

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)

Virtual Meeting

Wednesday, June 22, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.

Attending:

Voting Members:

Steve Woelfel, 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

Robert Snow, Rowley, representing MPO Subregion #2

Others Present:

Anthony Komornick, MVPC

Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC

Betsy Goodrich, MVPC

Jim Terlizzi, MVPC

Tony Collins, MVPC

Andy Port, Newburyport

Andrew Levine, Newburyport

Alex Loncarevic, VHB

Derek Krevat, MassDOT

Derek Shooster, MassDOT

Tim Paris, MassDOT District 4

Brian Fallon, MassDOT District 4

Jacob Kaminsky (Rep. Devers)

Josh Levin, MassDOT District 4

Ishmael Sharif

Agenda Item No. 1: Call to Order

Steve Woelfel called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and stated that he was representing Transportation Secretary Jamey Tesler. Mr. Komornick then announced that seven members were present and that there was a quorum.

Agenda Item No. 2: Opportunity for Public Comment

Steve 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. 3: Adoption of Minutes of May 25, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to accept the May 25, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting Minutes. John Pettis seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the May 25, 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

Tim Paris of MassDOT District 4 reported on the following changes in the status of MassDOT projects in the MVMPO region:

- Andover- Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 28: Koby Lemrise is now the Project Manager.
- North Andover – Route 114 Corridor Improvements: New cost estimate, TFPCC cost of \$41,797,093 and Total Contract Cost of \$39,449,082.
- Andover - I-495 Bridges over Route 28 and the MBTA Railroad: The Advertising Date is now 2/11/2023.
- Newbury – Newburyport - Salisbury- Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 1: Project cost updated to \$15,679,591.
- Lawrence- Intersection Reconstruction at Marston Street & East Haverhill Street: The new Advertising Date is 9/10/2022.

Ongoing Construction Projects

- Groveland- Groveland Community Trail: Construction is now at 49%, with an expected completion date 6/10/24.

Anthony Komornick said that at the last MPO meeting there was some question about the Route 114 cost estimate that was then reported. He asked if the numbers being shown at this meeting are correct. Tim Paris reported that he believes these are the correct figures.

b. Status of Transit Projects

Noah Berger said there has been a lot of news recently about the lack of a safety culture at the MBTA and emphasized that the MVRTA is not the MBTA. He noted that MVRTA drivers take a minimum of 200 hours of safety training before they can drive a bus in service and the Authority has a vehicle accident prevention task force that reviews every incident. He added that the MVRTA has 10 Route Supervisors, which was a problem

at the T. He also noted that the drivers perform a safety check on their bus before going out on the road.

Regarding capital projects in the TIP, we are tracking well to complete them by the end of the State Fiscal Year. The MVRTA has received nine buses from Gillig, which is one of the few vehicle manufacturers not being hampered by supply chain issues. As far as the Riverbank Stabilization project goes, we have done all that we can on land and we cannot go into the water until July 15 so as not to interfere with the sturgeons' mating season.

FTA has informed the Authority that it will receive \$450,000 in discretionary planning ARPA funds for route optimization and rebuilding ridership. Some of the money is going to software and some to route planning.

Mr. Berger then reported that the new summer schedule that goes into effect this July will reflect work on optimizing the Haverhill routes including eliminating 'double backs' and changing routes if inbound and outbound routes are not the same. As part of this process, we are meeting with folks like at the AHEPA senior housing apartments in Haverhill who thought we might be abandoning them. The revised Route 18 will be less than 400 feet away from the front door and we are working with them to put in better ways to use van service. He added that if there is a place a group wants to go regularly, the MVRTA can set up a quasi-fixed route van service to go somewhere, say every Friday at a certain time, that may even serve them better. We added that with the changes in routing, Route 18 can now serve the Groveland Housing Authority located at the municipal complex.

Most exciting in July, Noah reported that the Authority is revamping the Beach Bus. It will now run express from Lawrence to Salisbury and Hampton Beach only on Saturdays. Riders from other areas can ride to Salisbury and take it from there.

For the van services we are simplifying the service and trying to make all the rules the same. You can take a van from anywhere in the service district to anywhere else in the service area, which now includes Rowley. Bob Snow said, on behalf of the Town of Rowley, we thank you very much.

