

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, December 30, 2020 – 12:00 p.m.

Attending:

Voting Members:

David Mohler, MassDOT, representing MassDOT Secretary Stephanie Pollack
Frank Suszynski, representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
Theresa Park, MVPC Executive Director
Kathleen Lambert, representing MVRTA Administrator Joseph Costanzo
Pedro Soto, representing the City of Lawrence
Tara Lynch, representing the City of Haverhill
Jerry Klima, representing MPO Subregion #1

Others Present:

Anthony Komornick, MVPC	Connie Raphael, MassDOT District 4
Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC	Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning
Betsy Goodrich, MVPC	Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Planning
Michelle Ho, MassDOT Planning	Andrew Shapiro, Town of North Andover

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order

David Mohler called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. stating that the meeting was being held remotely according to the Governor Baker's Executive Order related to the Covid pandemic and asked Tony Komornick to conduct a roll call vote of members attending the virtual meeting. Mr. Komornick then announced that seven members were present.

Agenda Item No. 2: Opportunity for Public Comment

Mr. Mohler 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 the December 2, 2020 Virtual MVMPO Meeting

Vote: Theresa Park motioned to approve the December 2, 2020 MVMPO meeting minutes. Frank Suszynski seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the December 2, 2020 MVMPO Meeting Minutes passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 4: Status of Ongoing and FFYs 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Projects

a. Status of TIP Roadway and Bridge Projects

Connie Raphael reported the following project updates.

FFY 2021 Projects:

All 2021 projects are at 75% or Final Design.

The estimated cost of the South Broadway/Mount Vernon Street intersection project in Lawrence cost has increased slightly to \$1,234,007 from \$1,218,368.

FFY 2022 Projects

The estimated cost of the intersection project at Merrimack Street and South Broadway has increased to \$1.5 million.

FFY 2024 Projects

The estimated cost of the bridges on I-495 in Andover has jumped quite a lot, up to \$173 million.

New Proposed Projects

Andover has submitted a proposal to shorten the limits of its Route 133 project, which is being treated as a new project. The new limits of the project will be from Shawsheen Road to Route 28 while the existing project limits are from Lovejoy Road to Route 28. This proposed change will go to PRC in January.

Amesbury has submitted a new trail project, the Carriagetown Marketplace Connector, which would connect the Amesbury Powwow Riverwalk to the Salisbury Ghost trail. This project will also go to PRC in January.

Connie mentioned that she would provide an update on the actions taken at the January PRC meeting at our next MVMPO meeting.

b. Status of Transit Projects

FFY 2021 Projects:

Kathleen Lambert reported that they are awaiting Final Approval for the FTA funds that are to be flexed to replace nine model year 2009 buses. The MVRTA expects to issue a purchase order in January 2021 with delivery in June 2022. The manufacturer's current delivery timetable is 18 months due to delays caused by the COVID pandemic. This timeframe might improve as the year goes on.

Agenda Item No. 5: Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Proposed Amendments to MVMPO FFYs 2021-2025 TIP

Tony Komornick stated that the agenda here is different from the draft sent out last week in that Agenda item 5b., Adjustment to Construction Cost of South Broadway/Mount Vernon Street Intersection Improvements project in Lawrence (#609251), does not need to be listed here as it was already approved as an adjustment to the TIP at our previous meeting and has already been incorporated into the TIP.

Tony Komornick stated that there were no adverse comments received regarding the Amendments listed in Agenda items 5a, 5c and 5d, which include the Discontinuance of the Riverfront Clipper City Rail Trail in Newburyport, the changes in the funding amounts shown for the I-495 Bridge over the Merrimack River in Haverhill, and the addition of Section 5339-funded MVRTA transit projects to FFY 2021, respectively.

Derek Shooster inquired about the Mayor of Haverhill's question during the last MPO meeting and whether it had been included as a comment on the amendments. He confirmed that MassDOT did follow up with the Mayor.

