

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
July 25, 2018**

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 Representative to the Lowell Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Roland Nutter, Pepperell Board of Selectmen, NMCOG MPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

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

NMMPO Staff:

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

2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 26, 2018 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the June 26, 2018 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted to approve the June 26, 2018 minutes with one abstention by Roland Nutter.

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 June 26, 2018 meeting:

Projects under design:

- Littleton-Westford Interstate Maintenance and related Work on I-495: The project was advertised for construction on June 2, 2018 and bids are due August 14, 2018.
- Lowell-Chelmsford Stormwater Improvements along I-495: the project was advertised for construction on July 7, 2018 and bids are due September 18, 2018.
- Lowell – Improvements on Route 38 at Four Intersections: Project is at Final Design with a construction advertisement date of September 15, 2018.
- Westford-Intersection Improvements at Groton Rd. (Rte. 40) and Dunstable Rd: Project is at Final Design with an advertisement date of August 4, 2018.

Projects under Construction:

- Lowell–Intersection & Signal Improvements at 2 Locations: Route 113 (Varnum Avenue & VFW Highway) at Mammoth Road, and VFW Highway at Aiken Street; a preconstruction conference was held July 12th.

Ali Sarault updated the NMMPO on the pedestrian bridge project at the Gallagher Terminal. The project is awaiting delivery of a few materials, but it is hoped that it will be at 95% completion within the next two to three weeks, and then advance to final construction.

5. FFY 2018-2022 TIP Adjustment 3

Justin Howard detailed the FFY 2018-2022 Transportation Improvement Plan Adjustment 3 to the NMMPO. Adjustment 3 involves state funding adjustments to several transit projects programmed in 2018. Under FTA Section 5307, state funding for the purchase of capital spare parts (\$125,400) and for terminal and building equipment and maintenance activities (\$473,440) has been increased. In addition, state funding amounts have changed for several projects that are not federally funded. These projects include the purchase of associated capital maintenance items (increase of \$325,000); a real estate acquisition (decrease of \$423,440); and the construction of a pedestrian walkway at the Gallagher Intermodal Center (decrease of \$50,000). The TIP adjustment is necessary in order for these projects to be fully funded in FFY 2018. A summary of the adjustment was provided in the meeting packet.

6. Draft FFY 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan Amendment 1: Air Quality Conformity Determination - Discussion and Vote to Release for Public Comment

Justin Howard informed the NMMPO of a recent court decision affecting air quality conformity analysis requirements for the Regional Transportation Plan, specifically focused on ozone standards. When the current RTP was adopted in 2015, ozone standards followed the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), which replaced a 1997 standard. Following the 2008 standards, the majority of

Massachusetts was designated in attainment for ozone. The recent court decision ruled that areas of Massachusetts that were designated as nonattainment under the 1997 standards and are designated as attainment for the 2008 standards, are now required to conduct an air quality conformity determination analysis. The proposed amendment details the standards and provides the results of the air quality conformity determination analysis. The amendment is critical for development of the TIP and STIP, as the policy states that the TIP must come from a conforming RTP. A handout detailing the draft Amendment was included in the meeting packet.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted unanimously to release the Draft FFY 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan Amendment 1 for public comment.

7. Other Business

Justin Howard received a request from Christine Bruins at the Lowell National Historic Park to examine possible funding solutions for a \$500,000 shortfall in the Merrimack Riverwalk Extension project. Chris Hayes, City of Lowell Transportation Project Manager, updated the MPO on the project, expounded on the budgetary issues, and requested MassDOT's assistance. As design reached 75%, resultant cost increases led to the shortfall. Included in the meeting packet was a letter from Chris Hayes to Christine Bruins detailing the shortfall and identifying areas where the City is already working to address the overrun.

Stephen Woelfel requested that additional information from the City be provided to MassDOT and that the Merrimack Riverwalk Phase II project be revisited during the August 22, 2018 meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Kevin O'Connor and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:18 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 22, 2018, 2:00PM at NMCOG offices.