

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Docket May 22, 2024

Item 5 – FFY2025-2029 Draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Context: Each year, MVMPO staff develop the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a five-year plan for capital improvements that are candidates for federal aid. The TIP programs apportioned and discretionary funding administered by both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In Massachusetts, highway side funding is broken into two portfolios: *regional target* funding and *statewide* funding. State staff develop and propose a program of *statewide* projects for MVMPO board review and approval. For *regional target* funding, MVMPO staff coordinate with municipal officials and MassDOT to develop a proposed program for board review.

MVMPO staff inform initial program scenarios with two primary measures: a *readiness* determination and a project score. For readiness, staff coordinate with MassDOT to determine a project's design and engineering status. MassDOT assigns each project a year in which the MassDOT project manager believes the project will be able to advertise and obligate funds. Programming a project prior to the readiness year is allowable, but not advised as failure to obligate funding each year of programming essentially forfeits access to such funds. A project score is developed based on a given project's alignment with MVMPO board goals and priorities. Staff developed a new scoring methodology during this year's TIP cycle, but as no new regional target projects are to be programmed, current legacy stores were retained for programming purposes.

Discussion: In March, MVMPO staff provided MVMPO's board a proposed TIP scenario for review and comment. In total, the proposed FFY25-29 program includes \$73,864,188 worth of regional target funding with a \$1,180,000 reserve (FHWA aid), a statewide portfolio of \$440,022,195 (FHWA aid), and \$76,652,714 of transit support (FTA aid). During the March 27 meeting, the board reviewed the proposed program and indicated its support. Based on this, staff prepared the draft TIP, which was released for comment during the April MVMPO meeting.

Staff received several comments from MassDOT on the proposed draft, which are included in the revised draft's appendix. Staff updated the document based on MassDOT comments. As of this writing (May 15th, 2024), staff has not received any public comment on the draft TIP.

Action: Approve the FFY2024-2029 Transportation Improvement Program.

Item 6 – FFY2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Context: Each year, MVMPO staff develop the region's Unified Planning Work Program. The Unified Planning Work Program lays out the anticipated deliverables and work of MVMPO staff over the course of a given fiscal year. The document is presented annually for MVMPO Board approval.

Discussion: Staff prepared the draft FFY2025 Unified Planning Work Program, which was released for comment following the Board's April meeting. The draft UPWP programs four tasks—3C Program Management, Data Collection and Analysis, Transportation Planning, and Other Planning Support—and 18 total associated subtasks.

Work performed in support of these tasks will generate the following major deliverables:

- FFY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (Task 1.3)
- FFY2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (Task 1.4)
- Mechanics/Guidance for use of Regional Target on Design (Task 1.4)
- MassDOT and Regional Counting Program (Task 2.1)
- Traffic Counter Install and Monitoring (Task 2.1, continuing from FFY24)
- Pavement Management Program Evaluation (Task 2.2, carried over from FFY24)
- Travel Time Competitiveness Tool (Task 2.4, carried over from FFY24)
- Annual Performance Monitoring Benchmarks (Task 2.5)
- Active Transportation Plan Phase 2: Node Activation (Task 3.1)
- Active Transportation Pilot (Task 3.1)
- Fare Free Evaluation (Task 3.3, continuing from FFY24)
- Merrimack Valley Transit Automatic Passenger Counter Validation (Task 3.3)
- Scoping for a Future Years' Transit Enhancement Analysis (Task 3.3)
- Elder Friendly Service Design White Paper (Task 3.3)
- Third Party American with Disabilities Act Compliance Review (Task 3.3)
- Ferryboat Business Plan Development (Task 3.4)
- Annual High Injury Network Updates (Task 3.6)
- Up to Two Safety Quick Builds (Task 4.2)
- Collective Purchase for Roadway Salt (Task 4.2)
- Collective Purchase for Roadway Services (Task 4.2)

The FFY25 UPWP also includes standard process-oriented tasks and deliverables, including:

- Certification Review (Task 1.1)
- MVMPO Preparation and Facilitation (Task 1.2)
- Updated MVMPO Memorandum of Understanding (Task 1.2)
- MVMPO "Retreat" (Task 1.2)
- Review of Regional Target Plan Sheets & Scoring (Task 1.4)
- Re-organization/Consolidation of Online Transportation Tools (Task 2.3)
- Urbanized Area GHG Coordination (Task 2.5)
- Border to Boston Support and Coordination (Task 3.1)
- Regional Priority Growth Strategy Support (Task 3.4)
- Vision Zero Community Capacity Building (Task 3.6)
- Council on Aging Coordination (Task 3.3)

- Miscellaneous Grant Support (Task 4.2)

Staff received several comments on the proposed draft from MassDOT. Staff integrated these comments and their respective edits into the revised draft.

