

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION December 18, 2019

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. at the office of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), 40 Church Street, Suite 200, Lowell, MA. Attendees included:

Voting Members:

- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack)
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen, NMCOG Chair
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
- Kevin O'Connor, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning, MPO Liaison
- Kevin Hardiman, Town Engineer, Tewksbury
- Eric Salerno, Town Planner, Tyngsborough
- Justin Sultzbach, Assistant Town Administrator, Tyngsborough
- Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer, City of Lowell

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Bert Almeida, Chris Curry, Katrina Garavanian, Justin Howard, David Tilton, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 24, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the July 24, 2019 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted to approve June 26, 2019 minutes as presented. Tom Bomil abstained as he was not present at the July 24th meeting.

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

There were no comments.

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

Connie Raphael updated the NMMPO on project information changes since the July 24, 2019 meeting:

Projects in Design:

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Boston Road and Concord Road are at 75% design with an ad date of June 6, 2020.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Andover Street (Route 133) and River Road are at 100% with an ad date of February 29, 2020. Cost increased from \$3,518,633.00 to \$5,390,721.51.
- Andover – Tewksbury – Highway Lighting System Rehabilitation and Repair at the Interchange of Interstate Routes 93 and 495 is at 25% design.
- Dunstable – Improvements on Main Street (Route 113), from Pleasant Street to 750 Ft East of Westford Street are at 25% design.
- Lowell – Pedestrian Walkway and Bicycle Connection at Pawtucket Falls Overlook, from Vandenberg Esplanade to School Street is at 25% design.
- Tewksbury – Resurfacing and Sidewalk Reconstruction on Route 38 beginning at Colonial Drive north to the intersection of Old Boston Road (approximately 1.5 Miles) is still at pre-25% design.
- Billerica – Rehabilitation on Boston Road (Route 3A) from Billerica Town Center to Floyd Street is at 25% design.
- Burlington to Tyngsborough – Guide and Traffic Sign Replacement on a Section of US 3 is at 25% design.
- Dracut – Improvements on Nashua Road are at 25% Design. Design Public Hearing scheduled for January 16, 2020.
- Lowell – Dracut – Methuen Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 110 is at pre-25% design.
- Westford – Bridge Rehabilitation Beaver Brook Road over Beaver Brook is at 25% design.
- Westford – Bridge Replacement Stony Brook Road over the Stony Brook: pre-25% design.
- Lowell – Tewksbury – Route 38 Intersection Improvements: At 75% Design.
- Tewksbury – Andover – Interstate Resurfacing and Related Work on I-93 is at pre-25% design.
- Billerica – Yankee Doodle Bike Path Construction (Phase I) is at 25% design.
- Chelmsford – Traffic Signal Installation at Route 110 & Route 495 (2 Locations) is at pre-25% design.
- Westford – Rehabilitation of Boston Road is at 25% design.

Projects Under Construction:

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Route 129 and Riverneck Road: Notice to Proceed Issued, completion date October 3, 2021.
- Lowell – Deck Replacements, Lowell Connector over Industrial Avenue East: Completion date May 15, 2021.
- Lowell – Bridge Replacement VFW Highway over Beaver Brook: 33% Complete, September 10, 2021 new completion date.

- Tewksbury – Bridge Preservation, Mill Street over Shawsheen River: Bids opened November 13, awarded to NEL Corp., awaiting Notice to Proceed.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Main Street, Salem Road and South Street: Bids opened October 8, awarded to MDR, awaiting Notice to Proceed.

Justin Sultzbach informed the MPO that the Town of Tyngsborough is currently designing a sidewalk repair project along Middlesex Road and that the Town is looking for construction funding through the TIP. Staff informed him of the MassDOT process used to initiate a project and become eligible for programming on the TIP.

5. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATES

a. FFY 2020-2024 TIP Adjustment 1

Justin Howard presented the FFY 2020-2024 TIP Adjustment 1 which involves funding source changes to several 2020 TIP projects where target funds were flexed to transit. The LRTA is using toll credits to match the federal funds for four projects and the TIP amendment reflects their use as a match source. The adjustments are necessary in order for these projects to be fully funded in FFY 2020. Included in the meeting packet was a summary of the adjustment.

b. Draft FFY 2020-2024 TIP Amendment 1 – MPO Action to Release

Justin Howard presented a proposed Amendment to Fiscal Year 2020 of the FFY 2020-2024 TIP. Amendment 1 involves a cost increase to the Andover Road / River Road intersection improvement project in Tewksbury where the cost estimate at 100% design increased from \$3,518,633 to \$5,390,721.51. The added cost increase is covered by available MPO target Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding sources. He requested that the NMMPO consider releasing the amendment for a 21-day public comment period. The MPO will consider endorsement of the amendment at its January 22, 2020 meeting.

Based on a motion by Tom Bomil, seconded by Connie Raphael, the MPO voted unanimously to release the Draft FFY 2020-2024 TIP Amendment 1 for a 21-day Public Comment Period.

c. Annual Listing of Obligated Projects Report

Justin Howard gave a brief summary of the \$16,000,000 in Federal transportation funds obligated for regional projects in Federal Fiscal Year 2019. This report is required by the USDOT in order to provide proper transparency of federal spending. Included in the meeting packet was the FFY 2019 Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Transportation Projects in the Northern Middlesex Region. The report has been made available on the NMCOG website.

6. PERFORMANCE MEASURES – UPDATED SAFETY TARGET SETTING

Derek Shooster presented MassDOT’s CY20 Safety Performance Measure Targets (PM1), which were included as a summary in the meeting packet, and requested consideration by NMMPO members.

Based on a motion by Tom Bomil, and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the MPO voted unanimously to adopt the statewide CY20 Safety Performance Measure Targets.

7. NMMPO CERTIFICATION REVIEW – OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE

Every four years, FHWA and FTA review MPOs to certify that the planning process complies with federal regulations and guidance. Chris Timmel provided an overview and timeline of the MPO's next certification review. Currently, staff is working on a desk review of MPO practices and an onsite review has been scheduled for March 4, 2020. As part of the February 26, 2020 NMMPO meeting, FHWA and FTA will provide an opportunity for the public to provide comments on the MPO's current practices. A copy of the Certification Review announcement letter was provided to those in attendance.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Derek Shooster informed the MPO that the City of Lowell's Merrimack Riverwalk Extension project was partially funded by Eastern Federal Lands using Federal Land Access Program award, and currently has a funding gap. Construction bids received by the City of Lowell were much higher than anticipated. Stakeholders from the National Park Service and the City of Lowell are trying to identify additional funds to fill the gap and are discussing the possible use of TIP target funds. Additional information about this project will be available at the January 22, 2020 MPO meeting.

Derek also advised the group that MassDOT's Office of Performance Measures and Innovation (OPMI) released MassDOT's Tracker 2019 this week. The program is available at: [MassDOTTracker.com](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-tracker).

9. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Tom Bomil and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:37 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2020, 2:00 PM at NMCOG offices.