

## **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

### **Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO)**

#### **Virtual Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 26, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.**

#### **Attending:**

##### **Voting Members:**

Derek Krevat, representing MassDOT Secretary Jamey L. Tesler

Brian Fallon, representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver

Jerrard Whitten, Executive Director MVPC

Noah Berger, MVRTA

John Pettis, representing the City of Haverhill

Jerry Klima, Salisbury, representing MPO Subregion #1

Bob 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

Betsy Goodrich, MVPC

Tony Collins, MVPC

Mary Kay Beninati, MVPC

Chris Timmel, FHWA

Rick Taintor, Newburyport

Derek Shooster, MassDOT

Michelle Ho, MassDOT

Tim Paris, MassDOT District 4

Kathleen Lambert, MVRTA

Josh Levin, MassDOT

Ellen Keller

Andrew Shapiro, North Andover

Brian Keating, Methuen

Andrew Wang, MassDOT

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, NMCOG

#### **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 Jamey Tesler. Ms. Goodrich then announced nine members were present, which met quorum.

#### **Agenda Item No. 2: Opportunity for Public Comment**

Mr. 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 August 31, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting**

Ms. Goodrich mentioned that she had the following edits to the minutes: add as present Derek Krevat, Derek Shooster and Chris Timmel and remove Mary Kay Beninati since she was not present.

**Vote: Jerrard Whitten motioned to accept the August 17, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting Minutes. Jerry Klima seconded the motion.**

**The motion to accept the August 17, 2022 Virtual MVMPO Meeting Minutes passed by a roll call vote of nine in favor and none against.**

**Agenda Item No. 4: Status of Ongoing and FFYs 2023-2027 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:

- 605304 Haverhill Bridge replacement ad date was changed to 9/24/2024.
- Newburyport intersection improvements Route 1 at Merrimac Street, the TIP year is 2027 and TIP cost is \$2,870,513.
- 608816 Lowell/Dracut/Methuen Resurfacing and related work on Route 110 TIP cost is now \$5,535,712.
- 609466 Haverhill Bridge I-495 over the Merrimack River, TIP Cost revised and is now a 4-year AC. Should have a 2027 year for the TIP year.
- Lawrence Bridge Replacement over Short Street and over the Spicket River has a revised cost of \$3,285,005.
- 62045 Andover/Tewksbury interstate maintenance and related work on I-93 has a revised TIP year, TIP cost and new project manager.
- 611977 Amesbury Riverwalk Connector to the Salisbury Point Ghost Trail has revised TIP year of 2027 and revised TIP cost.
- 608095 North Andover Route 114 has a revised TIP year and is extended from 3 to 4 years and has a new TIP cost.
- 607541 Georgetown/Boxford Border to Boston has a new TIP cost.
- 606522 Andover bridge I-495 over Route 28 and the MBTA is now 4 years and has a new TIP cost.
- 608930 Lawrence Manchester Rail Trail has a new ad date of 5/25/2024.
- 610924 Lawrence Reconstruction Amesbury Street has a new TIP year and cost.
- 610658 Riverside Drive/Burnham has a new TIP year and cost.
- 607542 Georgetown/Newbury B2B has a new TIP year and cost.
- 602202 Salisbury reconstruction of Route 1 has a new TIP cost and total Federal participating cost. It had a greater than 10% increase in the cost.
- 609392 Rowley Safety Improvements at Route 1 has been advertised.
- 608494 Newbury-Newburyport-Salisbury Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 1 has been advertised. Bid opening on November 8.

- 610923 Lawrence Intersection Reconstruction at Marston Street and East Haverhill Street is at final design. Ad date is next October.
- 609509 Lawrence intersection Merrimack Street/South Broadway. It has just been added into the list.
- Remainder of the changes concern completion of the projects:
  - Haverhill Intersection Route 108/110 – 51% complete
  - Lawrence intersection at S. Broadway – 67% complete
  - Andover/Tewksbury Highway lighting – 47% complete
  - Danvers/Topsfield/Boxford/Rowley Interstate Maintenance on I-95 – 53% complete
  - Haverhill Bradford Rail Trail Extension – 76% complete
  - Groveland Community Trail - 76% complete

Mr. Krevat noted that there have been quite a few changes, but these changes are in the STIP and approved by our federal partners. The changes are accurate and mostly consistent with what is in the list. He stated that if anything changes in the current fiscal year, we will bring the changes back to the MPO for an amendment as they get closer to the advertising date.

