



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting held **March 26th, 2025**. The hybrid meeting was held virtually through Zoom.

CMMPO Advisory Committee Members Present:

- Adam Menard – Town of Auburn
- Conor McCormack – Town of Millbury
- Chris Payant – Town of Westborough
- Alex Salcedo – MassBike
- Karin Valentine-Goins – Walk/Bike Worcester
- Joanne Clark – AARP
- Robert Bilotta - CLW
- Feanna Jatta-Singh – NAACP, MAWOC
- Sarah Bradbury – MassDOT District 3
- Daryl Amaral – MassDOT District 2

Ex-Officio Members Present:

- N/A

CMRPC Staff Present:

- Sujatha Krishnan
- Nathan Lewis
- Rich Rydant
- Kevin Krasnecky
- Yahaira Graxirena
- Jeff Howland
- Adam Wriggins

Guest:

- N/A

Agenda Item #1 – Around the Room Introductions

Chair Adam Menard opened the meeting at 3:04 PM. A roll-call of the CMMPO Advisory members was announced, followed by the rest of the attendees.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of February 26th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Minutes for February 26th, 2025, CMMPO Advisory meeting were considered for approval. Chair Menard entertains a motion to approve the February 26th, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Payant makes a motion to approve. The motion is seconded by Mr. McCormack. The vote was unanimous in favor of approval.

Agenda Item #3 – FFY 2025-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Action Item: Seeking recommendation concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Proposed Amendment #5 to the 2025-2029 TIP Highway Project Listing

Mr. Krasnecky provided an overview of the Proposed Amendment #5 to the 2025 – 2029 TIP Transit listing that will be released for public review and comment:

- **Remove Project 608961 – Worcester – Intersection Improvements on Chandler Street and May Street from FFY 2025.** This project will be programmed in FFY 2026 of the Draft 2026-2030 TIP.
- **Cost increase of Project 608778 – Southbridge – Intersection Improvements at Central Street, Foster Street, Hook Street and Hamilton Street.** The project cost is increasing \$914,202 and will be added to the STBG funding source. The new total project cost is now \$8,193,645.
 - Cost increases due to off-site hazardous material added due to inability to utilize hazardous material on-site, and unanticipated utility costs.
- **Remove Project 610769 – Sutton – Superstructure Replacement, S-33-002, Manchaug Road over Mumford River.** This project will be programmed in FFY 2026 of the Draft 2026-2030 TIP.

- **Remove Project 612195 – Worcester – Superstructure Replacement, W-44-091, I-290 over East Central Street.** This project will be programmed in FFY 2026 of the Draft 2026-2030 TIP.

There will be a public meeting to comment on April 8th.

There were no comments at the time.

Chair Menard motioned to recommend approval of these changes to the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO). Conor McCormack moved, and Karin Valentine-Goins seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #4 – FFY 2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Action Item:** Seeking recommendations concerning CMMPO endorsement of the Draft Options for the 2030 TIP Highway Target Projects

Mr. Krasnecky provided an overview of the TIP development process and the four programming options under consideration. He walked through the worksheet shared on screen, which is used to present TIP project options to the CMMPO members. The worksheet includes various data points for each project, such as the project ID, the municipality in which the project is located, the roadway name or number, and a brief description of the proposed improvements, project scoring (if applicable), and any estimated greenhouse gas savings. It also outlines the current TIP year in which the project is programmed (within the FFY 2026–2030 timeframe), the total federal participating construction cost, and the potential funding source for each project. Additionally, the worksheet features the four different programming options that the staff developed for the CMMPO consideration.

Mr. Krasnecky explained that several projects saw significant cost increases during TIP development, which required shifting projects, especially in the later years—to stay within fiscal constraints. As a result, some projects were pushed back to later years, and none of the new projects proposed over the past few months could be programmed in the cycle.

In 2026, all four programming options included the same set of projects. These projects are the Worcester Pleasant Street Bike and Pedestrian Improvements, the Upton Route 140 Culvert Replacement, and the reprogramming of the Worcester Chandler Street and May Street project, which had been removed in Amendment #5. Also included were two “micro” projects—one in Millbury focused on transit access improvements and another in Westborough for bicycle parking. Each option included a placeholder for TIP design funding, should a community require it in that year. Approximately \$7 million remained

unspent in 2026, leaving some flexibility while still remaining under fiscal constraint. Mr. Krasnecky noted that project costs are likely to increase as the year progresses.

In 2027, all four options stayed within fiscal constraints, with very limited unallocated funding.

