

MVMPO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GOALS

MVMPO has established five Capital and Strategic Investment Goals for Transportation Improvement Program funding cycles from 2029-2044+. These goals, along with updated Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scoring to be completed in FFY24, will ensure regional target funding will advance toward goals established in this plan. For example, the creation of an investment goal for safety guarantees that 30% of the projects that receive federal aid will address safety concerns in the region. Also, our updated TEC scoring will weigh projects that serve REJ+ communities greater than those that do not. Our updated TEC scoring system will, ideally, encourage aspects of multiple program categories in one project. For example, an intersection improvement that might be categorized as a safety project would score higher if it also included enhanced active transportation accommodations and green infrastructure.

The funding allocation for each goal is based on our public engagement results. The funding allocation chart (Figure 49) is the result of the types of projects municipalities submitted to be included in the universe of projects and the types of projects prioritized by the general public.

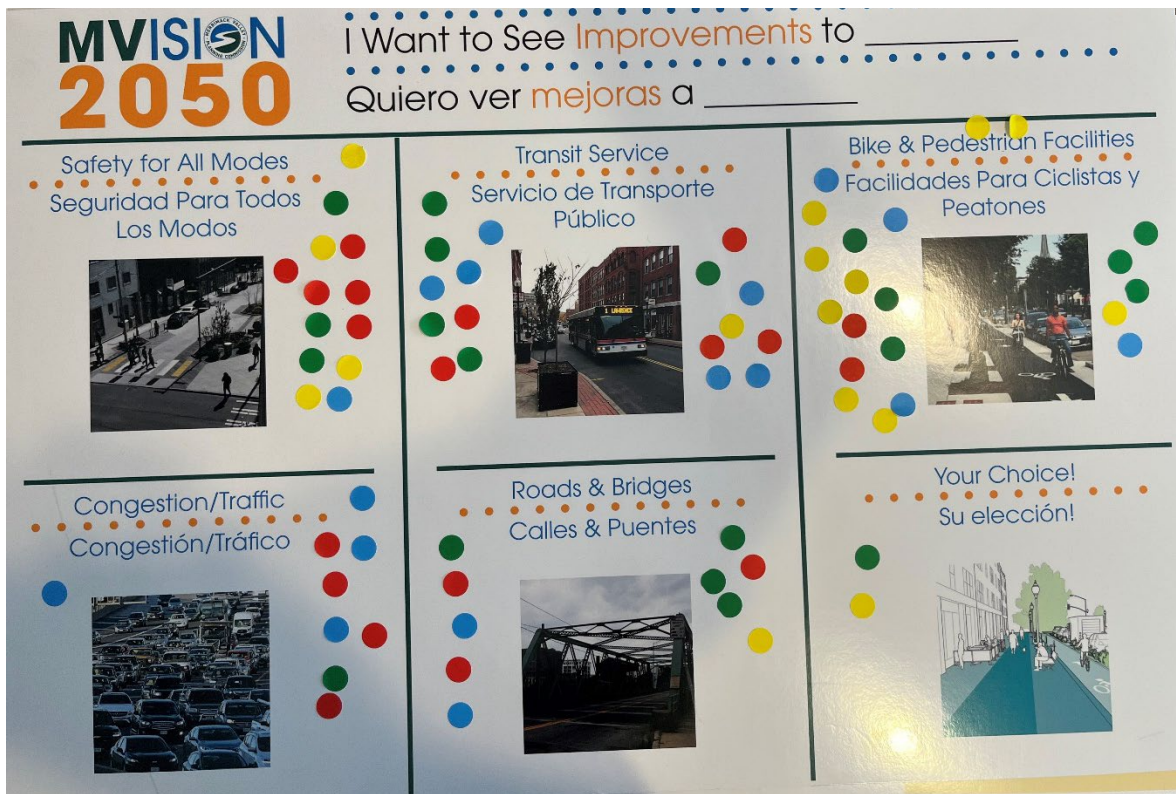


Figure 46: Results from Andover Farmers Market Public Engagement Board

4. How would you prioritize transportation spending? Please rank the following. Click and drag to order the goals from most important at the top to least important at the bottom.

