

MEETING MINUTES

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), Haverhill, MA

Wednesday, March 30, 2016 – 12:30 p.m.

Attending:

Voting Members:

Steve Woelfel, MassDOT, representing MassDOT Secretary Pollack
Frank Suszynski, Representing Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin
Dennis DiZoglio, MVPC Executive Director
Joe Costanzo, representing MVRTA Advisory Board
Mayor James Fiorentini, representing City of Haverhill
Mayor Daniel Rivera, representing City of Lawrence
Neil Harrington, Town of Salisbury Town Manager - MVMPO Subregion #1

Others Present:

Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC	John Pettis, City of Haverhill
Todd Fontanella, MVPC	Connie Raphael, MassDOT District 4
Jerry Klima, Town of Salisbury	Jim Terlizzi, MVPC
Anthony Komornick, MVPC	Nikki Tishler, MassDOT OTP
Rafael Mares, CLF	Geordie Vining, City of Newburyport
Theresa Park, City of Lawrence	

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order

Mr. Woelfel called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item No. 2: Adoption of Minutes of the January 27, 2016 MVMPO Meeting

There was a motion to approve the January 27, 2016 MVMPO meeting minutes. *The motion was seconded and approved.*

Agenda Item No. 3 Opportunity for Public Comment

Mr. Woelfel asked if there were any members of the public present who

wished to speak to the MVMPO. No one came forward to do so.

Agenda Item No. 4 FFYs 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

a. Status of TIP Roadway and Bridge Projects

Ms. Raphael updated the MVMPO on the status of the following FFYs 2016-2019 TIP projects:

FFY 2016:

- Amesbury, Powow Riverwalk Phase I: Project work scope has changed – revised 25% design plans needed w/new scope and schedule. Mr. Komornick called attention to a summary sheet in the handouts detailing the project's status, noting that he would speak in greater detail about the status of this project later today, prior to endorsing the TIP amendment that will move this project from FFY 2016 to FFY 2017;
- Andover-Lawrence-North Andover, I-495 Resurfacing & Related Work: Project was advertised for construction bids on 1/30/16; bids were opened on 3/22/16; MassDOT District 4 is awaiting construction contract award, and NTP to be issued;
- Groveland, MA-97 Reconstruction, School-Salem Sts.: Advertised 8/15, MassDOT issued a construction Notice to Proceed on 1/21/16, and a preconstruction conference was held on 2/18/16. Completion is expected in August 2017;
- Haverhill, MA-125 HSIP Intersection Reconstruction Project: MassDOT and the City are currently revising the project scope and budget as they proceed to 75% design. Current issues include:
 - the project area was extended north to Monument Square for signal coordination purposes adding approximately \$600,000 to the overall project cost;
 - the parties initially assumed that most if not all existing street lights and utility poles would be reset rather than replaced. The City and MassDOT now find that replacement will be necessary;
 - the parties are considering LED signal and street lighting upgrades not included in the original budget, which will add an additional \$400,000, and
 - MassDOT's Environmental or Rights-of-Way section has advised the City that this Project may require a "Section 4(f)"* review, as

it abuts the G.A.R. Memorial Park. If confirmed, this requirement will impact the project development schedule.

(*Section 4(f) of the *Department of Transportation Act of 1966* (Pub. L. 89-670, 80 Stat. 931).)

- Lawrence, Bruce School Safe Routes to School: At pre-25% design. The project scope and budget have both expanded. Scheduled to be advertised for construction bids on 9/30/2016, FFY 2017
- Lawrence – MassDOT's Project Review Committee (PRC) approved the City's intersections project on 2/11/16 including the addition of the Common St. & Lowell St. intersection.
- Methuen: MA-213 Resurfacing and Related Work: Project was previously scheduled for construction advertising on 2/6/16. Since the MVMPO last met, MassDOT has revised the project work scope and budget to include previously separate bridge deck reconstruction projects: 1) MA-213 EB, and WB, over the Spicket River and the I-495 bridge over MA-213. The projects were joined together to minimize area traffic disruptions.