Agenda Item No. 5: Discussion and Potential Action to Endorse Proposed Amendment #3 to MVMPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP

Anthony Komornick said that at the previous meeting it was discussed that the Rowley Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central, and Glen Streets project would be ready to advertise in FFY 2022. The Proposed Amendment #3 to use available FFY 2022 Regional Target money to fund the project instead of using Statewide funding in 2023 was released for Public Review and Comment at that meeting. He noted that shortly after that meeting there was another serious crash at this intersection. Mr. Komornick reported that the one comment we received during the public review and comment period on this proposed change was a positive one stating that the sooner this project could be advertised for construction, the better.

Vote: John Pettis motioned to endorse Proposed Amendment #3 to MVMPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP to move the Rowley Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central, and Glen Streets project forward to use Regional Target funding in FFY 2022. Robert Snow seconded the motion.

The motion to endorse Amendment #3 to the MVMPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP to move the Rowley Safety Improvements at Route 1, Central, and Glen Streets project forward to use Regional Target funding in FFY 2022 passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 6: Discussion and Potential Action to Endorse MVMPO's Draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program

Anthony Komornick stated that the MVMPO released the Draft FFY 2023 UPWP for review and comment at the previous MPO meeting. The review and comment period for the document started on June 1 and ended June 21. Tony reviewed the comments that were submitted by MassDOT and the MVRTA comment and described how they would be included in the Final version of the document.

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to endorse the Draft FFY 2023 UPWP. Jerrard Whitten seconded the motion.

The motion to endorse the Draft FFY 2023 UPWP passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 7: Discussion and Potential Action on Proposed Adjustments to the MVMPO's FFY 2022 UPWP

Anthony Komornick said that MVPC staff is now requesting to use funding for what was originally programmed in the FFY 2022 UPWP to conduct a Road Safety Audit at Route 125 and Boston Road in Haverhill. Shortly after we endorsed the UPWP last year,

MassDOT conducted the RSA. Staff would like to put \$16,000 in funding toward the Public Participation Process which requires additional time based on FHWA's and FTA's recommendation for increasing public outreach that was made at our Planning Certification Review. An additional \$15,000 would be added to the Management and Support task. Mr. Komornick noted that funding for these last two tasks had been reduced last year because there had been a reduction in our planning funding. Other proposed changes include \$5,000 for bicycle and pedestrian planning, \$1,500 in funding for the MTP tasks and participation in the Socioeconomic Projections Committee meetings \$1,500, and \$2,000 for gathering information for the Safe Streets and Roads for All program as we hope to submit a regional Action Plan proposal. Mr. Komornick noted that reductions were being proposed for three environmental planning tasks in the UPWP to support the remainder of these additions and were made possible due to changes in MVPC's Environmental staffing and receipt of additional environmental funding.

Mr. Komornick noted that an amendment to the UPWP is required rather than making simple adjustments due to the fact that the Route 125/Boston Road RSA task was being removed from the document.

Vote: Noah Berger motioned to Release the Proposed Amendment to the MVMPO's FFY 2022 UPWP for Public Review and Comment. Jerrard Whitten seconded the motion.

The motion to Release the Proposed Amendment to the MVMPO's FFY 2022 UPWP for public review and comment passed by a roll call vote of 6 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 8: Other

Anthony Komornick stated that earlier today we were informed by OTP that there are two transit Amendments that need to be made to the current TIP. These are two FTA Section 5310 projects that must be added to the FFY 2022 element. One project is for operating funds for the Northern Essex Elder Transport's (NEET) On the Road Again project totaling \$38,000 with \$19,000 being Section 5310 funding with a \$19,000 match from local sources. The second project is to support Opportunity Works transportation services for a total of \$120,000, with 5310 funding of \$60,000 with a \$60,000 match from local sources.

Vote: Robert Snow motioned to Release the two Amendments to the MVMPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP to add FTA Section 5310 projects, one for NEET and one for Opportunity Works to FFY 2022, for Public Review and Comment. John Pettis seconded the motion.

The motion to Release the two Amendments to the MVMPO's FFYs 2022-2026 TIP to add two FTA Section 5310 projects, one for NEET and one for Opportunity Works, to FFY 2022, for Public Review and Comment passed by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Agenda Item No. 9: 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 12:36 pm.

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