

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
APRIL 28, 2021**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID-19 emergency executive order 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:

- Stephen Woelfel, 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

Voting Members Absent:

- Kevin O'Connor, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board Representative to the MPO
- Daniel Rourke, Lowell City Councilor, MPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, MPO Liaison
- Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT Project Design Engineer
- Michelle Ho, MassDOT Planning
- Ali Bent, LRTA
- Alan Heredia, City of Lowell Asst. Transportation Engineer
- Kevin Hardiman, Tewksbury Town Engineer
- Josh Trearchis, VHB, Project Manager

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Justin Howard, and Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

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

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the March 24, 2021 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the March 24, 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

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

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

- **Andover/Tewksbury – Highway Lighting System Rehabilitation and Repair at the Interchange of Interstate Routes 93 and 495** – Project was advertised for construction on March 27, 2021. Bids are due May 11, 2021.
- **Chelmsford/Medford/Somerville/Stoneham Interstate Preservation on I-93 & I-495** – Bids were opened on March 9, 2021. Construction has begun with completion estimated on August 22, 2023.
- **Dunstable – Improvements on Main Street (Route 113), from Pleasant Street to 750 Ft east of Westford Street** – Project is currently at 100% design, with an advertising date of September 25, 2021.
- **Tewksbury – Resurfacing and Sidewalk Reconstruction on Route 38 beginning at Colonial Drive north to the Intersection of Old Boston Road, approximately 1.5 Miles** – The 100% design plans are expected to be submitted in July 2021. The current construction advertising date is September 11, 2021.

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

There were no comments provided.

5. FFY 2022 UPWP DEVELOPMENT

Justin Howard provided an update on the development of the FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program which begins on October 1, 2021. He presented a summary spreadsheet containing the budget and brief description of each task, including coordination of transportation activities, data collection efforts, systems management activities, and transit planning. The consensus of the MPO was to move forward with development of a draft UPWP document which will be considered for release at the May NMMPO meeting.

6. FFY 2022-2026 TIP DEVELOPMENT

Justin Howard presented an executive summary of the draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP, stating that the full document can be found on the NMCOG web site. He noted that the NMMPO reviewed programming scenarios at the March meeting and voted to draft the full TIP document based on scenario four. This

scenario programs intersection improvements at Boston Road (Route 3A), Lexington Road and Glad Valley Road in Billerica, and improvements on Chelmsford Street (Route 110) in Chelmsford in FFY 2026. Justin summarized other topics included in the TIP such as project prioritization, regional equity of TIP funding, financial constraint, the relationship between the TIP and the Regional Transportation Plan, the process for amending/adjusting the TIP, and public participation. He reviewed the highway and transit projects proposed for programming in the draft document prior to a vote to release the draft for public comment.

Based on a motion made by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted to release the Draft FY2022-2026 TIP for a twenty-one day public comment period.

7. REQUEST FOR INFRASTRUCTURE BILL SUPPORT LETTER

Beverly Woods informed the NMMPO that Congresswoman Trahan had contacted NMCOG staff asking for assistance in identifying potential projects to include for federal earmarking. Staff discussed the communication and potential projects to be included in the bill: the Boston Road project in Westford; VFW Highway improvements; a refueling station at LRTA's maintenance facility; and the purchase of a hybrid-electric bus for LRTA. The Congresswoman's office has also requested a letter of support from the MPO. Steve Woelfel, MassDOT, stated that, as chair of the Massachusetts MPOs, the Secretary has provided letters relative to all congressional requests and will provide a copy to the NMMPO.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Stephen Woelfel informed the group that the Innovation Conference registration is now open and the UMass Transportation Center website has full details and the registration form.

Derek Shooster stated that another round of the MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grants is being made available. Municipalities may submit an application no later than May 21st. This particular round of funding promotes projects that result in safer facilities. He provided a link for those interested. Justin Howard mentioned that he would distribute the information to member communities via the MPO distribution list.

Chris Timmel mentioned that the USDOT has announced its new RAISE grant program for sustainable and equitable rail, transit, road and port infrastructure projects. There are a series of webinars coming up with regards to the RAISE program. He provided a link to the program for those interested in learning more and participating in the program.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:42 PM.