

# MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION JULY 27, 2022

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID-19 emergency executive order authorizing virtual public meetings, the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) 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 in Attendance:**

- Stephen Woelfel, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Transportation Planning (Representing MassDOT Secretary Jamey Tesler)
- Brian Fallon, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Tom Bomil, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board Chair
- Andrew Deslaurier, Billerica Select Board, NMCOG Chair
- Mark Kratman, Lowell Regional Transit Authority Board Representative to the MPO
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG NMMPO Representative

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

- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Andrew Wang, MassDOT Planning
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3
- Ishmael Sharif, MassDOT
- Ali Bent, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Meaghan O'Brien, Lowell Regional Transit Authority
- Christine McCall, City of Lowell Assistant City Manager, DPD Director
- Andrew Jennings, Billerica LRTA Board Member
- Kevin Hardiman, Town of Tewksbury Engineer

### **NMMPO Staff:**

- Jennifer Raitt, Justin Howard, David Tilton, Shravanthi Gopalan Narayanan, and Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 22, 2022 NMMPO MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with copies of the June 22, 2022 NMMPO minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion by Tom Bomil and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the June 22, 2022

NMMPO meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

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

Timothy Paris updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the June 22, 2022 meeting:

- **Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Main Street/Pleasant Street & North Street/East Street** – The project has a new construction advertisement date of May 1, 2027.
- **Westford – Bridge Replacement, Stony Brook Road over the Stony Brook** – Project is At 25% design and is programmed in the TIP in FFY 2024. Cost estimates have been updated to reflect the TIP programmed amount of \$1,767,271.
- **Chelmsford – Traffic Signal Installation at Route 110 & Route 495 (2 Locations)** – The new Project Manager is Augustin Manyowashington.
- **Lowell – Pedestrian Walkway & Bicycle Connection at Pawtucket Falls Overlook, from Vandenberg Esplanade to School Street** – The construction advertisement date is now October 2, 2050.
- **Burlington – Billerica – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 3A** – This project has a construction ad date of December 31, 2022 with the total contract cost now \$6,042,504.25.
- **Andover - Tewksbury – Highway Lighting System Rehabilitation and Repair at the Interchange of Interstate Routes 93 and 495** – Construction is 32% complete with a completion date of August 18, 2023.
- **Dunstable – Improvements on Main Street (Route 113), from Pleasant Street to 750 FT East of Westford Street** – Construction is active with a completion date of November 17, 2023.
- **Burlington to Tyngsborough – Guide and Traffic Sign Replacement on a Section of US 3** – Construction is 4% complete with a completion date of October 23, 2022.
- **Billerica – Rehabilitation on Boston Road (Route 3A) from Billerica Town Center to Floyd Street** – The project is at final design, advertised, and construction bids have been opened.

Justin Howard requested a clarification on the ad date for the Bridge Rehab on Beaver Brook Road over Beaver Brook in Westford project. Sarah Bradbury confirmed that the project was advertised in June, bids opened in July, and is currently awaiting project award.

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

There were no comments.

### 5. FFY 2022-2026 TIP UPDATES

- a. **Draft TIP Amendment 3:** Justin Howard provided a summary of Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP Amendment 3, which involves programming the purchase of 3 replacement vans by the LRTA at a cost of \$190,300 using FTA section 5310 funds, and matched by State Mobility Assistance Program funds. Justin reminded the MPO that the draft amendment was released for a 21 day

public comment period at the June 22, 2022 NMMPO meeting. No comments were received. He requested the amendment be endorsed by the NMMPO to ensure full funding.

Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Pat Wojtas, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse Draft FFY 2022-2026 TIP Amendment 3.

- b. **Draft TIP Adjustment 2:** Justin Howard provided a summary of an adjustment made to FFY 2022 and 2023 of the FFY 2022-2026 Northern Middlesex Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Adjustment 2 involves changes made to three Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) projects in the first year of the TIP to reflect their current cost estimates. The first project involves the addition of \$6,925 in State RTA Capital (RTACAP) to fund engineering and design of access to and from the commuter rail platform at Gallagher Terminal. This includes rehabbing the stairs and elevator, and replacing the bridge over the train tracks. The second project reduces funding for a stairway-reinforcing project by \$6,925 in State RTACAP. The third action moves the federal piece for purchase of two hybrid buses from FFY 2023 to FFY 2022 in order to obligate the funding for vehicles that have already been received from the manufacturer.

## 6. LRTA PUBLIC TRANSIT AGENCY SAFETY PLAN UPDATE

Ali Bent gave a presentation of the LRTA Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), detailing the LRTA's safety processes and procedures. The plan utilizes existing agency safety practices and best practices to be implemented to meet the new regulation set in 49 CFR Part 673 of the federal guidelines. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) introduced several changes to the PTASP regulation and the majority of updates in this plan are set to comply with the BIL directives.

The PTASP includes formal documentation to guide the agency in proactive safety management policy, safety risk management, safety assurance, and safety promotion. The goal is to provide management and labor a comprehensive, collaborative approach to managing safety. The plan includes the process and schedule for an annual review of safety performance measures and update processes that may be needed to improve LRTA's safety practices. The document and its updates will be maintained for three years following adoption and are subject to review by the LRTA.

Justin Howard reminded the group that the MPO should consider endorsing the safety targets as part of the performance based planning effort by the MPO and requested consideration to adopt the updated targets as presented.

Based on a motion by Andrew Deslaurier and seconded by Tom Bomil, the NMMPO voted to endorse updated targets in the LRTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan as presented.

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Timmel mentioned to the group that the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program, which is open to MPOs and local municipalities, has an application due date of September 15th. Eligible projects include planning, design, development or updating of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as well as

implementation of Action Plan activities. Chris offered to answer questions or provide assistance if needed.

Stephen Woelfel informed the group that the 2022 Moving Together Conference will be held November 1<sup>st</sup> at Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. Registration will be open within the next couple of weeks.

Jenny Raitt, new Executive Director at NMCOG, introduced herself to the group and stated that she looks forward to working with everyone.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

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

The next meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2022 at 2:00 PM. Justin Howard stated that he will keep MPO members informed as to whether the August meeting is necessary, agenda items being the determining factor.