

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.

Attending:

Voting Members:

Dave Mohler, MassDOT, representing MassDOT Acting Secretary Jamey L. Tesler
Frank Suszynski, representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver
Jerrard Whitten, MVPC Executive Director
Noah Berger, MVRTA Administrator
John Pettis, representing the City of Haverhill
Neil Harrington, Salisbury, representing MPO Subregion #1
Robert Snow, Rowley, representing MPO Subregion #2
John Cashell, Georgetown, representing MPO Subregion #3
Paul Materazzo, Andover, representing MPO Subregion #4

Others Present:

Anthony Komornick, MVPC	Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning
Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC	Tim Paris, MassDOT District 4
Betsy Goodrich, MVPC	Derek Krevat, MassDOT Planning
Jim Terlizzi, MVPC	Michelle Ho, MassDOT Planning
Andrew Shapiro, North Andover	Brian Fallon, MassDOT District 4
Andy Port, Newburyport	Mayor James Fiorentini, Haverhill
Rep. Jamie Zahlaway Belsito	Chris Timmel, FHWA
Ian Hatfield, Office of Rep Zahlaway Belsito	Jon Rockwell, TEC Inc.
Alex Loncarevic, VHB	Angus Jennings, West Newbury

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order

Dave Mohler called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and asked Anthony Komornick to conduct a roll call vote of members attending the virtual meeting. Mr. Komornick then announced that six members were present. (Jerrard Whitten and Neil Harrington joined just after the roll call and Paul Materazzo joined shortly thereafter.)

Agenda Item No. 2: Opportunity for Public Comment

Dave 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 December 22, 2021 Virtual MVMPO Meeting

Vote: John Pettis motioned to accept the December 22, 2021 Virtual MVMPO

Meeting Minutes. Neil Harrington seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the December 22, 2021 Virtual MVMPO Meeting Minutes passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0 with 1 Abstain.

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

a. Status of TIP Roadway and Bridge Projects

Tim Paris reported on changes to the following projects:

- Georgetown-Boxford Border-to-Boston Trail Project #607541: TIP Cost and TIP year have been updated to reflect the funding programmed in the current TIP.
- Lawrence – Merrimack Street/ South Broadway Project #609509: There are minor Total Federal Participating Cost (TFPC) and Total Contract Cost changes.
- Newbury-Newburyport-Salisbury Resurfacing of Route 1 Project #608494: The TIP cost has changed to reflect TIP Amendment #1 and the Advertise Date has changed by a few weeks.
- Rowley – Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central and Glen Streets Project #609392: There is a slight change in Total Federal Participating Cost (TFPC)
- Haverhill – North Avenue Reconstruction from Main Street to Plaistow, NH Project #608788: The TFPC and the Total Construction Cost have been corrected
- Lawrence – Intersection of Marston Street and East Haverhill Street Project#610923: Has moved to Final Design and the TFPC and Total Construction Costs have changed.
- Lowell – North Andover – Haverhill Bridge Superstructure and Substructure Repairs along I-495 Project #612197: The Advertise date has changed and the costs have changed.

Mayor Fiorentini asked Tony if the Advertise Date of 2050 for North Avenue in Haverhill was a real date? Anthony Komornick answered no. Frank Suszynski stated that it is a hold date that just lets people know that the project is not yet programmed in the TIP.

Mayor Fiorentini asked what is the plan for the additional money from the new Infrastructure Bill, is it to take all the projects and move them up? Dave Mohler answered that on Friday this week we will give the MPOs funding numbers, then the MPOs will look at the projects. You can put new projects in if they can be ready on time. It will be project-specific and MPO-specific.

Mayor Fiorentini asked how do we break-up projects? Frank Suszynski answered we can look to see if it can be split into phases, and the current

project number will be the project number for phase 1. He suggested that the Mayor and John should come in and talk to myself and Brian Fallon and Tim Paris.

Mayor Fiorentini said part of this project is a bridge, does it get money from the bridge program, do we have to submit it for a grant? Dave Mohler stated that the bridge program is not a grant program. It is a formula program that comes to the State. MassDOT is currently putting a bridge list together. If it is on the bridge list, you can take that part out of the regional funding. If it is not on the bridge list, you will have to keep it as part of the total project and use regional target funding for it.

Neil Harrington asked if this document was available in some form to send to him. Anthony Komornick said he would send it out to the MPO members.

Robert Snow asked if there is a date the work will start at Route 1 and Glen Street in Rowley. Frank Suszynski answered where there is an October Ad Date so most likely the work will start in the Spring of 2023.

b. Status of Transit Projects

Noah Berger reported that today the Authority received the first of nine Gillig buses. It is a sleeker bus, with a more modern curved front, which will help us present the hip and cool image we are trying to convey to the public.

He said that the MVRTA has selected a contractor for the Riverbank Stabilization Project. The project will keep the maintenance building from falling into the river which, he is sure, will make everyone happy. The Authority is working with MassDOT and FTA to spend the State money for this project first, since it must be spent by June 30th. He added that the in-water work for the project cannot be performed between April 15th and July 15th because of the possible impact it could have on the protected sturgeon population.

As far as repowering the buses and upgrading the CAD/Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) and Automatic Vehicle Announcement (AVA), the transfer of the funding to FTA is still in process., MassDOT must let the FHWA District Office know, which must let FHWA in Washington know and they must notify the FTA Office in Washington and they must in turn let the FTA regional office know about this before the transfer can be completed.

