

ENDORSEMENT OF AMENDMENT 5 TO THE FFY 2024 – 2028 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE NORTHERN MIDDLESEX REGION

FFY 2024-2028 Northern Middlesex Transportation Program Air Quality Endorsement Statement

This document certifies that the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization hereby endorses Amendment #5 to the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region. This TIP amendment is being endorsed in accordance with the 3C Transportation Planning Process and complies with the requirements in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” (BIL).

Air Quality Conformity

Whereas, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) require Metropolitan Planning Organizations within non-attainment areas and/or attainment areas with maintenance plans to perform air quality conformity determinations prior to the approval of transportation plans and transportation improvement programs, and at such other times as required by regulation;

Whereas, the air quality conformity analysis prepared for the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program also demonstrates air quality conformity of the Northern Middlesex Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and that all regionally significant transportation projects in the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program are contained in the Regional Transportation Plan, and that all regionally significant projects in the 2020 to 2040 timeframe of the Regional Transportation Plan are modeled in the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program's air quality conformity analyses;

Whereas, the NMMPO has completed its review in accordance with Section 176(c) (4) of the Clean Air Act as amended in 1990 [42 U.S.C. 7251 (a)], and hereby certifies that Amendment 5 to the FFY 2024-2028 TIP is financially constrained and that the implementation of the RTP satisfies the conformity criteria specified in both 40 CFR Part 51 and 93 (8/15/1997) and 310 CMR 60.03 (12/30/1994). Based on the results of the conformity analyses, the RTP and FFY 2024-2028 TIP is consistent with the air quality goals of, and in conformity with, the Massachusetts State Implementation Plan;

Therefore, in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450.326 (Development and content of the Transportation Improvement Program) and the Northern Middlesex MPO Regional Public Participation Plan (23 CFR 450.316), the MPO hereby endorses the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program.



for

July 24, 2024

Monica Tibbits-Nut, Secretary and CEO
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT);
Chair, Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO)

Date

Summary Narrative of Amendment 5 to the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region

Introduction and Overview

The following table summarizes an amendment package to Fiscal Year 2024 of the FFY 2024-2028 Northern Middlesex Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). **Amendment 5** involves several items described below that have the net effect of increasing transit funds by \$1,640,830 of which \$744,723 are from federal sources and \$896,107 are from state sources. The amendment package was released for public comment period at the June 26, 2024 NMMPO meeting. A virtual public comment meeting was held on July 10, 2024 from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM via zoom. The public was invited to comment on this amendment package by email to publiccomments@nmcog.org or by mail to NMCOG, 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA 01854. Following the public comment period, the NMMPO met again on July 24, 2024 and voted to endorse the amendment with comments received.

Table of Changes to the FFY 2024 LRTA TIP Program of Projects

TIP Code	Change	Project	Reason
LRTA011869	+ \$1,040,830	Purchase nine (9) transit vehicles for paratransit and Council on Aging services	LRTA awarded Community Transit Grant
LRTA011635	+ \$600,000	Facility & equipment improvements	Utilize newly available state funds to purchase one (1) fixed route hybrid-electric bus

TIP Program Description

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a critical federally mandated document that directs the allocation of federal transportation funding within the NMMPO region. The TIP outlines a five-year capital plan, featuring a diverse array of projects anticipated to receive federal and state aid. The most [recent TIP](#) is available on the NMCOG website as well as TIPs from [recent years](#). Our TIP is bifurcated into two principal components: one focusing on transit projects through the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) and the other on regional transportation infrastructure enhancements.

LRTA Program of Projects

LRTA's Program of Projects, which forms a significant part of the NMMPO TIP, is formulated and submitted by LRTA to MassDOT for approval. This submission is a prerequisite for securing the necessary state match through MassDOT's statewide Capital Improvement Program. Furthermore, any modifications to this plan are subject to review and approval by the MassDOT

Rail & Transit Division, ensuring compliance and alignment with state transportation objectives. Prior to finalization, proposed changes to the TIP, referred to as “amendments” including those related to the LRTA’s projects, are presented to the NMMPO Board for comprehensive review and consideration for inclusion in the regional plan.

Public Comment Summary

The NMMPO and LRTA invited the public to provide their input on this TIP amendment package. We established a 21-day comment period to ensure sufficient opportunity for community feedback. This process satisfied the LRTA’s public participation requirements for the Program of Projects. The public was invited to refer comments by email to publiccomments@nmcog.org or by mail to NMCOG, 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA 01854.

- **21-Day Public Comment Period: June 24, 2024 – July 17, 2024**

The NMMPO received no comments on the proposed amendment.

- **Virtual Public Meeting: July 10, 2024 at 5:30 PM on Zoom**

NMCOG staff Kelly Lynema and Blake Acton hosted a virtual public meeting on Zoom. No members of the public attended the meeting, so no comments were recorded.

Detailed List of Changes

1. **LRTA011869 – New Accessible Transit Vehicles:** The LRTA has been awarded a grant through the MassDOT Community Transit Grant Program (CTGP) for a total of \$1,040,830 to purchase nine (9) fully accessible transit vehicles. This grant enables the acquisition of four (4) Type E vehicles, three (3) Type E2a vehicles, one (1) Type Ca vehicle, and one (1) Type A-EV electric vehicle, as detailed in the 2023 [MassDOT Fully Accessible Vehicle Guide](#). These vehicles will enhance LRTA's Roadrunner Paratransit services and support Councils on Aging by replacing aging vehicles that have met their useful life. Funding for this initiative is provided from both federal and state sources, distributed as follows:
 - a. \$744,723 from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310, programmed for FY 2024.
 - b. \$186,181 from State Mobility Assistance GOBOND, programmed for FY 2025.
 - c. \$109,926 from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), programmed for FY 2024.
2. **LRTA011635 – New Hybrid-Electric Fixed-Route Bus:** this amendment affects LRTA011635 which was approved as part of [FFY 2024-2028 TIP Amendment #1](#) in January, 2024. LRTA will procure the authority’s first fixed-route hybrid-electric bus, fully funded by state RTACAP funds amounting to \$600,000 increasing the total cost of this project from \$2,759,984 to \$3,459,984. This amendment does not impact the procurement timeline for new fixed route buses. LRTA had originally planned to

purchase this hybrid bus under the FTA Low or No (LowNo) Emission Grant Program. However, the availability of sufficient state funds allows LRTA to purchase the vehicle using solely state funds.