

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

August 23, 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)
- Tim Paris, 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
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT
- Andrew Wang, MassDOT Planning
- Josh Levin, MassDOT District 4
- Ali Bent, LRTA

NMMPO Staff:

- Jennifer Raitt Executive Director, Kelly Lynema Deputy Director, and NMMPO staff Shrvanthi Gopalan Narayanan, Jessica Boulanger, Blake Acton, Austen Torres Davis, and Michael Asciola

2. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 26, 2023 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the July 26, 2023 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the July 26, 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 and other project updates.

- Updates on existing projects:
 - **Project 613213 – Bedford-Billerica-Chelmsford-Tyngsborough Bridge Preservation of 41 Bridges in Route 3 Corridor** – Ad date pushed back from 2/24/23 to 3/16/2024
 - **Project 612658 – Tewksbury-Bridge Preservation of T-30—14, I-495 over Route 133, and T-03-015, I-495 over Route 38** – Bids opened on 7/25/23 and NEL CORP is the apparent low bidder
 - **Project 612656 – Westford-Bridge Preservation, W-26-018, W-26-019, I-495 (NB/SB) over Concord and Boston Road** – Notice to proceed was issued on 6/8/23, Scheduled completion date is 3/24/25
 - **Project 612631 – Chelmsford – Bridge Preservation, C-08-039, Gorham Street (ST 3A) over I-495 and replacement of nC-08-036, Westford Street over I-495 (DB)** – costs reduced by \$1M
 - **Project 609250 – Billerica-Intersection Improvements at Boston Road (Route 3A), Lexington Street and Glad Valley Road** – Received 100% design received 8/6/23, revised costs increased less than \$1M each.
 - **Project 610704 – Burlington – Billerica – Resurfacing and related work on Route 3A** – Costs increased up \$.8M
 - **Project 609035 – Westford – Rehabilitation of Boston Road** – new ad date of 6/1/24
 - **Project 608774 – Lowell – Tewksbury – Route 38 Intersection Improvements** – received final design and cost was slightly lower than estimate at \$4.3M and \$3.9M

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

No comments.

5. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) – MPO action to adopt targets

Ali Bent from LRTA presented an overview of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. The final rule was put in place by FTA in 2019. Every year it is reviewed and updated and the MPO has to adopt the targets.

No comments were received. Derek Krevat requested a vote from the MPO members to endorse the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) targets as presented. Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the PTASP targets were 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 to withdraw the amendment

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan explained that Amendment 6 involves the programming of Project 608774-Lowell-Tewksbury Route 38 Intersection Improvements from FFY 2023- 2024.

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan requested MPO members to withdraw Amendment 6 as the project is staying in FFY 2023 and there is no need for the amendment.

Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, Amendment 6 was withdrawn unanimously.

7. 2023-2050 DRAFT LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (ENVISION 2050) – MPO action for endorsement

Jennifer Raitt explained that NMCOC received many public comments. Jennifer Raitt asked the MPO to endorse the 2023-2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan with the modifications that have been made. Kelly Lynema summarized the changes that have been proposed to the plan and how they have been reconciled in the document. All of the public comments that were received have been incorporated into Appendix C into the Plan.

There was a question raised by Mr. Jennings regarding automatic passenger counts and if a successor system to Route Match is being planned and/or if there is an anticipated date for installation of an automatic passenger count system.

Ali Bent responded that there was an RFP that expanded beyond passenger counters and includes addressing the Route Match part. An award has been made to a vendor and the project will begin this fiscal year.

Jennifer Raitt asked if the full fleet would be complete during this coming fiscal year. Ali Bent clarified that the fleet would be completely outfitted with the APC's by the end of the second half of this fiscal year.

Derek Shooster asked Ali Bent if the TIP program line item is for reference. Ali Bent explained that there was an amendment to move the Federal piece to FY '23 (LRTA 011460) originally FY '22. It will be on the FY24-28 and now will become active in FY24 with a State match.

Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas the 2024 Long-Range Transportation Plan was endorsed unanimously.

8. SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL: GREATER LOWELL VISION ZERO, ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION – MPO ACTION TO DESIGNATE MEMBER TO SERVE ON COMMITTEE

Jennifer Raitt announced that NMCOG has funding to do a Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan and as part of that process NMCOG is establishing an advisory committee that will be tasked with working with us on key milestones, and reviewing along the way. They will meet monthly for the duration of the grant which will most likely be eight to nine months.

Jessica Boulanger gave a brief overview of the Greater Lowell Vision Zero plan and The Vision Zero Advisory Committee that is being developed as Jennifer Raitt discussed. NMCOG would like to leave 2 seats open on the advisory committee for MPO members to participate. These meetings will be monthly evening meetings to take place via Zoom to help inform the plan, react to the data from the consultants, and working closely with the community at some of the public meetings. Jessica asked if anyone is interested in participating on the Advisory Committee.

Andrew Deslaurier asked if the position needs to be a staff person or a member of the community. Jessica Boulanger responded that it could be either, but we would like to leave a few seats open for MPO members.

Pat Wojtas has expressed interest if it is not in conflict with her position on the NMCOG Council.

Karyn Puleo expressed interest.

Jessica Boulanger will follow up with Pat Wojtas and Karyn Puleo.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Jennifer Raitt introduced new staff members at NMCOG. Blake Acton and Austen Torres Davis joined NMCOG on August 14, 2023. Blake Acton is the Regional Transit Planner II and Austen Torres Davis is the Transportation Planner II.

Blake Acton and Austen Torres Davis introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their past experiences as planners.

Jennifer Raitt announced the departure of Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan from NMCOG as she has taken a position at the Boston MPO. Jennifer Raitt thanked her for her work at NMCOG, on Envision 2050, and working on TIP, and has been a tremendous asset to the NMCOG.

Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan thanked everyone.

Derek Krevat announced that the MassDOT Safe Routes to School Infrastructure and Signs and Lines grants were launched today. The deadline is Friday, October 6th – please share this information in order to get a competitive pool of applications for both of these grants.

Next Meeting Date – Tentatively scheduled for September 27, 2023 at 2:00pm

10. Adjournment

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karyn Puleo, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:41 PM.