

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
January 23, 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
- 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 Administration
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Ali Bent, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Justin Sultzbach, Assistant Town Administrator, Tyngsborough

NMMPO Staff:

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

2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 3, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the January 3, 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 January 3, 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 January 3, 2019 meeting:

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Route 129 and Riverneck Road: A revised environmental notification form was submitted, and a new comment due date is expected.
- Billerica – Rehabilitation on Boston Road (Route 3A) from Billerica Town Center to Floyd Street: At 25% design, cost now \$10,390,825.
- Lowell – Rourke Bridge Replacement: MassDOT is finalizing the audit on HNTB as consultant and expecting a Notice to Proceed in approximately six weeks.
- Littleton-Westford Interstate Maintenance and Related Work on I-495: Contract was awarded to Aggregate Industries and a Notice to Proceed was issued. Completion date is May 23, 2021.
- Westford – Intersection Improvements at Groton Road and Dunstable Road: Awarded to Newport Construction Corp. A Notice to Proceed was issued on January 16th. Completion date is May 1, 2020.

5. UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE MEASURE AND TARGET SETTING ACTIVITIES

a. Safety PM – Update on Statewide Targets

MassDOT CY19 Safety Performance Measure Target handouts were included in the NMMPO packet. Derek Shooster explained the statewide targets and performance measures that the State recommends the MPOs adopt. The targets are based on 5-year average trends for total fatalities, total incapacitating injuries, total number of non-motorized fatalities and incapacitating injuries. The NMMPO is required to update this performance measure on an annual basis. Members will have time to review these targets and will consider adoption at the February 27, 2019 NMMPO meeting.

b. LRTA Transit Asset Management Plan – MPO Action on Asset PM

Ali Bent presented the LRTA Transit Asset Management Plan developed in accordance with FTA's final rule for Transit Asset Management. She outlined the four year horizon covering 2018 through 2022 and listed asset categories and classes along with inventory, condition assessment, decision support, investment prioritization, and funding available to keep up with the state of good repair. The MPO is tasked with adopting the LRTA TAM Plan and performance measures/targets outlined.

Based on a motion by Kevin O'Connor, seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted to adopt the LRTA Transit Asset Management Plan and performance measures/targets as presented.

6. FFY 2019-2023 TIP AMENDMENT 1 – REVIEW OF COMMENTS RECEIVED AND MPO ACTION

Justin Howard presented TIP Amendment 1, which involves the programming of funding for construction of the Merrimack Riverwalk Extension and construction of an overlook and deck for viewing at a total cost of \$2,964,631.52. The Merrimack Riverwalk project utilizes Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program (PLHD) and City of Lowell funding. The amendment is needed to bring the region's TIP in line with the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division's TIP (a division of FHWA), and to ensure that all funding for construction of the project can be obligated in the near future. On January 3, 2019, the NMMPO met to release the Amendment for public comment. No comments were received during the public comment period.

Based on a motion by Tom Bomil, seconded by Frank Suszynski, the NMMPO voted to endorse Amendment 1 to the FFY 2019-2023 TIP.

7. FFY 2019-2023 TIP AMENDMENT 2 – OVERVIEW AND MPO ACTION

Justin Howard summarized a proposed amendment to the FFY 2019-2023 TIP that involves the programming of funding for two projects: A cost decrease from \$2,160,000 to \$517,850 for the Mill Street Bridge over the Shawsheen River, due to a change in the project scope from bridge replacement to bridge preservation; and the purchase of 6 replacement vans for use by the LRTA, as part of a Community Transit Grant award totaling \$385,600.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted unanimously to amend project description wording from “bridge replacement” to “bridge preservation” and to release proposed TIP Amendment 2 for a 21-day public comment period.

8. FFY 2020-2024 TIP UPDATE – OVERVIEW OF STAFF ACTIVITIES

Justin Howard provided an updated schedule in the meeting packet and gave a brief overview of staff activities in development of the FFY 2020-2024 TIP. The schedule outlines the development of the next TIP through the end of May 2019, when the next TIP will be released for public comment and provided to the MPO for endorsement. The FFY 2020-2024 TIP will go into effect on October 1, 2019.

9. FFY 2020-2040 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE – OVERVIEW OF STAFF ACTIVITIES

Justin Howard stated that work is underway to update the region’s long range transportation plan (RTP). Currently, staff is conducting outreach to all of our member communities, including individual meetings with each town to discuss current projects in the RTP and to receive feedback on any new priorities the community may have. Staff are planning to meet with Lowell neighborhood groups and have arranged a series of regional meetings to solicit public input into the plan. An online survey is also available on the NMCOG web site and has been distributed throughout the region. The target date for endorsement is July 2019. Staff provided a flyer outlining upcoming meetings and the online survey.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Derek Shooster reminded the NMMPO of a CMAQ consultation meeting on March 6, 2019 at MassDOT, and the statewide Bicycle Master Plan comment deadline is January 31, 2019. The plan is available on MassDOT’s web site and public comment may be submitted there. The MassRides program is ending on June 30, 2019, however, MassDOT is collaborating with others to try a new approach to the program. More information will be available in the near future.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:32 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 27, 2019, 2:00PM at NMCOG offices.