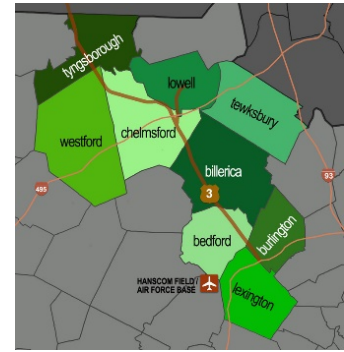


## **Middlesex 3 Regional Transportation Community Compact**

The Middlesex 3 Coalition communities are faced with transportation challenges. As a result, eight of the Middlesex 3 communities have entered into the Middlesex 3 Regional Transportation Community Compact to address these transportation challenges. These communities include Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Chelmsford, Lexington, Lowell, Tewksbury and Tyngsborough.



**Background** - The Middlesex 3 Highway runs from Tyngsborough to Burlington, Massachusetts. While this is a relatively short distance of 22 miles, public transportation is limited between the northern Middlesex 3 corridor (Billerica, Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury and Tyngsborough) and the southern Middlesex 3 corridor (Bedford, Burlington and Lexington).

Significant travel and economic development activities occur along the Middlesex 3 Highway. This includes increased job opportunities in the high-tech, robotics, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, healthcare and educational sectors as well as in support services (including restaurants and retail jobs). By connecting the northern and southern Middlesex 3 Highway with additional public transportation resources, greater job access will be available for disadvantaged, middle skilled, recent college graduates, and other employees. In addition, increasing public transportation along the Route 3 corridor will improve access to educational, healthcare and business services for area residents and employees. Finally, greater use of public transportation will help decrease traffic congestion, maintain highway infrastructure, and improve environmental sustainability.

**Transportation Challenges** - Travelers coming from the northern Middlesex 3 corridor (Billerica, Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury and Tyngsborough) to the southern Middlesex 3 corridor (Bedford, Burlington and Lexington) face limited public transportation options. This is partly because there are two regional transit authorities (RTAs) that serve the area. This includes the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA), which primarily serves the northern Middlesex 3 communities and the MBTA, which serves the southern Middlesex 3 communities. As a result, there is an artificial boundary, which separates and creates a disjointed and limited system along the Middlesex 3 Highway without well-planned interconnections between the systems.

This disjointed and limited system is further constrained by funding that is focused within the service area. Despite the best intentions of the RTAs, their funding is tied to their service area and this creates an impediment to interregional service expansion and coordination benefiting area residents, employees and employers. While the LRTA has provided limited and well received bus service from Lowell to Burlington, additional public transportation between the northern and southern Middlesex 3 Highway is needed and funding needs to follow.

**Middlesex 3 Transportation Community Compact Proposal and Scope of Services** - The Middlesex 3 Coalition seeks to manage the Middlesex 3 Regional Transportation Community Compact with eight Middlesex 3 communities (as outlined above) and with the Town of Bedford serving as the lead community. The Middlesex 3 communities will work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the Central Transportation Planning staff to examine and recommend action steps to improve public transportation between the northern and southern Middlesex 3 corridors. This includes identifying and outlining the current schedules, usage, funding and funding criteria that currently exists for public transportation services along Route 3. In addition, the Middlesex 3 Compact will examine and recommend if the current structure and services meet the actual usage, demand and regional needs for residents, employees and employers across the two RTAs.

In addition, the Middlesex 3 Community Compact will provide the municipalities and the state with an outline of next steps needed to improve public transportation along the Middlesex 3 Highway. This will include an examination and recommendation of best practices, successful models of interregional public transportation initiatives and other successful initiatives to help improve public transportation and address the real and current public transportation needs of the residents, employees and employers along the Middlesex 3 Highway. The Middlesex 3 Coalition will work with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the Central Transportation Planning staff and the Middlesex 3 communities to create a budget, work plan and schedule, which will be submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for approval.