

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Docket

December 4, 2024

Item 4 – MVMPO Memorandum of Understanding

Context:

MVMPO must meet certain eligibility requirements to program federal aid through the 3C (continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative) transportation planning process. One of the requirements is CFR §450.310(b), which states that “MPO designation shall be made by agreement between the Governor and units of general purpose local government that together represent at least 75 percent of the affected population (including the largest incorporated city, based on population, as named by the Bureau of the Census) or in accordance with the procedures established by applicable state or local law.” In Massachusetts, the state has used a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish the composition and procedures of each MPO Board. Typically, MOUs are updated every four to five years. While MVMPO’s MOU was last updated in 2022, staff have accelerated an update to address several housekeeping needs.

Discussion:

Since the summer of 2024, MVMPO’s Board has engaged with staff and other Board stakeholders in discussions related to several MVMPO MOU topics, including the representation of the interests of non-public officials, representation for towns located within the region’s designated subregions, attendance, and Board member selection. During the last Board meeting, the Board reviewed partial findings of an initial questionnaire related to these topics and finalized draft language related to attendance expectations. Staff have collected additional questionnaire responses and will review these with the Board at the subject meeting. These and previous responses will setup more concrete discussions about representation and Board member selection.

Action:

Participate in the discussion.

Item 5 – FFY2025-2029 TIP Amendment #1

Context:

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a five-year capital plan of projects located within the region that are anticipated to receive federal aid. The TIP projects for the region are separated into two elements—highway projects and transit projects—based on the federal funding program supplying the aid.

From time to time, the Board may amend the TIP to address necessary changes related to projects' costs and scopes. Per federal regulation, amendments are subject to a 21-day public comment period and must be approved by the Board.

Discussion:

FFY2025-2029 TIP Amendment #1 packages several actions, as summarized below:

Amendment #1 packages several actions:

- Newburyport: Bikeshare Pilot – Programs \$180,000 over three years from FFY25-FFY27
- Newbury and Georgetown: Border to Boston Earmarks – Moves currently programmed earmark funds from FFY24 to FFY25
- Haverhill: Basiliere Bridge – Adds \$34,403,828 to the project due to revised cost estimates
- Haverhill: Main Street Intersection Safety Demonstration Project – Adds \$250,102 of discretionary aid per grant award
- Haverhill: Columbia Park at Main Street Safety Demonstration Project – Adds \$743,778 of discretionary aid per grant award
- Lawrence: Safety Action Plan – Adds \$250,000 of discretionary aid per grant award
- Haverhill: Removing the Scars of Urban Renewal Reconnecting Communities Project – Adds \$565,000 of discretionary aid per grant award

The Board conditionally approved the TIP amendment at its last meeting. To date, no public comments or questions have been received regarding the amendment. Staff have scheduled a public hearing for December 2, 2024. Assuming there are no comments or questions, the amendment will be approved.

Action:

Approve and adopt the draft plan.

Item 6 – Public Participation Plan – Re-Release

Context:

MVMPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a federally required document that details how the Board and its staff engage the public in the transportation planning decision making process. The document states goals and values for participation, includes examples of various approaches for engagement, and depicts decision trees that help staff select appropriate engagement strategies relevant to a process or project. The document includes anti-discrimination assurances and explains how complaints can be made in the event a member of the public perceives that they have been discriminated against. The PPP also includes information about language access and accessibility to ensure all members of the public can be included in decision-making.

Discussion:

MVMPO's Board reviewed a proposed amended PPP at its last meeting. Since this time, staff have made additional updates, which necessitates the re-release of the document for a 45-day public comment period. The new changes include:

- Revised flow charts related to amendments for public hearings;
- The addition of an MVMPO-wide privacy policy;

- Improved documentation regarding accommodations for those who are deaf/hard of hearing;
- Improved documentation regarding accommodations for language access;
- Added a regional map; and
- Made several grammar and formatting edits.

Action:

Re-release the amended Public Participation Plan for public comment.

Item 7 – Congestion Mitigation Process (CMP) Scope

Context:

Urban areas with a population over 200,000 are designated as Transportation Management Areas. The federal statutes dictating Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) processes require MPOs serving Transportation Management Areas to establish a Congestion Management Process (CMP). Because MVMPO serves a Transportation Management Area, MVMPO is required to establish a CMP. The CMP is used to guide other MPO planning studies, measures, and programing decisions. Federal guidance for the CMP consists of eight actions:

- Develop Regional Objectives
- Define CMP Network
- Develop Multimodal Performance Measures
- Collect Data/Monitor System Performance
- Analyze Congestion Problems and Needs
- Identify and Assess Strategies
- Program and Implement Strategies
- Evaluate Strategy Effectiveness

Discussion:

During the meeting, MVMPO staff will provide an overview of a scope to update the region's CMP. MVMPO last updated its CMP in 2022. The CMP is part of the metropolitan planning process, as the CMP informs other MPO documents such as the region's transportation work program, its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and its Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This CMP update follows MVMPO's 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update. Updating the CMP will allow MVMPO staff to assess congestion conditions and identify key congestion locations using the most up-to-date data.

Action:

Receive the scope.

Item 8 – MassDOT Performance Measure Two and Three Overview

Context:

Per Federal legislation, State Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required to establish performance measures and associated targets to be used to assess the transportation system. MassDOT and Massachusetts MPOs use three performance measures. The first performance measure (PM1) tracks roadway safety and will be discussed at a future meeting. The second of these performance measures tracks bridge and pavement reliability through the following measures:

- Percentage of Pavements of the Interstate System in Good Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the Interstate System in Poor Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in Good Condition
- Percentage of Pavements of the non-Interstate NHS in Poor condition
- Percentage of NHS bridges by deck area classified as in Good Condition
- Percentage of NHS bridges by deck area classified as in Poor Condition

The last of these performance measures tracks system performance, freight, and congestion mitigation and air-quality through the following measures:

- Percent of the Person-Miles Traveled on the Interstate that are Reliable
- Percent of the Person-Miles Traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are Reliable
- Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) Index on the Interstate System
- Annual Hours of Peak Hour Excessive Delay Per Capita
- Percent of Non-SOV Travel on the NHS System
- Total Emission Reduction of all projects funded with CMAQ in areas designated as nonattainment or maintenance for ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), or particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

Discussion:

During the December 4, 2022 meeting, MassDOT staff will provide an overview of PM2 and PM3, including updated data about systemwide performance.

Action:

Receive the update.

Item 9 – Other Business

Item:

MassDOT requested staff submit an MVMPO-endorsed project list for its statewide Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP). Staff has attached the requested list and seeks MVMPO endorsement. MVPC Environmental Program staff selected projects from the region's *Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024)*.

Action(s):

Endorse the proposed MVMPO project list for the RIP.

Docket Attachments

- A. FFY2025-2029 TIP Amendment #1 Revisions Report
- B. Updated Public Participation Plan
- C. MVMPO MassDOT Resilience Improvement Plan Projects