

**Minutes of the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting  
Thursday Nov 18<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 PM**

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

MPO Representatives and Alternates Present:

Jeff Mullan, MassDOT (Secretary of Transportation)  
Clinton Bench, MassDOT (Meeting Chairperson)  
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 Representative)  
Gordon Bailey, Town of Lee (Southeast Berkshire Representative)  
Gary Shepard, BRTA  
Bruce Collingwood, City of Pittsfield  
Jay Green, City of North Adams  
Jim Huebner, Town of Washington (Southeast Berkshire Alternate)

Member Agency Staff Present:

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

Others Present:

Mark Siegars, TAC Vice-Chair  
Jane Winn, BEAT  
Jorga-Ann Marsden, Town of Stockbridge  
George Shippey, Town of Stockbridge  
Doug Schlaefer, Town of Lee  
Dick Lindsay, Berkshire Eagle

**1. Minutes from October 12, 2010 MPO meeting**

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

**2. Opportunity for Public Comment**

Mr. Siegars commented on the transportation needs of small communities, and requested that MassDOT endeavor not to overlook those needs, particularly given the context of the large number of smaller communities in the Berkshire region. In response, Secretary Mullan discussed proposals now under consideration for increasing Chapter 90 funding. Secretary Mullan also discussed MassDOT's Small Town Rural Assistance Program.

Mr. Shippey commented on Stockbridge's opposition to advancement of plans for a new I-90 Interchange in the vicinity of Stockbridge or west Lee. Mr. Shippey stated one of the Town's main concerns would be impacts to the Kamposoa Bog and the surrounding watershed.

Mr. Schlaefer, a resident of the West Rd area in Lee, asked that a petition presented at a previous Lee Area Traffic Study Public Meeting be made part of the meeting record for the current meeting. Mr. Schlaefer also expressed

opposition to advancement of plans for a new I-90 Interchange.

Mr. Karns commented on a proposed BioMass Facility in Pownal Vermont, and discussed potential impacts from the proposed facility that could affect the Berkshire region.

### **3. TAC Report**

Mr. Siegars summarized the proceedings of the November TAC meeting. The TAC voted to endorse findings and recommendations of the Lee Area Traffic Study, and requested that emphasis be placed on measures that will address issues of truck traffic in downtown Lee.

### **4. Approve 2011-2014 TIP amendments**

Mr. Daskal summarized comments received on proposed amendments to the FY 2011-2014, including a MassDOT request to amend the project cost on the Miner Road Bridge Project. A motion was made by Mr. Shepard and seconded by Mr. Green to approve the TIP 2011-2014, and incorporate the additional MassDOT comment in the amended TIP. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **5. Downtown Lee Parking Management Study**

Ms. Greer made a presentation on this Study, which focuses on parking supply and utilization in downtown Lee, and contains recommendations for optimizing the future provision and utilization of parking.

### **6. Lee Area Traffic Study**

Mr. Karns led a group discussion on key findings of this Study, including conclusions about which options should be excluded from further analysis. Mr. Karns discussed the more focused analysis called for in the Study recommendations, including analysis of the Route 20 corridor, expanded analysis of truck traffic, and preliminary environmental and cost analysis of interchange options. Mr. Niles commented on Study findings and emphasized the importance of addressing truck traffic issues. Mr. Siegars commented on truck traffic in a broader regional context, and how trucks and transport of goods and services are essential to the future economic viability of the region.

Mr. Lovejoy observed that the potential solutions identified for further analysis in the Study all have an associated quality of making people uncomfortable, and at some future time the MPO will need to address the issue of whether it makes sense to invest resources in additional analysis. This led into a group discussion of what types of analysis will be done in the near term (a further quantification of truck traffic volumes and directional orientations), and what type of analysis will be proposed in the longer term. Mr. Bench offered information on the UPWP development process, and explained how the MPO will have opportunity to discuss the scope of future studies, and ultimately approve or disapprove of their inclusion in the UPWP.

A motion was made by Mr. Lovejoy and seconded by Mr. Collingwood to endorse the findings and recommendations of the Study. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **7. 2011 RTP Update**

Mr. Daskal presented information on draft RTP project lists and preliminary financial analysis.

In commenting on the project lists, Mr. Bench suggested that the MPO consider how RTP goals and policy initiatives might be used to help prioritize regional funding decisions.

Mr. Shepard commented on transit financing and described options that might be considered for transit financing initiatives.

Mr. Daskal summarized TAC input on RTP project lists, and the next steps anticipated in the RTP development process.

### **8. Status reports from Member Agencies**

Mr. Frieri presented an update of road and bridge project status.

### **9. Next Meeting Date**

Mr. Daskal asked if the MPO would be agreeable to scheduling a joint meeting with the TAC to discuss RTP issues. The group agreed the next meeting of the Berkshire MPO will be a joint TAC/MPO meeting. The meeting time will be Wednesday December 8<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 pm.

Materials Distributed:

- August meeting minutes
- 2011-2014 TIP amendments
- RTP memo, RTP project spreadsheets and maps
- MassDOT Project Status Report