205 Responses

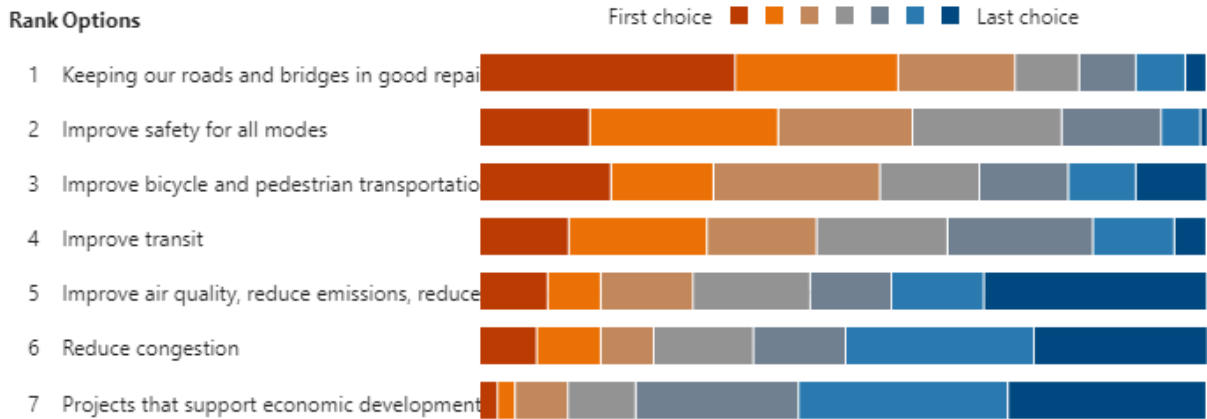


Figure 47: Questionnaire Responses to Transportation Spending Prioritization

The MVMPO seeks innovative, feasible, and cost-effective solutions to complex transportation challenges and does so through engaging the Merrimack Valley community, analyzing data, and coordinating with federal, state, regional, and local governments. The result of this plan is a collection of fiscally constrained strategies and projects identified for funding by our transportation improvement program (TIP), unified planning work program (UPWP), and other federal and state funding sources. This section seeks to improve upon the regional transportation network by synthesizing and addressing key issues identified in previous sections. Highlighted strategies advance towards local, regional, state, and federal goals and a transportation network that balances all needs.

This chapter will be broken out by goal, however, it warrants mentioning that many of the listed strategies advance multiple goals. For instance, strategies that support MV Vision 2050's goal to *Improve Transportation Mode-Shift Balance* frequently overlap with strategies that support the *Ensure Environmental Sustainability* goal.