Tony Komornick replied that he did not interpret the Mayor's question as a comment on the amendments, but rather as an inquiry as to how some of the funding that would be made available in the Statewide Bridge Program through one of these proposed amendments might be spent on other bridges in the City of Haverhill.

Vote: There was a motion from Theresa Park to approve the Amendments as presented, which Jerry Klima seconded.

The motion to approve the Amendments passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 6: Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Proposed Amendments to MVMPO's FFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program

Tony Komornick noted that we had originally intended to take action on these proposed UPWP amendments at a December 9th MVMPO meeting but when the meeting date was changed to December 2nd it proved impossible to complete the review and comment period in the reduced timeframe. Instead the review and comment period for these amendments was incorporated to review and comment period for the just -approved TIP amendments.

Mr. Komornick summarized the proposed UPWP amendments, which include a new Task 3.11 that will facilitate the completion of three intersection studies in Amesbury, providing additional funding to Task 2.7 to complete the Active Transportation Plan, and the changes that were being made to the funding of selected tasks in the UPWP to

support the work to be done under Tasks 2.7 and 3.11.

Tony Komornick stated that there were no adverse comments received regarding the proposed amendments.

Vote: There was a motion from Jerry Klima to accept the UPWP Amendments, which was seconded by Frank Suszynski.

The motion to Accept the UPWP Amendments passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 7: Other

Pedro Soto presented information on the Marston Street at East Haverhill Street project in Lawrence in support of his request that it be put on the 2021 or, more likely, the 2022 TIP for \$1.7 million.

Mr. Soto stated that the City Council recently approved \$171,000 for TEC to bring the project to 100% design. He said that the project was approved at the September 2020 PRC meeting. It is needed to improve safety, operations and accessibility for all users at this intersection, which is a gateway into the City of Lawrence. There is a steep downhill grade on the East Haverhill Street approach to the intersection, which is also the site of numerous crashes. This project will also improve access to the Tombarello site, which the City is seeking to remediate and redevelop.

The project will also improve safety, access and efficiency for users of the Parthum Middle and Elementary schools. Other key features of the project include shared use paths on the west side of Marston Street and the south side of East Haverhill Street, new sidewalks and a new traffic signal, if needed, or pedestrian signals.

Dave Mohler asked Tony Komornick to review the timeframe for developing the MPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP. Tony Komornick stated that the process is kicking off right now, with TIP Readiness days taking place in February. Staff is putting together the files needed to develop the document. Mr. Mohler asked Mr. Komornick if there was insufficient funding available in FFY 2021 of the current TIP to program this project and was told that there was not. Mr. Mohler said that the project would be a candidate for inclusion in the 2022-2026 TIP and that Mr. Soto should contact MVPC staff to provide more information.

Pedro Soto then stated that Lawrence also has the Amesbury Street Corridor Improvements project that he will be discussing at the next MPO and which could also be considered for inclusion in the FFYs 2022-2026 TIP. This project has an estimated cost of \$8,000,000.

Jerry Klima said that the Amesbury Carriage Town Connector project will be considered at the next PRC meeting. It provides the final connection between the Coastal Trails

Network from Amesbury/Salisbury Connector to the end of the Amesbury Riverwalk and would go through and around Carriagetown Marketplace. There are two alternatives for securing funding for project design and permitting. One option is the \$1.8 million that was included for this project in the 2014 Transportation Bond Bill. Another option would be to request approximately \$200,000 through the Mass Trails program and he noted that the match money for a grant under this program has already been secured. This could be a project for 2022.

Derek Shooster shared a link that MassDEP has announced new and enhanced electric vehicle incentive program grant opportunities. Municipalities or property owners can visit the site if they are interested in funding for charging stations or EV fleets.

Agenda Item No. 8: Adjourn

Vote: Jerry Klima made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Theresa Park seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting was Adjourned at 12:26 pm.