



## Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

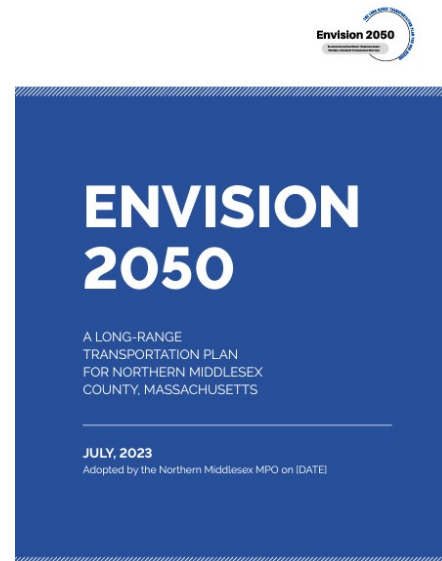
### Events and Opportunities

#### MPO releases Envision 2050: the Long Range Transportation Plan, and TIP Amendment 6 for Public Comment

**Public meeting scheduled for August 8, 2023; comments accepted through August 17, 2023.**

The Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) has released for public comment the draft FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 6 and draft Envision 2050: The Long-Range Transportation Plan for a 21-day public review and comment period, which will close on August 17, 2023.

Comments may be submitted to [publiccomments@nmcog.org](mailto:publiccomments@nmcog.org), by attending the virtual public comment session on [August 8, 2023 at 5:30 pm on Zoom](#), or by U.S. mail addressed to NMCOG, 40 Church Street, Suite 200, Lowell MA 01852. The MPO will reconvene on August 23, 2023 to hear any comments and consider endorsement of the draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP Amendment 6 and the draft of Envision 2050. [View the draft Envision 2050 plan and the draft TIP amendment 6.](#)



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#### Take the Lowell Homes, Housing, and Community Survey!

Whether you live, work, or simply visit Lowell, we want to hear from you. NMCOG is leading the Lowell Housing Production Plan as part of Lowell Forward, the City's comprehensive plan update. The Lowell Homes, Housing, and Community Survey will guide us as we work with the City to create goals for Lowell Forward and the Housing Production Plan. These documents will work in tandem to guide staff, elected officials, partner nonprofits, and others in changing policy, zoning, investments, and more. [Take the survey today!](#)

#### Talbot Mills Dam Removal

**Public comment period extended to August 25, 2023.**  
A proposed project to remove the Talbot Mills Dam is



Image source: Merrimack River Watershed Council

currently being reviewed by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Office. The proposed project involves removing the former mill dam, stretching approximately 127 feet long and standing 10 feet high on the Concord River, just 4.76 miles upstream from its confluence with the Merrimack River. The primary objectives of the project are to restore migratory fish passage and aquatic species connectivity, decommission aging infrastructure, reduce flood hazards, and enhance water quality, habitat, and natural river functions. The Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration has designated this project as a Priority Project, highlighting its significance. To move forward, the project requires various State Agency Permits. NMCOG will be submitting comments, and we welcome comments on potential environmental impacts to be included in our letter. Comments can also be submitted in writing on or before August 25th to

nicholas.moreno@mass.gov or the [MEPA Comment Portal](#). A Certificate on the EENF will be issued on September 1, 2023. For additional information, please contact our Sustainability Planner, Daniela Garcia Moreno, at [dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org](mailto:dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org).

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## DER RFR for Dam Removal Reconnaissance Studies

### ***Application Deadline August 9, 2023***

The MA Division of Ecological Restoration's (DER) Request for Responses for early-phase dam removal projects is now open, but the deadline for applications is August 9th. This opportunity is exclusively for municipalities. Join DER in identifying valuable projects with potential environmental and community benefits. Responses to the RFR can be submitted through [COMMBUYS](#) by searching for the solicitation number [BD-24-1046-DER-FWE01-91147](#) or "RFR DER 2024-01".

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## EPA Solar for All Program

On June 28, 2023, [EPA released the \\$7 billion Solar for All Notice of Funding Opportunity](#). Through this competition, Solar for All will award up to 60 grants to states, territories, Tribal governments, municipalities, and nonprofits to expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities primed for residential solar investment—enabling millions of low-income households to access affordable, resilient, and clean solar energy.

Notices of Intent from municipalities, coalitions, and eligible nonprofit organizations are due by **August 14, 2023**.