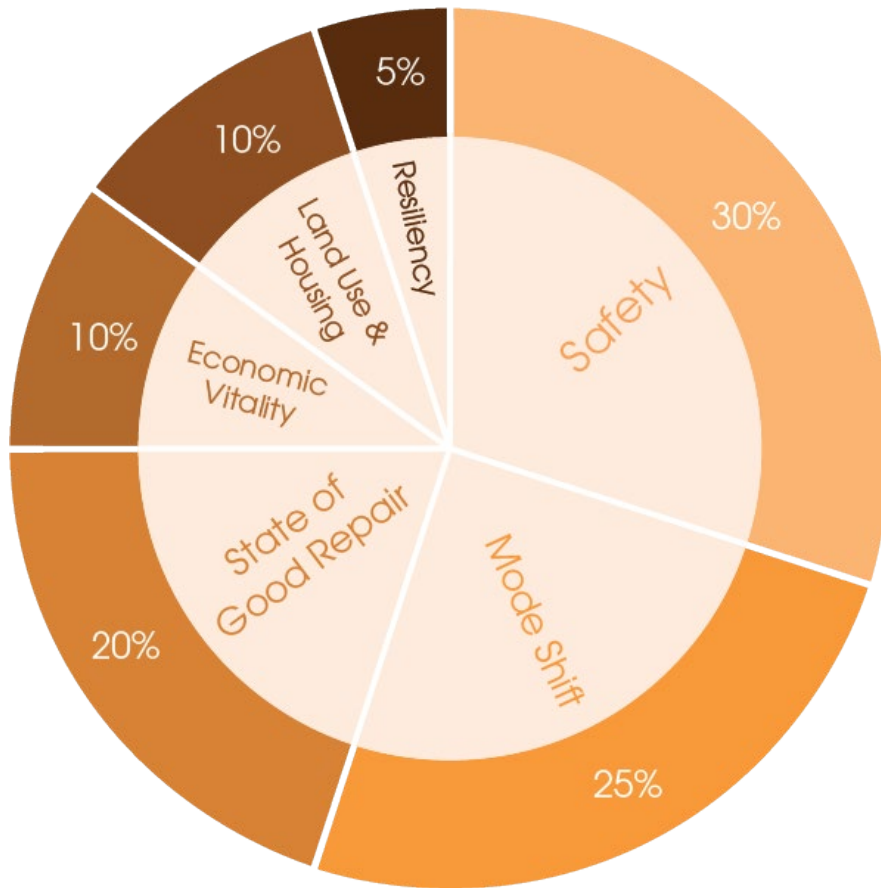


Figure 48: Percent of Federal Aid Funding for MVMPO Capital and Strategic Investment Goals

EQUITY

Equity is not identified in the funding allocation pie chart because it is and will continue to be integrated into all facets of our planning practice and a component of the TEC scoring system. The equity component of the TEC scoring system was adopted as a result of the MVMPO's 2020 MTP. In this plan, there are no projects that solely have an equity focus, but instead equity is an element of most of our programmed projects. For instance, six of the ten projects programmed on the regionally prioritized highway target work towards achieving other various MV Vision 2050 goals *within* REJ+ communities.

The MVMPO is developing a more equitable framework for conducting our planning practice and project development. Public engagement was essential to developing this plan and as depicted in the public engagement section, and MVMPO staff received significant input from community members. MVMPO staff also learned about opportunities to further improve engagement to support communities through means and mechanisms that work for them.

Equity Strategies

- *Update PPP to balance resource use to encourage meaningful engagement.*
- *Develop a reconnecting communities analysis and leverage the federal discretionary program to support equitable transportation outcomes*
- *Include REJ+ component in TIP Project Scoring system.*
- *Monitor REJ+ mapping and analysis program.*
- *Include REJ+ neighborhoods in the programmed planning efforts.*
- *Prioritize pavement management in REJ+ neighborhood.*

SAFETY

As discussed in the System Performance chapter, the safety of the region's roads is a top concern. MV Vision 2050 seeks to address concerns and risks to our community members by prioritizing safety in all facets of the MVMPO's planning practice and committing to a goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on the region's roadways.

At the beginning of 2023, MVPC was awarded a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) federal aid discretionary grant. This is a pivotal opportunity to develop a comprehensive safety action plan to ensure that Merrimack Valley has a safe, multimodal transportation network. Through the year 2050 the region will build upon the SS4A plan by implementing the strategies listed below.

Safety Strategies

- *Develop a High Injury Network (HIN) to inform future safety planning efforts.*
- *Execute Strategies identified in vision zero action plan.*
- *Participate and be a resource for Vision Zero Advocates and Committees.*
- *Prioritize Federal Aid on Projects and Programs identified in the SS4A program.*
- *Incentivize and support local technical assistance for traffic calming.*
- *Develop the next generation of the Road Safety Audit (RSA) to support public life and pedestrian activity.*

The plan includes projects to mitigate risks at high crash or unsafe corridors and intersections. The following projects address safety risks.

- METHUEN MILK STREET, PROSPECT STREET, AND EAST STREET
- LAWRENCE ANDOVER AND SOUTH BROADWAY
- NEWBURYPORT THREE ROADS INTERSECTION
- LAWRENCE - INTERSECTION MANCHESTER/BROADWAY/DAISY STREET
- LAWRENCE - INTERSECTION WATER/BROADWAY/CANAL
- LAWRENCE - SALEM STREET/NEWTON STREET
- NEWBURY - ROUTE 1 AND BOSTON ROAD INTERSECTION

MODE SHIFT

Mode shift is a way to eliminate barriers for people to live a healthy and more sustainable life. For a very long time, our transportation network has been out of balance, favoring driving as the primary mode of transportation. Strategies that have continued the status quo have increased vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic fatalities, and serious injuries, and have limited mobility and access for those who cannot afford a car. This plan seeks to incrementally establish the ability for community members to use multiple modes of transportation for a variety of purposes.

The mode shift goal includes projects that introduce or improve transportation elements such as sidewalks, shared-use paths, separated bike lanes, and transit services. Meeting this goal will involve the creation of connections or filling of gaps in the region's Active Transportation Network (ATN). Staff will prioritize initiatives and projects that create multimodal connections along transit corridors. The program will also support transit investment to create accessible, reliable, frequent, and comfortable service.

