

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MARCH 24, 2021**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID-19 emergency legislation authorizing virtual public meetings, the meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. via videoconference headquartered at the office of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), 40 Church Street, Suite 200, Lowell, MA. Attendees included:

Voting Members:

- David Mohler, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Acting MassDOT Secretary Jamey Tesler)
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Andrew Deslaurier, Billerica Select Board, NMCOG Chair
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board
- Kevin O'Connor, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board Representative to the MPO

Voting Members Absent:

- Daniel Rourke, Lowell City Councilor, MPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, MPO Liaison
- Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Brian Fallon, MassDOT Projects Engineer
- Ali Bent, LRTA
- Steve Cronin, Westford DPW Director
- Paul Starratt, Westford Town Engineer
- Alan Heredia, City of Lowell Asst. Transportation Engineer
- Justin Sultzbach, Tyngsborough Assistant Town Administrator
- Kevin Hardiman, Tewksbury Town Engineer
- Nathan Klosowski, UMass Lowell Transportation Services
- Andrew Jennings, Billerica LRTA Board Member
- Yovani Baez-Rose, City of Lowell Design Planner
- Jon Rockwell, Director of Transportation Infrastructure Services at TEC, Inc.

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Justin Howard, Chris Curry, David Righter, and Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 24, 2021 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the February 24, 2021 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the February 24, 2021 meeting minutes were approved, with an abstention by Tom Bomil, as he was not present for the February meeting.

3. STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Connie Raphael updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the February 24, 2021 meeting:

- **Andover/Tewksbury – Highway Lighting System Rehabilitation and Repair at the Interchange of Interstate Routes 93 and 495** – Project is at 100% design with a slight cost change and has a construction ad date of March 27, 2021.
- **Burlington to Tyngsborough Guide and Traffic Sign Replacement on a Section of US 3** - Construction bids were opened on January 26, 2021. Construction has begun and the project has a completion date of October 23, 2022.
- **Chelmsford/Medford/Somerville/Stoneham Interstate Preservation on I-93 & I-495** – Bids were opened March 9, 2021 and the apparent low bidder is Aggregate Industries. Waiting for contract award and notice to proceed.
- **Dunstable – Improvements on Main Street (Route 113), from Pleasant Street to 750 Ft east of Westford Street** - 100% design, with a cost increase just under \$200,000 and a construction advertising date of September 25, 2021.
- **Billerica – Rehabilitation on Boston Road (Route 3A) from Billerica Town Center to Floyd Street** – Project is at 75% design and the construction cost estimate price has increased by about \$200,000.
- **Dracut – Improvements on Nashua Road** – Project is at 100% design. The cost estimate is down slightly.
- **Billerica – Yankee Doodle Bike Path Construction (Phase I)** – Project cost estimates are down slightly.
- **Burlington-Billerica – Resurfacing and Related Work on 3A** – The Ad date for construction is now July 3, 2021.
- **Chelmsford – Bridge Replacement on Gorham Street (ST 3A) Over I-495** – The project is at 25% design and construction cost estimates are about \$300,000 less than previous.
- **Westford – Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-495** – This is a newly approved resurfacing project on I-495 in Westford.

4. OPEN FORUM – OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS FROM MPO MEMBERS, COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE PUBLIC

There was none.

5. FFY 2021-2025 TIP UPDATES

Justin Howard noted that the MPO members voted at the February meeting to release FFY 2021-2025 Draft TIP Amendment 1 for a 21-day public comment period, which ended on March 22. The proposed amendment involves the following changes in order to ensure that FTA 5339b awards are obligated in FFY 2021:

- Adding the federal share of funding to purchase automated passenger counters for the fixed route fleet to FFY 2021, reflecting a FTA 5339 funding award. The provision of State match and the actual purchase will occur in FFY 2022;
- Adding the federal award for the replacement of 2 fixed route buses to 2021. The State match and purchase will remain in FFY 2022;
- Adding the federal award for the replacement of 4 fixed route cutaway vans to 2021. The State match and purchase will remain in FFY 2023; and
- Adding the federal award for the purchase of replacement fixed route bus lifts to FFY 2021. The State match and purchase will remain in FFY 2022.

No comments were received during the public comment period. Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse FFY 2021-2025 TIP Amendment 1 as presented.

6. FFY 2022-2026 TIP DEVELOPMENT

Justin Howard gave an overview of the FFY 2022-2026 TIP Transit Program of Projects, and provided a brief explanation of programming and funding for individual projects. He also provided a list of TIP Projects outside of the targets using Statewide Program funding and explained the funding shifts. The City of Lowell expressed concern regarding the proposed moving of the Pawtucket Falls Overlook project from FY 2022 to FY 2025. NMCOG will arrange a meeting involving the City of Lowell, MassDOT, DCR, and NPS representatives to discuss fiscal constraint and design issues affecting the Pawtucket Falls Overlook project.

Justin then outlined four regional target programming scenarios, each with a focus on alternatives for FFY 2026. Following a brief discussion, the MPO selected Scenario 4, programming the first year of the Chelmsford Street project in Chelmsford and the Boston Road/Lexington Street/Glad Valley Road intersection project in Billerica in FFY 2026. Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted to program FFY 2022-2026 TIP Development TIP Scenario 4.

7. NMMPO MOU UPDATE

Justin Howard provided an update on a corrective action identified in the latest MPO Certification Review, involving an update to the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding between NMCOG, MassDOT and the LRTA. The final draft was included in the meeting packet and Justin requested MPO members consider adoption. Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the NMMPO

voted to endorse the MOU Relating to the Comprehensive, Continuing and Cooperative Transportation Planning Process for the NMMPO as presented.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Justin Howard informed the group that the next NMMPO meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 2PM. Should a virtual meeting be required, a link will be sent to participants and published in the public notice.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Tom Bomil, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:48 PM.