FFY 2017:

- Andover, Billerica, Bedford, & Tewksbury, Stormwater Improvements on I-93 at Various Locations: Includes improvements along I-93 in Andover. Project is at pre-25% design stage in the Boston office and is scheduled to be advertised in November 2016.
- Resurfacing of I-93 in Andover and Methuen: This \$11,011,021 project is at pre-25% design and is slated to be advertised in August 2017;
- Haverhill, MA-97 between Silver Birch Lane and Research Drive: District 4 has completed review of 25% design plans, a public hearing is scheduled for April 7 at Haverhill City Hall, Room 301 at 7:00 p.m., and project is scheduled to be advertised for construction in December 2016.
- North Andover, Massachusetts Avenue / MA-125 Intersection Reconstruction Project: MassDOT District 4 has sent its comments on the 25% design plans to the design engineer. A 25% design public hearing is pending.

FFY 2018:

- Amesbury, Elm Street Reconstruction Project: District 4 has requested that the City resubmit its 25% design with any updates that are required, as the City's initial submission (2011) is aged. Expiring design agreements need extensions.
- Amesbury/Salisbury, Powow Riverwalk/Ghost Trail Connector: Project 25% design plans are under review at MassDOT. Project is scheduled to be advertised for construction in 2018 (October 2017).
- Georgetown, Border to Boston Southern Segment: A 25% design public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 6:30 p.m. at Georgetown Town Hall, Third Floor Meeting Room - 1 Library Street.
- Haverhill, I-495 Bridge over the Merrimack River Superstructure Replacement: A 25% design public hearing was held in November 2015, and the project is scheduled for construction advertising in early 2018.
- Salisbury, Border to Boston Trail segment: MassDOT held a 25% design public hearing on June 8, 2015. The Town and MassDOT are still working on the best design option for the trail's crossing of Elm Street (MA-110) – revised work scope and cost estimate expected.

FFY 2019

- Georgetown-Newbury, Border to Boston Northern Segment: At 25% design stage. The date for the 25% design public hearing has yet to be set. The project is scheduled for construction advertising in November 2018.
- Amesbury/Haverhill/Merrimac, I-495 Sign Update: At 25% design stage and may be advertised in summer 2019.

b. Status of Transit Projects

Mr. Costanzo briefed attendees on four FFY 2016 TIP projects:

- 1) five of a total of 10 MVRTA replacement buses are already in service;
- 2) delivery of the final five of ten replacement buses is expected to take place in May 2016; these vehicles will be in service by the end of June;
- 3) five replacement vans delivered in December are now in service, and
- 4) delivery of two new support vehicles is expected in eight weeks (May 2016).

c. Discussion and Potential Action on Statewide Project Amendments to FFYs 2016-2019 TIP

Mr. Komornick directed attendees to one multi-page handout and one summary sheet detailing proposed changes to the MVMPO TIP statewide program:

- Add Project #608174 to replace decks on the MA-213 bridges over the Spicket River in Methuen and to conduct deck/superstructure work on the MA-213 Bridge over I-495 in Methuen in the FFY 2016 TIP element (\$2.4 million). MassDOT is proposing to combine this work with the MA-213 resurfacing project that is already in the FFY 2016 element of our TIP. This request is one of the comments we received during the public comment and review period.
- Reduce the \$1.2 million estimated construction cost for Project #607476, resurfacing and related work on MA-213, by \$564,000 to match the project's revised stormwater work requirements;
- Reduce cost estimate for Project #607561: I-93 Resurfacing in Andover and Methuen from \$10,387,000 to \$9,987,520, and
- Revise the Advance Construction (AC) drawdown schedule for Project #605306, replacement of I-495 Bridge over the Merrimack River in Haverhill. The amount currently programmed in FFY 2018 (AC Year 1 of 3) would be reduced by \$4 million. For FFY 2019 (AC Year 2 of 3), the amount shown in the current TIP would be increased by \$2 million.

The only comments that the MVMPO staff received for this amendment were from MassDOT, requesting to combine the MA-213 bridge work with the existing MA-213 resurfacing project.

Mr. Woelfel requested that the MVMPO make a motion to endorse the proposed TIP amendment with the above-recommended changes. The motion was made by Mr. DiZoglio and seconded by Mr. Suszynski. *The motion was approved with no objections or abstentions.*

d. Discussion and Potential Action on Target Funding Project Amendments to FFYs 2016-2019 TIP

Mr. Komornick directed attendees to the same summary sheet (referenced in 4c above), and called attention to the first two projects. The MVMPO has proposed amending the FFY 2016 target funding category to accommodate the following requests:

- City of Amesbury: move the City of Amesbury's Powow Riverwalk Phase II Project from FFY 2016 to FFY 2017 to allow sufficient time for project design/permitting, and
- City of Lawrence: add in its new intersection signalization/pedestrian improvements project for Lawrence and Common Streets, and program \$2.4 million of FFY 2016 unobligated funds.

