MEETING MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
April 22, 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:
- David Mohler, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (Representing MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack)
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen, NMCOG MPO Representative
- Frank Suszynski, MassDOT District 4 (Representing MassDOT Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver)
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board, NMCOG Chair

Stakeholders and Other Attendees:
- Chris Timmel, Federal Highway Administration
- Bryan Pounds, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning
- Constance Raphael, MassDOT District 4
- Derek Shooster, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning, MPO Liaison
- Timothy Paris, MassDOT District 4
- Kevin Hardiman, Tewksbury Town Engineer
- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer
- Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3

NMMPPO Staff:
- Beverly Woods, Chris Curry, Justin Howard, Carlin Andrus and Katrina Garavanian, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

2. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 25, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

NMMPPO members were provided with a copy of the March 25, 2020 minutes prior to the meeting. Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Ron Keohane, the NMMPPO voted to approve the March 25, 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 March 25, 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. MassDOT is keeping an eye on this project advertisement date due to town meeting delay.
- Tewksbury – Intersection Improvements at Andover Street (Route 133) and River Road is at Final Design. The Ad Date is scheduled for May 9, 2020.

4. FFY 2020-2024 TIP UPDATES

a. Draft Amendment 3 – MPO Action to Endorse

Justin Howard presented Draft Amendment 3 to the MPO for consideration to endorse, as there were no comments received during the public comment period. This amendment includes programming additional funds ($555,515) to cover a cost estimate increase for an intersection improvement project at Boston Road and Concord Road in Chelmsford. The new cost estimate is $2,996,437.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Ron Keohane, the NMMPO voted unanimously to endorse Draft Amendment 3 as presented.

b. TIGER Bridge Project Funding Request Discussion

Justin Howard informed the group that the City of Lowell has requested TIP target funds to cover a funding shortfall for the TIGER bridge project. Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer, provided a brief update and overview of each of the five locations within the TIGER bridge construction project, which has been underway since 2018. She detailed change order requests and explained the $3,000,000 shortfall arising from unforeseen issues encountered with the Pawtucket Street over Northern Canal Bridge, Central Street over Pawtucket Canal Bridge, and Pawtucket Street over Pawtucket Canal. She mentioned potential funding sources, percentage contributions, and the amount of $700,000 for an on call design service that is still needed, requesting any available TIP funds on behalf of the City of Lowell. Justin will include this request on the next NMMPO meeting agenda pending additional details and further clarification.

5. FFY 2021-2025 TIP-- MPO ACTION TO RELEASE DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Justin Howard presented the draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP for consideration by the MPO. He requested the MPO take action to release the document for a 21-day public comment period. Prior to the meeting,
each attendee received the full draft document by e-mail, along with a list of all projects being programmed in the draft TIP.

Based on a motion by Pat Wojtas, seconded by Ron Keohane, the MPO voted unanimously to release the draft FFY 2021-2025 TIP for a 21-day public comment period.

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

Connie Raphael informed the group that the MAPIT tool is currently down and being upgraded. The upgrade has been slightly delayed but should be up and running soon.

Justin Howard stated that the City of Lowell’s Pawtucket Falls Overlook project is at 25% and the City is requesting a design public hearing (DPH). He then asked about MassDOT procedures for holding DPHs during the pandemic. David Mohler stated that MassDOT will look into it and provide information to MPO staff.

Justin Howard then asked how MPO endorsed documents, such as the past two TIP amendments and the recently released TIP document, will be signed by MPO members. David Mohler responded that MassDOT is currently working with MPOs and Federal partners to develop a procedure for signatories, and that a decision will be shared shortly.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Based on a motion made by Pat Wojtas and seconded by Ron Keohane, the MPO voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:00 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2020, at 2:00 PM. Should a virtual meeting be required, a link will be sent to participants and published in the public notice.