

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
February 28, 2018**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 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)
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing Highway Administrator Johnathan Gulliver)
- Kevin O'Connor, LRTA Representative
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen, NMCOG Chair
- Ed Kennedy, Lowell City Council, NMCOG NMMPO Representative

Ex Officio Members:

- Cassie Chase, Federal Highway Administration

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Derek Krevat, MassDOT Planning, MPO Liaison
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4
- Kevin Hardiman, Tewksbury Department of Public Works
- Stephen Strykowski, Billerica Commission on Disability, Council on Aging

NMMPO Staff:

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

**2. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 24, 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the January 24, 2018 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and second by Kevin O'Connor, the NMMPO voted unanimously to approve the January 24, 2018 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 24, 2018 Meeting:

##### *Projects under Design*

- Littleton-Westford Interstate Maintenance and related Work on 495 is currently at 75% design with an ad date of March 24, 2018.
- Lowell-Chelmsford-Andover Stormwater Improvements along Route 28 and I-495 is at 25% design with an ad date of May 5, 2018.
- Lowell – Improvements on Route 38 at Four Intersections is at 75% design with an ad date of September 15, 2018.
- Westford - Intersection Improvements at Groton Rd. (Rte. 40) and Dunstable Rd. is at 75% design. There has been a slight price adjustment to \$2,514,902. The scheduled advertisement date is August 4, 2018.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Main St., Salem Rd. and South St. is at 75% design with a slight price increase to \$3,296,077. The ad date is March 9, 2019.
- Billerica – Yankee Doodle Bike Path is at 25% design with a project cost estimate of \$8,708,806.35.

##### *Projects under Construction*

- Billerica – Construction has begun on Intersection Improvements at Route 3A and Allen Rd., with a completion date in April 2020.
- Lowell – Bridge Replacement, Market St. over the Western Canal is 30% complete, with a completion date of August 7, 2018.
- Billerica / Bedford – Middlesex Turnpike Phase III Improvements are 1% complete, with a completion date of June 6, 2023.
- Westford – The bridge contract has been awarded for the intersection improvements at Groton Rd. and Oak Hill Rd. Construction will start this spring, with a completion date of October 10, 2019.
- Lowell – TIGER Grant Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Five Bridges has been advertised, and bids were opened on February 21, 2018. The apparent low bidder is MAS Building.
- Chelmsford – Bridge Deck Replacement, including Intersection Improvements at Route 4 and I-495: The project has been awarded to S&R Corporation, with construction expected to start in the spring and be completed in summer 2020.
- Lowell – Intersection & Signal improvements at 2 locations (Varnum Ave. at VFW Hwy. and Mammoth Rd. at Aiken St.): The construction bid has been awarded to S&R Corporation.

## **5. MASSDOT CIP/STIP DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

Derek Krevat presented an overview of the Capital Investment Plan (CIP), which MassDOT's Office of Transportation and Planning is currently developing. The CIP is a plan that parallels the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) process. Derek outlined the schedule for developing the Plan and provided contact information for questions or comments with regards to the CIP. Public meeting dates and locations are currently being worked out, with a final schedule due within a couple of weeks.

## **6. FFY 2019-2023 TIP DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

### 2019-2023 Regional Financial Targets

Justin Howard presented spreadsheets showing the regional targets used in development of the TIP. He also explained the funding sources and match requirements for federally funded transportation improvement project. The regional apportionment for the NMMPO is around 3.9 percent of the funding available to MPOs statewide. Mr. Howard noted that the region is level funded in 2019 from the previous TIP apportionment, while increases of 4 to 4.5% are provided in subsequent years.

### TIP Readiness Day Results

Justin Howard and Beverly Woods met with MassDOT in Mid-February to discuss the status of all of the NMMPO's eligible TIP projects. A copy of the meeting results was included in the meeting packet. The MassDOT recommendations would leave nearly \$6 million unprogrammed in 2019, so the NMMPO is now tasked with finding projects to fill the void. Mr. Howard presented two programming scenarios for consideration by the NMMPO, based on what staff has identified as projects that may be able to be ready for advertising in FY 2019. Scenario 1 programs the Chelmsford Route 129 at Riverneck Road Intersection project in 2019 (currently at 25% design), while Scenario 2 programs the Dracut Nashua Road improvement project (25% design submittal due in March).

Beverly Woods raised a question about the timeframe for MassDOT projects that are being designed in-house, which seems exceedingly long from design to construction advertising. She noted that these delays have resulted in the reshuffling of projects, and the inability to program up to the regional target. She also noted that timeframes needed for the advancement of local projects through the MassDOT and FHWA review and approval processes seem to have become exceedingly long. For example, the Chelmsford Route 129 project is expected to be at 75% by June, yet MassDOT staff do not believe that it can be ready for advertising by September 2019. Discussion followed.

## **7. FFY 2019 UPWP DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

Justin Howard provided an overview of the PL funds for FFY 2019, which will increase 2.1% from FFY 2018, with \$746,521 in planning funds available to the NMMPO for next fiscal year. He noted that staff will be developing next year's work program. One of the significant tasks required is the Regional Transportation Plan Update. He noted that federal regulations require that the document be updated every four years. For the March NMMPO meeting, Justin will provide a list of planning activities proposed for inclusion in the document. The draft UPWP will be available in April and the NMMPO will vote on endorsement in May.

## **8. BICYCLE PARKING DISCOUNT PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPALITIES**

Justin Howard stated that NMCOG is partnering with 10 other regional planning agencies to offer discounted pricing on bike racks through a contract between the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) and three selected vendors. Justin Howard explained that all of NMCOG communities, as well as the Lowell Regional Transit Authority, are eligible to participate. Communities are encouraged to install bike racks in business districts and at public buildings where bike-parking demand is greatest. Discounted pricing is typically 20-40 percent off the vendors' regular pricing on a full selection of eligible bike-parking equipment. The program runs through December 31, 2018. Discussion of Lowell's bike share efforts commenced and it was thought that the bike rack-purchasing program could supplement their program.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS**

Beverly Woods summarized a recent discussion with Steve McLaughlin, MassDOT's project manager for the Rourke Bridge project. At this point, a general scope of work has been created and has been approved by MassDOT. MassDOT is developing a Request for Response (RFR) to procure a consultant, and hopes to have a contract in place by December 2018. MassDOT is looking to conduct alignment and bridge type studies, MEPA/NEPA filings, and some level of design. She noted that the preliminary design may stop short of 25%, as Federal Highway will not review the CE checklist for the project until a construction-funding source has been identified.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Ed Kennedy, the NMMPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:08 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, 2018, 2:30PM at NMCOG offices.