- Option A included partial funding for the Worcester Chandler Street project, along with projects in Uxbridge, Northbridge, and Upton, in addition to micro project funding and TIP design placeholders.
- Option B programmed the full cost of the Chandler Street project and the Sturbridge Route 20/131 roundabout but could not accommodate TIP design funding.
- Option C covered a larger share of the Chandler Street project, as well as the Northbridge and Sturbridge projects, while still including placeholders for micro projects and TIP design.
- Option D omitted Chandler Street entirely, but included the Uxbridge, Northbridge, and Sturbridge projects, and reserved funding for micro projects and design.

For 2028, TIP funds were nearly fully committed across all four options. The Oxford Route 12 project, which had increased in cost to over \$20 million, was split over multiple years through advanced construction.

- Option A included a portion of funding for Oxford, the Rutland Route 122/Pleasantdale project, the remaining Chandler Street funds, and the Sturbridge roundabout.
- Option B included partial Oxford funding, micro projects, TIP design placeholders, and the Uxbridge and Northbridge projects.
- Option C offered similar funding allocations but also included the remainder of the Chandler Street project.
- Option D programmed the Spencer Route 9/49 intersection project in addition to partial funding for Oxford and Rutland, and the first year of advanced construction funding for Chandler Street.

In 2029, the options were mostly aligned. All four included funding for micro projects and TIP design.

- Options A, B, and C programmed the Spencer project this year.
- Option D had been funded in 2028.
- Each option included the remaining funds for the Oxford Route 12 project.
- Option B also reintroduced the Rutland project, which had not been funded in 2028.
- Option D, the final phase of funding for the Chandler Street project was also included.

Mr. Krasnecky noted that across all four options, there were only minimal funds left unspent.

In 2030, all four options were identical. They each included placeholders for micro projects and TIP design funding, as well as the three projects originally programmed in 2029 but pushed back due to fiscal constraint: West Brookfield Route 9 Phase 3, Westborough Route 30, and Worcester's Lake Avenue/Bigelow-Davis Parkway intersection improvements.

Mr. Krasnecky stated that staff recommend Option D as the preferred programming scenario. MPO members expressed support for this recommendation, and Option D would be used to develop the draft TIP. He concluded the presentation by displaying a one-page summary of the recommended scenario.

Discussion:

Mr. Bilotta asked whether the improvements at Lake Ave and Bigelow Davis are going to be funded by the state or if the city will be using their own funding for it.

Mr. Krasnecky responded, saying that the city will be putting some money towards it for design. The state and federal funds will cover the construction of the project.

Ms. Valentine-Goins asked if it is considered good practice to have a lot of money left over. She also asked if the Chandler St. project cost doubled.

Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that staff saw the issue with the \$7 million gap coming because one of the projects, the Sturbridge project, was originally scheduled for 2026, which would have eaten up that money. It wasn't going to be ready for 2026 and had to be pushed back and that's why there's that gap there now.

Ms. Valentine-Goins asked if the funds could be flexed for micro projects.

Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that there were only two microprojects. Chandler Street was in two phases, one and two.

Chair Menard motioned to recommend approval of these changes to the Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMMPO). Chris Payant moved, and Feanna Jattan Singh seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Rob Bilotta abstaining.

Review of the 2026 – 2030 Statewide Highway Project Listing

Mr. Krasnecky reviewed the statewide highway projects programmed by MassDOT. He shared the current draft listing of statewide projects programmed from Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2026 through 2030.

