

## **Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Docket**

**August 23, 2023**

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### **Item 4 - FFY23 UPWP Amendment**

*Context:*

Each year, MVMPO staff track expenditures to ensure the best use of Metropolitan Planning (PL) federal aid. In Massachusetts, PL funding has typically been granted to regions on an annual basis. Funds are expected to be expended within the federal fiscal year of apportionment based on an annual contract with MassDOT, which functions as an intermediary between regional planning agencies and the federal government. Funds cannot be carried over.

*Discussion:*

Due to staffing changes, the immediate needs of the 3C certification process documents, and a refocused mission, MVMPO staff project PL budget remainders in the approximate amount of \$238,000. Staff propose to amend the UPWP, moving funds to subtasks with anticipated shortfalls. Staff also proposes to increase the program's direct cost expenditure budget to 1) support the purchase and installation of trail counting equipment; 2) the purchase of additional in-office support hardware, and; 3) training for staff.

The MVMPO opened the comment period during its July meeting. Staff did not receive any comments on the proposed amendment.

*Action:*

Close the 21-day comment period and approve the amendment.

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### **Item 5 - FFY23-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #5 – Transit (MeVa Updates)**

*Context:*

Merrimack Valley Transit (MeVa) is a designated Regional Transit Authority (RTA), which allows it to manage the region's transit federal aid program in coordination with state and federal governments.

**Discussion:**

Consistent with its authority to program federal aid, MeVa has proposed several adjustments and amendments to its FY23 and FY24 program as shown in the attached TIP revisions report.

The MVMPO opened the comment period during its July meeting and requested an expedited 14-day comment period. At the same July meeting, the MVMPO conditionally approved the plan, dependent on the substance of any comments. Staff did not receive any comments on the proposed amendment and as such, the amendment was approved.

**Action:**

No action required: this item is information only.

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## **Item 6 - FFY23-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #6 – Highway (Lawrence Rail Crossing)**

**Context:**

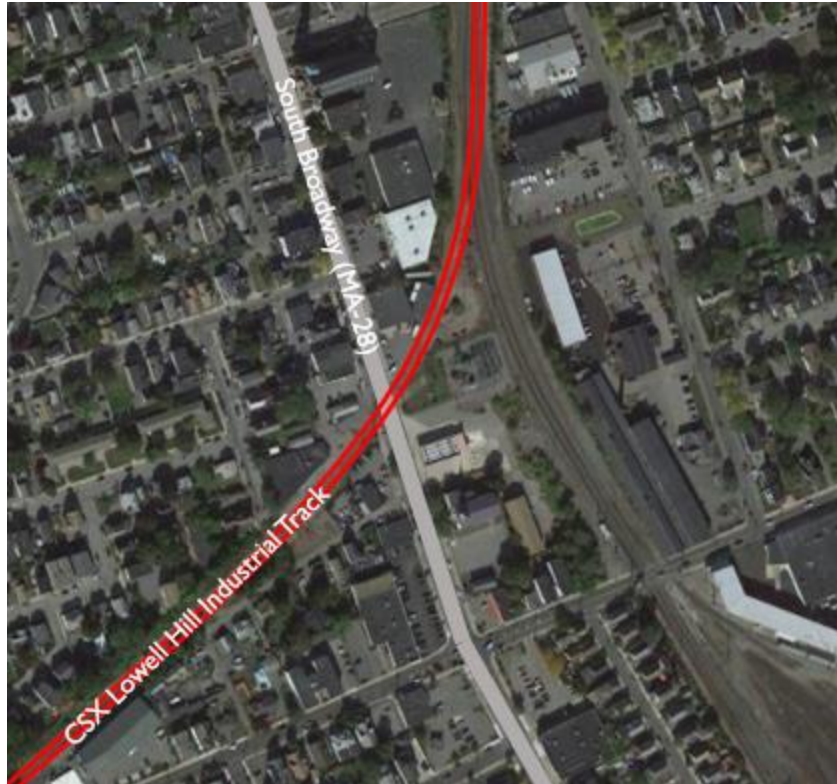
South Broadway (Route 28) is a two-lane principal arterial in the City of Lawrence with an annual average daily traffic volume of approximately 18,000 vehicles. South Broadway crosses the CSX Lowell Hill Industrial Track which is used several times a week as CSX serves customers along the line. The figure on the following page provides the geographic context of the area.

