

# MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## May 24, 2023

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

#### **Stakeholders and Other Attendees:**

- Derek Shooster, MassDOT
- Ethan Yang, Resident
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Ali Bent, LRTA
- Nandi Munson, Pepperell COA Director
- Andrew Wang, MassDOT Planning
- Sarah Bradbury MassDOT D3
- Andrew Jennings, LRTA Advisory Board - Town of Billerica
- Erika Oliver Jerram/Billerica
- Michelle Ho, MassDOT Planning
- Michelle Scott, MassDOT
- Josh Levin, MassDOT District 4

#### **NMMPO Staff:**

- Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director, and NMMPO staff Justin Howard, Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, and Jessica Boulanger

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2023 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the April 26, 2023 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the April 26, 2023 NMMPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

## 3. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM MANAGER POSITION OPEN AT NMCOG (Jennifer Raitt, NMCOG Executive Director)

- Ms. Raitt thanked Justin Howard for his years of service as he is leaving his position at NMCOG. This is Justin Howard's last MPO meeting. Ms. Raitt asked the MPO for feedback or things that can be shared that NMCOG should be aware of as she begins the process of filling the Transportation Manager position. Ms. Raitt will be taking on the activities of the Transportation Manager until the position is filled.
- Derek Shooster thanked Justin for his work in the region. He also mentioned that the certification review is coming up and should be a priority item that staff prepare for with regard to all 3C planning activities that MPO staff perform and board members participate in.
- Derek Krevat thanks Justin for his service on behalf of MassDOT.
- Justin Howard thanked everyone he has worked with over the years.

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

Timothy Paris updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the April 26, 2023 meeting.

- No updates to any of the projects.
- Justin Howard would like to know the status of **Project 608297** – discussion of the study of the utility poles and sidewalks along Rt. 38 in Tewksbury. Brian Fallon stated that it is almost finished. Justin requested Jayne Wellman, Tewksbury Select Board member to get a copy of that report.
- Sarah Bradbury gave District 3 updates on 2 projects. Westford projects are track to being advertised. Continuing to work with the community on the Stony Brook project.

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

There were no comments.

## 6. FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Adjustment 1

Justin Howard provided a summary narrative of Adjustment 1 to the FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program for the Northern Middlesex Region. Due to staffing changes at NMCOG and our decision to outsource our traffic counting data collection work, an RFP was sent out and the bid was awarded to Southern Traffic Services (Rekor). As part of the outsourcing, we are moving the funding from staff time to a direct cost. UPWP needs to be adjusted to reflect this change. Adjustments to the UPWP do not require formal MPO action or public comment period. However, the MPO can vote to release this as an amendment.

## 7. FFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development

### a) Presentation of Draft Document – Action item to release for public comment

Jessica Boulanger provided an overview of the Unified Planning Work Program for FFY 2024. The presentation included information on UPWP Financials including some changes in 2024, USDOT's Equity Action Plan, continuing planning activities and various new proposed studies. New proposed projects include a Regional Electric Vehicle Study, Aiken Avenue and Bridge Street Intersection Study in Dracut. There has been a slight change in the UPWP. Initial discussions were for the Westford Age and Dementia Friendly plan but after further discussions and response from the town meeting supplemental funding has been allocated to supplement the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant award NMCOG was awarded. NMCOG applied for an SS4A grant with MVPC as the lead applicant and received a grant from the federal government under BIL. She mentioned other funding sources for the UPWP. She also provided an overview of the timeline for UPWP development and the 21-day public comment period. At the next meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup> she will present the final plan. Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier the Draft UPWP was released for a 21 Day public comment period.

## 8. FFY 2023-2027 TIP Amendment 4 – Action Item to Endorse

Justin Howard provided a summary narrative of Amendment 4 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex region. At the last meeting the MPO voted to release this for public comment and that period ended on May 19<sup>th</sup>. As a review, the proposed project amendment includes: (1) Terminal Building and Maintenance; (2) IT Equipment and Maintenance; (3) Purchase Capital Spare Parts; (4) Rehab Fixed Route Fueling station - remove the \$400,000 project from the TIP; (5) S&B Fare Collection Upgrades – fully state funded; (6) LRTA Facilities, Equipment, Spare Parts and IT Equipment – fully state funded; (7) Purchase AVL/APC/Annunciators System for Fixed Route – this is not finalized – the state piece of this project is for fiscal year 2024. It is on the TIP so we can obligate the funds. It will be on the new TIP at \$1,000,000.

Derek Shooster asked about the status of the ADA Access at the Gallagher Terminal with LRTA. Ali Bent responded with more information on funding.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the MPO voted to endorse the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Amendment 4 as presented with the change to revise the \$3.9 million of 5307 for the Gallagher Terminal project.

## 9. FFY 2024-2028 TIP Development

### a. Presentation of comments – Action Item to Endorse

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan presented the public comments that were received for Draft FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) document. Public comment period was from April 28 to May 19, 2023. A public meeting was held on May 9, 2023. Shravanthi recapped the projects that are programmed in the FFY2024-2028 TIP – Regional, State and Transit Projects.

Andrew Deslaurier asked about any date changes and Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan confirmed there are no changes to project dates. Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the MPO voted to endorse the FFY 2024-2028 TIP.

## 10. ENVISION 2050 UPDATES

Jessica Boulanger provided an update on the Environmental Consulting meeting held on May 18, 2023. The event was titled; Envision 2050 Clean and Sustainable Transportation Options .The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Environmental Consulting for our Envision 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. A requirement of the Regional Transportation Plan is that RPAs review and discuss potential mitigation activities to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by transportation planning, specifically the efforts recommended in our latest plan- we are developing. During the meeting Shrvanthi Gopalan Narayanan provided an overview of the TIP and Daniela Garcia Moreno provided an overview of NMCOG’s sustainability efforts. A link to the recording from this meeting is on NMCOG’s website.

## 11. OTHER BUSINESS

MassDOT CIP Public Meeting will be hosted by NMCOG on May 24, 2023 at 6:00 via Zoom. NMCOG is hosting the meeting on behalf of MVPC and NMCOG. MassDOT will be presenting the Capital Investment Plan for FY24-FY28. These investments are funded through the Capital Investment Plan (CIP), which programs state and federal funds to pay for long-term improvements to the transportation system. Michelle Scott at MassDOT is the primary event contact. The next MPO meeting will be on June 28, 2023 at 2:00 PM. This meeting will be recorded.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:47 PM.