to meet the diverse needs of residents, especially seniors and young families. There is a strong call for state-level incentives, financial support, and a more flexible regulatory environment to help overcome the current barriers to housing development.
- **RAISE Grant:** The City of Worcester and town of Southbridge are applying for this grant for the 3rd time and were both told by the grant reviewers that they have a very strong chance of being funded. CMRPC is helping both communities to ensure success.

- **PROTECT Grant:** The NOFO is now open and closes on February 5, 2025. Staff are working internally to determine if there are any regionally applicable projects that could fit the criteria for this grant.
- **Mass Trails Grant:** CMRPC staff are actively working on an application to apply for a feasibility study for the Blackstone River bikeway completion. The grant is due at the beginning of February 2025.

New Business

There was no new business.

Next Meetings

- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 4:00 PM.
- CMMPO Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 3:00 PM.
- CMTPC Meeting – Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Rick Baker and a second from Brian Pigeon, the members unanimously voted to adjourn at 6:38 PM.