

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

**Federal Fiscal Year 2019
(October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019)**

Prepared by the

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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 2019 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 2019 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 2019, while the MVRTA is responsible for implementing the transit projects and services that received obligations.

Roadway, Pedestrian and Bridge Project Obligations

Just over \$28.8 million in federal transportation funds were obligated for roadway, pedestrian and bridge projects in the Merrimack Valley during FFY 2019 (see Table 1 on Page 6).

As was the case in FFY 2018, the most significant federal obligation of funding in the Merrimack Valley in FFY 2019 was \$18,962,741.00 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). This represents the second payment of federal funds for this project, which will ultimately cost \$118,786,388 and take six years to complete (see definition of *Advance Construction* on the following page).

The second largest obligation of funding was \$4,558,144.54 for the reconstruction of the Route 125/Massachusetts Avenue intersection in the Town of North Andover (Project #606159). This project will address longstanding safety issues at the intersection and, in doing so, also improve its Level of Service.

FFY 2019 also saw the obligation of \$3,164,057 of federal funds for the reconstruction of Elm Street in Amesbury (Project #602418). This was the first obligation for the AC project, which has an estimated total construction cost of \$9,776,353.82.

In Newburyport, \$1,492,902.40 was obligated for the project to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the Nock Middle School and the Molin Upper Elementary School under the Safe Routes to School (Project #608792).

Transit Projects Obligated Using MVMPO Target Funds

In FFY 2019, two transit projects received obligations using MVMPO Target Funds that are usually devoted to roadway and trail projects. The largest of these was the \$558,833 in Federal STP funds that was transferred to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and subsequently used by the MVRTA to cover the incremental cost of purchasing three diesel/electric hybrid buses rather than three clean diesel buses (MV001). The second was \$88,000 in federal funds that were flexed to FTA and then used by the MVRTA for the purchase and installation of bike racks on its fixed route buses and the installation of bicycle parking at the Buckley and McGovern Transportation Centers in Lawrence (MV002).

The \$28,824,667 that was obligated to the six projects described above is only 0.545% higher than the \$28,668,548 that was programmed for these projects in the 2019 element of the MVMPO's FFYs 2019-2023 TIP with virtually all this increase being attributed to the Intersection and Signal Improvement Project at Route 125 and Massachusetts Avenue in North Andover.

Other Transit Project Obligations

In addition to the two transit projects noted above, seven MVRTA projects received funding obligations from the Federal Transit Administration during FFY 2019. Data on these project obligations may be found in Table 2 on Page 7.

Similar to FFY 2018, three FFY 2019 project obligations will support the MVRTA's operations. These are the \$471,925 in Operating Assistance that will support the Authority's services in FY 2019 (Project #RTD0006772), \$2,522,325 in Preventive Maintenance funding that will also be used to support the MVRTA's

operations in FY 2019 (Project #RTD0006769), and \$1,254,778 to support provision of the Authority's ADA Paratransit Service (Project #RTD0006770).

The MVRTA used \$320,000 in federal funds to refurbish four vehicle lifts in its maintenance facility (#RTD0007126) and \$188,025 for Design and Permitting for a project that will stabilize the riverbank behind the Authority's Administrative Offices and Bus Parking facility.

Other project obligations were \$80,000 in Short-Range Transit Planning funds that the Authority used in two planning contracts it had with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (#RTD0006771) and the \$36,165 that was used to replace a Model Year 2013 support vehicle (#RTD 0006785).

The total amount of FFY 2019 federal obligations for transit projects in the region was \$4,881,217, which was 1.96% more than the \$4,787,525 in federal funds that was programmed for these projects in the MVMPO's FFYs 2019-2023 TIP.

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 Program (STP)/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 2019 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 2019 Programmed Federal Fund	FFY 2019 Obligated Federal Fund	Remaining Advance Construction Fund
REGION : MERRIMACK VALLEY						
MassDOT Highway	602418	AMESBURY- RECONSTRUCTION OF ELM STREET	10-Jul-19	\$3,164,057.00	\$3,164,057.00	\$6,612,296.82
MassDOT Highway	605306	HAVERTHILL - BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, H-12-039, I-495 (NB & SB) OVER MERRIMACK RIVER	15-Apr-19	\$18,962,741.00	\$18,962,741.00	\$49,447,739.84
MassDOT Highway	606159	NORTH ANDOVER- INTERSECTION & SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS AT ROUTE 125 & MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE	4 Jan-19	\$4,401,625.00	\$4,558,144.54	
MassDOT Highway	608792	NEWBURYPORT- IMPROVEMENTS AT NOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL & MOLIN UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (SRTS)	24-Jul-19	\$1,493,292.00	\$1,492,902.40	
MassDOT Highway	MV0001	FLEX TO FTA FOR MVRTA NEW BUS UPGRADE TO CLEANER FUEL BUSES	05-Mar-19	\$558,833.00	\$558,833.00	
MassDOT Highway	MV0002	FLEX TO FTA FOR MVRTA BIKE RACKS FOR BUSES AND BIKE RACKS FOR BUCKLEY AND MCGOVERN TRANSPORTATION CENTERS IN LAWRENCE	05-07-19	\$88,000.00	\$88,000.00	
MERRIMACK VALLEY REGION TOTAL :				\$28,668,548.00	\$28,824,677.94	

**TABLE 2: FFY 2019 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 2019 Programmed Federal Fund	FFY 2019 Obligated Federal Fund
REGION : MERRIMACK VALLEY					
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0006769	PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE EXPENSE	10/1/2018	\$2,600,075.00	\$2,522,324.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0006770	ADA OPERATING EXPENSE	10/1/2018	\$1,165,135.00	\$1,254,778.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0006772	OPERATING ASSISTANCE	10/1/2018	\$390,125.00	\$471,925.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0007126	REFURBISH FOUR VEHICLE LIFTS	12/13/2018	\$320,000.00	\$320,000.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0007127	RIVERBANK STABILIZATION DESIGN/PERMITTING	12/13/2018	\$188,025.00	\$188,025.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0006785	REPLACE 1 MODEL YEAR 2013 SUPPORT VEHICLE	12/13/2018	\$36,165.00	\$36,165.00
MVRTA (TRANSIT)	RTD 0006771	SHORT RANGE TRANSIT PLANNING	10/1/2018	\$88,000.00	\$88,000.00
MERRIMACK VALLEY REGION TOTAL :				\$4,787,525.00	\$4,881,217.00

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