<https://www.epa.gov/greenhouse-gas-reduction-fund/solar-all>

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## Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program

***Apply for funding by August 18, 2023.***

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law established the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) discretionary grant program. This new competitive grant program, which provides \$1.4 billion in funding over four years, is designed to make transportation more resilient to rising sea levels, increased flooding, natural disasters and climate change. The Federal Highway Administration will administer the program; trails and other pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are eligible for funding as solutions to climate impacts. This grant cycle is open through August 18, 2023. Eligible activities for PROTECT grants include planning, construction, operations, maintenance, technology demonstrations, deployment, climate and sustainability, accessibility and security, as well as trails and other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. [View the grant opportunity and find out more](#)

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## MassDOT Announces Info Session Regarding Safe Routes to School Signs and Lines/Infrastructure Grant Programs

***Webinar scheduled for Wednesday, August 23, 2023 | 12-1pm***

The MassDOT Safe Routes to School Program is launching the Signs & Lines Program AND the Infrastructure Grant Program simultaneously this year. Application periods for both programs open on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 with one informational webinar. Municipal staff, school and school district staff, SRTS task force members, and anyone else interested in SRTS are encouraged to attend. MassDOT will provide details on application processes and expected project timelines for each program, and will review examples of eligible and ineligible projects. All application materials will be available on the [Engineering](#) page of the Safe Routes to School website when the grant programs launch on August 23, 2023. [Learn more and register for the webinar.](#)

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## \$11.5M in Grants Available to Electrify Heavy-Duty Vehicles

***Application Deadline, 9/26***

The Healey-Driscoll Administration has made a total of \$11.5 million in grant funding available for low- and zero- emission vehicles and equipment projects that will help to reduce transportation emissions in Massachusetts. Administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), these grant programs will utilize \$7.5 million from the [VW settlement](#) and \$4 million from the Climate Protection and Mitigation Expendable Trust (Climate Trust). Applications can be found on the [MassDEP website](#), and are due by September 26, 2023 at 5:00p.m. [Learn more and apply.](#)

NMCOG News

## MPO Endorses 2023 Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

On July 26, 2023, the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) unanimously voted to endorse 2023 Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan (CPT-HST). The CPT-HST assesses the transportation needs of persons



with disabilities and seniors within the Northern Middlesex Region and other transportation service providers. It is developed triennially by Northern Middlesex staff on behalf of the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization, and unlocks the region's access to Section 5310 Program funding, which can be used to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. View the CPT-HST at [nmcog.org/announcements](https://nmcog.org/announcements).

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## NMCOG Begins Work on Safe Streets and Roads for All: Greater Lowell Vision Zero

In 2022 the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) was awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. The SS4A program funds regional initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The Vision Zero, Greater Lowell Plan, will include explicit goals and measurable strategies to implement and address the region's safety challenges. The final plan will include timelines and identified projects to guide future projects and eliminate traffic-related deaths and injuries. The SS4A program supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy and our goal of zero roadway deaths.

NMCOG will lead the effort in partnership with the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) and a Vision Zero Task Force in developing a regional safety action plan titled Northern Middlesex Vision Zero Plan. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program, with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over 5 years, 2022-2026. [Join the Greater Lowell Vision Zero mailing list to receive project updates and event notices.](#)



**Regional Meeting on Homelessness Draws More than**

## 120 participants

On Thursday, August 3, 2023, the City of Lowell and NMCOG hosted the Regional Meeting on Homelessness. The event was designed to bring together leaders across the region to learn from service providers, system leaders, and advocates about homelessness in the Greater Lowell, learn the facts and gain insight into the issue, and learn from each other what actions can be taken in each community to respond. More than 100 attendees gathered to listen, learn, and share initial needs and ideas.

NMCOG is working with the City of Lowell to develop a follow up meeting summary, including notes on what was shared and heard at the meeting, including a list of next steps. In the interim, presentation slides, a meeting handout, and the meeting recording are available on our website at [nmcog.org/announcements](https://nmcog.org/announcements).

## Resources

### Spring 2023 Aerial Imagery Now Available to Communities

Eight Northern Middlesex communities now have access to the latest Eagleview/Pictometry or Nearmap imagery from April 2023 flyovers. Over the past year, NMCOG worked to bring communities together to obtain discounted rates from leading imagery vendors. The new imagery replaces 2020 (or older) imagery with higher resolution two to three-inch vertical and oblique photography that is not available on Google Maps or other web apps. Municipal staff will be able to use the imagery in web apps and in GIS to save time and resources managing public safety, assets, inspections, and planning initiatives.



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### Massachusetts Technical Potential of Solar Study Interactive StoryMap Now Available

This recent study and companion interactive ArcGIS StoryMap tool demonstrate solar potential across Massachusetts. Supported by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, the study demonstrates the state's impressive capacity for clean energy—the technical potential for solar surpassing Massachusetts' decarbonization requirements by 15 to 18 times. The StoryMap tool is available to all—residents, businesses, municipal leaders, and policymakers—to explore solar potential and suitability for any location in the state. Access the [ArcGIS StoryMap tool](#) here.

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### Guide to Equitable Park Planning

A guide to equitable parking planning is now available on the NMCOG website. Created by NMCOG staff with funding by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, this resource document is designed to acknowledge that to be truly sustainable, people—and therefore

# A QUICK GUIDE TO EQUITABLE PARK PLANNING



equity and social justice—must be prioritized in the planning of parks and green spaces. The guide serves as a starting point for community organizations and planners involved in park planning. Download the Guide to Equitable Park Planning [here!](#)

Visit our  
Website



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