In addition, the staff received the following requests during the amendment's review and comment period:

- the City of Haverhill advised that the cost of its FFY 2016 Main Street HSIP Project had increased by \$600,000 and might increase by another \$400,000;
- the City of Amesbury requested use of whatever FFY 2016 funding remained unobligated to fund a project linking the MA-110/MA-150 intersection improvements with the MA-150 corridor construction project that is now under construction, and
- the City of Lawrence proposed to add replacement of the signals at the Union/Essex Sts. intersection to its \$2.4 million project.

Mr. Woelfel sought to clarify that the MVMPO's proposal required two actions - to amend the FFY 2016 element in both the statewide and the target funding categories. He then made a motion to approve the target funding element of the TIP.

Action on this motion was deferred at Mr. DiZoglio's request to talk through the decision-making process. He recalled that the MVMPO had \$2.4 million available in uncommitted transportation funds as of the last MVMPO meeting. Against that backdrop, the MVMPO had yet to fund the increased cost of the Massachusetts Avenue/MA-125 intersection project in North Andover. It was questioned whether \$1 million would be enough to keep Haverhill's project on schedule, or if there were other potential cost increases.

Mr. Suszynski and Mr. Pettis collectively summarized the status of the Haverhill Main Street HSIP project. The project limits were previously extended northward to Monument Square in order to synchronize the series of signals in this heavily traveled segment of Main Street and improve traffic management. Some of the additional \$600,000 cost is attributable to that change; the balance of the \$600,000 cost increase attributable to revised cost calculations.

The \$440,000 cost increase is for new street lighting within the project limits. During a recent project constructability review, the City noticed that the project work scope provided for resetting existing roadway lighting. Indeed, many if not all utility poles in the right-of-way require relocation to accommodate roadway alignment shifts and ADA compliance. The City expressed concern that the age and condition of the existing equipment would render it unusable once removed. Accordingly, the City requested that the project be modified to replace all roadway lighting within the project limits, including poles and ancillary equipment. The City proposed to salvage whatever lighting equipment was removed under this Project and reinstall it in other City locations.

Mr. Suszynski advised that \$440,000 is only an initial estimate. MassDOT, like the MVPC, is concerned for inducing any project delay. A question here is whether the upgraded lighting should be a non-participating upgrade, or be included with the original project. He believes that the impacts of the new lighting to the project are potentially manageable, but the City of Haverhill needs to provide MassDOT with some additional information. The project designer has advised that it will need to hire a sub-consultant to design the lighting, at a cost unknown just now – not included in the \$440,000 estimate just for the lighting. MassDOT staff was not yet convinced that replacement of all light poles was necessary. If the lighting became a non-participating item, it would be a different issue that might not impact the TIP.

The purpose of the above discussion is to determine if the Haverhill Main Street project (with additions) could be designed and ready for construction advertising by September 2016. The lighting work has been discussed only at a 'low level' (among MassDOT District 4 and City staff), and would require discussion at a higher level within both entities before any action could be taken.

Mayor Rivera asked for additional details on the \$600,000 project cost increase. Aside from the two additional signals and signal controller equipment, Mr. Suszynski advised that MassDOT office project cost estimates have been trending low over the past few years, so MassDOT is looking deeper into the 75% and 100% cost estimates using average bid pricing. MassDOT does use average bid pricing as a basis for calculating cost, with some engineering judgment based upon the specifics of a given project. Notably, projects that contain a number of site-specific requirements may warrant additional cost – clearly, smaller quantities yield higher bid costs. MassDOT's goal is to develop cost estimates that are more in line (within 10%) of actual bids received. Another trend that MassDOT has noticed is that four to five years ago there were 10-15 bidders on a project; now, there are 4-5 bidders – a sign of the recovered economy.

Mayor Rivera asked if this project was impacting, or being impacted by, construction of the new UMass Lowell campus at Main and Merrimack Streets. Mr. Suszynski and Mr. Pettis collectively explained that this project was unaffected by the UMass-Lowell project. The project limits were not being modified as a result of that development; further, the traffic controller equipment upgrade, which should have been part of the original project, was not a sizeable part of the increase (\$100,000 out of \$600,000). In addition, the project does not involve roadway resurfacing or reconstruction.

