

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION JANUARY 25, 2023

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID-19 emergency executive order authorizing virtual public meetings, the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) 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 in Attendance:

- Derek Krevat, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Transportation Planning (Representing MassDOT Secretary Gina Fiandaca)
- Brian Fallon, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Andrew Deslaurier, NMCOG Chair
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG NMMPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Ali Bent, LRTA
- Andrew Wang, MassDOT
- Chris Timmel, FHWA
- David Langlais, Hoyle and Tanner, Town of Dunstable
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Joe Giniewicz, Town of Westford
- Josh Levin, MassDOT
- Kevin Hardiman, Town of Tewksbury
- Meaghan O'Brien, LRTA
- Michelle Ho, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4

NMMPO Staff:

- Justin Howard, Shrvanthi Gopalan Narayanan, Jessica Boulanger, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 4, 2023 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the January 4, 2023 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the January 4, 2023 NMMPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

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

Timothy Paris updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the January 4, 2023 meeting.

- **Tewksbury-Intersection Improvements at Main Street/Pleasant Street & North Street/East Street** – For this project, the project year was updated to 2027 and project cost was added to \$4,861,960.00
- **Westford – Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-495** – The TIP cost of this project was revised to \$5,909,760,00
- **Dracut Improvements at George Englesby Elementary School (SRTS)** – There are new TFPCC estimates of \$1,115,100.00 and the total contract cost is \$986,040.00
- **Billerica-Yankee Doodle Bike Path Construction (Phase I)** – The new advertisement date for this project is 8/31/2024
- **Lowell-Pedestrian Walkway & Bicycle connection at Pawtucket Falls Overlook, from Vandenberg Esplanade to School Street** – This project has been deactivated.
- **Lowell-Reconstruction & Related Work on VFW Highway** – There is a new TFPCC estimates of \$12,008,004.48 but no total contract cost at this moment.
- **Lowell-Tewksbury-Route 38 Intersection Improvements** – The advertisement date for this project is revised to 3/4/2023

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

There were no comments.

5. PERFORMANCE MEASURE UPDATES

a. Action Item to adopt updated Safety Performance Targets

Justin Howard gave an overview of Safety Performance Measure Targets as part of Performance Based planning efforts that are considered annually by the MPO. The MPO adopted initial Performance Measures and Targets for Safety in January 2018 and has addressed updates of the targets every year since then. He presented each of the 5 safety measures to the MPO, which includes total fatalities, fatality rate, total serious injuries, serious injury rate, and total combined non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries and updated statewide targets. He also mentioned that there was an option to develop regional targets. Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the updated safety targets were adopted as presented.

6. ENVISION 2050 UPDATES

Jessica Boulanger provided an update on Envision 2050, presenting an overview of the RTP, performance measures used in achieving goals of the plan, a summary of recently held focus group meetings, project timeline, upcoming engagement opportunities and next steps. She gave an update on consistent themes that were highlighted during the focus group meetings. Themes related to pedestrians are traffic signal timings, crosswalk placement and crossing distances, sidewalk and

pavement maintenance, and slower speed limits. Themes related to bicyclists include bike parking, dedicated bike lanes for bicyclists, and infrastructure to support active transportation. Themes related to transit included frequent and reliable service, punctuality, stop amenities, and the route service network. The second Envision 2050 regional event, Envision 2050 Public Forum 2 will be held on March 22, 2023 at UMass Lowell and the results of Envision 2050 survey will be shared with participants. Throughout February and March, regional events and organization meetings will be held. In June, the draft plan will be presented to the NMMPO for approval to release for public comment, followed by a final plan for endorsement by the NMMPO in July. Jessica provided information on how attendees and stakeholders can be involved in leading the Envision 2050 conversation and directed any questions to the team at NMCOG.

7. FFY 2023-2027 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT 2 FOR THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX REGION

a. Route 38 intersection improvements project in Lowell

Justin Howard provided a summary of Amendment 2 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Amendment 2 involves the programming of a construction cost estimate increase for a project that involves improving several intersections around the I-495/Route 38 interchange along Tewksbury/Lowell line. This includes upgrades to electrical systems for traffic signals at various intersections. This project is proposed to be advertised on February 4th of this year. This amendment involves an increase of over \$709,000 to the cost estimate from \$3.3 to just over \$4 million. Since this project is scheduled for advertisement in early February, it was released at the previous MPO meeting on January 4 for a shortened comment period of 15 days. The comment period ended on January 17 with no comments received.

Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse Amendment 2 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region.

8. FFY 2024-2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Justin Howard provided the timeline for development of the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is anticipated to go into effect on October 1st, 2023. Important upcoming meetings dates include a January 27, 2023 MARPA/MassDOT meeting to discuss financial and narrative guidance for the development of STIP/TIP, and a February 8, 2023 TIP Readiness Day, where NMCOG staff will meet with MassDOT to discuss project updates and recommendations for programming. At the February 22nd NMMPO meeting, staff will provide results of these two meetings. In March, MassDOT provides Final Statewide project lists to NMMPO staff. With this information, staff will develop multiple scenarios for programming the TIP and present each to the MPO to vote on the preferred scenario. Staff will develop the draft TIP with the preferred scenario and present it to the MPO at the April 26th NMMPO meeting. Upon approval to release the draft by MPO members, the draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP will be open for a 21 day public comment period. In May, staff will hold a public meeting to hear comments on the draft, compile the responses received, update the draft with those comments and finalize the document for endorsement by the MPO members at the NMMPO meeting. After

endorsement by MPO members, NMCOG staff will share the document with state and federal partners for their approval. The final document will be ready by October 1st, 2023.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Derek Krevat informed the group that the Innovation Conference 2023 will be held in Worcester on the 2nd and 3rd of May.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next MPO meeting will be on February 22, 2023 at 2:00 PM.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:36 PM.