



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

News

Assessment of LRTA Bus Stops Now Online

At the January meeting of the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO), NMCOG shared the completed Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) Bus Stop Inventory, a comprehensive overview of bus stops across the LRTA service area. In this year-long effort, NMCOG staff visited 227 bus stops to evaluate conditions, accessibility, and amenities. The analysis identifies opportunities for collaboration between the LRTA and municipalities to improve signage, accessibility, and rider comfort at bus stops, ensuring a better transit experience for the region's communities.



The interactive report includes 11 maps highlighting key findings and recommendations, offering valuable insights for planners and stakeholders. [Explore the data and learn more by visiting the online interactive report.](#)

2024 Planning Board Year in Review: Planning Board considered affordable housing, zoning issues and cannabis sites among others

Publication Date: Jan. 4, 2024, | Source: [Tewksbury Town Crier](#)

*"In January, town planner Alex Lowder reported that the **Northern Middlesex Council of Governments** regional planning agency will be launching a planning process to address homelessness and housing affordability in its nine member communities, including Tewksbury."*

"The project will involve residents in member communities and will work to develop realistic housing production goals for towns."

[Read the article.](#)

Mark Your Calendars! 2025 Greater Lowell Economic Summit Scheduled for March 20



NMCOG is hosting the 2025 Greater Lowell Economic Summit at UKG In Crosspoint Towers (900 Chelmsford St, Lowell). We invite anyone who lives, works, or is a stakeholder in the NMCOG region to attend the two-hour session or sessions of their interest over the day of March 20.

The goal of the summit is to bring together partners, interested stakeholders, and the public. Each session of this major event will include plenary and concurrent facilitated breakout groups to discuss Greater Lowell's economic development. The summit will guide strategy formation as part of **Greater Lowell Stronger Together**, NMCOG's 2025-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning process.

Tell us if you plan to attend and share your topics of interest at nmcog.org/summit. Session times and topics will be chosen partially based on these responses. We will send an email to all registrants when topics and times are finalized, including all the meeting details including parking, accessibility, and agenda.

More information about Greater Lowell Stronger Together can be found at nmcog.org/ceds. The Greater Lowell 2025-2030 CEDS is facilitated by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) and funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and other local and state sources. We are being assisted by Fourth Economy Consulting.

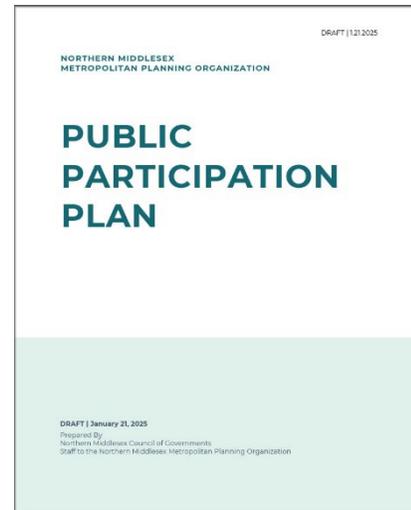
Events and Opportunities

Public Comment Period Now Open for Key Transportation Planning Documents

In January, the NMMPO released several draft planning documents and amendments for public review and comment. Your feedback is essential in shaping regional transportation priorities, public engagement strategies, and project evaluation criteria for infrastructure projects.

Documents available for public comment:

- **Public Participation Plan** (Comment period open through March 8) – Updates reflect post-pandemic engagement strategies.
- **NMMPO Memorandum of Understanding** (Comment period open through February 21) – Proposed amendments clarify agency roles and collaboration with MassDOT and LRTA.
- **Transportation Evaluation Criteria** (Comment period open through February 12) – Updates align scoring criteria with regional goals from Envision 2050 and the Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan.
- **Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #2** (Comment period open through February 12) – Proposes a study location change to Chelmsford Center Village.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2** (Comment period open through February 12) – Addresses increased costs for a pavement preservation project on Route 3.



Your input helps shape transportation planning in our region! [View the draft documents and learn more at View the draft documents and learn more at nmcog.org/opportunities-for-public-comment.](https://nmcog.org/opportunities-for-public-comment)

Learn More about NMCOG and our Communities: Attend a Board or Council Meeting!

NMCOG Council Meeting

The NMCOG Council meets the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom and in person at NMCOG's offices.