**Discussion:**

In the Spring of 2021, the Lawrence Police Department contacted both the railroad and MassDOT about the condition of the roadway crossing surface of the South Broadway grade crossing. The surface, which was originally a full-depth rubber system, was in a condition that required vehicles to swerve out of the travel lanes to avoid potholes and exposed metal bolts within the crossing surface to avoid damage to their vehicles. This was considered a significant roadway hazard and required immediate repair. Pan Am, the railroad owner at the time, worked with the city to repave the crossing thereby eliminating the roadway hazard at the crossing.

Due to conditions of the track and ties below the crossing surface, the repair made in the summer of 2021 failed within two years introducing a hazard at the crossing again. To resolve the on-going safety issues at the crossing MassDOT is advancing a project to fully replace the complete track panel and crossing surface so that the roadway safety issue does not reemerge, necessitating an amendment to the TIP.

The MVMPO opened the comment period during its July meeting. Staff did not receive any comments on the proposed amendment.



**Action:**

Open the 21-day comment period for the proposed amendment.

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## Item 7 – Draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan

**Context:**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a document that provides information about existing conditions in the region, which inform a shared vision for the region, goals and objectives to meet that vision, and strategies and projects that also support the vision. The MTP includes a financially constrained project list that lists projects anticipated to be recipients of federal aid within the plan's 20-year horizon.

**Discussion:**

At previous MVMPO meetings, staff provided and received feedback on the draft vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for MVision 2050, the region's new MTP. In July, staff provided an overview of the MTP's project universe and fiscally constrained project list. Staff has finalized a draft version MVision 2050 for review and comment. Beyond the project universe, list, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies, the draft includes a profile of existing conditions in the region, which informed the development of the plan's vision.

Staff encourage board members to give feedback during the 21-day comment period. Following reception of comments from the board, MassDOT, and the public, staff will revise the plan for approval and adoption. The plan will remain in effect for five years.

**Action:**

Open the 21-day comment period on MVision 2050, the region's draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

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## Item 8 – Coordinated Human Services Transit Plan (CHSTP)

**Context:**

Projects selected for the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (Section 5310) must be included in a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. Typically, these plans are referred to as Coordinated Human Services Transit Plans (CHSTP). As the Section 5310 program is intended to support seniors and individuals with disabilities, these parties are an integral part of plan development. Additionally, representatives of public and nonprofit transit service providers provide feedback to ensure their support services needs are captured for federal aid eligibility.

**Discussion:**

Staff kicked off the planning effort for an updated CHSTP in fall of 2022. Outreach work included an online questionnaire, a veterans coffee event, two specific targeted senior language/community-based meetings (Spanish-speakers and Asian seniors), and a focus group meeting with service providers in both the Merrimack Valley and Northern Middlesex Council of Governments.

Staff have compiled feedback and produced a plan for comment. Following the opening of the comment period, staff will reach out directly to local service providers to ensure their needs are documented in the plan.

**Action:**

Open the 21-day comment period on the draft Coordinated Human Services Transit Plan.

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### Docket Attachments

- A. Agenda Item 6 – TIP Revisions Report
- B. Agenda Item 7 – Draft MVision 2050 (Metropolitan Transportation Plan [MTP])
- C. Agenda Item 8 – Draft Coordinated Human Services Transit Plan (CHSTP)



TIP Revisions Report  
Merrimack Valley

STIP: 2023 - 2027 (A)

Type	Value Changed	Date of Change	Former Value	New Value	Variance	Comments
Federal Fiscal Year 2023						
Section 3 / Planning/Adjustments/Pass-throughs						
Railroad Crossings						
<b>S12855 Lawrence: LAWRENCE- Rail-Highway Crossing Improvement on the Lowell Hill Industrial Track South Broadway - Route 28 (053031V)</b>						
Amendment	2023: Statewide-CON-Railroad Crossings-RRHE	7/19/2023	\$0	\$395,000	\$395,000	