



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments



Envision 2050: Clean and Sustainable Transportation Options

On May 18, planning staff from the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) held an Environmental Consulting Meeting for the Envision 2050 Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan. The plan will serve as the framework for transportation investments in public transportation, bicycle, pedestrian facilities, highways, bridges, and transportation-related air quality improvements for the region. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues the Federal Planning Factors, which are seven national goal areas for the Federal-Aid Highway Program; the fifth goal is to, "protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns".

A requirement of this plan is that the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) 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. During the session Shrvanathi Gopalan Narayanan, NMCOG Transportation Planner, provided an overview of the Transportation Improvement Program Highway Projects programmed for funding through 2028 and described projects that will be included in the Recommendations of the Envision 2050 Regional Transportation Plan. Daniela Garcia Moreno, NMCOG Sustainability Planner, provided an overview of the agency's Sustainability Planning efforts highlighting greenhouse gas emission and overall carbon reduction efforts including Net Zero Planning and assistance related to the Massachusetts's Green Communities program, coordinating activities for the Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative, and conducting a wastewater infrastructure study. Audience members highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary planning with respect to transportation as it relates to housing, sustainability, and land use.

[Watch a recording of the Environmental Consulting Session](#)

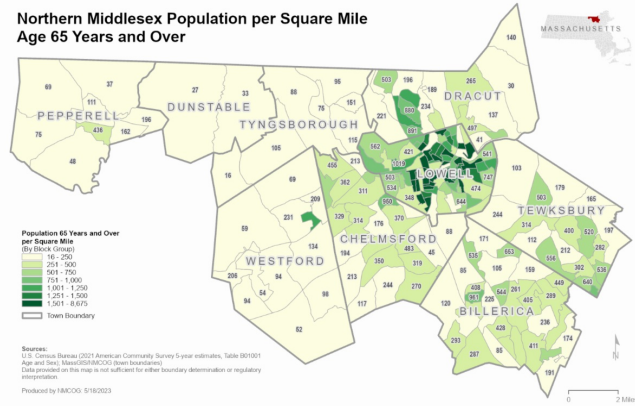
2023 Regional Coordinating Council Meeting

The Regional Coordinating Council is a voluntary coalition of transportation providers, planners, human service providers, and advocates who

collaborate to identify and address regional transportation needs. On May 25, the (NMCOG) hosted a 2023 Regional Coordinating Council meeting in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) in fulfillment of funding requirements. The session included a presentation from each regional planning agency followed by an open forum discussion including representatives from both regions.

To begin the session Jessica Boulanger, NMCOG Transportation Mobility Specialist, provided a background of the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan, a requirement for federal transportation funding. This program supports transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas. The NMCOG presentation included maps showing the density of persons with disabilities, seniors, and the population growth of our regional senior population from 2011-2022. MVPC staff provided an overview of their region and shared the findings of a preliminary survey. [Merrimack Valley Transit Authority](#) shared news of their rebranding and efforts to consolidate paratransit services in the MVPC region under the name Mini Meva. Participants shared creative methods for identifying drivers for volunteer services by visiting college campuses and other key demographics to assist with van rides. Across both regions participants highlighted the need for additional funding and capacity building around funding. Rachel Fichtenbaum of MassDOT referenced state funding opportunities available to our Councils on Aging and Transit Authorities.

A recording of the meeting can be found on [YouTube](#).



Regional Clean Energy Workshop Sustainability Panel and Community Conversation

On May 22nd, NMCOG hosted a Sustainability Panel and Community Workshop. A part of NMCOG's Regional Clean Energy Workshop Series, this workshop featured a panel conversation with Sue Thomas, Town of Westford's Sustainability Coordinator; Badhri Uppiliappan, Town of Chelmsford's Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee Chair; and Terumi Okano, Town of Pepperell's Climate Change Committee Co-Chair. The workshop included a presentation from consultant, John Snell, who shared lessons learned from his work with Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and Metropolitan Area Planning Council communities. The evening concluded with a robust discussion on community needs and regionalization opportunities. [Watch a recording of the Sustainability Panel and Conversation.](#)

To learn more about NMCOG's sustainability efforts, visit nmcog.org or contact NMCOG Sustainability Planner, Daniela Garcia Moreno, at dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org.