Date: February 19

Time: 7:00pm

Location: online via Zoom or in person at 672 Suffolk Street, Lowell, MA 01854

[View meeting details.](#)

NMMPO Meeting

The Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) meets the fourth Wednesday of each month via Zoom and in person at NMCOG's offices. This month, the NMMPO will begin the process of developing the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Federal Fiscal Years 2026-2030—a process which allocates state and federal construction funding for infrastructure projects across our region. The MPO will also hear public comments on updates to the Transportation Evaluation Criteria and NMMPO Memorandum of Understanding.

Date: February 26

Time: 2:00pm

Location: online via Zoom or in person at 672 Suffolk Street, Lowell, MA 01854

[View meeting details.](#)

Grant and Other Funding Opportunities

Community One Stop for Growth Portal Open

This year's application portal for the Community One Stop for Growth is now open. One Stop provides a streamlined process for municipalities



and organizations to apply for 12 state economic development grant programs. These programs offer direct funding and support to housing and economic development projects related to community activation and placemaking, planning and zoning, site preparation, building construction, and infrastructure.

One Stop is accepting applications through the optional Expression of Interest process through March 26. By submitting an expression of interest, applicants may receive guidance on priority projects from the state before submitting a full application. Applicants may begin working on their applications now in the [application portal](#); EOED will accept full application submissions from May 5 through June 4, with awards announced in the fall. For more information on grant programs and to learn how to apply, visit www.mass.gov/onestop.

Community Compact Municipal Fiber Grant Program

The [Municipal Fiber Grant Program](#) is a competitive, matching grant program to assist municipalities with the construction of municipal fiber broadband infrastructure and related projects and expenditures. The application period will be open from March 10 to April 10 at 12:00pm. [Learn more and apply!](#)

NMCOG Welcomes New Staff!

Over the past two weeks, two new transportation planners have joined NMCOG's team. Join us in welcoming Apple Gould-Schultz and Amanuel Regassa to our team! Together they will be supporting the federal certification work of the NMMPO, leading our Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and supporting transportation-related projects in each of our communities.

Welcome to the team and the NMCOG region!

Apple Gould-Schultz is a Transportation Planner I at NMCOG, joining the team January 2025. She primarily works in expanding pedestrian and cyclist mobility in the Greater Lowell Region. To this role,

Amanuel Regassa is a Transportation Planner II at NMCOG and joined our team in February 2025. In his work he contributes to transportation planning initiatives, including implementation of the Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan,

Apple brings a passion for supporting environmental justice communities and accessible planning/scientific communication.

Before joining NMCOG, Apple worked as a fellow and research manager for the Human-Environment Regional Observatory where she studied urban forests. Her research, which focused on the impact of tree planting initiatives to mitigate urban stormwater runoff, led to successful tree planting projects in environmental justice hubs in Worcester, MA. Apple has also worked in both conservation and education – developing various green infrastructure initiatives and teaching Geographic Information Science.

Apple received her B.A. in Environmental Science with a concentration in Earth Systems Science from Clark University. She continued her studies at Clark to earn her M.S. in GIS, graduating in May 2024.

applying his skills in data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and policy development to enhance regional mobility and safety.

Before joining NMCOG, Amanuel worked as a Junior Civil Engineer and Project Coordinator, gaining experience in highway design, transportation research, and project management. During his master's, he completed academic projects in Europe focused on mobility planning, transit design, and road safety. He also served on the advisory board of Save the Nations, supporting Vision Zero initiatives, and was a World Ambassador for Road Safety and Sustainable Mobility, representing the voices of youth in advocating for safer, more sustainable transport systems.

Amanuel holds a Master's degree in Transportation Science with a specialization in Transport Policy and Planning from Hasselt University, Belgium, and a Bachelor's degree in Construction Technology and Management from Addis Ababa Science and Technology University.

Employment at NMCOG

NMCOG is Hiring! Regional Housing Coordinator

The Regional Housing Coordinator will participate in technical planning support work with NMCOG's nine communities to advance local and regional housing

initiatives and programs. Their focus will be on assisting member municipalities develop, maintain, and administer affordable housing in compliance with M.G.L. Ch. 40B and associated regulations. Learn more and apply at nmcog.org/employment.

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments | 672 Suffolk Street Suite 100 | Lowell, MA 01854 US

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