Mr. DiZoglio said that due to the uncertainty of the cost and timing of the additional lighting work, asked that the MVMPO:

- approve programming an additional \$600,000 of the unobligated FFY 2016 target funds for the Haverhill Main Street project;
- approve the City of Lawrence's request for additional funding to improve the Essex/Union Streets intersection signal equipment today, and
- ask the City of Haverhill to continue working with MassDOT to refine work and cost estimates for adding new street lighting equipment to the existing Main Street signalization project that is now programmed in the TIP, pending the City's assurance that the project can be fully designed in time for construction advertising by September 2016.

Mr. Costanzo added his concern that the cost and potential delay associated with adding lighting to the Haverhill project could delay implementation of the Lawrence intersections project. He felt that as of the last meeting, the City's funding need for that project was being met, and that their project was important for safety.

Mr. Woelfel and Mr. DiZoglio summarized the current situation:

- the MVMPO is amending its FFYs 2016-2019 TIP;
- the Haverhill Main Street HSIP project is already programmed in the 2016 TIP; however, its work scope and budget have expanded, which will require at least \$600,000 and may require an additional \$400,000
- Can the MVMPO address some of the City of Haverhill's funding needs without affecting other projects and delaying adoption of the TIP?

Mr. DiZoglio made a motion that the MVMPO program \$600,000 of the \$2.4 million in FFY 2016 uncommitted funds toward the Haverhill Main Street project, and program the remaining \$1.8 million for the City of Lawrence's intersections improvement project. Ms. Beninati advised that an additional \$266,000 remained available for programming – Mr. DiZoglio amended his motion to commit these additional funds to the Lawrence project - a total FFY 2016 commitment of \$2,066,000, leaving an approximate \$400,000 funding gap for the Lawrence project.

Mayor Rivera spoke in support of the motion to program additional FFY 2016 funding for the City of Lawrence intersections project. Owing to the City's inability to maintain or upgrade these intersections in prior administrations, his administration has demonstrated its commitment to the project in providing some Chapter 90 funds toward the project's initial design work. Even so, the City has identified (and budgeted design funds for) signal work on the Essex/Union Sts. Intersection, which should be improved at the same time as the other intersections already included in this project. The City estimates that its additional funding request totals, \$500,000, of which \$100,000 would be to improve the Essex/Union Sts. intersection. Mayor Rivera requested that MassDOT authorize the additional funding through the MVMPO process, and offered to put the

City's request in a letter. Mr. DiZoglio also offered to provide the MVMPO's support. Mayor Rivera seconded the motion.

Action on the motion was not taken at this point. Mr. Woelfel emphasized that he could transmit the City's request to MassDOT officials, but was not empowered to recommend a specific MVMPO action on this request at this time. The MVMPO's charge is to vote upon the actions that were proposed for today's meeting. Above all, the MVMPO must act in a fiscally responsible manner, which requires that it have sufficient information on project costs and public input on those projects prior to taking a specific action. While the MVMPO members could vote on such an action, there is no guarantee that MassDOT will approve the request – in which case the MVMPO will have to come back to the table.

Mr. Suszynski advised that the Lawrence project was designed and picked to fit the amount of uncommitted funding that was available. Ms. Raphael added that phasing is an option – the City could initiate another project to address the intersections that were left – there were fourteen initially – do 7 or 8 intersections now, and fit the remainder in next year's TIP if funding becomes available.

Mr. Mares clarified that the motion before the MPO (\$2,066,000) is the amount currently available for programming. While the \$2.4 million estimated project cost is not inexpensive, the City and MassDOT have some flexibility to match the final work scope and design details to fit available funding. The Lawrence project is HSIP and CMAQ eligible. Mr. Woelfel advised that a letter is not required and that he will go back to MassDOT to discuss the City's request for additional funds, whether a letter is drafted or not.

Mr. Woelfel moved the motion forward to approve the amendment of the FFY 2016 element of the FFYs 2016-2019 TIP to:

- a) program \$600,000 of the \$2.4 million in FFY 2016 uncommitted funds toward the Haverhill Main Street project;
- b) program the remaining \$2,066,000 for the City of Lawrence's intersections improvement project, and
- c) support the City of Lawrence's request for additional funding from MassDOT.

