

MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION JUNE 23, 2021

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID-19 emergency executive order authorizing virtual public meetings, the meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M. via videoconference headquartered at the office of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), 40 Church Street, Suite 200, Lowell, MA. Attendees included:

Voting Members:

- David Mohler, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing Acting MassDOT Secretary Jamey Tesler)
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Tom Bomil, Chair, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board
- Kevin O'Connor, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board Representative to the MPO

Voting Members Absent:

- Andrew Deslaurier, Billerica Select Board, NMCOG Chair
- Daniel Rourke, Lowell City Councilor, MPO Representative

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, MPO Liaison
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT Project Design Engineer
- Brian Fallon, MassDOT Projects Engineer
- Michelle Ho, MassDOT Planning
- David Langlais, Regional Business Manager, Hoyle & Tanner
- Andrew Jennings, Billerica LRTA Board Member
- Gus Norrbom

NMMPO Staff:

- Beverly Woods, Justin Howard, and Chris Curry, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 26, 2021 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the May 26, 2021 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the May 26, 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

3. STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Tim Paris updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the May 26, 2021 meeting:

- **Lowell – Pedestrian Walkway & Bicycle Connection and Pawtucket Falls Overlook, from Vandenberg Esplanade to School Street** – The construction advertisement date was changed to January 4, 2025.
- **Westford – Bridge Rehabilitation Beaver Brook Road over Beaver Brook** – The construction advertisement date was changed to July 16, 2022.
- **Westford – Bridge Replacement, Stony Brook Road over the Stony Brook** – The construction advertisement date was changed to September 24, 2022.
- **Burlington – Billerica – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 3A** – The construction advertisement date was changed to January 29, 2022.

Justin Howard asked for an update on the Main Street improvement project in Dunstable, as it is high risk of not meeting the construction advertising deadline. Frank Suszynski responded that he would reach out to District 3 to obtain an update.

4. OPEN FORUM – OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS FROM MPO MEMBERS, COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE PUBLIC

There were no comments provided.

5. FFY 2022 UPWP – Potential Action to Endorse

Justin Howard reminded the group that members voted to release the draft FFY 2022 UPWP for a twenty-one day public comment period at the May meeting. Three sets of comments were received, from a Lowell resident, from Federal Highway Administration and from MassDOT. Justin detailed the comments and provided a summary sheet in the meeting packet. The comment from the Lowell resident was in support of the UPWP with specific interest in activities relating to the City of Lowell. Justin then discussed each of the FHWA and MassDOT comments and outlined the edits made in response to comments. Justin provided a link to the full document with comments addressed, located on the NMCOG website: [Northern Middlesex MPO Draft FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program](#)

Based on a motion by Kevin O’Connor and seconded by Tom Bomil, the MPO voted to endorse the FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as presented.

6. ROURKE BRIDGE UPDATE

Frank Suszynski provided an update on the Rourke Bridge project based on public feedback and the engineering analysis performed to date. The design team indicated that the Old Ferry Road alignment (Alignment Number 3) is the preferred alignment option. He stated that the Lowell City Council has reviewed the various alternative designs. MassDOT will be submitting a bridge type study by June 24. The report will be reviewed and discussed, edits will be made, and a public meeting is anticipated for August 2021. On behalf of Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, Frank reiterated the commitment to advancing design for the bridge project to 25% and to identifying a construction funding source. He confirmed that this is a design-build project and that once funding sources are identified, the project can

be advertised at the 25% design stage, rather than at final design. He will provide additional details following the preliminary design review in August.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Curry informed the group that LRTA has completed analysis of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program goal methodology, which was mentioned at the May NMMPO meeting. He stated that the DBE goal for the next 3 years reflects an increase to 5.85%. The goals and methodology publication is currently under a forty-five day public comment period. Comments are due no later than July 31, 2021.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Tom Bomil and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:25 PM.

Should a July meeting be required, it will be held July 28, 2021 at 2:00 PM and notification will be provided in advance of that meeting.