The following strategies will support the incremental development of a transportation network that balances the accessibility and mobility of multiple modes of transportation.

Mode Shift Strategies

- *Deemphasize auto capacity enhancement related projects.*
- *Develop a regional wayfinding plan (including transit services).*
- *Prioritize pavement management of multimodal corridors.*

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

In 2014, the MVMPO completed its first Active Transportation Plan, which established a vision for an Active Transportation Network in the region. Informed by the 2014 ATP, the MVMPO supported and programmed projects that have improved the livability of many of our communities. In FY 2024, the MVMPO will build upon the 2014 ATP and seek to build a plan that achieves the strategies listed below.

Active Transportation Strategies

- *Complete a level of comfort analysis of active transportation network.*
- *Identify and prioritize filling gaps in the active transportation network.*
- *Identify improvements to existing active transportation network segments.*

- *Identify funding sources for gaps in active transportation.*
- *Study walkability of developing and planned MBTA communities neighborhoods.*

Through the completion of the MVMPOs TEC scoring system, we will seek to *prioritize closing gaps identified in Active Transportation Plan*. Projects that align with this strategy include:

- HAVERHILL, BRADFORD RAIL TRAIL PHASE THREE – COMPLETE THE CONNECTION TO THE GROVELAND RAIL TRAIL.
- GROVELAND, MAIN STREET SHARED-USE PATH – CONNECT THE BUSINESS CORRIDOR, TOWN OFFICES, AND HOUSING TO RAIL TRAIL.
- NORTH ANDOVER DOWNTOWN SHARED-USE PATH
- HAVERHILL WATER STREET SHARED-USE PATH
- ANDOVER, ESSEX STREET CORRIDOR
- ANDOVER, HAVERHILL STREET CORRIDOR RECONSTRUCTION FROM ROUTE 28 (MAIN STREET) TO NORTH ANDOVER T.L.
- ROWLEY - MAIN STREET FROM RAILROAD TO MILL RIVER

TRANSIT

Transit is a vital resource for many in the Merrimack Valley community. The region's most vulnerable populations often rely on transit to travel to essential services, jobs, and recreational opportunities. The Performance Measure section clearly depicts the inequities that exist between those who have access to a car and those who do not.

Transit also provides a service that more people would use if accessibility were to improve. As stated in the Public Engagement chapter, participants found it hard to rely on public transit due to its hours of operation and infrequent headways. Participants found that it is difficult to plan their day around the bus or train schedule. Since 2020 there have been many changes, as outlined in the Merrimack Valley Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow section, that have made the bus more appealing to the Merrimack Valley Community. The MVMPO is planning for a transportation network that creates greater access to transit, and therefore, provides an affordable, enjoyable service that serves the needs of the Merrimack Valley Community. This plan seeks to continue the work that is currently being done by MeVa Transit with the following strategies:

Transit Strategies

- *Plan for transit capacity improvements such as queue jumps, signal priority, and dedicated bus lanes.*
- *Support a complete bus stop plan for MeVa.*
- *Complete a comparative study of transit travel time and vehicular travel time.*
- *Complete a study of free MeVa bus service.*
- *Complete a potential trip analysis using Rail Vision alternatives.*
- *Analysis of MeVa transit service connections with MBTA commuter rail stations.*

The MVMPO will also support the implementation of the following projects which allow for greater frequency, hours of operation, and accessibility of transit services.

- REHAB AND EXPANSION OF MCGOVERN TRANSPORTATION CENTER TO BECOME LAWRENCE TRANSPORTATION HUB.
- FACILITY UPGRADES TO BRADFORD AND WASHINGTON SQUARE TRANSIT STATIONS IN HAVERHILL.
- IMPLEMENTATION OF BUS SHELTER PROGRAM.
- PROCUREMENT OF LOW-FLOOR CUTAWAY VANS.
- SOLAR FERRY BOAT SERVICES.

STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

The MVMPO recognizes that the condition of the region's roads, bridges, and culverts are vital. The MVMPO is modernizing the State of Good Repair goal to have a stronger focus on the conditions of sidewalk, shared-use paths, bike lanes, transit corridors, and bus accommodations, as well as roads and bridges. The following strategies will help us program projects that keep all modes in mind when we think of keeping our transportation network in a state of good repair.