There were no additional comments or questions. *The motion was approved with no objections or abstentions.*

Agenda Item No. 5: MVMPO Self-Certification Compliance Statement for Meeting Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) Requirements

Mr. Komornick advised that at the time the MVMPO staff was preparing the 2016 RTP and taking actions to adopt the MVMPO's FFYs 2016-2019 TIP, MassDOT and the MPOs were requested to demonstrate that the TIPs/STIP were in conformity with the GWSA. MassDOT was in the process of performing an AQ analysis to ensure conformity, which was not complete at that time. We were subsequently advised by MassDOT that Massachusetts was found to be in compliance with the GWSA. Accordingly, a self-certification document was prepared by MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning, which is enclosed in the handouts, and were asked to sign this Self-Certification sheet at our next MVMPO meeting, which is today. We need to take action on this today to certify that we are in compliance.

A motion to endorse and sign the Self-Certification Compliance Statement was made by Mr. DiZoglio, seconded by Mr. Suszynski, and approved with no objections or abstentions.

Agenda Item No. 6: FFYs 2017-2021 TIP

a. Draft MVMPO TIP Targets

Mr. Komornick directed attendees to a handout showing the draft STIP targets released by MassDOT to the MPOs at a MARPA meeting earlier this month in Sutton, MA. The numbers in the handout show that there is about the same amount of funding available for FFYs 2017-2019 in the (new) FFYs 2017-2021 TIP as was available to the MVMPO for FFYs 2017-2019 in the current (FFYs 2016-2018) TIP. The staff has compared the target projects programmed in FFYs 2017-2019 under the current tip with these projects as they are now for draft FFYs 2017-2019. He referred to an email he sent out prior to this meeting advising that the MVMPO was now facing a funding shortfall of about \$2.8 million in FFY 2017 due to the cost increases for MA-125/Massachusetts Avenue intersection in North Andover and a \$600,000 increase for the MA-97 Reconstruction Project (Silver Birch Lane to Research Drive) in Haverhill. So, the MVMPO staff is considering options for coming up with an FFY 2017 element that will be fiscally constrained. For follow-up, there is still available about \$1.1 million in FFY 2018 target money and \$1.8 million in target money for FFY 2019.

Mr. DiZoglio asked that in light of Ms. Raphael's project update at the beginning of this meeting whether there are any rights-of-way, environmental, or other issues with the projects in play for FFY 2017 that may prevent them from proceeding? The amount of work remaining on the I-495/Massachusetts Avenue and MA-97 Reconstruction Project in Haverhill is considerable. It is possible that one or both of these projects may not be ready for construction advertising in September 2016. He asked Mr. Suszynski to provide additional details on these projects' progress at the next MVMPO meeting. Ms. Raphael added that she had not seen a revised work scope and design schedule from the City of Amesbury for the Powow Riverwalk Phase II project – only a status report on what the City was doing. Mr. Suszynski added that the City's consultant has yet to provide District Four with a 25% design, and the public hearing, 75% and 100% PS&E products remain to be completed – a challenge to do in one year. Mr. DiZoglio concluded discussion on this project, noting that over the last decade it had been programmed over many different TIP years and yet was still in development. He was unsure what the future held for the project, and felt that it wasn't unreasonable to ask the City to provide a durable project development timetable.

Mr. Woelfel acknowledged that these issues wouldn't get resolved today. He summarized the following tasks to be conducted between now and the next MVMPO meeting:

- MassDOT Highway Division will compile details on the projects slated for programming in FFY 2017;
- MVMPO staff will advise the City of Amesbury of the MVMPO's request for a project schedule and of its concerns for the project's ability to be ready to go in FFY 2017 – as well as the fact that FFY 2017 is potentially over-subscribed, and
- The City of Haverhill will review the MA-97 reconstruction project to follow up from the 25% design public hearing and determine if there will be issues (i.e. environmental or right-of-way) that would delay the project. In response to a question from Mayor Fiorentini, Mr. Pettis advised that the project does require sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

Mr. Costanzo noted that MassDOT allocates a variable amount of federal transportation funds each year ('off the top') toward repaying federal grant

anticipation notes (GANs) for the Accelerated Bridge Program. He estimated that MassDOT's payments were about \$60 million in FY 2017, and Mr. Komornick estimated that final payments were due in FY 2022 – within the time band of the next TIP. Meanwhile, GANs payments are projected to fluctuate from FY to FY. Would MassDOT be able to reallocate some of the 'savings' in FYs when GANs payments were lower to increase the pool of target funds? Editor's Note: (actual FY 2017 GANs payments are \$75,596,136, and the final payment is \$76,216,750, due 6/30/2027). Click on the following link to review the complete list of MassDOT ABP Program GANs repayment schedules

