

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION May 22, 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:

- Steven 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
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Kevin O'Connor, Tyngsborough Representative to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Cassie Ostrander, Federal Highway Administration
- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Amy Sullivan, 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
- Eric Salerno, Town Planner, Tyngsborough
- Kevin Hardiman, Town Engineer, Tewksbury
- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer
- Chris Hayes, Lowell DPD Transportation Project Manager

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry, Justin Howard, David Tilton, Jong Wai Tommee, Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 24, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

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

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Route 129 and Riverneck Road: Scheduled to be advertised on June 15, 2019.
- Tewksbury – Bridge Preservation, Mill Street over Shawsheen River: Ad date scheduled for July 6, 2019.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Main Street, Salem Road and South Street: Ad date of July 20, 2019.
- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Boston Road and Concord Road: The cost is now \$2,528,795.95, and the advertising has been moved to March 14, 2020.
- Lowell – Pedestrian Walkway and Bicycle Connection at Pawtucket Falls Overlook, from Vandenberg Esplanade to School Street: The project is at 25% Design, with a cost estimate of \$3,217,162.03.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Andover Street (Route 133) and River Road: Cost is estimated at \$3,926,941.05.
- Lowell – Improvements on Route 38 at Four Intersections: Notice to Proceed was issued on April 25, with pre-construction meeting scheduled for May 30th. Completion date is September 20, 2021.

5. DRAFT FFY 2019-2023 TIP AMENDMENT 3 – MPO ACTION TO ENDORSE

Justin Howard outlined TIP Amendment 3 stating that, at the April meeting, the NMMPO authorized the release of Draft FFY 2019-2023 TIP Amendment 3 for a 21-day Public Comment Period. The Amendment involved two cost changes: (1) the Route 129 and Riverneck Road in Chelmsford cost estimate increased to \$5.8 million; and (2) the Main Street, Salem Road and South Street in Tewksbury cost estimate increased from \$3.2 to \$3.7 million. The Amendment also includes a narrative that was added to the TIP regarding performance measures and target setting. This narrative is required by Federal Highway and the Federal Transit Authority in order for the TIP to be in compliance with USDOT regulations. There was one comment received from MassDOT relative to adding statewide CMAQ funding for the Route 129 / Riverneck Road project. That change is now reflected in the Amendment.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse the Amendment as presented.

6. DRAFT FFY 2020-2024 TIP – MPO ACTION TO ENDORSE

Justin Howard stated that the NMMPO voted to release the draft of the draft FFY 2020-2024 TIP for a 21-day public comment period at last month's meeting. The TIP will go into effect October 1, 2019 and supersedes the current 2019-2023 TIP document. The comment period has ended with a few minor changes requested by MassDOT. These changes have been made and a summary outlining those changes has been included in the meeting packet.

Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse the Draft FFY 2020-2024 TIP as presented.

7. FFY 2020 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM – MPO ACTION TO RELEASE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Howard presented the draft FFY 2020 UPWP, requesting that the NMMPO release the document for a 21-day Public Comment Period. The UPWP lists all of the staff activities for the upcoming year, beginning October 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2020. Justin added that the \$22,000 in unprogrammed planning funds has been addressed. Through a request from the Town of Tewksbury to study safety issues at the intersection of Shawsheen Street, Foster Road, Beech Street, and Patten Road. Based on this request, a road safety audit will be performed and \$11,000 has been programmed for that study. In addition, \$11,000 has been programmed for a project at the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Primrose Hill Road in Dracut to examine safety issues so that a TIP project can be developed following the study. Justin highlighted the list of UPWP activities, and described how each task addresses the Federal and State regulations.

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the NMMPO voted unanimously to release the draft FFY 2020 UPWP for a 21-day Public Comment period.

8. FFY 2020-2040 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Justin Howard provided an update on the Regional Transportation Plan. He presented the project goals, objectives, performance measures and targets. Justin explained the current methodology for programming and requested input from MassDOT and Federal Highway. Beverly Woods expressed the need to program the Rourke Bridge somewhere within the RTP, noting that the major infrastructure project far exceeds the region's annual allocation of funding. Steven Woelfel agreed to consult others at MassDOT regarding this issue and to report back to the NMMPO at the June meeting. Chris Curry provided an update on the transit programming included in the RTP. Justin stated that the draft RTP will be available at the June NMMPO meeting.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Cassie Ostrander introduced Chris Timmel, who will replace hers as the Federal Highway Liaison to the NMMPO. Cassie is transitioning to another position within Federal Highway. The NMMPO thanked Cassie and wished her well.

Steve Woelfel stated that the Capital Investment Program was voted for release for public comment by the boards on Monday. Twelve public meetings are scheduled.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Kevin O'Connor, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:25 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 2:00 PM at NMCOG offices.