



## Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

### A Message from the Executive Director

It has been nothing short of an incredible year at NMCOG!

During this time, we witnessed many changes in our organization and overall operation, including welcoming many new talented staff and moving our office. Now in our 60th year, NMCOG is aligning our mission, staff, and budget to ensure that we can continue to deliver excellent services to our nine member communities for many decades to come.

The innovative nature of NMCOG (as a regional planning agency, metropolitan planning organization, and council of governments all-in-one) has enabled us to embrace change, amplify existing partnerships, and make new strides in key priority issues like housing, resiliency, and economic development in order to better position our diverse region for success. As NMCOG continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of our local governments and broader region, we invite our partners to make the most of this forum for regional collaboration so that we can continue to build on our momentum in 2024.

We look back at the past year with gratitude. We look forward with hope and renewed passion as we celebrate NMCOG's current and future accomplishments. Thank you all for your continued support, collaboration, and dedication to the region.

We wish you and yours a peaceful holiday season and wonderful New Year!

Jennifer Raitt

### A Year at NMCOG

**12 MassDOT Progress Reports:** Through our contract with MassDOT and under a work plan approved by the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), NMCOG provides comprehensive transportation planning services to the region. Each month, NMCOG submits a report to MassDOT on progress made on transportation capital and planning projects, how our work might inform MPO priorities, new data generated, and noting potential improvements to the region's future mobility. [Learn more about NMCOG's transportation services here.](#)

**11 Council Meetings:** NMCOG is governed by a board of local elected and appointed officials from its member municipalities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Westford. These officials include a member of the community's Select Board or City Council, Planning Board, and an alternate. The Council meets monthly on the third Wednesday of each month, with typically one month off in the summer. [Find out more about the NMCOG Council.](#)

**10 New Staff:** We said farewell to several long-time staff, and welcomed many more this year, including staff filling new positions on our Executive, Weights and Measures, Transportation, and Housing and Economic Development teams. [Meet our team.](#)

**9 Population and Employment Projections:** In May, UMass Donahue Institute released US Census 2022 population estimates for all nine communities in Greater Lowell. NMCOG uses this information across our multiple disciplines for transportation planning, housing plans, our work in economic development, and GIS mapping; [it is also publicly available on our website](#)

**8 Weights and Measures Destinations:** Did you know that NMCOG's Weights and Measures team inspects, tests, and certifies nearly every commercial scale, check-out system, home heating oil truck meter, gas pump, grocery scale, manufacturing and shipping scale, apothecary and jewelry scale, and troy weight system across the region? This year, we welcomed Tyngsborough and Westford to our list of communities that use our Weights and Measures services within Northern Middlesex County. [Yes, we provide this service!](#)

**7 MBTA Communities:** NMCOG is working with all seven of the communities in Greater Lowell subject to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 3A (MBTA Communities Law) to increase housing choice in the region. Through our Housing and Economic Development and GIS teams, we are providing [technical assistance](#) to test proposed zoning for compliance with the law and creating scenarios for consideration, to assist with outreach and engagement and to help draft zoning language to help our communities meet their shared end of 2024 deadlines. Congratulations to Lowell for passing their zoning this past October!

**6 Housing Choice Communities:** Of the nine NMCOG communities, Billerica, Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford are designated Housing Choice communities. Eligibility is based on a community's production of housing over a five-year period and its adoption of best practices related to housing production. NMCOG works with our communities to achieve, obtain, and maintain Housing Choice Designation, which provides access to multiple state grant and capital funding programs. [Learn more!](#)

**5 Conference Presentations:** As members of the American Planning Association (APA), active participants in state-wide transportation planning, and out of our desire to share what we learn with others in our profession, NMCOG staff regularly present at local, regional, and national conferences. This year, we are proud to share that staff have led a keynote address at the Northern New England Chapter of APA Conference, two panels at the Southern New England APA Conference, a panel at the MassBike 2023 Annual Meeting, and a presentation at the APA National Conference. In addition, staff give back to the community by leading planning and facilitation workshops, sitting on the boards of non-profit organizations, teaching courses, and volunteering with boards and committees in their own communities.

**4 Quarterly CEDS Meetings:** NMCOG serves as the economic development partner of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the US Department of Commerce for the Greater Lowell region. As part of this work, we develop the Greater Lowell Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and support the regional CEDS Committee in implementing its recommendations to create jobs, support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and ensure the economic vitality of the region. We provided a 2023 Annual Report outlining our accomplishments and mapped out the work ahead in March. [Learn more, and watch for the CEDS update planning process, on our website.](#)

**3 Communities with New NearMap Imagery:** NMCOG's GIS and Data Department is an authorized MA Regional GIS Service Center for the region and provides a wide range of services to our communities and for our agency's planning projects. In July, we began Nearmap imagery subscriptions for Dracut, Tyngsborough, and Westford to provide very high-resolution two to three-inch vertical and oblique photography. This imagery provides a level of detail not available on Google Maps or other web applications, and it will be used by NMCOG and these three communities to manage public safety, assets, inspections, and planning initiatives. [Find out more about NMCOG GIS services.](#)

