

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.

Attending:

Voting Members:

Derek Krevat, MassDOT, representing MassDOT Secretary Jamey L. Tesler
Frank Suszynski, representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
Noah Berger, MVRTA Administrator
Jerrard Whitten, MVPC Executive Director
John Pettis, representing the City of Haverhill
Dan McCarthy, representing the City of Lawrence
Jerry Klima, Salisbury, representing MPO Subregion #1
Robert Snow, Rowley, representing MPO Subregion #2
Paul Materazzo, Andover, representing MPO Subregion #4

Others Present:

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| Anthony Komornick, MVPC | Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning |
| Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC | Brian Fallon, MassDOT District 4 |
| Betsy Goodrich, MVPC | Cassandra Ostrander, FHWA |
| Jim Terlizzi, MVPC | Alex Loncarevic, VHB |
| Kathleen Lambert, MVRTA | Jacob Kaminsky (Rep. Devers) |
| Geordie Vining, Newburyport | Josh Levin, MassDOT District 4 |
| Rick Taintor, Newburyport | Andrew Levine, Newburyport |
| Andrew Shapiro, North Andover | |

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order

Derek Krevat called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and stated that he was representing Transportation Secretary and CEO Jamey Tesler and that this meeting was accessible to people with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency. Mr. Komornick then announced that six members were present and that we had a quorum.

Agenda Item No. 2: Opportunity for Public Comment

Derek Krevat 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. 3: Adoption of Minutes of March 23, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to accept the March 23, 2022 Virtual MVMPO

Meeting Minutes. Paul Materazzo seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the March 23, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting Minutes passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 4: Status of Ongoing and FFYs 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects

a. Status of TIP Roadway and Bridge Projects

Brian Fallon of MassDOT District 4 reported on the following changes in the status of MassDOT projects in the MVMPO region:

- Newburyport – Route 1/Merrimack Street Intersection Improvement Project: Adam Kell is the new Project Manager
- Salisbury – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 1A: Three informational meetings have been scheduled for mid-May.
- Haverhill – I-495 Bridge Replacement: The TIP years have been modified.
- Haverhill – Corridor Improvements on Water Street: Annie Autio is the new Project Manager
- Lawrence – Short Street Bridge Replacement: Janhavi Limaye is the new Project Manager
- Andover/Tewksbury -Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-93: Project has a new Ad date of 4/5/2025 and a new Project Manager, Koby Lemrise
- Amesbury – Riverwalk Connector to Salisbury Point Ghost Trail: Michael Trapanier is the new Project Manager
- North Andover – Route 114 Corridor Improvements: TIP years have been modified to show 2024, 2025, and 2026.
- Georgetown/Boxford – Border to Boston Rail Trail: Project has new Ad date of 12/23/2023.
- Lawrence – Lawrence/Manchester Rail Trail: Project has a new AD date of 12/2/2023, new TIP years (2023, 2024).
- Lawrence – Amesbury Street Reconstruction: Project has a new Ad date of 1/27/2024.
- Georgetown/Newbury – Border to Boston Rail Trail: Project has a new Ad date of 1/3/2026.
- Salisbury – Reconstruction of Route 1: Project is now at 100% Design, has a new Ad date of 3/25/2023.
- Rowley – Safety Improvements at Route 1/Glen Street Intersection: Project has new TFPCC of \$1,352,139.26 and a new Total Contract Cost of \$1,273,681.07.

- Newbury/Newburyport/Salisbury – Resurfacing Work on Route 1: Project has a new Ad date of 7/9/2022. Design of concrete intersection in Newbury will be completed in June.
- Lawrence – Intersection Reconstruction at Marston Street/East Haverhill Street: Project has a new Ad date of 7/16/2022, but ROW issues are being worked on

Ongoing Construction Projects

- Haverhill – Intersection Improvements at Route 108/Route 110 Intersection: Project has a new Completion date of 9/4/2023.
- Lawrence – Mt. Vernon Street/Route 28 Intersection: New Completion date of 9/6/2022. Project is 9% complete.
- Andover/Tewksbury – Highway Lighting System Rehabilitation: Project is now 9% complete with a Project Completion date of 8/18/2023.
- Danvers/Topsfield/Boxford/Rowley – Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-95: Project is 32% complete with a Project Completion date of 7/7/2024.
- Haverhill – Bradford Rail Trail Extension: Project is 35% complete with Project Completion date of 8/16/2022.
- Groveland – Groveland Community Trail: Project is 27% complete with a Project Completion date of 6/10/24.

