MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
March 25, 2020

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In light of the COVID19 emergency legislation 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:
- Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack)
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG Chair

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:
- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Planning
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Planning, MPO Liaison
- Chris Hayes, City of Lowell Transportation Project Manager
- Christine Bruins, Lowell National Historical Park
- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer
- Justin Sultzbach, Tyngsborough Assistant Town Administrator
- Eric Salerno, Tyngsborough Town Planner
- Anna McGinty, Tewksbury Town Planner
- David Langlais, Hoyle, Tanner & Associates
- Dan Silvia, Chelmsford Television

NMMPO Staff:
- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry, Alicia Geilen, Justin Howard, David Tilton and Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPO members were provided with a copy of the February 26, 2020 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Ron Keohane, the NMMPO voted to approve the February 26, 2020 minutes as presented.
3. STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) PROJECTS UNDER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Connie Raphael updated the NMMPO regarding project information changes since the February 26, 2020 meeting:

Projects in design:

- Chelmsford – Intersection Improvements at Boston Road and Concord Road is at 100% design with an ad date of June 6, 2020.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Andover Street (Route 133) and River Road is at Final Design. The Ad Date has been moved to May 9, 2020.

New projects under design:

- Burlington-Billerica – Resurfacing and Related Work on Route 3A
- Burlington to Tyngsborough – Pavement Preservation on Route 3
- Chelmsford – Interstate Preservation on I-495

The following projects are planned to be deactivated due to changes in regional priorities, other projects are covering the scope, or due to lack of progress on design over an extended period of time.

- Andover-Tewksbury-Wilmington New Interchange Construction on I-93 Between Interchanges 41 and 42
- Billerica – Bridge Rehabilitation at Boston Road over Concord River
- Billerica – Middlesex Canal Enhancement

4. FFY 2020-2024 TIP UPDATES
   a. Draft Amendment 2 – MPO Action to Endorse

   Justin Howard provided a summary narrative of the proposed draft amendment 2 to the FFY 2020-2024 TIP, which involves programming $500,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for the Merrimack Riverwalk Extension project in Lowell. The City is providing $100,000 to match the $400,000 in Federal funds proposed in this amendment. At the last meeting, the MPO voted to release the Draft Amendment for Public Comment. The Public Comment period ended last Friday and no comments were received.

   Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Ron Keohane, the NMMPO took a voice vote to endorse the Draft Amendment as presented. Affirmative votes were provided by:

   - Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT representing Secretary Stephanie Pollack
   - Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 representing Highway Administrator Johnathan Gulliver
   - Pat Wojtas, NMCOG Chair
   - Ron Keohane, NMCOG MPO Representative
b. Draft Amendment 3: MPO Action to Release for Public Comment

Justin Howard presented a Summary Narrative of Amendment 3 to the FFY 2020-2024 TIP, which involves programming additional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for the Boston Road/Concord Road Intersection Improvement project in Chelmsford to account for a cost increase. The new cost estimate is $2,996,437, an increase of $555,515 from the current programming in the TIP.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Frank Suszynski, the NMMPO voted to release Draft TIP Amendment 3 for a 21-day public comment period. Affirmative votes were provided by:

- Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT representing Secretary Stephanie Pollack
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 representing Highway Administrator Johnathan Gulliver
- Pat Wojtas, NMCOG Chair
- Ron Keohane, NMCOG MPO Representative

5. FFY 2021-2025 TIP UPDATES – MPO ACTION TO SELECT PREFERRED SET OF PROJECTS

Justin Howard presented two scenarios for the programming of regional target funds for consideration by the MPO. He requested that one preferred scenario be selected to populate the TIP, which will be presented to the NMMPO at the next meeting.

**FY2021-2025 Northern Middlesex TIP Target Project Scenario 1:**

Scenario 1 would involve the 2025 programming of the VFW Highway Reconstruction project in Lowell at $7.7 million, currently at 75% design.

**FY2021-2025 Northern Middlesex TIP Target Project Scenario 2:**

Scenario 2 would involve the programming of three smaller projects in 2025: Chelmsford’s Route 110/495 traffic signal installation, Billerica’s Boston Road, Lexington Street and Glad Valley Road intersection improvement project, and the Lowell Connector Reconstruction project. Each of these projects are in preliminary design. Due to recent cost increases, this scenario would need to be reworked to fit within budget constraints.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Ron Keohane, the group agreed unanimously to submit Scenario 1 for approval.

Affirmative votes were provided by:

- Stephen Woelfel, MassDOT representing Secretary Stephanie Pollack
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 representing Highway Administrator Johnathan Gulliver
Justin then detailed the FY 2021-2025 preliminary State project list, as well as the transit program of projects to be included in the TIP. The draft TIP will be presented at the April 22, 2020 MPO meeting, where members will consider releasing the document for a 21-day public comment period.

6. FFY 2021 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) UPDATES

Justin Howard provided a spreadsheet and overview of the preliminary task list for the FFY 2021 UPWP. He explained the tasks and budget allocation information. There is approximately $22,000 available for a transportation study and staff has reached out to the communities to obtain input and ideas. Updates will be shared with the NMMPO at the next meeting.

7. NMMPO CERTIFICATION REVIEW UPDATE

Chris Timmel provided an update on the Certification Review process. He stated that the Federal Highway team had a great site visit at NMCOG on March 4th, along with MassDOT and LRTA. He thanked all involved for arranging the visit and tour. Specific findings pertaining to the Review will be provided in the final report with recommendations, commendations and any corrective actions. A draft will be prepared by the end of April for finalization in May and will be presented to the NMMPO at that point.

8. OTHER BUSINESS/OPEN FORUM – OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS FROM MPO MEMBERS, COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE PUBLIC

Derek Shooster informed the group that the annual Innovation Conference will not be held this spring due to COVID-19. Information regarding refunds and so forth will be sent to registrants when available. At this time, the Moving Together conference is still planned for October.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Frank Suszynski, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 2:42 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2020, 2:00 PM at the NMCOG offices. Should a virtual meeting be required, a link will be sent to participants and published in the public notice.