- FFY 2026, projects include the Sutton superstructure replacement on Manchaug Road over the Mumford River and the Shrewsbury/Worcester Bridge Preservation on I-290 over Lake Quinsigamond and Lake Avenue North. 2026 projects include the Southbridge Bridge Replacement on Mill Street over McKinstry Brook and the Quinebaug River, a superstructure replacement on I-290 over East Central Street in Worcester, resurfacing and related work on Route 16 in Mendon, the rehabilitation and box widening on Route 20 from Route 9 to South Street in Shrewsbury and Northborough, and the Holden Bridge Replacement on Salisbury Street over the GNW rail line.
- FFY 2027, the list includes the Barre Bridge Replacement on Coldbrook Road over the Prince River, and the West Brookfield Bridge Replacement on Long Hill Road over the Quinebaug River. Continued funding is allocated for the Shrewsbury/Worcester I-290 bridge project. Additional projects include the Dudley Bridge Replacement on Route 131 over the Quinebaug River, the Charlton Bridge Replacement on Route 20 over Cady Brook, and more funding for the Worcester I-290 superstructure replacement over East Central Street. Resurfacing and related work in Dudley and Southbridge on Route 131, and guide and traffic sign replacement on I-395 in Webster, Oxford, and Auburn. The Oxford Bridge Replacement on Route 56 over the French River is also included, as is the Auburn Bridge Replacement on Oxford Street over Kettle Brook. Also, the Shrewsbury Street Bridge Replacement over the MBTA/CSX Railroad and the Auburn Bridge Replacement on US Route 20 westbound over I-395.
- FFY 2028, the final portion of funding is allocated for the Shrewsbury/Worcester Bridge Preservation project. Other projects include the East Brookfield Bridge Replacement on Cove Street over the Seven Mile River and intersection improvements in Charlton on Route 49 at Putnam Road, Walker Road, and Route 20. Upton will receive resurfacing and related work on Route 140, along with the construction of a roundabout. Additional funding is also provided for the ongoing Shrewsbury/Northborough Route 20 rehabilitation project. Lastly, FFY 2028 includes the Westborough Fisher Street improvements, a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project.
- FFY 2029, the draft list includes the New Braintree Bridge Rehabilitation on Barre Road over Meadow Brook, continued funding for the Route 20 rehabilitation project in Shrewsbury and Northborough, and improvements at Burgess Elementary School in Sturbridge, another SRTS initiative.
- FFY 2030, the last round of funding is provided for the Shrewsbury/Northborough Route 20 project. Additionally, the year includes intersection and signal improvements at US Route 20 and Grafton Street in Shrewsbury.

There were no questions.

Review of the 2026 – 2030 Transit Project Listing

Mr. Krasnecky provided an overview of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority's (WRTA) transit project listings included in the Draft FFY 2026–2030 TIP.

Beginning in 2026, the first project listed is operating assistance for fixed-route and paratransit services, which is funded across all five years of the TIP for a total of just over \$52 million. The WRTA is also replacing several buses: six 40-foot buses are scheduled for replacement in 2026 and three more in 2027, for a total cost of \$8 million. Replacement of support vehicles is also planned, with three vehicles replaced in 2026, one in 2027, three in 2028, and one in 2029, totaling \$470,000.

Mr. Krasnecky noted several ongoing investments in support equipment for fixed-route and demand-response services, funded for approximately \$5.9 million throughout all five years of the TIP. Additionally, WRTA will continue to purchase spare parts for its revenue fleet, also funded annually through 2030 for a total of \$4.36 million.

Bus shelter installation is funded in 2026 and 2027 with a total budget of \$251,195. Renovations and maintenance to the WRTA Hub facility will also be funded annually over the five-year period, totaling \$136,000. Rehabilitation of Union Station is funded throughout the five years with a total allocation of \$30.2 million. WRTA Maintenance and Operations Facility will undergo renovations and maintenance with \$567,456 in funding across the TIP years.

Other major ongoing investments include preventative maintenance (\$2.465 million over five years), transportation planning services (\$1.577 million over five years), and engineering and design for WRTA facilities, which is funded through 2029 for a total of \$700,000.

Additional projects scheduled for 2026 include the purchase of four new fixed-route shuttle buses at a cost of \$900,000 and the purchase of new bus stop signs in 2026 and 2027, totaling \$1.18 million. Construction of a new administrative and operations facility is also slated for 2026, with \$2.7 million allocated for the project.

Discussion:

Ms. Jattan Singh asked if the \$52 million for the Worcester Regional Transit Authority operating assistance for fixed route and paratransit was for new drivers.

Mr. Krasnecky mentioned that it is operating assistance to provide fixed route and paratransit services throughout the WRTA area.

Agenda Item #5 – FFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Sujatha Krishnan gave an overview of the development of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026, which begins on October 1, 2025. CMRPC is currently comparing FY2025 and projected FY2026 budgets. Based on guidance from federal and MassDOT partners, CMRPC anticipates a modest 2% increase in highway funding, while transit funding through WRTA will decrease slightly due to federal funding challenges.

CMRPC will continue working on three consultant-supported projects: the Regional Housing and Transportation Plan, the Vernon Street/I-290 Interchange Study, and the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan and Demonstration Project. A major focus of the upcoming year will be the kickoff of the next Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), beginning in summer 2025. Additional funds will be allocated to support that process.

A new bicycle count program to track usage on trails and bike lanes more systematically, and the continuation of work under the Aging and Dementia-Friendly Action Plan, including the “Happy Factor” study. Mobility management opportunities with local communities will also be explored.