State of Good Repair Strategies

- *Create a trail condition study.*
- *Update sidewalk condition analysis.*
- *Engage municipalities to identify pavement management needs.*

The state of good repair goal includes projects that improve transportation network conditions for all modes of transportation. Historically, the state of good repair goal focused on improving pavement conditions of roads and structural integrity of bridges. Projects included in this to support this goal will be designed to improve the conditions of one or more of these transportation elements. The following projects were identified as community priorities for maintaining the accessibility and mobility of our transportation infrastructure.

- AMESBURY ROUTE 150 RESURFACING AND PEDESTRIAN ACCOMMODATIONS
- SALISBURY NORTHEAST BLVD TO NH STATE LINE
- AMESBURY - BEACON STREET/ROUTE 150 RECONSTRUCTION FROM MERRIMACK STREET TO I-495
- METHUEN - PELHAM STREET CORRIDOR RECONSTRUCTION

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Our transportation network can be seen as the skeleton of the region's communities and economy. As described throughout this plan, there have been many recent changes related to the delineation of how street space is used. Many municipalities are beginning to balance the use of street space by opening more space for walking and biking, and by creating more inviting streetscapes. MV Vision 2050 continues this trend, emphasizing the importance of human scale design along key economic corridors and downtowns. The following strategies seek to open access to people arriving by multiple modes of transportation and welcome people to stay longer once they arrive. Using adjacent street activity is beneficial for economic vitality.

Economic Vitality Strategies

- *Execute bike parking assessment.*

- *Explore façade improvement program.*
- *Develop a public space and passageways planning program.*
- *Improve multimodal movement of freight.*

The economic vitality goal includes projects that improve multimodal access to jobs, downtowns and tourist destinations. Projects may also include the improvement of infrastructure such as sidewalks and crosswalks in downtowns, central business districts and tourist destinations. The following projects emphasize the importance of transportation to the regional economy.

- METHUEN - MERRIMACK STREET BUSINESS CORRIDOR
- WEST NEWBURY MAIN STREET PROJECT
- HAVERHILL - WARD HILL ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

LAND USE AND HOUSING

A new focus of the MVMPO is on the intersection of land use, housing and its relationship with the transportation system. Emerging shifts in local zoning ordinances are encouraging all organizations to support changes that will incrementally yield more housing and in-fill development in the region's communities. City councils and town meetings will discuss, and potentially adopt, new zoning plans resulting from the MBTA Communities legislation within the horizon of this plan. As such, it is essential that the MVMPO recognize the role it can play in supporting the vision of the legislation. The MVMPO shares the vision of the creation of transit-oriented neighborhoods where greater densities of people can live within walking or biking distance to commuter rail stations. To create transit-oriented neighborhoods, streets must be designed to allow people to walk, bike and take transit safely and comfortably. The following strategies support this goal.

Land Use and Housing Strategies

- *Analysis of transportation related barriers to creating housing.*
- *Prioritize projects that support the implementation of housing and mixed-use neighborhoods.*
- *Study potential changes to transit services to support new MBTA communities neighborhoods.*

The compact land use and attainable housing goal supports multimodal projects in dense housing districts or areas zoned or built to a density of 15 units per acre or more. This program supports the MBTA Communities Legislation by funding projects within a zoning district surrounding MBTA commuter rail stations. The program also funds projects located in mixed use districts.

RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Recent years have brought extreme changes in the seasons experienced by the Merrimack Valley. Extreme weather events require the region's transportation network to face climate risks by both mitigating and adapting to impacts. The following strategies are intended to create a more resilient and sustainable transportation network.

Resiliency and Sustainability Strategies

- *Include a green infrastructure component into TIP project scoring system.*
- *Develop a green street analysis and planting plan.*
- *Identify critical transportation corridors vulnerable to climate change, with potential support from the PROTECT grant.*
- *Coordinate with Municipal Vulnerability Planning efforts.*

The resiliency goal includes projects that either improve the region's ability to recover from a natural disaster or manage the impact of an extreme weather event. Projects include culvert replacements, green infrastructure, and flood relief infrastructure. The following projects address a sustainability or resiliency challenge in the region.

- BOXFORD PYE BROOK CULVERT REPLACEMENT
- ANDOVER, ESSEX STREET BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
- NEWBURYPORT, ROUTE 1 MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS