

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
April 25, 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:

- 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
- Ed Kennedy, Lowell City Council, Lowell MPO Representative
- Roland Nutter, Pepperell Board of Selectmen, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Tom Bomil, Dracut Representative to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) Advisory Board

Ex Officio Members:

- Cassie Chase, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Derek Krevat, MassDOT Planning, MPO Liaison
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Ali Sarault, Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA)
- Christopher Hayes, City of Lowell Transportation Projects Manager
- Bridget Myers, Howard Stein Hudson

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry, Jong Wai Tommee and David Tilton, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 28, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the March 28, 2018 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Roland Nutter and second by Frank Suszynski, the NMMPO voted unanimously to approve the March 28, 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 March 28, 2018 Meeting:

Projects under Design:

- *Littleton-Westford Interstate Maintenance and related Work on I-495* is currently at 75% design with an ad date of May 19, 2018.
- *Lowell-Chelmsford Stormwater Improvements along I-495* is at 100% design with an ad date of July 7, 2018. Andover is no longer part of the project scope.
- *Lowell – Improvements on Route 38 at Four Intersections* is at final design with an ad date of September 15, 2018.
- *Westford - Intersection Improvements at Groton Rd. (Rte. 40) and Dunstable Rd.* is at 75% design with an ad date scheduled for August 4, 2018.
- *Lowell – Connector Reconstruction from Thorndike Street to Gorham Street:* MassDOT District 4 met with designers and the City to discuss alternatives and project consolidation; currently working toward a 25% design submittal.

Projects under Construction:

- *Andover-Bedford-Billerica Stormwater Improvements along I-93, Route 3 and Route 3A:* Construction began earlier this month with a completion date of June 24, 2019.
- *Westford – Intersection Improvements at Groton Road (Rte. 40) and Oak Hill Rd.:* Construction began earlier this year. Completion date of October 2019.
- *Lowell – Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Five Bridges:* Construction contract awarded to MAS Building; awaiting notice to proceed.

5. FFY 2018-2022 TIP AMENDMENT 2 – DISCUSSION AND VOTE TO ENDORSE

Beverly Woods outlined TIP Amendment 2 explaining the programming of a Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grant award for the construction of crosswalks and signage along the Canalway pedestrian walkway system and the repair of the Swamp Locks/Pawtucket Canal Pedestrian Bridge. The projects have been amended into the original agreement between FHWA – Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD), the National Park Service, and the City of Lowell. The agreement also included the Merrimack Riverwalk extension project FLAP award in 2014. The amount to be programmed is about \$1.2 million and the City is

providing matching funds of about \$215,000. A Public Meeting was held and no additional comments were received.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Frank Suszynski, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse the Amendment as presented.

6. FFY 2018-2022 TIP AMENDMENT 3 – DISCUSSION AND VOTE TO RELEASE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Beverly Woods gave a summary of TIP Amendment 3, which involves changes to three bridge construction projects including:

- A funding increase for the Mill Street bridge over the Shawsheen River in Tewksbury from \$233,457 to \$432,000, consisting of \$1,728,000 in federal funds and \$432,000 state funding; and,
- A cost increase and description change for the Lowell Connector northbound and southbound bridges over Industrial Avenue East in Lowell. The cost change is due to combining the two Lowell Connector bridge projects, and will need to be reflected as such, by removing project 608678 from the TIP and rolling into project 608257. The proposed cost estimate is \$4,007,143, consisting of \$3,205,715 federal funding and \$801,429 state.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted unanimously to release the Amendment for a twenty-one day public comment period.

7. FFY 2019-2023 TIP DEVELOPMENT – DISCUSSION AND VOTE TO RELEASE DRAFT REPORT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Beverly Woods summarized a discussion from the March MPO meeting regarding the a possible programming scenario for FY 2019 projects which left \$6 million on the table. The MPO agreed at the March meeting to move forward with the Tewksbury Main Street project and the Chelmsford Route 129/Riverneck Road project in FY 2019. The MPO was presented with and discussed an updated list of highway and transit recommendations for FFY 2019-2023, which are included in the draft document.

Chris Hayes, City of Lowell Transportation Projects Manager, spoke about the timing issues and fiscal constraints with the Lowell pedestrian walkway and bicycle connection at Pawtucket Falls Overlook and the VFW Highway reconstruction project, which includes a portion of the Pawtucket Falls Overlook project. The VFW project is programmed in 2023, while the Pawtucket Falls Overlook project is programmed in 2020. MPO staff reiterated that all projects would be re-evaluated for programming as design progresses.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Frank Suszynski, the NMMPO voted unanimously to release the Draft TIP as presented for public comment.

8. FFY 2019 UPWP DEVELOPMENT – DISCUSSION AND VOTE TO RELEASE DRAFT REPORT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Beverly Woods presented the draft FFY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which consists of activities to be conducted by MPO staff over the next Federal Fiscal Year. She discussed each program task and provided the budget for the program.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to release the Draft FY 2019 UPWP for public review and comment.

9. STATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN UPDATE

MassDOT will hold a series of public meetings across the Commonwealth to present and discuss the Draft Capital Investment Plan Update. A meeting schedule was included in the MPO meeting packet. Stephen Woelfel encouraged the MPO members to attend one of the meetings.

10. UPDATE TO THE BOSTON UZA AGREEMENT

Derek Krevat introduced the draft Memo of Understanding between the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island Metropolitan Planning Organizations, State Departments of Transportation and public transportation operators. The MOU outlines the responsibilities of each party in an effort to coordinate projects on shared transportation routes, along common boundaries, and so forth. The update of this MOU is needed due to expansion of the Boston UZA in the 2010 US Census. The NMMPO's latest certification review outlined the corrective action needed to update the document. The NMMPO will continue to work with MassDOT, FHWA, and member MPOs/RTAs to complete this update by the end of the year.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Frank Suszynski and seconded by Roland Nutter, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:05 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 23, 2018, 2:30PM at NMCOG offices.