CMRPC staff will continue to provide support for local master plans, particularly transportation chapters, and complete the corridor profile study for West Boylston Street while initiating a new study for Route 122A in Rutland. Ongoing efforts related to congestion, safety, performance management, and travel demand modeling will continue as usual.

CMRPC also plans to begin work on a pedestrian plan as a follow-up to the regional bicycle plan. Trail-related work will continue in partnership with communities, including projects in Grafton, Blackstone Valley, and with the Charles River Headwaters Greenway. The agency is responding to community interest in updating Tier 2 Complete Streets Prioritization Plans and is looking into funding options for those updates.

In addition to LRTP outreach and data collection efforts, there will be a continued focus on climate resiliency and the integration of culvert and EV planning into CMRPC’s work.

On the transit planning side, CMRPC will continue to collaborate closely with WRTA, MassDOT, and local communities. Although the Lincoln Street Transit Enhancements project (proposed for 2030) is currently unfunded, staff will continue exploring funding options. Other ongoing or upcoming local efforts include micro-transit studies in Millbury and Leicester, and a transit corridor assessment in Shrewsbury along Maple Avenue.

Ms. Krishnan concluded by emphasizing that staff will serve as project leaders on the three consultant-supported studies and encouraged committee members to review the major task list and provide suggestions for any missing or new project ideas. A draft UPWP will be released in May, with advisory committee review and public comment to follow later that month.

Discussion:

Ms. Clark asked if walk audits will still be a part of the plan.

Ms. Krishnan responded affirmatively that CMRPC will continue that work as part of the Livability element.

Ms. Valentine-Goins asked what the timeline is for the SS4A project.

Ms. Krishnan mentioned the RFP will be released by mid-April, including a kick-off of the consultant process.

Agenda Item #6 – CMRPC Vernon Street/I-290 Interchange Transportation Study

Yahaira Graxirena provided a brief update on the Vernon Street/I-290 Transportation Study. Following the proposal deadline, CMRPC received seven proposals. The steering committee reviewed all submissions and selected the top four firms for interviews. Each firm was evaluated based on both its written proposals and interview performance.

The committee reached a strong consensus on a preferred consultant team, which is now undergoing the contracting process. Although the selected firm cannot be publicly announced until the contract is finalized, Yahaira noted the committee's confidence in the firm's qualifications and is optimistic about the work ahead.

CMRPC anticipates finalizing the contract within the next two weeks and will begin work shortly thereafter.

Agenda Item #7 – Staff Updates

Ms. Krishnan provided several staff-related updates:

- **Environmental Consultation:** Scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd, this virtual meeting will include a presentation by Derek Krevat from MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning. He will discuss the work done as part of the MassDOT Resiliency Plan. CMRPC staff will also present environmental considerations in the UPWP, TIP, and Long-Range Transportation Plan. Meeting details are available on the CMRPC calendar.

- **Regional Housing and Transportation Plan RFP:** The RFP for this study was released on March 19th. A pre-proposal meeting is scheduled for Friday at 9 a.m. The proposal deadline is expected around April 14th or 15th, followed by interviews and then the contracting process.
- **Safe Streets for All:** The RFP for this initiative is expected to be released by mid-April.

Agenda Item #8 New Business

Remote Meeting Extension: Ms. Krishnan noted that legislation extending remote meetings through June 2027 is currently awaiting the governor’s signature. If not signed in time, future meetings—such as the next CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting—will require an in-person quorum, though hybrid attendance would still be allowed.

Webinar Format: CMRPC staff continue using the Zoom webinar format for virtual meetings to prevent disruptions such as “Zoom bombings.” Staff are working with Ms. Myska to ensure smoother access and participation for committee members.

Community Announcement

- **Week Without Driving – September 2025:**
Ms. Valentine-Goins announced that WalkBike Worcester will again support the Week Without Driving initiative this fall. Interest and participation in the event are growing nationally. A recent America Walks webinar included nearly 85 attendees, and this year’s event is expected to be significantly larger than in previous years.

Agenda Item #8 Next Meetings

Chair Menard announced the schedule for the next meeting:

- CMMPO Advisory Committee meeting (virtual) – Wednesday, April 23rd, 2025: 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM
- CMMPO Meeting – Wednesday, April 16th, 2025, at 4:00PM

Agenda Item #9 – Adjournment

At 4:00 PM Chair Menard called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Valentine-Goins made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Jattan-Singh. The group voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting minutes prepared: Nathan Lewis, Public Outreach Coordinator

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