

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF July 12, 2023
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

D. Kilhart, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

FITCHBURG CITY CLERK

I. Introduction

Aug 03 2023 1:29 pm

Members

Dick Kilhart, Athol; Jacqueline Doherty, Athol; Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Robert Swartz, Gardner; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Elizabeth Wood, Leominster; Tim Toth, Templeton; Beth Faxon, Townsend; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon; Travis Condon, NCMCC

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Ben Breger, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; Michael Melencio, MBTA; Elizabeth Williams, MassDOT; Brian Doheny, Ashburnham; Tracy Murphy, Westminster; Andrew Schuschu, GAAMHA

Non-Members

Amanda Reid, Lunenburg; Susan Templeton, Sen. Cronin's Office

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Tyler Godin

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of June 14, 2023 Minutes

A consensus was reached to accept the minutes for June 14, 2023 as presented.

IV. Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee met before the meeting and presented the following slate of officers.

Chair: Robert Swartz, Gardner
Vice Chair: Travis Condon, NCMCC
Secretary: Beth Faxon, Townsend

It was asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There were none.

V. Election of Officers

Without any opposition from the group, it was the consensus of the MJTC that one vote be cast for the slate presented by the nominating committee. The newly elected officers of the MJTC are:

Chair: Robert Swartz, Gardner
Vice Chair: Travis Condon, NCMCC
Secretary: Beth Faxon, Townsend

They will carry out their respective roles over the course of the next year.

VI. MA Vehicle Census

- Presentation by Elizabeth Williams, MassDOT, Director of Data and Policy & Michael Melencio, MBTA

M. Melencio presented the Massachusetts Vehicle Census (MVC), which is the first state level dataset in the nation that joins vehicle-level odometer readings with vehicle attribute and registration transaction histories. This powerful resource allows policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders understand state and local trends in vehicle usage and ownership. Questions that this dataset can answer about actively registered vehicles in the state include:

- Are electric vehicles driven more or less than gas powered vehicles?
- How many vehicles were added (or subtracted) from my city or town between 2021 and 2022?
- What is the difference in the number of passenger vehicles versus commercially registered vehicles?

M. Melencio reviewed the methodology used to create the census, as well as data exclusions and limitations.

VII. Montachusett FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

- Review of Transit and Highway Amendment #5
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding Transit and Highway Amendment #5

G. Snow reviewed highway amendment #5. MassDOT has notified the MPO that the project under consideration has seen a cost increase from \$6,375,205 to \$10,108,853; an increase of \$3,733,648 or approximately 58.6%. Because this represents an increase of more than 10% for a programmed project over \$5,000,000, an Amendment to the FFY 2023 Highway Element for the current FFY 2023-2027 Montachusett TIP is required. This project is also a Target project under Section 1A – Regionally Prioritized Projects. The endorsed TIP is fiscally constrained for FFY 2023 and has available \$2,260,338 in Target funds for FFY 2023. The state has also committed to fund the remaining project cost that exceeds the regional Target through statewide funds under Section 2B State Prioritized Modernization Projects. Through this mix of funding, FFY 2023 will remain fiscally constrained. G. Snow mentioned that the comment period is running from July 3, 2023 to July 24, 2023 and that we are seeking a recommendation from the MJTC to the MPO to endorse TIP Highway Amendment #5 at its meeting on July 26. We have not yet received any comment. The consensus of the MJTC was to make the recommendation to the MPO.

G. Snow reviewed Transit Amendment #5. The Amendment reflects a cost change to six (6) projects and the removal of two (2) projects from the FFY 2023 Transit Element. These changes are due to increased costs and updated priorities for MART. At an online meeting held on June 28, 2023, the Montachusett MPO reviewed the proposed Amendment and voted that it be released for an abbreviated, 10-Day public review and comment. The abbreviated public review and comment period commenced on Monday July 3, 2023 and will close at the end of business on Wednesday July 12, 2023. G. Snow mentioned that we are seeking a recommendation from the MJTC to the MPO to endorse TIP Transit Amendment #5. There have been no comments received. The consensus of the MJTC was to make the recommendation to the MPO.

VIII. Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan

- Review of Draft 2024 RTP – Journey to 2050
- Review of Comment and Responses to Draft 2024 RTP
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO Regarding Draft RTP

S. Bean mentioned that the RTP is out for a 21-day public comment period which started July 3rd and will run through July 24th. As of this meeting, there are no public comments that have been received. S. Bean then detailed an overview of the Executive Summary of the RTP. We will be presenting any comments received to

the MPO at their meeting in two weeks. S. Bean mentioned that we are seeking a recommendation from the MJTC to the MPO to endorse the 2024 RTP at its next meeting.

B. Harris demonstrated how to access the draft RTP on the MRPC website. He said if someone wanted to make a comment, you can follow the link on the page, and we will receive it and incorporate the comment in an appendix to the final document.

The consensus of the MJTC was to recommend that the MPO Endorse the 2024 RTP at its next meeting.

IX. Contract Status Report

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

B. Harris stated there were no updates available for FTA or RTA at this time.

- MassDOT 3C

B. Harris mentioned that we have a new planner in the department, Tyler Godin, and he will be focusing on Transit.

B. Harris mentioned a handout about the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study. Recent developments with the study include a cost benefit analysis being conducted regarding restoring passenger rail between North Adams, Greenfield and North Station.

B. Harris mentioned a handout from the USDOT about a Fiscal Year 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program, with up to \$3.16 billion available for planning and construction projects. This RCN NOFO is a combination of two major discretionary grant opportunities: The Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) and Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) Programs. USDOT has combined these two programs into a single NOFO to provide a more efficient application process for project sponsors. While they remain separate programs for the purposes of award, the programs share many common characteristics.

X. Administrative Matters

- Next MJTC Meeting

B. Harris mentioned that typically we consider a break around this time of year, after many of the major documents are endorsed. He reviewed multiple options which included meeting every other month. He mentioned that if there were a pressing issue on an off month which would require the group to meet, staff will reach out to meet.

C. Klem mentioned there is likely to be additional TIP Amendments to discuss in August, so if the group opted to go every other month, September may be the better month to start that schedule.

R. Schwartz expressed appreciation at his being elected Chair.

There was a consensus that the August meeting will be held on August 9th, at 2:30

XI. Adjournment

Consensus was reached to adjourn.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 7 12 2023 Agenda
- 6 14 2023 MJTC minutes
- 5 7 12 MJTC Ballot
- 6 Massachusetts Vehicle Census (MVC) Overview
- 7 FFY 2023 Highway Amendment #5 Summary
- 7 FFY 2023 Transit Amendment #5 Update
- 7 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #5
- 7 Int Parties Draft Transit TIP Amendment #5
- 8 RTP Executive Summary DRAFT
- 8 RTP Trends and Recommendations DRAFT
- 9 2023 RC Announcement 7 5 2023
- 9 Northern Tier June 2023 Newsletter