Mr. Krevat asked if there are any questions for Tim. No questions were asked.

b. Status of Transit Projects

Transit update was provided by Noah Berger

- Noah thanked everyone who attended the ribbon cutting for the new buses, colors, logo, and name of the organization. Now Merrimack Valley Transit (MeVa Transit). MeVa received positive feedback.
- For the Riverbank stabilization project and the new vehicles, funds were flexed from the highway to the transit section of the 2022 element of the previous TIP, but will be obligated in 2023. Noah asked if an amendment needs to be made. Derek Krevat noted that federal partners require them to do an adjustment to the FFY2023 TIP to match the year of the obligation. Derek Shooster said that the adjustment needs to be made at the next MPO meeting so that FTA can obligate the funds. The MPO would need to endorse the adjustment. Noah asked about the sequence of events that would need to occur but that he would coordinate with Derek Shooster separately.
- Riverbank Project. Thanks to the additional funds, the project is on

budget and on schedule. They have weathered physical storms, but it is at a point that it should be completed on time.

- Vehicles: Given the lead time of the large Gillig buses, they are anticipating delivery in January. The vehicles were supposed to be on-line in October, but were not so that the date may slip a bit. As for vans, Noah noted that he no longer wants to purchase high-floor vans given the demographics. Current vehicles on the market do not meet MeVa's safety standards. The funding will be used for engineering and procurement of vans that will benefit the agency and others and allow them to sequence the funding correctly.
- Other projects as for maintenance are on track.

Mr. Krevat asked if there were any questions. None were asked.

Mr. Krevat noted that Brian Keating posted a note in the chat that said: I would like to thank MassDOT for the bike lanes on Riverside Drive in Methuen. Mr. Krevat thanked Mr. Keating.

#### **Agenda Item No. 5: Potential FFY 2023-2027 TIP Adjustment**

Ms. Goodrich explained that an adjustment was needed:

- Add the City of Lawrence to the project name for the Andover Bridge Rehabilitation I-495 over MBTA and Route 28.
- Remove Statewide NHPP funding for the Rowley Safety Improvements at Route 1/Center/Glen Streets since that project was moved to FFY2022.
- Mr. Krevat asked if there were any question. None were asked.

**Vote: Bob Snow gave the motion to approve. Jerry Klima seconded the motion. Ms. Goodrich reported 9 in favor.**

#### **6. Discussion of Future Potential Amendment**

Ms. Goodrich introduced a discussion regarding the project cost increases for the Salisbury Reconstruction of Route 1 and the North Andover Route 114 projects. The MVMPO is not bringing forth an amendment but wanted to discuss the implications of the cost changes and the potential addition of two projects in Lawrence.

- The MVMPO removed the two Lawrence projects from the FFY 2022 TIP because they were not ready for advertising. The MVMPO would propose to include the two projects in the FFY 2023 element of the TIP, because they are in final design. However, Mr. Paris' list included an advertising date of

October 2024, which would put them into FFY 2024, and not ready for FFY 2023.

