

BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
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**Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting
Tuesday July 20th, 4:00 PM**

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, Massachusetts

MPO Representatives and Alternates Present:

Clinton Bench, MassDOT (representing Secretary of Transportation Jeff Mullan)
Peter Niles, MassDOT District 1 (representing Administrator Luisa Paiewonsky)
Jim Lovejoy, Town of Mt. Washington (Southwest Berkshire Representative)
James Mullen, Town of New Marlborough, (BRPC Representative)
Mike Ouellette, Town of Adams (North Berkshire Alternate)
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield (Pittsfield Representative)
Jay Green, City of North Adams (North Adams Representative)
Tom Szczepaniak, Town of Dalton (North Central Berkshire Representative)
Gordon Bailey, Town of Lee (Southeast Berkshire Representative)
Bob Malnati, BRTA Alternate

Member Agency Staff Present:

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT Boston
Peter Frieri, MassDOT District 1
Mark Moore, MassDOT District 1
Sonja Gray, MassDOT District 1
Doug Plachcinski, BRPC
Dave Daskal, BRPC
Anuja Koirala, BRPC
Nat Karns, BRPC

Others Present:

Mark Siegars, TAC Vice-Chair
Kevin O'Donnell, Great Barrington
John Boyle, Dalton
Ken Walton, Dalton
David Laviolette, Dalton
Alan Wilcox, Tyringham
Sam Haupt, Peru
Chris Cornwell, Greenman Pedersen
Jane Winn, BEAT

1. Minutes from May 18th, 2010 MPO meeting

Mr. Lovejoy moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Bailey seconded. The motion was approved.

2. Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no public comment

3. HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program

Mr. Karns discussed a new initiative by HUD/FHWA/EPA to provide funding for regional and community plans that address sustainable development. Mr. Karns stated that BRPC intends to utilize this funding, if awarded, to prepare an update and expansion of the 2001 Regional Plan for the Berkshires.

Mr. Bench asked if the grant application requires matching funds or other local commitments. Mr. Karns responded that there was no explicit requirement for matching funds. Grant guidelines request that the applicant identify

commitments from local stakeholders that will participate in a Plan Coalition. Grant materials also request that the MPO be a member of this Plan Coalition.

Mr. Mullen asked how the MPO designee to the Coalition will be selected. Mr. Karns responded that issue will be addressed should the HUD grant be awarded to BRPC.

Mr. Lovejoy moved that: 1) The MPO agree to participate in the Plan Coalition; 2) The MPO agree to consider recommendations of the Plan when implementing future MPO actions. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4. BRTA Section 5309 Grant Application

Mr. Malnati presented information on this FTA grant application, which requests federal and matching state funds for capital improvements to BRTA's transit system. Elements of the request include smaller buses, hybrid buses, construction of operation and maintenance sub-stations, land acquisition, ITS communications equipment, paratransit vehicle purchase, and construction of transfer facilities.

Mr. Bailey made a motion for the MPO to submit a letter of support to BRTA on behalf of the grant application. Mr. Green seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. RTP Status Report

Mr. Bench explained the purpose and general format of the RTP.

Mr. Plachcinski reported on the first series of RTP public forums held in May. He also described ongoing work with the transportation needs assessment process, and the analysis of existing conditions, all of which will be documented in the plan.

6. Report from the July 15th TAC Meeting

Mr. Siegars described the proceedings of the prior week's TAC meeting. Presentations were made on behalf of several prospective TIP projects by project proponents. Following those presentations, the TAC voted to recommend the Peru-Skyline Trail project for inclusion in the 2014 TIP. The Lee Tyringham Road project finished a close second in the TAC's vote.

7. Release 2010 TIP Amendments for Public Comment

Mr. Daskal report on proposed TIP amendments, some of which involve moving projects out of year 2010 to 2011.

Mr. Ouellette asked several question pertaining to progress on the Ashuwillticook Bike Trail design in Adams, which is one of the projects that is being moved to 2011. Mr. Moore responded that there were some delays in design associated with flood control issues, but they are being resolved. Mr. Moore also reported that the Right-of-Way process is going well.

Mr. Szczepaniak asked for an explanation of why the Lenox bike path project was being removed from year 2010. Mr. Daskal recounted recent developments that include community opposition to the bike path and a major increase in the construction cost estimate. The Lenox Selectboard has formed a committee to revisit bike recommendations for the Town. Mr. Daskal said the MPO will be asked to re-program Earmarked bike funds at a future date.

Mr. Bailey made a motion for the MPO to release the 2010 TIP amendments for Public Comment. Mr. Lovejoy seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

8. Release draft 2011 UPWP for Public Comment

Mr. Daskal presented a summary of work tasks in the 2011 UPWP.

Mr. Bailey asked for further explanation on the Task 3.1 Special Studies sub-tasks for Hubbard Avenue and Wind Turbine Siting. Mr. Daskal explained that the Hubbard Avenue task would focus on mechanisms to implement recommendations from the previous traffic study. The Wind Turbine task is intended to examine transportation impacts associated with proposed turbine installation locations. Mr. Ouellette asked about the developer's responsibility in dealing with transport of wind turbine components. The group discussed the challenges presented by transport of wind turbine components to remote locations. The group discussed priorities for the Special Studies sub-tasks, and requested that Mr. Daskal provide more information to the MPO next month on envisioned priorities.

Mr. Lovejoy stated that priority should be given to the proposed Regional Finance Issues task.

Mr. Karns discussed recent developments with the Housatonic Railroad Marketing Study. Depending on outcomes of that study, the MPO may need to consider planning efforts that address passenger rail and rail station location.

Mr. Niles had several questions relating to the Pavement Management System task. He expressed concerns about coordinating with MassDOT Pavement Management data collection. Mr. Daskal explained the context of the PMS task, and provided assurances that MassDOT has participated, and will continue to participate in PMS planning.

Mr. Lovejoy made a motion for the MPO to release the draft 2011 UPWP for Public Comment. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

9. Release draft 2011-14 TIP for Public Comment

Presentations were made to the MPO on behalf of several TIP candidate projects. These presentations included:

- Mr. Walto and Mr. Greenman on behalf of Housatonic Street
- Mr. Haupt and Ms. Grey on behalf of Skyline Trail
- Mr. Collingwood on behalf of BMC improvements
- Mr. Frieri on behalf of Route 2 Florida
- Mr. Nason on behalf of Tyringham Road
- Ms. Grey on behalf of Route 20 Becket

The MPO then progressed through two 'straw votes' on which project to recommend for inclusion in year 2014 of the TIP. For the second vote, 5 members voted in favor of Housatonic Street and 3 voted in favor of Skyline Trail.

Following the second vote, Mr. Lovejoy made a motion to include Housatonic Street –Dalton in year 2014 of the TIP, and release the draft streets/bikeways TIP for Public Comment. Mr. Szczepaniak seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

A motion was then made by Mr. Bailey to release the Transit element of the draft TIP for Public Comment. Mr. Szczepaniak seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

A motion was then made by Mr. Bailey to release the Bridge element of the draft TIP for Public Comment. Mr. Szczepaniak seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Berkshire MPO was set for Tuesday August 24th, at 4:00 pm.