

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION July 24, 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:

- David Mohler, Chair (Representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen, NMCOG Chair
- Kevin O'Connor, Tyngsborough Representative to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning, MPO Liaison
- Ali Bent, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer
- Eric Salerno, Tyngsborough Town Planner

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry, Justin Howard, Jong Wai Tommee, Rosalyn Impink (Intern), Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 26, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

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

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

Derek Shooster informed the MPO that he and Beverly Woods have spoken offline about the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail subsequent to the discussion raised in the June 26, 2019 meeting. Beverly provided a copy of the Agreement between MassDOT and the towns along the rail trail. The District has reviewed language from the Agreement and the next course of follow up is to receive from Chelmsford's DPW or Road Maintenance a record of work performed on the trail throughout the last decade. Beverly has reached out to Chelmsford's Town Manager and is awaiting a response. She will follow up with him again to determine status.

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

Connie Raphael updated the NMMPO on project information changes since the June 26, 2019 meeting:

- Tewksbury – Bridge Preservation, Mill Street over Shawsheen River: At final design, ad date of August 10, 2019.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Main Street, Salem Road and South Street: At final design. Advertised July 20 with bids due October 8, 2019.
- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Boston Road and Concord Road: 75% design submitted July 22, 2019.

5. FFY 2020-2040 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN – MPO ACTION TO ENDORSE

Justin Howard reminded the group that at the June meeting the MPO voted to release the FFY 2020-2040 RTP for a twenty-one day Public Comment period. The comment period has ended and a comment summary was included in the meeting packet. Two sets of comments were received, one from MassDOT and one from a Billerica resident serving on the LRTA board. Justin outlined the comments with the group with most involving minor edits.

Based on a motion by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse the Draft FFY 2020 – 2040 Regional Transportation Plan as presented.

6. DRAFT AIR QUALITY PLANNING AND COORDINATION MOU – MPO ACTION TO ADOPT

Derek Shooster explained that the MOU is a Federal requirement for the purpose of ensuring that all agencies within the Commonwealth share air quality data consistently. Justin Howard added that the MOU must be adopted by October 1, 2019.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the NMMPO voted unanimously to adopt the Draft Air Quality Planning and Coordination Memo of Understanding as presented.

7. LRTA UPDATES

a. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

Chris Curry informed the MPO that the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan calls for revision every five years. The Plan goal is to improve mobility and efficiency of the services offered by public, private, and nonprofit entities, to close existing gaps in service, and to eliminate duplication of services. Public outreach meetings will begin in September to obtain input from consumers as well as transit providers. The Plan should be complete by the end of the calendar year.

b. Sunday Service Pilot Program

Ali Bent introduced the Sunday Ridership information included in the MPO meeting packet. The program began June 16 and will run through March 2020. LRTA has seen an average of 475 rides per Sunday, with a steady increase this past week. Expecting that the fall will bring a higher number. A marketing campaign is being developed around the Sunday Service and will utilize news, radio and online ads to further boost the ridership.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:21 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 25, 2019, 2:00 PM at NMCOG offices.