Robert Snow asked what the Advertise date was for the Rowley Route 1 at Glen Street project. Derek Shooster answered that it could be deliverable in FFY 2022, but MassDOT is still waiting for the 100% design plans. The project is currently programmed in FFY 2023 as a Statewide funded project. We may be able to use Merrimack Valley Regional Target balance from FFY 2022 to advertise this project earlier. The TIP could be amended by this body for this fiscal year.

b. Status of Transit Projects

Noah Berger reported that the MVRTA has started work on a Riverbank Stabilization project at its Bradford facility. Unfortunately, this early work has revealed that there are issues with the tiebacks for the wall to the garage. He added that the Authority will likely need more funding for the project.

MassDOT had provided the Authority with \$40,000 in State funding to update its fare collection infrastructure. Now that the MVRTA has gone to fare-free operation, that funding can be reassigned to making improvements to the McGovern Transportation Center. With the City of

Lawrence planning on making Amesbury Street two-way, this is not good for bus operations at the Buckley Transportation Center, we would like to make the McGovern Center as the new Lawrence bus hub.

Since going fare free on March 1, the Authority has seen over a 42% increase in ridership. He added that this change is also providing an overall better experience with less conflict about paying, and the ability to use both the front and back doors. There is a more friendly boarding experience, not facing a farebox as the first thing you see. He also noted that there are also fewer conflicts with drivers because we no longer have a mask requirement.

Noah then reported that the MVRTA is working to optimize its routes. Many places have inbound and outbound trips on different routes. This process started in Lawrence and The Authority will next focus on the Haverhill routes. We will soon be able to serve Groveland through some bus rerouting.

On the Demand Response side, we are going to serve Rowley, the final community in the region to get service.

We are going to install bus stop signs with a new look. We will start using old signs at first, then we will put up new signs later. We will work closely with the cities and towns as to where to locate bus stops.

In Newburyport, we will begin optimizing bus routes in September. The MVRTA is also working on providing a new commuter service using a private provider to go from the I-95 Newburyport Park and Ride Lot into Boston.

Finally, Mr. Berger said that in the next month, an MVRTA focus group will be looking at a mock-up of the new look and new logo.

Geordie Vining asked if there was any more you could tell us about the Park-and-Ride commuter service, who is the provider? Noah Berger answered that the carrier would be Peter Pan. He added that the MVRTA is looking long term at the current challenges for it to house the six commuter buses that have been used to provide the I-93 Bus Service into Boston and perhaps Peter Pan can also take over that service.

Anthony Komornick provided an update to the FFY 2022 target funding. He said with additional funding being authorized for FFY 2022 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, there is now about \$3.9 million available in unprogrammed Regional Target funding. One project that could use some

of that funding is the Rowley Route 1 at Glen Street project. If it can be ready in time, that would use \$1.3 million and that would leave \$2.5 million in Target funds available.

Mr. Komornick then noted that staff has also looked at using some of the available FFY 2022 Target money to fund the now larger scope of the Riverbank Stabilization project. He showed members an option for transferring \$665,000 in Target funds to FTA with a Toll Credits match.

Derek Shooster stated that the final design for the Rowley project may be coming in May before the next MPO meeting and noted that the MPO should not release this change as a proposed amendment for public review until we have that design. The Project Manager has indicated that this project can be made ready to be advertised in FFY 2022.

He added that the Riverbank Stabilization change is more complicated since this project is already going to receive an FTA funding obligation. However, this proposal would seek to use additional federal funds. We will have to check with FTA on this situation. Also, we do not know if FTA is going to allow us to program Flex to FTA funds at this time in the federal fiscal year because they had wanted such transfer requests to be submitted by May 1st, but the additional funding was only recently made available.

Derek Krevat stated that we have an inquiry into FTA regarding this proposed project and then we would also have to check with MassDOT Rail and Transit.

Tony Komornick then reported on some proposed adjustments that the Rail and Transit Division requested be made to the FFY 2022 element of the TIP for some non-federal aid (NFA) transit funding projects. These adjustments include the removal of the NFA project to Acquire Bus Plus Payment Software at \$40,735 because the MVRTA is now Fare Free and does not need the software and add projects to rehabilitate/renovate McGovern Transportation Center for \$52,735, Rehab/renovate bus route signing for \$157,414, and rehab/renovate admin/maintenance facility for \$518,467 all using Regional Transit Authority State Capital Assistance (RTACAP) non-federal aid funds.

Noah Berger stated that as far as the Flex to FTA funding is concerned there is an urgency from a construction point of view for these to be FFY 2022 funds, we do not have to spend it by 2022, we just have to transfer the funds by 2022.

Derek Krevat stated that given the tight time frame we are confronting with the transfer of Target Funding to FTA , it seems prudent that we move forward with the release of an amendment for a new project to fund the increase in cost of the Riverbank Stabilization project.

Robert Snow asked how the Rowley project would move forward, would that be an amendment? Frank Suszynski said that MassDOT did receive the Plans, Specifications & Engineering yesterday, but still need to review it. He said that he thinks this can be done in time for the next MPO meeting so that we can decide on releasing it as a proposed amendment.