On February 14th the Authority will be changing the route that Route 51 takes along Main Street in Amesbury. The bus will now take a route that the Mayor of Amesbury drew on a map herself.

He noted that the MVRTA will be going Fare Free beginning on March 1st. He said that it is widely known about the social benefits of going Fare Free, but it is also a cumbersome process for everyone to collect fares. For every

dollar in fares collected by the Authority, we only receive 23.9¢. The Board approved the free fare program for two years.

The MVRTA will also partner with our cities and towns for Shared Streets Grants. If you are doing one, we can include a bus shelter and we are working to make more bus stops. He said that there is a company in Ward Hill that is putting together "smart" benches with roofs and plug-ins for cell phones. He added that if a community is not doing a Shared Streets application, we can still do one for bus shelters.

Agenda Item No. 5: Anticipated Schedule for Development of MVMPO's FFYs 2023 to 2027 TIP and FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program

Anthony Komornick presented the schedule from the meeting packet which was updated today before the meeting but that now has changed based on the discussion we had earlier in the meeting, which is that we will have funding numbers with respect to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill this Friday, as opposed to in mid-February. The MVMPO's Draft FFYs 2023-2027 TIP must be released for public review and comment at our April 2023 meeting and endorsed by the MVMPO at its May meeting. The Draft FFY 2023 UPWP must be released for public review and comment at the May meeting and endorsed the following month.

Agenda Item No. 6: Discussion and Potential Action to Approve MVMPO CY 2022 PM1 Safety Performance Measure Targets

Anthony Komornick presented the PM1 CY 2022 Safety Performance Measure Targets from the meeting packet. The five Performance Measures in PM1 are Total Fatalities, Fatality Rate, Total Serious Injuries, Serious Injury Rate, and Total Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries. For the last two years the MPO has adopted MassDOT's targets. This year's methodology in determining targets was a little different due to COVID-19 reducing travel in 2020 therefore MassDOT did not include the 2020 data. Tony went through the data and targets presented in the meeting packet. In the past we have adopted the State's PM1 targets.

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to adopt the State's PM1 Safety Performance Measure Targets for the MVMPO. John Pettis seconded the motion.

The motion to adopt the State's PM1 Safety Performance Measure Targets for the MVMPO passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 7: Discussion and Potential Action to Release Proposed Amendments to MVMPO's FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program for Public Review and Comment

Anthony Komornick said we are proposing to increase funding for Task 2.8 - Safety Monitoring System from \$30,825 to \$39,326. This is being done because staff is

devoting more time than expected in coming up with our regional Top 100 Crash Locations list. We have received several inquiries and requests from the MVTC which we are incorporating into this process. As shown in the table in the meeting packet, we propose to move small amounts of funding from several other tasks to cover this increase.

Derek Shooster said that the new guidance for UPWP changes is that if the funding change is less than 25% of a task then it can be considered an adjustment and not an Amendment, it would depend on whether this applies to a Task or a Subtask. Dave Mohler said since we have not looked at which applies in this case let's just go forward with an Amendment, and in the future, we will examine which applies.

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to release the Proposed Amendments to the MVMPO's FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program for Public Review and Comment. Paul Materazzo seconded the motion.

The motion to release the Proposed Amendments to MVMPO's FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program for Public Review and Comment passed by a roll call vote of 9 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 8: Update on MVMPO Activities

a. Daisy Street/Manchester Street Road Safety Audit

Jim Terlizzi stated that Road Safety Audits (RSA) are conducted in an effort to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. An RSA was conducted at the intersection of Broadway, Manchester Street, and Daisy Street in Lawrence because this intersection has a high EPDO score of 163. He said that our region's threshold score to appear on this list is 118. The intersection is near the Spicket River Greenway and the planned Lawrence – Manchester rail corridor trail, both of which will attract pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Representatives for the City, MVPC, and MassDOT got together to conduct the RSA on December 20, 2021 to observe how the intersection functions and discuss possible problems and solutions. In addition to the site work, accident data was examined to determine the types of accidents that have occurred, such as angle or rear-end collisions.

Some examples of improvements considered, many of which are fairly easy to implement, include split phasing the signal control and protected phasing for the side streets which would help prevent angle accidents. Also, striping the Broadway approaches for right turn only lanes separate from straight/ through lanes where the pavement is wide enough, should also make the intersection safer. MVPC has released a draft report for review by MassDOT and the City of Lawrence.

b. January 20, 2022 Regional Coordinating Council Meeting

Betsy Goodrich reported that there was a Regional Coordinating Council meeting held in conjunction with the Northern Middlesex region to discuss transit issues in general and more specifically around disabled and elderly medical trips. Many non-profits also provide transportation for medical trips. We look at types of trips, days, and hours that the non-profits often hear from Community Action Programs. Going forward, we will invite representatives from hospitals and Community Action Programs. Anyone can participate in these meetings which are an outgrowth of the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.

Agenda Item No. 9: Other

The next meeting will be February 23rd when we will begin TIP development.

Agenda Item No. 10: Adjourn

Vote: Robert Snow made a motion to adjourn the meeting and John Pettis seconded the motion.

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

The meeting was Adjourned at 12:50 pm.