

## **North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC) MPO Presentation Outline**

### **Introduction (Alex)**

- Alex assumed the NSPC Subregional Coordinator Role in September. NSPC consists of nine municipalities all within about a 30-minute drive north of Boston. We have with us today our two NSPC co-chairs - Danielle McKnight, Town Planner, North Reading, and Brian Szekely, Town Planner, Winchester, and NSPC's representative to the MPO - Tina Cassidy the Planning Director for Woburn.
- We want to thank the MPO for inviting us to discuss NSPC's priorities as we seek to strengthen the connection between NSPC and the MPO.
- Thank you to Kate White, Sandy Johnston, and Matt Genova for engaging NSPC around Destination 2040, the MPO's next long-range transportation plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, and the Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Sandy and Matt attended our November NSPC meeting to present on these programs and provided NSPC with a transportation needs assessment that we find to be very helpful so thank you.

### **NSPC Accomplishments and 2020 Workplan:**

- This past year NSPC partnered with the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative to host a workshop on subdivision controls.
- NSPC also hosted a breakfast to introduce local leaders to the process of creating the metropolitan region's new regional plan, MetroCommon x 2050 which is being spearheaded by MAPC. These efforts continue and NSPC plans to host a legislative breakfast in the spring to engage state legislators around the region's needs.
- NSPC has also engaged artists around the subregion and was awarded technical assistance from MAPC to develop a Community Art Trail between Wakefield, Lynnfield, and Stoneham and possibly other NSPC communities.
- In defining transportation priorities for the future, NSPC has the asset of a Subregional Mobility Study that was completed with technical assistance from MAPC in 2017. So now I'm going to hand it over to talk about some of the key findings and challenges that were identified in that study and plans to address these challenges in the future.

### **NSPC Transportation Plan 2017 and Next Steps (Danielle lead, others jump in as needed)**

- About the plan – MAPC technical assistance to analyze challenges and opportunities for establishing more non-single-occupancy travel options across the subregion.
- Key findings

- More NSPC residents are commuting within the subregion than into Boston showing there any many employment opportunities in NSPC.
  - BUT there are more commuters that utilize public transit into Boston than the subregion.
  - **This shows there are limited transit options across the subregion and it's difficult to make crosstown connections.** This was identified as a major concern by business leaders in the subregion during focus groups.
  
- Existing commuter rail and bus services are clustered within areas with greater population density and limited in the northern section of the subregion.
  - So there is a great need to connect communities with rail services with those that don't
  
- Key recommendations
  - Improvement to existing MBTA services – increased frequency and route extensions.
  - New local shuttles – first-mile last-mile connections from commuter rails to employment centers – potentially on-demand shuttle services.
  - Partnerships with ride-hailing companies to resolve first-mile last-mile gaps.
  - Complete streets – improve safety and revamp vital corridors in the subregion.
  - Create mobility hubs around expanded MBTA bus networks and local shuttles (Recommendation to establish a hub near the Burlington Mall).
  
- Next Steps
  - Evaluating progress towards meeting the challenges identified in the plan and will be pursuing sustainable solutions to addressing these challenges.

#### **How the MPO can help NSPC (Brian)**

- Addressing challenges identified in the 2017 Transportation Plan will require startup funds but also a plan for how to sustain these programs in the long-term.
- NSPC is interested in technical assistance from the MPO to establish a financial operating plan that ensures programs such as local shuttle services can be sustained by the Subregion in the long-term.

#### **Strengthening Connections with the MPO (Tina)**

- Tina Cassidy is NSPC's representative to the MPO and will keep the MPO updated on NSPC's progress towards meeting these challenges and how the MPO can be helpful.
- NSPC would like to have continued discussion about how projects are ranked for funding, particularly tradeoffs between funding large projects and several smaller projects.