- The Salisbury project is a two-year project and the cost for year two (FFY 2024) would increase as a result of including the two Lawrence projects in FFY 2023. As a result, the Methuen Riverside Drive/Burnham Road project and the Route 114 project would move back a year. \$1,791,985 in target funding would remain unprogrammed.
- The Route 114 is a 4-year project and in this scenario the project starts in FFY 2025 with full funding and would take full funding through 2027 and part of 2028. Target funding information for 2028 is unavailable at this time, so this is a theoretical discussion.
- Mr. Krevat reconfirmed that this is only for general discussion. He asked if there were any initial reactions, thoughts, or questions.
- Jerry Klima said that it was not right to have the Route 114 take so many years and that a project such as this should be a state project. Mr. Krevat mentioned that they are discussing this with the highway division to think about programming options. He will see what guidance they provide. He said that the point was taken.
- Mr. Krevat then asked Tim Paris to confirm the ad dates for the two Lawrence projects. Mr. Paris stated that the October date is a place holding date. Brian Fallon agreed that it is a place holder date and that MassDOT is tracking the right-of-way process for the two projects.
- Derek Krevat mentioned that there is work to do in terms of readiness and potential options for North Andover. It is not ideal to push projects back and asked that the MPO look into alternative scenarios. This scenario impacts the outer years, so some of this can be accomplished in the 2024-2028 TIP development as was previously stated. The question of the immediate fiscal year 2023 will depend on readiness of the Lawrence projects. This is something that will be investigated over the next month or two and will be reported back to the MVMPO with updates. Meeting attendees were encouraged to provide comments.

### **Agenda No. 7: Discussion of Potential Future UPWP Amendment**

Ms. Goodrich reported:

- In the last fiscal year, the MVMPO adjusted the UPWP to remove two projects that the MVMPO was unable to finish due to the resignation of its engineer.
- Ms. Goodrich provided a table that showed a total of \$14,600 needed to finish

- the two projects.
- Including the two projects in the current UPWP, would require removing one project from the FFY 2023 UPWP. Ms. Goodrich provided a table showing the current studies included in the FFY 2023 UPWP, which includes the funding allocated as well as information about safety and environmental justice for each project.
  - The MVMPO is not proposing an amendment at this time, but wanted to inform the MVMPO members and provide them with an opportunity to comment or ask questions.
  - Mr. Krevat confirmed that the future amendment would be to add two projects to the current UPWP and that one of the existing studies would need to be removed from the UPWP.

### **Agenda Item No. 8: Other**

- Mr. Krevat asked if there was any other business to bring forward.
- Jerrard Whitten wished to acknowledge Mary Kay Beninati who has worked for the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission for 37 years and is now retiring. She was MVPC's first woman planner.
- Tony Komornick stated that it is with great sadness that this is Mary Kay's last MPO meeting. She has done virtually everything there is to do in terms of transportation planning for the agency. Most know her as the person who runs the TIP at the MVMPO. She knows the TIP and STIP process. He can seldom remember a time that she could think of a ruling or a thought about a TIP process that hasn't been substantiated by dealing with the Office of Transportation Planning. That type of resource is invaluable and will be sorely missed. She was involved in congestion management process, regional traffic model, corridor studies, overseen public outreach for TIP and UPWP amendments, freight planning, excel macros and has done a world of good for this agency. "I will miss her and applaud her for all her years of faithful years of service to this organization."
- Mr. Whitten went on to say that she is more than all the technical capabilities. She spearheaded celebrating birthdays at the organization, she brought a personal element to our place. "I am indebted to her for helping me understand what MVPC is all about and the work that we do." Let's give her a round of applause.
- Mary Kay Beninati expressed her thanks: "Thank you and I appreciate all your words. It has been great working with all of you all of these years. I'll just have to come to some of the meetings."
- Noah Berger asked the chair if the MVMPO would pass a resolution

acknowledging Mary Kay's service and appreciative of her above and beyond guidance help and passion for what we do. He would like to make this official.

- Mr. Krevat said that was a great idea. He asked Mr. Berger if this should be done with an official vote. Mr. Berger said that considering all the votes she has prepared us for that it would be very fitting.
- Mr. Krevat said he would consider that a motion thanking Mary Kay and acknowledging her service to the MPO and all the great work she has done. Is there a second?

**Vote: Noah Berger made the motion and Jerrard Whitten seconded with "a collective second"**

**The motion was passed unanimously.**

- Mary Kay thanked Noah and everyone. Mr. Krevat reaffirmed everything from MassDOT's perspective that it has been a pleasure to work with her and congratulations on her retirement.

## **9. Agenda Item No. 9: Adjourn**

**Vote:** Bob Snow made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jerrard Whitten seconded the motion.

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

**The meeting was Adjourned at 12:39 pm.**