

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION July 26, 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)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG NMMPO Representative
- Andrew Deslaurier, Billerica Select Board, NMCOG Chair
- Karyn Puleo, LRTA MPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Andrew Jennings, LRTA Advisory Board - Town of Billerica
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT
- Liz Williams, MassDOT
- Andrew Wang, MassDOT Planning
- Elizabeth Oltman, City of Lowell
- Jackie Anderson, Town of Dracut
- Josh Levin, MassDOT District 4
- Michael Melencio, MassDOT
- Tina Rivard, Town of Dracut

NMMPO Staff:

- Kelly Lynema Deputy Director, and NMMPO staff Shrvanathi Gopalan Narayanan and Jessica Boulanger

2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 28, 2023 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the June 28, 2023 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion to approve the minutes (as amended with the correction of a typo on page five) by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the June 28, 2023 NMMPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

3. STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4)

Timothy Paris updated the NMMPO regarding new projects because of the recent Project Review Committee (PRC) meeting and other project updates.

- Updates on existing projects:
 - **Project 613268 – Tyngsborough-Culvert Replacement on Westford Road** – Ayoola Olaoye Adetoyin has been assigned as Project Manager
 - **Project 612658 – Tewksbury-Bridge Preservation I-495 over Route 133 and I-495 over Route 38** – The project has been advertised; bids were opened on 7/25/2023 but they have not selected a low bid yet
 - **Project 612656 – Westford-Bridge Preservation I-495 (NB/SB) over Concord and Boston Road** – The project has been advertised; Notice to Proceed given on 6/8/2023

Pat Wojtas asked what the 608076 – Rt. 495 Rest Area Chelmsford project is going to involve. Brian Fallon, District 4 replied that he will contact the Project Manager and get an update. The project will include vertical construction of the rest area building.

Karyn Puleo asked why the advertisement date was listed as 2050. Timothy Paris explained that the date has not been set. Generally, a 2050 date means the project has not been scheduled on the TIP and technically is not yet funded.

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

No comments.

5. FFY 2023-2027 TIP AMENDMENT 5 - This Amendment includes cost changes for Lowell Regional Transit Authority projects – MPO action for endorsement.

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan presented a summary Narrative of Amendment 5 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region. TMPO released the draft document for a 21-day public comment period. No comments were received. Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan requested a vote from the MPO members to endorse FFY 2023-2027 Northern Middlesex Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 5. Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karyn Puleo, the FFY 2023-2027 Northern Middlesex Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 5 was endorsed unanimously.

6. FFY 2023-2027 TIP AMENDMENT 6 (ATTACHED) – This Amendment includes the programming of a project from FFY 2023 TO FFY 2024 – MPO action for releasing draft for 21-day public comment.

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan presented a summary Narrative of Amendment 6 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region. Amendment 6 involves the programming of Project 608774-Lowell-Tewksbury Route 38 Intersection Improvements from FFY 2023-2024. There was a request from MPO members to release this proposed amendment for 21-day public comment period from July 28, 2023 to August 17, 2023. Public comments can be emailed or mailed to NMCOG. A public comment meeting will be held on August 8, 2023 via Zoom. The MPO will meet again on August 23, 2023 to hear any comments received and consider endorsement of this Amendment.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the FFY 2023-2027 TIP Amendment 6 was released for a 21-day public comment period from July 28, 2023 – August 17, 2023. A public meeting will be held on August 8, 2023.

7. DRAFT FFY 2023-2027 TIP Adjustment 2 – This adjustment involves the reprogramming of State RTACAP funds between several 100% State funding projects.

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan presented a summary of Adjustment 2 to the FFY 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Adjustment 2 involves several changes to existing LRTA projects that are funded with 100% State RTACAP. Projects include Rehab ADA/Commuter Access Way with a cost decrease, S&B Fare Collection Upgrades with a cost decrease, and Facilities, Equipment, Spare Parts and IT with a cost decrease. This adjustment does not require a vote of the MPO.

Derek Shooster noted that this does need a vote by the MPO because it is a TIP adjustment to state-wide funding, but does not need a 21-day public comment release.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP Adjustment 2 was approved unanimously.

8. DRAFT COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES PLAN – MPO action for endorsement

Jessica Boulanger received one public comment via email to NMCOG on the draft Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan from Andrew Jennings. Andrew Jennings joined the meeting to share his comments.

Jessica Boulanger responded to Andrew Jennings's comments and explained that a written response is included in the draft Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan (CPT-HSP).

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the draft Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan (CPT-HSP), including public comments, was endorsed unanimously.

9. 2025-2050 Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan (Envision 2050) – MPO to release draft for 21-day public comment

Kelly Lynema thanked Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan and Jessica Boulanger for all the hard work they put into this plan.

Jessica Boulanger and Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan gave an overview of the 2025-2050 draft Long-Range Transportation Plan (Envision 2050).

Derek Krevat commented that it was stated in the presentation that projects needed to be listed in the LRTP to be programmed in the TIP. He asked for clarification on where this information came from as he does not believe there are any rules or requirements about this. Derek Krevat clarified that there is no requirement that RTP's list projects. RTP's are policy documents. There are no requirements that TIP projects be in the LRTP.

Pat Wojtas asked if the public meeting on August 8th will be remote. It was clarified that it will be remote only.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the MPO voted to release the 2025-2050 draft Long-Range Transportation Plan (Envision 2050) for a 21-day public comment period unanimously. A public meeting will be held on August 8, 2023.

10. MassDOT online Massachusetts Vehicle Census dashboard – Introduction by MassDOT staff and Q&A on the tool (A public resource providing information regarding vehicle usage, baseline data on the total number of vehicles available, and mileage accrual. The data now available will support conversations regarding how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.)

Liz Williams, MassDOT Director of Data and Policy and Michael Melencio from the Office of Performance Management and Innovation gave a presentation on the Massachusetts Vehicle Census. This information was released in June and is available at <https://geodot-homepage-massdot.hub.arcgis.com/pages/massvehiclecensus>. Michael presented the first iteration of the dashboard, explaining that it is intended as a municipal level resource.

Pat Wojtas asked if the general public can use this resource. Liz Williams responded that it is open to the public.

Andrew Deslaurier commented that this dashboard is very easy to use and helpful.

11. Other Business

- Next Meeting Date – August 23, 2023 at 2:00pm

12. Adjournment

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