**2 Housing Production Plans:** In 2023, NMCOG provided technical assistance to Dunstable for their

Housing Production Plan (HPP) Update, and to Lowell for their first HPP as part of the Lowell Forward Comprehensive Plan. HPPs outline a community's plans for encouraging and creating affordable housing consistent with MGL Chapter 40B over a five-year period. Moreover, HPPs identify a community's housing needs, and specify actions ranging from policies to financing that will respond to those specific needs. To date, NMCOG has supported each of our communities in the development of their HPPs – you can [read the approved plans here!](#)

**1 Office Relocation!** After 15 years at 40 Church Street, NMCOG has moved to new offices at 672 Suffolk Street in Wannalancit Mills in Lowell. We are delighted to share that we are now completely settled in our new space after many months of planning, site visits, tenant improvements, and furniture moving! Watch your email for a housewarming party invitation for early in the new year.

## Resources and Opportunities

### MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program

The DWSP Grant program for FY24/FY 25 is now open for eligible municipal drinking water programs, water districts and other public water suppliers. This grant program provides up to \$350,000 towards the purchase of land in existing MA DEP approved drinking water supply protection areas, or land in estimated protection areas of identified and planned future water supply wells or reservoirs. A virtual information session will be held Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 1:00 pm via MS Teams. If you are interested, please email Vanessa Farny at [vanessa.farny@mass.gov](mailto:vanessa.farny@mass.gov) by Monday, January 8 to receive a meeting link.

Program documents are available here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/drinking-water-supply-protection-grant-program>. The application deadline is Friday, March 8, 2024 at 3:00 pm.

---

### ACT School Bus Fleet Deployment RFP (Round 2)

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) Accelerating Clean Transportation School Bus ("ACT School Bus") Fleet Deployment Program offers funding and technical assistance for electric school bus ("ESB") fleet deployment projects through its Request for Proposals ("RFP"). MassCEC seeks applications from MA public school districts, public school districts partnered with a private bus company, or private school bus transportation contractors. The application deadline is Thursday, January 11, 2024. For information about this program contact: [CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com](mailto:CleanTransportation@MassCEC.com).

---

### USDOT RAISE Discretionary Grant Program

RAISE discretionary grants help project sponsors at the state and local levels -- including municipalities, Tribal governments, counties, and others complete critical freight and passenger transportation infrastructure. The City of Lowell was awarded \$21.4 million through the RAISE 2023 program for bridge preservation across the city. The NOFO is available here: <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants/raise-nofo>. The application deadline is February 28, 2024 and selections will be announced no later than June 27, 2024.

---

## USDOT Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility

These grants will finance innovative capital projects for the transportation-disadvantaged, with the goal to improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and people of low income. The application deadline is February 13, 2024. To learn more visit:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/grant-programs/access-and-mobility-partnership-grants>

---

## State Economic Development Plan Available

Governor Healey recently approved the state's Economic Development Plan "Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations" and filed the plan with the State legislature. NMCOG participated in the Northeast Regional convening to help with contributing to this plan and advocating for economic resiliency and equity issues that impact our region.

The plan reflects a vision for Massachusetts organized around three main priority areas: fundamentals: Investing in the fundamentals to enable economic growth; talent: Retaining and attracting the world's best talent across all backgrounds; and sectors: Supporting businesses that power the state's economy. The Healey-Driscoll Administration's core principles of equity, affordability, and competitiveness are at the center of the plan. The full plan is available here:

<https://www.mass.gov/economic-development-plan>.

## Upcoming Events

Please join us at an upcoming meeting. For more information see below and visit our [website](#).

### NMCOG Council Meeting

January 17th, 2024  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

In person at  
672 Suffolk St, Suite 100,  
Lowell, MA 01854  
with optional remote access  
[via Zoom](#).

### NMMPO Monthly Meeting

January 24, 2024  
2:00pm - 3:30pm

[via Zoom](#)

### Greater Lowell Vision Zero Advisory Committee Meeting

January 25th, 2024  
5:00pm - 6:00pm

[via Zoom](#)

## Employment Opportunities at NMCOG

### Come join our talented team!

Are you passionate about helping municipalities and the region advance climate resiliency, develop policy to protect and enhance open space, and spearhead carbon reduction initiative in housing, transportation, and more? If this sounds like the opportunity for you, please check out our open position of Sustainability Planner:

<https://www.nmcog.org/employment>.

Visit our  
Website



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments | 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA 01854

[Unsubscribe jboulanger@nmcog.org](mailto:jboulanger@nmcog.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data  
Notice](#)

Sent by [jraitt@nmcog.org](mailto:jraitt@nmcog.org) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!