

**Listing of Federal
Obligations for Transportation Projects in the
Merrimack Valley Region**

**Federal Fiscal Year 2020
(October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

Prepared by the

**Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
160 Main Street, Haverhill MA 01830**

on behalf of the

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Introduction

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) that was enacted by Congress in August 2005 was the first federal transportation funding authorization legislation that contained a provision requiring that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) publish:

“...an Annual Listing of projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year shall be published or otherwise made available by the cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public review. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP).”

This provision in federal law has appeared in subsequent federal transportation funding authorization acts, including the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act that was signed into law on December 4, 2015. It is intended to increase the transparency of government spending on transportation projects and strategies in metropolitan areas to state and local officials, and to the public.

23 CFR 450.334, the federal regulation which defines how the above requirement is to be met, stipulates that at a minimum this Listing must contain the following information for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP;
- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year;
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years;
- Sufficient description to identify the project or phase; and
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase.

Transportation Planning in the Merrimack Valley Region

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is the transportation planning staff for the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO). In this capacity, MVPC provides technical support and assistance to the MVMPO in fulfilling its transportation planning responsibilities as defined by federal regulations, to have a Continuing, Comprehensive and Coordinated (“3C”) transportation planning process that considers all transportation modes and supports metropolitan community development and social goals.

Key responsibilities of the MPO include the preparation of regional transportation plans and programs of projects for the 15 cities and towns that comprise the Merrimack Valley region:

Amesbury	Haverhill	Newburyport
Andover	Lawrence	North Andover
Boxford	Merrimac	Rowley
Georgetown	Methuen	Salisbury
Groveland	Newbury	West Newbury

Sources of Obligation Information

Data on the obligation of FFY 2020 federal transportation funds for roadway and bridge projects was provided by MassDOT’s Office of Transportation Planning. Information on the obligation of federal transit funds in the region in FFY 2020 was provided by the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA).

Summary of Federally Funded Projects in the Merrimack Valley Region

The term *obligation* refers to the United States Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) legal commitment to pay the federal share of a project’s cost and an obligated project is one that has received such a commitment. It should be noted that projects for which funds have been obligated are *not* necessarily initiated or completed in the program year.

For FHWA projects, obligation takes place when a project agreement is executed and the state/grantee requests that the funds be obligated. For FTA projects, obligation occurs when FTA approves a grant application it has received from a recipient which, in the case of the Merrimack Valley MPO region, is usually the MVRTA.

Agencies Responsible for Implementing Project

MassDOT is responsible for implementing the roadway and bridge projects that received federal funding obligations in FFY 2020, while the MVRTA is responsible for implementing the transit projects and services that received obligations.

Roadway, Pedestrian and Bridge Project Obligations

Over \$46.2 million in federal transportation funds were obligated for roadway, pedestrian and bridge projects in the Merrimack Valley during FFY 2020 (see [Table 1 on Page 5](#)).

As was the case in FFY in FFYs 2018 and 2019, the most significant federal obligation of funding in the Merrimack Valley in FFY 2020 was \$39,052,354 for the replacement of Bridge H-12-039 that carries I-495 over the Merrimack River in the Ward Hill area of Haverhill (Project #605306). Three obligations of federal funds were made to this project during year. FFY 2020 is the third year of federal expenditures for this project, which will ultimately cost \$108,833,832 and take five years to complete (see definition of *Advance Construction* on the following page).

FFY 2020 also saw the obligation of \$6,612,296.82 of federal funds for the reconstruction of Elm Street in Amesbury (Project #602418). This was the second obligation for this two-year AC project, which has an estimated total construction cost of \$11,178,124.

In Haverhill, \$1,412,887 was obligated for the project to construct Phase II of the Bradford Rail Trail that will run from Route 125 east to Railroad Street (Project #608027).

The \$47,077,474 that was obligated to the three projects described above is only 1.8% higher than the \$46,824,667 that was programmed for these projects in the 2020 element of the MVMPO's FFYs 2020-2024 TIP with virtually all this increase being attributed to the Elm Street Reconstruction project in Amesbury.

Transit Project Obligations

One MVRTA project received funding obligations from the Federal Transit Administration during FFY 2020. Data on this project obligation may be found in Table 2 on Page 6.

The MVRTA used \$371,280 in federal funds to purchase On-Board Automatic Passenger Counters for its fixed route buses. This funding came to the Authority through FTA's Section 5339 Program.

Definitions of Terms Referred to in this Report

Advance Construction is a method of programming and funding larger scale roadway and bridge projects using a combination of federal and state funds. Under this method, MassDOT uses state transportation funds to pay for the entire cost of a federal-aid eligible project. Then, over time, federal transportation funds are programmed in a region's TIP and the STIP to "repay" the state for its up-front expenditure. To be eligible for this method, a project must take more than one year to complete and its construction cost must be greater than the region's combined Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)/Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)/Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ)/Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding target.

GrantsPlus is the system used by MassDOT to track the status of transit projects for the Regional Transit Authorities around the Commonwealth.

ProjectInfo is the system used by MassDOT to track the status of its approved roadway, trail, pedestrian and bridge projects.

**TABLE 1: FFY 2020 ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED ROAD, BRIDGE, AND BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS
IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY MPO REGION PER 23 CFR 450.334**

Agency	ProjInfo_ID	MassDOT_Project Description	Obligation Date	FFY 2020 Programmed Federal Fund	FFY 2020 Obligated Federal Fund	Remaining Advance Construction Fund
REGION : MERRIMACK VALLEY						
MassDOT Highway	602418	AMESBURY- RECONSTRUCTION OF ELM STREET	19-Nov-19	\$5,778,442.00	\$6,612,296.82	
MassDOT Highway	605306 A	HAVERHILL - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, H-12-039, I-495 (NB & SB) OVER MERRIMACK RIVER	11-Feb-20	\$12,244,704.00	\$12,244,704.00	
MassDOT Highway	605306 B	HAVERHILL - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, H-12-039, I-495 (NB & SB) OVER MERRIMACK RIVER	10 Sep-20	\$12,244,704.00	\$12,244,704.00	
MassDOT Highway	605306 R	HAVERHILL - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, H-12-039, I-495 (NB & SB) OVER MERRIMACK RIVER	23-Sep-20	\$14,562,946.00	\$14,562,946.00	\$10,395,385.84
MassDOT Highway	608027	HAVERHILL - BRADFORD RAIL TRAIL EXTENSION, FROM ROUTE 125 TO RAILROAD STREET	22-Jul-20	\$1,412,887.00	\$1,412,822.97	
MERRIMACK VALLEY REGION TOTAL :				\$46,243,683.00	\$47,077,473.79	

**TABLE 2: FFY 2020 ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED TRANSIT PROJECTS
IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY MPO REGION PER 23 CFR 450.334**

Agency	GrantsPlus Project Number	MVMPO TIP_Project Description	Obligation Date	FFY 2020 Programmed Federal Fund	FFY 2020 Obligated Federal Fund
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REGION : MERRIMACK VALLEY

MVRTA (TRANSIT)		PURCHASE ON-BOARD AUTOMATIC PASSENGER COUNTERS	6/11/2020	\$371,280.00	\$371,280.00
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MERRIMACK VALLEY REGION TOTAL :

\$371,280.00

\$371,280.00

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