Lowell Forward Homes, Housing, and Community City-wide Workshop

On May 30, NMCOG had a great meeting sharing data, listening to six word housing stories, and hearing housing ideas from nearly 60 people at the Lowell Forward Homes, Housing, and Community City-wide Workshop! We heard dozens of six-word stories, including:

- Know this place. Love this place.
- More housing needed at all levels.
- Live with family, want future ownership.
- I wanted to stay in Lowell.

We also gathered participants' ideas for housing goals, missing voices, and housing opportunities. Lowell Forward is now seeking feedback on their Vision and Goals through a survey posted on the project website: forward.lowellma.gov. Watch the project website for additional outreach opportunities specific to homes and housing in the coming weeks.



Daniela Garcia Moreno facilitates meeting discussion with Lowell community members.

Special Joint Stormwater Collaborative Meeting: PFAS

On May 24th, NMCOG hosted a Special Joint Stormwater Collaborative Meeting with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission to learn about polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFSA), an emergent contaminant that is a threat to communities and their health worldwide. Members of the Northern Middlesex Stormwater Collaborative and the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative heard from Massachusetts Municipal Association Legislative Analyst, Josie Ahlberg, who gave an overview of State and Federal regulations related to PFAS and provided strategies for municipalities to take action on this critical issue. For more information about NMCOG's stormwater work, please contact Sustainability Planner, Daniela Garcia Moreno, at dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org.

New Employees



Kelly Lynema, AICP ,Deputy Director

Kelly joined the NMCOG team in May 2023 as Deputy Director. In this role, Kelly supports the Executive Director in oversight of the organization, specifically in contract



***Isabel Emmet, AICP,
Regional Land Use
Planner***

administration and management, public affairs and communications, and oversight of planning activities and programs. She also participates in management of local and regional planning efforts in housing, economic development, climate and resiliency, transportation, land use, and GIS.

Kelly brings to NMCOG a career of interwoven planning and communications experience. Most recently, she served as Assistant Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development for the Town of Arlington, where she coordinated the implementation of the Town's master plan, oversaw land use and housing policy development, and managed the Department's community affairs. She additionally worked in placemaking and the public realm for the Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation and as an urban planner and project manager for two private-sector firms, Utile and NBBJ, where she worked on neighborhood and comprehensive plans for communities across the eastern United States. Kelly received her master's degree in urban planning from Harvard University and her bachelor's degree in sociology from Tufts University, and in 2022 earned a certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management from Massachusetts Municipal Association and Suffolk University. Prior to completing her undergraduate degree, she had a ten-year career in marketing, advertising, and graphic design. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Isabel joined NMCOG in June of 2023 as its Regional Land Use Planner II, working primarily on projects such as the Regional Digital Equity Plan. Prior to working at NMCOG, she worked at the Borough of State College in Pennsylvania, where she gained extensive experience in addressing local planning-related issues and zoning enforcement during the COVID-19 Pandemic, particularly in areas of rent and small business loan assistance, zoning for signage, and short-term rental licensing enforcement. She has a Master's in City and Regional Planning from the Ohio State University and a Bachelor's in Political Science and a Concentration in American Music from Carleton College. She is passionate about finding solutions to address any and all challenges related to planning and community development. She lives with her husband in Lowell. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and a LEED Associate.

Employment Opportunities at NMCOG

Come join our talented team!
Full job descriptions for our open positions
are available on our website.

[Transportation Planner](#)
[Regional Transit Planner I/II](#)
[Transportation Planning Program Manager](#)

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