[http://www.massbondholder.com/sites/default/files/files/ABP%20Investor%20Presentation%202014A%20\(11.24.14\)_FINAL%20FOR%20ROADSHOW\(2\).pdf](http://www.massbondholder.com/sites/default/files/files/ABP%20Investor%20Presentation%202014A%20(11.24.14)_FINAL%20FOR%20ROADSHOW(2).pdf)

Mr. Costanzo asked Mr. Suszynski to comment on MassDOT's project cost management process during project development, particularly to avoid 'bracket creep'. Mr. Suszynski said that MassDOT routinely reviews project costs at the 25%, 75%, & 100% PS&E stages. The 25% PS&E is a preliminary, less detailed estimate reflective of the project's state of development – typically by this stage, corridor alignments and potential widenings are defined. The 'bracket creep' Mr. Costanzo referred to typically occurs between the 25% - 75% PS&E stage – particularly after the 25% PS&E public hearing, when constituents often ask for bicycling and pedestrian improvements. However, it is not uncommon for projects to reach the 75% PS&E stage and then be put on hold, to be reactivated 3-4 years later – at a significant increase in cost. Some projects' development phases can extend to 5-6 years. Another project cost generator is utilities. MassDOT did not traditionally include utility costs in its project budgets, but is doing so now. The difficulty with this process is that the utility companies avoid allocating staff review time or funding on projects until the project designs are complete, or nearly complete – like during the TIP FFY in which a project is programmed. Accordingly, it is very difficult to produce reasonably accurate utility cost estimates during much of the project development phase.

Mr. Komornick asked if the funding targets provided by MassDOT to date were draft, or final targets? Mr. Woelfel said the state is still working on its Capital Investment Plan (CIP), so the numbers are draft numbers.

c. Preliminary Draft Listing of Transit Projects

Mr. Costanzo provided an overview of the transit planning and programming process from his perspective. For transit, the TIP is an FTA-required project programming document in which funding must be programmed one or more FFYs in advance of receipt. MassDOT's GrantsPlus Program, by comparison, functions more like a checkbook and acknowledges funding transactions in near real-time. This delay creates discrepancies. For example, the MVRTA orders vehicles in a given FFY subject to inclusion in the TIP; however, this transaction isn't recognized in the GrantsPlus Program until the vehicles are delivered – usually one year later.

The MVRTA's current major capital improvement project is the Newburyport Transportation Center. The MVMPO has recognized the project; however, to date it is funded 100% by MassDOT (\$5 million). The project is listed in GrantsPlus, but there was some question as to whether MassDOT would require it (similar to federally-funded projects) to be programmed in the FFY 2017 TIP.

From FFY to FFY, most of the MVRTA's TIP-programmed transit capital projects involve bus, van, and operations vehicle replacements. The MVRTA is up-to-date on its maintenance activities, and does not have a backlog of maintenance projects at this time. As buses come due for replacement, they are replaced. The Maintenance line item is for vehicle servicing and repairs, parts procurements, and routine upkeep of various facilities.

MVRTA continues to utilize MVPC staff for transit planning, as the staff has the skills to do the work required without hiring internal staff at MVRTA or outside consultants.

Mr. Vining commented on a City of Newburyport concern as to whether the \$5 million in MassDOT funds for the Newburyport Transportation Center ("Project") had to be programmed in the TIP. Mayor Holaday was seeking a clear answer on this question given that the Newburyport City Council just voted to approve funding for production of a final design. He asked who was the appropriate decision maker on this issue. Mr. Woelfel replied that MassDOT is not required to program non-federal funds for transportation projects but does acknowledge and list transportation projects using non-federal funds the CIP in its planning work. Mr. Costanzo added that the project was listed in GrantsPlus. MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning is well aware of the Project, and that there was some community –

level work still pending on this project.

Agenda Item No. 7: Discussion and Potential Action on MVMPO Draft 2016 Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Mr. Komornick noted that the MVMPO approved the release of the Draft 2016 PPP for a 45 day public review and comment period at its last meeting in January. The PPP details how the MVMPO staff interacts with the public to ensure maximum feasible opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. Staff held a public hearing on March 2, 2016, and the review and comment period closed on March 26, 2016.