Action: Approve the FFY2025 Unified Planning Work Program.

Item 7 – FFY24 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment 2

Context: The Unified Planning Work Program establishes the tasks and deliverables that the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission's (MVPC) staff will undertake on behalf of the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO). The work program may be amended throughout the year as needs and staffing change. Early in the federal fiscal year, MVMPO amended its contract (Amendment #1) to add carryover funding from previous years to advance particular tasks. The subject proposed amendment—Amendment #2—presents book-keeping items, including the closing and reallocation of remainders from completed tasks to tasks requiring ongoing support.

Discussion: Amendment #2 proposes the actions discussed below, which are also shown in the financial table that follows as a docket attachment.

- Action 1: Transfer \$13,885.31 from Subtask 1.3 (Unified Planning Work Program) and \$11,000 Subtask 3.4 (Regional Vitality) to Subtask 1.1 (Program Management, Support, and Growth), resulting in a balance of \$61,168.04 in 1.1, \$500 in 1.3, and \$1,603.92 in 3.4 (see also, Action 4).

Action 1 Rationale: Staff anticipate minimal further expenditures to the 1.1 line item. Due to staffing limitations in the Community and Economic Development Program, budget allocated toward the Commission's Priority Growth Strategy may be reallocated elsewhere, as is proposed here, and as such funding may be re-allocated from the Regional Vitality subtask.

- Action 2: Transfer \$5,543.69 from Subtask 2.3 (Supportive GIS and Information Technology) to Subtask 1.4 (Transportation Improvement Program), resulting in a level balance for Subtask 1.4 and a remainder of \$145,368.09 in Subtask 1.2.

Action 2 Rationale: Staff developed a new TIP scoring tool, which was charged largely to Subtask 1.4; however, the majority of the expenditures reflect GIS development and work. The development of the scoring system resulted in drawing down funds in Subtask 1.4 below budgeted levels. This action closes out Subtask 1.4 with a \$0.00 balance.

- Action 3: Transfer the balance of \$33,777.08 from Subtask 2.4 (Travel Time Reliability and Competitiveness) and the balance of \$12,282.22 (Benchmarks and Performance Measures) to Subtask 4.2 (Local Technical Assistance), effectively closing out Subtasks 2.4 (main deliverable shifted to FFY25) and 2.5 (task complete).

Action 3 Rationale: Staff have absorbed LTA requests that have exceeded anticipated time needs or were not initially programmed, such as North Andover's RFP scope for a station feasibility analysis. As such, the expenditures for Subtask 4.2 exceeded originally budgeted amounts. This action moves funding from the development of a travel time competitiveness tool to technical assistance. The tool will not be completed in FFY25. The action also moves funding from the performance measure subtask, which was completed in February 2024.

Action 4: Transfer \$164.73 from Subtask 3.4 (Regional Vitality) to Subtask 4.1 (County and State Planning Support) resulting in a balance of \$1,603.92 in Subtask 3.4 and a level balance in Subtask 4.1

Action 4 Rationale: Subtask 4.1 supports as-needed requests from the state and county, typically related to training, review of documents, and assistance with grant review. This year, staff supported the review of MassDOT's community transit grant applications, which causes slight overdraw of budgeted funds. This action reallocates funding from Subtask 3.4 (Regional Vitality). Due to staffing limitations in the Community and Economic Development Program, budget allocated toward the Commission's Priority Growth Strategy may be reallocated elsewhere, as is proposed here.

Action: Release proposed FFY24 UPWP Amendment #2 for the 21-day comment period.

Attachments:

- A. Draft FFY2025-2029 Transportation Improvement Program
- B. Draft FFY2025 Unified Planning Work Program
- C. Proposed FFY2024 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #2