

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
March 27, 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:

- Stephen Woelfel, Chair (representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack)
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen, NMCOG Chair
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Kevin O'Connor, Tyngsborough Rep. to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Cassie Ostrander, Federal Highway Authority
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Ali Bent, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Eric Salerno, Town Planner, Tyngsborough
- Kevin Hardiman, Town Engineer, Tewksbury
- Jay Minkarah, Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- Gregg Lantos, Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- Jim Duggan, Town Manager, Dracut
- Mark Hamel, Town Engineer, Dracut
- Natasha Vance, Transportation Engineer, Lowell
- Paul Starratt, Town Engineer, Westford
- David Langlais, Regional Business Manager, Hoyle, Tanner & Associates
- Alexandra Markiewicz – MassDOT Transit Planning Group

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry and Justin Howard, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the February 27, 2019 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted to approve the February 27, 2019 minutes as presented.

## 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 February 27, 2019 meeting:

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Route 129 and Riverneck Road: At Final Design. The cost has been adjusted down from \$5,579,943.50 to \$4,805,059.50.
- Tewksbury-Andover Interstate Resurfacing and Related Work on I-93: The ad date has changed to February 3, 2024.
- Lowell – Tewksbury – Route 38 Intersection Improvements is the revised name for project 608774 and will be reflected as such in the TIP.
- Lowell – Bridge Replacement, Bridge Street over the Eastern Canal: This project is no longer active.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Andover Street (Route 133) and River Road: The cost has changed from \$3,518,633.05 to \$2,958,108.15.

## 5. MassDOT RAIL VISION STUDY PRESENTATION

Alexandra Markiewicz from MassDOT's Transit Planning Group presented an update on Rail Vision and gave an overview of MassDOT's status as it relates to the long-range planning process. She introduced the program's six objectives: matching service to mobility and travel patterns; economic growth; passenger experience; ensuring equitable service; meeting climate change and resiliency goals; and, financial stewardship. Alexandra described a variety of system models and stated that the group will share results upon completion of the study. She encouraged attendees to contact her with any questions or comments. ([alexandra.markiewicz@state.ma.us](mailto:alexandra.markiewicz@state.ma.us))

## 6. UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE MEASURE AND TARGET SETTING ACTIVITIES

- a. MassDOT/MPO/RTA Performance Based Planning Agreement – MPO Action

Following a brief discussion, Steven Woelfel stated that this item would be taken up for adoption in the April meeting following MassDOT's meeting with MARTA.

## 7. FFY 2020-2024 TIP UPDATE

Justin Howard presented two TIP scenarios in the ongoing development of the 2020-2024 TIP. Discussion centered on the potential programming of the Westford Beaver Brook bridge reconstruction project in FFY 2020. Currently programmed in 2022, this project was being considered for 2020 due to the availability of construction funding in the 2020 TIP. Derek Shooster provided information from the MassDOT bridge section stating that they did not feel comfortable moving the project forward because they have not yet seen the design submissions. After discussion, Steve Woelfel stated that MassDOT's position is keep the project in 2022, and that staff would work with the Town and NMCOG to determine if the project could be considered for 2020, prior to the April MPO meeting. Justin Howard then reviewed the other projects proposed to be programmed, and MassDOT and municipal staff provided updates on each project. Following discussion, the MPO decided to go forward with a modified version of Scenario 1, with the Westford Beaver Brook project remaining in 2022. The Draft TIP will be presented to the MPO on April 24.

Justin Howard then presented potential transit TIP projects, outlining the needs of the LRTA. He stated that the list of needs is preliminary and that the actual transit projects to be included in the TIP will be finalized within the next few weeks. Ali Bent from LRTA provided updates on cost changes and noted the removal of one project on the summary page that was provided to the MPO.

## 8. FFY 2020 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM UPDATE

Justin Howard provided a preliminary list of activities that will be included in the UPWP and gave a brief overview of the projects and funding.

Beverly Woods clarified with Steven Woelfel that MassDOT is providing the match to the 5303 funds and NMCOG can remove that item from the UPWP program budget.

Justin also informed the group that NMCOG is currently soliciting ideas from the local communities for an additional transportation study, with \$22,000 available for the project in the next fiscal year.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS

### b. Tyngsborough Park and Ride Expansion

Steven Woelfel stated that MassDOT is waiting for an official written request the town of Tyngsborough before moving forward with this project. Justin Sultzbach stated that the town is ready to send the letter but had been holding off, as requested at the prior MPO meeting. He will now send Tyngsborough's request and will copy Derek Shooster.

### a. Rourke Bridge Update

Beverly Woods inquired into the status of the consultant contract for the Rourke bridge project. HNTB is onboard.

### a. Innovation Conference Announcement

Steven Woelfel encouraged all to sign up for the Innovation Conference as it is filling up quickly.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:10 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 2:00PM at NMCOG offices.