

# MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## January 24, 2024

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) meeting was called to order at 2:20 P.M. in person at Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA and via Zoom. Attendees included:

#### **Voting Members in Attendance:**

- Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, Representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Monica Tibbits-Nutt
- Brian Fallon, MassDOT D4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board Chair, NMCOG Representative
- Karyn Puleo, LRTA MPO Representative

#### **Stakeholders and Other Attendees:**

- Justin Howard, LRTA
- Elizabeth Altman, Traffic Engineer, City of Lowell
- Tim Paris, MassDOT
- Brandon Burns, FHWA
- Joshua Barber, FHWA
- Ann Sullivan, MassDOT

#### **NMMPO Staff:**

- NMMPO staff Jessica Boulanger, Austen Torres Davis, Paul Christner

### 2. OPEN FORUM – OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS FROM MPO MEMBER COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PUBLIC

No Comments

### 3. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 29, 2023 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES (24:42)

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the November 29, 2023 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Pat Wojtas had a comment on the second page in section three (Status Report); edits were made. Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karen Puleo, the November 29, 2023 NMMPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

### 4. ACTION ITEM: TIP AMENDMENT #1 – LRTA AMENDMENT PACKAGE (26:26)

Paul Christner gave an overview of the LRTA Amendment Package. There are many different changes and they will be voted on as a package.

- LRTA011667 – An addition of \$50,000 to hire a Mobility Outreach Coordinator through Community Transit Grant.
- LRTA011635 – A little over \$2 million for facility and equipment improvements due to more State funds that are available.
- RTD0010688 – An additional \$7.3 million to purchase 7 hybrid buses in FY24
- RTD0010703 – A reduction of \$6.6 million to purchase 1 hybrid bus in FY24 & 6 BEBs in FY26
- RTD0010696 - Reduction of \$250,000 to an upgrade in the parking garage payment system. Federal funds not needed because the LRTA received more State funds than anticipated.
- T00039 – Reduction of \$800,000 to implement AVL/APC system for fixed route buses
- RTD0011205 – Reduction in \$300,000 to purchase a backup generator – delay in final design
- T00040 – Reduction of \$15 million for pedestrian access way & commuter rail platform – delay in final design
- T00058 – Reduction of \$3.6 million for improvements to Maguire facility – now part of the LRTA plans to program in FFY 2025-2029 TIP

There was a request ask for a motion to release the package for a 21 day Public Comment period.

Pat Wojtas asked what the bottom line is and if there were other projects that still need to be programmed. Justin Howard, LRTA, responded that the package would move money around from year to year, depending on the project. Some of the items regard moving the Federal piece from a FY26 to FY24. The package was not for unprogrammed funds. Overall the amendments would balance out as FTA funding recipients can carry over funds from year to year.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karen Puleo, the TIP AMENDMENT #1 – LRTA AMENDMENT PACKAGE was approved unanimously to be released for a 21 Day Public Comment period.

### 5. ACTION ITEM: TIP AMENDMENT #2 – LRTA AMENDMENT PACKAGE (31:50)

Paul Christner gave an overview of TIP Amendment #2, which is comprised of two projects that spanning the NMCOG region and into another region. Because they are statewide projects we need to amend our TIP and add them to our TIP. These projects include:

- Project #608816 - Resurfacing and related work on Route 110 – Lowell – Dracut – Methuen – add project and a change of over \$18 million
- Project #613213 - Bridge preservation of 41 bridges in Route 3 Corridor – Bedford, Billerica, Chelmsford, Tyngsborough – add project and a change of almost \$10 million

Justin Howard asked which TIP Project 613213 would be going on. Brian Fallon responded that as a statewide project, it just needs to be reflected in the regional TIP because it includes communities that are within the Northern Middlesex region.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karen Puleo, the TIP AMENDMENT #2 – LRTA AMENDMENT PACKAGE was approved unanimously to be released for a 21 Day Public Comment period.

## 6. STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT (TIP) PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (37:20)

Timothy Paris gave a summary of the projects under design and construction

- 613562 - Tewksbury improvements at Shawsheen Street, Foster Road, Patten Road and Beech Street – New project manager – Ryan Wilcox
- 613213 – Bedford-Billerica-Chelmsford-Tyngsborough-Bridge preservation of 41 bridges in Route 3 corridor – cost increase of \$150,000
- 608816 – Lowell-Dracut-Methuen-resurfacing and related work on Route 110 – 100% design in and total cost increase of \$1.2 million
- 607401 – Chelmsford – traffic signal installation at Route 110 & Route 495 (2 locations) - Ad date pushed back approximately 8 months
- 607887 - Lowell – Rourke bridge replacement – RFP ad date pushed back two weeks
- 608227 – Billerica – Yankee Doodle Bike Path construction (Phase I) – 100% design and total cost increase approximately \$1.8 million
- 609250 – Billerica – intersection improvements at Boston Road (Route 3A), Lexington Street and Glad Valley Road – TFPC decreased slightly
- 605966 – Lowell – reconstruction & related work on VFW highway – an increase in costs of approximately \$800,000

Karyn Puleo had 2 project updates:

- 609035 – Westford – Westford Rehabilitation at Boston Road is at 100%. The PSNE is due March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- 608861 – Westford – Westford Stony Brook Road over Stony Brook- at 25% - FY25- municipal right of way relocation involved

## 7. PRESENTATION OF FFY 2025-2029 TIP AND 2025 UPWP TIMELINES (41:01)

Paul Christner presented an overview of the NMMPO activities related to the TIP development schedule and key 2024 meeting dates. He also presented an overview of the NMMPO activities related to the UPWP development schedule and key 2024 meeting dates. The details of this presentation can be found in the meeting materials that were provided prior to this meeting.

Derek Krevat asked if there had been outreach to municipal partners at this time. Paul Christner shared that staff have begun reaching out. Paul is working with Derek Shooster on planning a municipal TIP day; the date will be finalized soon. NMCOG has also administered a region-wide call for projects to understand municipal requests for projects qualified for UPWP programming, TIP, and NMCOG's district local technical assistance program.

## 8. FEDERAL PUBLIC MEETING (45:17)

Brandon Burns with the Federal Transit Administration was joined with Josh Barber from the Federal Highways Administration to give an overview of the 2024 Certification Review and to provide public input regarding the transportation, planning, and decision-making processes administered by NMMPO. Any comments received by Thursday, February 8, 2024 will be taken into consideration and summarized in the final report. The details of this presentation can be found in the meeting materials that were provided prior to this meeting.

## 9. OTHER BUSINESS (59:58)

- MassDOT/MARPA Meeting – January 31, 2024
- TIP Readiness Day – February 7, 2024
- Certification Review – February 8, 2024
- Next NMMPO Meeting – February 28, 2024
- MassDot Innovation Conference – April 30 – May 1, 2024

## 10. ADJOURNMENT (1:01)

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Karyn Puleo, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:01 PM.