Vote: Noah Berger motioned to release an amendment to add Riverbank Stabilization Phase 2 project to FFY 2022 Regional Target funding to Flex to FTA of \$ 665,500, plus Transportation Development Credits for the match, for Public Review and Comment. Jerry Klima seconded the motion.

The motion to release an amendment to add Riverbank Stabilization Phase 2 project to FFY 2022 Regional Target funding to Flex to FTA \$ 665,500 plus Transportation Development Credits for the match for Public Review and Comment passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0.

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to Adjust the transit non-federal aid funding in FFY 2022 as Tony described in the MVMPO FFYs 2022 to 2026 TIP. Jerry Klima seconded the motion.

The motion to Adjust the transit non-federal aid funding in FFY 2022 of the MVMPO FFYs 2022 to 2026 TIP passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 5: Discussion and Potential Action to Release MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP for Public Review and Comment

Mary Kay Beninati said that there is a lot of information in the Draft TIP document including an emphasis on performance measure targets the MPO has been adopting over the last few years. There are tables in there that show which performance measures each of the projects will help meet. All the projects will help meet at least one performance measure target with the exception of the two off system bridges. Likewise, many of the transit projects are listed that help meet the MVRTA's Transit Asset Management Plan performance measure targets.

With the new Infrastructure Law, many funding categories have been continued and there are many new funding categories. There is a significant amount of

funding available through competitive grant applications that are open to local and regional entities. When these grants have been approved, these projects will have to appear in the TIP.

As far as changes to the project list, we have added the FFY 2027 projects voted on last month, so in addition to the completion of the North Andover Route 114 project, we have added the Amesbury Riverwalk Connector to the Salisbury Point Ghost Trail, the start of the Haverhill Reconstruction of North Avenue which will be AC'd over three years, and the Newburyport Intersection Improvements at Route 1 and Merrimac Street to FFY 2027.

Noah Berger noted that the projects reflect the fact that the Authority has outgrown its bus hubs in Lawrence and in Haverhill. Other projects focus on keeping the Authority's facilities in a state of good repair to meet operation needs and to provide the transit service that our communities deserve and expect.

Vote: Jerry Klima motioned to Release the MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP for Public Review and Comment. Robert Snow seconded the motion.

The motion to Release the MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP for Public Review and Comment passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 6: Update on Development of MVMPO's Draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program

Anthony Komornick stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) needs to be released for public review and comment next month. He noted that additional Section 5303 money has come into the State and as a result there will be \$225,000 more funding in FFY 2023 than there was available in 2022.

Betsy Goodrich then made a presentation on the tasks that will be included in the upcoming Draft UPWP.

She emphasized that the preparation of the MVMPO's FFY 2023 Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be a major focus of the document.

As in previous UPWPs, MVPC will conduct Automated Traffic Recorder counts in the region and reported that MVPC will also initiate a pedestrian and bicycle counting program,

Under MVPC's Pavement Management Program, staff will be collecting data on the condition of all non-interstate federal aid roadways in the region. Staff will also continue to assist our communities in implementing pavement management programs.

Betsy noted that MVPC is currently finalizing its Active Transportation Plan

and will be implementing the recommendations in this document in FFY 2023. One important new bicycle and planning task being considered is a Regional Bicycle Parking Study.

Betsy then reported that another major focus area in FFY 2023 will be Safety. MVPC will continue to develop its Intersection Top 100 Crash locations list and will investigate developing a high crash corridor list. Staff will also conduct Road Safety Audits (RSAs) and participate in RSAs conducted by MassDOT in the region.

Transportation impacts everybody's health and lives including, employment, education, livability, and other areas. Under the Livability Task, Betsy said that MVPC staff will participate on the Mayors Health Task Force in Lawrence, provide support for the Safe Routes to School Program, support the implementation of Complete Streets programs and projects, and update the region's Priority Growth Strategy, and its Regional Housing Production Plan.

Betsy then spoke about the Climate Change and Stormwater Planning tasks that will be in the upcoming UPWP including providing assistance to communities in implementing strategic plans under the MVP Program, supporting the community efforts to promote electrification of our vehicle fleet, and assisting communities in meeting the requirements of the MS4 permits.

Significant transit planning activities will include providing technical assistance to our communities, assisting the MVRTA with its National Transit Database reporting and the Implementation of Bus Stops in the region, and providing support to the Regional Coordinating Council.

Derek Krevat confirmed that the MVMPO's Draft FFY 2023 UPWP will be released at the May meeting.

Agenda Item No. 7: Other

Derek Krevat said that the Innovation Conference will be taking place at the DCU Center in Worcester this May 24th and 25th.

Agenda Item No. 8: Adjourn

Vote: Robert Snow made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jerry Klima seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously, with no objections, by voice vote.

The meeting was Adjourned at 1:01 pm.