Mr. Fontanella directed attendees to a two-page handout in their packets detailing comments received from MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) and Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (ODCR). While there were very few changes needed, in accordance with comments received from MassDOT, the MVMPO staff:

- moved Chapter 6 (Public Participation during the Project Development Process) from the main section of the Plan to Appendix A;
- confirmed that MVMPO policy is to hold a public hearing during development of the PPP;
- revised or replaced certain words, phrases, and hyperlinks as directed, and
- submitted information on the MVMPO's public participation process used in developing its 2016 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Staff transmitted its 2016 RTP Outreach goals and a matrix that logged each comment received during its development. The matrix showed how each comment related to a specific RTP goal, and noted where specific commenters and/or comments were relevant to Title VI and Environmental Justice populations.

Mr. Fontanella advised that the MVMPO staff received no other comments on the draft PPP. As the staff has addressed the above comments, the MVMPO is asked to adopt the revised PPP today as a final document.

There were no other questions or comments.

Mr. Costanzo made a motion was made to endorse the MVMPO 2016 Public Participation Plan. *The motion was seconded and approved with no objections or abstentions.*

Agenda Item No. 8: Update on MassDOT Draft FFYs 2017-2021 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Mr. Woelfel commented that for the first time, MassDOT has created one CIP document for all of its divisions. Accordingly, there is not separate MBTA CIP this year. MassDOT has programmed \$14.3 billion projects into the CIP. MassDOT has prepared a 93-page presentation on the CIP, and an abridged version, that it gave to the MassDOT Board of Directors. This presentation will also be provided to MARPA members.

This CIP is fundamentally different than those prepared before in that rather than being structured upon projects, this CIP is structured around three agency priorities: 1) maintaining the existing transportation system (increasing reliability) then 2) modernization, and 3) providing more transportation options/capacity for customers. Priority 1) is the highest with over 60% of all CIP funds devoted to improving reliability.

What is also different about this CIP than from previous CIPs is that MassDOT is not proposing much system expansion. Most of the CIP highway expansion funding is being programmed to finish projects like the MA-128 Add-A-Lane (in Dedham, Needham, Wellesley), Faunce Corner Road (Dartmouth), and Middlesex Turnpike Phase III (Bedford/Billerica/Burlington). The CIP also covers some projects in various states of planning – staff is looking to advance projects that address critical transportation facility linkages. The CIP does acknowledge certain 'illustrative' highway projects such as the I-495/I-90 Interchange, and larger transit expansion projects, i.e. expansion of South Station or the I-90 Allston Viaduct/West Station in Cambridge/Allston, as projects still in consideration but not planned nor funded in this CIP.

MassDOT staff developed this CIP as a package of 54 programs across all of its divisions. They created each program by first setting the agency priorities, then using staff recommendations and the Planning for Performance (PfP) and *WeMoveMassachusetts* asset management tool for individual asset management categories. In addition, staff consulted with members of various Boards, including the MassDOT Board of Directors and the Fiscal Control Management Board for the MBTA over the last two months. MassDOT then worked to assemble the draft package of CIP projects, which it shared with the joint Boards about two weeks ago. So far, MassDOT has presented to the Boards its priorities, the programs, and the

funding sources it proposes. At the upcoming joint Board meeting on April 11th, MassDOT staff will present the universe of recommended projects that match the program sizes. The program of recommended CIP projects derives from a larger set of over 5,000 candidate projects that were scored by MassDOT staff for their 'fit' with MassDOT's priorities. The staff will be asking the MassDOT Board for a vote on April 11 to release the draft CIP, then it will hold twelve to fourteen public meetings to solicit public comment on the draft from late April to mid May. Following closure of this phase, the draft CIP will be revised to include public comment and then presented to the MassDOT Board at a subsequent meeting (late May) for its approval. MassDOT will provide the MPOs with its presentation that provides highlights on projects the divisions see as illustrative and/or what ones are programmable, by division (i.e. Highway, Rail & Transit, etc.).

Mayor Fiorentini asked if the North-South RailLink Project Study was included in the CIP. Mr. Woelfel believed it would be in the Plan. He was unsure if the study scope may still be in development, but believed that the study budget was approximately \$2 million.

Mr. Costanzo commented that if the CIP's adoption was scheduled for late May, would the need to have TIP candidate projects approved first in the CIP cause TIP development delays? Mr. Woelfel didn't think that the CIP schedule would cause much delay in TIP development. MassDOT is already working behind the scenes to align the CIP and the STIP. For example, MassDOT compared its own individual project scorings with those prepared by each project's host MPO – and found that each entity's scorings were similar. In addition, MassDOT shared with MARPA members an evaluation of how individual MPOs were programming projects that supported MassDOT's three CIP priorities. Similar to the outcome of the project scoring comparison, the MPOs' priorities compared favorably with MassDOT's. In sum, MassDOT does not expect much disruption for TIP years FFY 2017 and FFY 2018, particularly as there will be more room in the five-year TIPs to plan and program for future projects. The MPOs have been doing a good job with their program activities. However, MassDOT is seeing more TIP disruption in FFY 2017 caused by unanticipated project cost increases.

