

Executive Summary

About the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Fifteen member communities fall within the Merrimack Valley's federally designated metropolitan planning region. The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) supports these communities by facilitating various environmental, economic development, transportation, and technology planning services. Staff within MVPC also support the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO), which is the region's transportation policy board. This body manages the region's federally required Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive (3C) transportation planning process, which ensures infrastructure planning and funding coordination across the local, state, and federal levels of government.

What is the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the region's transportation capital plan. Each year the MVMPO prepares and approves a list of projects that are candidates to receive federal aid over a five-year period. Projects must be programmed on the TIP to receive federal aid.

How is the TIP developed?

The TIP programs federal aid from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

On the highway side, the TIP contains two primary types of federal aid projects: regional projects and statewide projects. Regional projects are typically developed by member communities in coordination with MVMPO staff and MassDOT and are typically confined to a single municipality. These projects tend to benefit residents, employees, and visitors who travel through the specific municipality. By contrast, statewide projects tend to be greater in geographic scope and/or magnitude of benefit in that they support statewide mobility or satisfy interests and goals of the state.

On the transit side, the TIP contains both capital and operating support for the region's transit authority (MeVa). Capital projects include a range of project-types, including but not limited to replacing rolling stock, preventative maintenance, and upgrading facilities. Operating projects include subsidy for operations and short-range planning support.

Federal aid projects are supported by two types of federal aid funding: apportioned aid and discretionary aid. Federal surface transportation legislation develops programs and associated funding ceilings to allow states and regional governments to obligate the use of federal funds for their projects. Funds that are *apportioned* are approved by congress and divvied up to states by program. In Massachusetts, regional funds are further broken up by formula. Funds that are *discretionary* are available to recipients as warranted by federal approval, most typically through competitive grant programs administered by the Federal Highway Administration or Federal Transit Administration.

What projects are funded in this year's TIP?

This cycle programs federal aid for the following regional target projects:

- Reconstruction of Route 1 in Salisbury
- Reconstruction on Route 97 between West Main and Moulton Street in Georgetown
- Intersection Improvements at Route 1 and Merrimack Street in Newburyport
- Corridor Improvements on Route 114 between Waverly Road and Mill Street in North Andover
- Reconstruction of North Avenue between Main Street and the New Hampshire Line in Haverhill

- Intersection Improvements at Merrimack Street and South Broadway Road in Lawrence
- Intersection Improvements at Riverside Drive and Burnham Road in Methuen
- Intersection Improvements at Marston Street and East Haverhill Street in Lawrence
- Reconstruction of Route 133 between Shawhseen Road and North Main Street in Andover
- A trail connector between the Riverwalk and Salisbury Ghost Trail in Amesbury
- Replacement of the Basiliere Bridge in Haverhill
- Replacement of I-495 Bridges in Andover and Lawrence
- A segment of the Border to Boston Trail between Georgetown Road and West Main Street in Georgetown and Boxford
- A segment of the Border to Boston Trail between Georgetown and Byfield in Georgetown and Newbury
- Lawrence to Manchester Rail Trail
- Replacement of the I-495 Bridge over the Merrimack River and Route 110 in Haverhill and Methuen
- Safe Routes to School Improvements for Community Day Arlington in Lawrence
- Interstate Improvements on I-93 between Andover and Tewksbury
- Safe Routes to School Improvements for Bagnall Elementary in Groveland
- Bridge replacement on Tewksbury Street over the MBTA Commuter Rail in Andover
- Bridge replacement on Route 213 over the Methuen Rail Trail in Methuen
- Bridge preservation on I-93 in Andover
- Various transit projects that allow Merrimack Valley Transit (MeVa) to operate their year-round fare-free fixed route service, operate paratransit services, and maintain vehicles and other infrastructure.

How Can I Be Involved?

Every year, the MVMPO releases its draft TIP for a 21-day comment period at its April meeting. Public hearing opportunities are provided and advertised thereafter. In addition to attending a public hearing, written comments may be provided to the MPO by mail and/or email via the contact information listed below. Staff additionally welcome the opportunity to discuss the TIP and may be contacted to set up a meeting by email.

Mail:

Attn: Transportation Program Manager
 Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
 160 Main Street
 Haverhill, MA 01830

Email:

preed@mvpc.org

Can the TIP be Changed Following Approval?

Yes. The TIP may be amended or adjusted in a given year following the procedures outlined in the region's most current Public Participation Plan. The subject document also includes the current procedures (as of the approval date of May 24, 2023) on page 58.