Subsequent CIPs will likely have greater influence on the development of corresponding TIPs. The MassDOT staff expects to focus more upon transit, bicycling and walking projects and less upon highway expansions. In this

CIP, starting in FFY 2018 MassDOT plans to invest about \$15 million per FFY or \$60 million over four years to implement programs and projects recommended in MassDOT's Pedestrian Plan and in the Statewide Bicycle Plan. Some of these investments will occur on the MBTA system. Secretary Pollack strongly supports investing in these modes but it is not yet clear which projects are needed.

Mr. Mares asked if MassDOT's complete set of CIP project recommendations were publicly available. Mr. Woelfel advised that the table of CIP-recommended projects would be presented to the Board on April 11th, and then shared with the public. He noted that the larger universe of projects, from which the CIP was developed, has increased significantly.

Mr. Mares believed Chapter 90 funding was included in the CIP but was unsure if the funding was part of the \$14.3 billion in proposed spending. Mr. Woelfel was unsure, but replied that the CIP includes an annual \$200 million state funding commitment for five years, and \$50 million for the municipal (non-NHS) bridge program. Mr. Woelfel believes that the Executive Office of Administration and Finance furnished a Chapter 90 funding estimate of \$750 million over the life of the CIP.

Agenda Item No. 9: Draft Memorandum of Understanding between Merrimack Valley MPO and Rockingham Planning Commission MPO

Mr. Komornick directed attendees to a draft MOU between the MVMPO and the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) MPO. The MVMPO is expected to document ongoing cooperation with adjoining MPO regions in its '3c' planning efforts. USDOT recommended that the MVMPO develop this particular MOU at its last Certification Review (2013).

At USDOT's suggestion, the MOU was drafted to include both MassDOT and NHDOT as signatories. After an unsuccessful effort over several years to secure NHDOT participation, the RPCMPO suggested moving ahead with the RPCMPO and MVMPO as the MOU parties. The enclosed draft MOU is agreeable to the RPCMPO.

However, CTPS (at MassDOT's direction) is preparing an updated Boston Urbanized Zone Area (UZA) MOU. The MVMPO is a member of this UZA, which expanded geographically based upon the 2010 Census to include portions of the RPCMPO, SNHMPO, and Nashua MPO regions as well as portions of Rhode Island. As a result, the new Boston UZA MOU will most

likely serve as the controlling document, making the MVMPO/RPCMPO MOU duplicative and unnecessary. Attendees were asked to review the language of the MVMPO/RPCMPO MOU as an FYI and for MassDOT's Office of Transportation Planning to consider it as a guide to what the MPOs were considering.

Mr. Fontanella noted that after the 2013 Certification Review the MVMPO staff also drafted MOUs as cooperative agreements with the Nashua and Southern New Hampshire MPOs. These MOUs remain in draft form. Staff provided copies of each of the draft MOUs to Lourenco Dantas at CTPS recently to inform his work on the new Boston UZA MOU. Mr. Woelfel advised that he had heard some internal discussion on the UZA MOU, and would report out on internal progress at the next MVMPO meeting.

Agenda Item No. 10: Other Business

Mr. Fontanella called attention to a draft MOU between the MVMPO and the MVRTA. Federal partners requested this in the 2013 Certification Review. Mr. Costanzo has reviewed it and made a few changes. The revised draft is being circulated today in preparation for acting upon it at the next MVMPO meeting. MVRTA needs to have this in place for its next Triennial Review. Mr. Costanzo added that the MVRTA has always been part of the MVMPO process, but FTA has requested that grantees and MPOs execute separate MOUs with the transit operators to assure that this cooperation existed.

Mr. Komornick advised that the next MassDOT Complete Streets Workshop was scheduled for April 14th at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill. He reminded everyone that communities wanting to send someone should go online to register as soon as possible. Communities intending to participate in the Complete Streets Program must ensure that one or more of its paid staff complete MassDOT's training session. Mr. Woelfel added that as of about one week ago, 287 Massachusetts communities had participated in the training.

Agenda Item No. 11: Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn at 2:15 p.m. *The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.*