

Summary Narrative of Amendment 1 to the FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program for the Northern Middlesex Region

Introduction and Overview

The table below summarizes the final amendment package to Fiscal Year 2024 of the FFY 2024-2028 Northern Middlesex Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Amendment 1 involved several items that had the net effect of reducing transit funds by \$17,022,000, of which \$15,188,600 were from federal sources and \$1,833,400 were from state sources. The proposed amendment package was released for a 21-day comment period at the January 24, 2024, NMMPO meeting. Following its release, a public comment meeting was scheduled and held on February 14, 2024, via Zoom. The public was invited to comment on this amendment package by email to pchristner@nmcog.org, publiccomments@nmcog.org or by mail to NMCOG, 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA 01854. After the public comment period closed on February 23, the NMMPO met on February 28 day to hear any comments received and endorsed this amendment package with comments received.

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

TIP Code	Change	Project	Reason
LRTA011667	+ \$50,000	Hire a Mobility Outreach Coordinator	LRTA Awarded Community Transit Grant
LRTA011635	+ \$2,759,984	Facility & equipment improvements	LRTA received more state funds than anticipated
RTD0010688	+ \$7,373,000	Purchase 7 hybrid buses in FY24	LRTA Awarded with Low or No Emission FTA Grant
RTD0010703	- \$6,600,000	Purchase 1 hybrid bus in FY24 & 6 BEBs in FY26	
RTD0010696	- \$250,000	Upgrade to parking garage payment system	Federal funds not needed because LRTA received more state funds than anticipated. Project completed in FY23.
T00039	- \$800,000	Implement AVL/APC system for fixed route buses	Federal funds were spent in FY23, so federal funds no longer needed in FY24.
RTD0011205	- \$300,000	Purchase a backup generator	Delay in final design for pedestrian access way & Commuter Rail platform following FTA/MBTA feedback.
T00040	- \$15,000,000	Pedestrian access way & Commuter Rail platform	
T00058	- \$3,600,000	Improvements to Maguire facility	

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.

21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: FEBRUARY 2, 2024 - FEBRUARY 23, 2024

The NMMPO accepted public comments at publiccomments@nmcog.org during the public comment period.

On February 21, 2024, one comment was provided by email from LRTA staff to MPO staff with regard to the cost change to Project #LRTA011635, Facility & Equipment Improvements (100% State). It was noted that additional items have been added to the project, with a need for an increase in funding from \$2,105,000 to \$2,759,984. These items include painting of handrails at Gallagher Terminal and equipment purchase support for the AVL/APC project. This project is fully funded through RTACAP and has been approved by MassDOT Rail and Transit. The MPO adjusted the amendment as requested by the LRTA and endorsed the modified amendment.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING: FEBRUARY 14, 2024 AT 5:30 PM ON ZOOM

NMMPO staff Paul Christner 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. **LRTA011667 - Mobility Outreach Coordinator:** LRTA applied for and received a Community Transit Grant to recruit a Mobility Outreach coordinator. As outlined in NMMPO's [Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan](#) (CPT-HST) from 2023, the primary responsibility of the new hire will be to educate and train seniors and individuals with disabilities. The initial focus will be strengthening relationships with Councils on Aging (COAs) in the LRTA service area, understanding how their service works and their service needs. LRTA proposed programming \$40,000 from 5310 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds and \$10,000 from State Contract Assistance (SCA).
2. **LRTA011635 – Transit Facility and Equipment Improvements:** LRTA proposed leveraging \$2,759,984 of newly available state funds through the Regional Transit Authority Capital Assistance Program (RTACAP) to support a variety of improvements to transit facilities and equipment including:
 - a. Design for Commuter Rail Access Project
 - b. Design for Maguire (paratransit) facility improvements
 - c. Replacement of three (3) end of life service trucks
 - d. Reconstruction of roof drainage and storm water trenches
 - e. Elevator repairs
 - f. Sidewalk and paving repairs
 - g. Replacement of maintenance equipment
 - h. Exterior building maintenance
 - i. Purchasing an additional parking payment kiosk
 - j. Misc. bus support equipment adjacent to AVL system
 - k. Painting of handrails throughout parking garage, purchasing of computer equipment and garage repairs
3. **RTD0010688 and RTD0010703 – Fixed-Route Vehicle Replacement:** LRTA applied for and received a grant from the FTA Low or No (LowNo) Emission Grant Program to purchase seven (7) new Gillig hybrid electric buses for fixed-route service. LRTA proposed amending the TIP to move the Federal share programmed for FY26 to FY24 and to combine RTD0010688 and RTD0010703 into one project. This amendment removed \$5,280,000 of federal share and \$1,320,000 of state share (RTACAP) from FY26 and added \$6,171,400 of federal share and \$31,600 of Transportation Development Credits (TDC) state share to FY24 as well as added \$1,170,000 of state TDC to FY26. These changes enable LRTA to access the LowNo grant funds to place orders for the new buses in FY24. Additionally, LRTA has decided to purchase hybrid buses instead of battery electric buses (BEB) in this replacement cycle as described in the TIP. Given the

current technological landscape and operational considerations, LRTA has chosen hybrid buses as a more feasible and reliable option at this stage, ensuring both environmental benefits and practicality for the service area. LRTA remains committed to sustainability and will actively monitor advancements in technologies like BEBs, considering them in future replacement cycles.

4. **RTD0010696 – Gallagher Parking Garage Upgrades:** In SFY23, LRTA upgraded the parking payment system at Gallagher Transportation Center Garage to allow visitors to pay for hourly parking and to pay using electronic payment at a self-serve kiosk, as well as facility entrance/exit design changes to accommodate the new system. LRTA proposed amending the TIP to remove the \$200,000 of federal share (5307) and \$50,000 of state share (RTACAP) programmed for this project in FY24. LRTA received more state funding in SFY23 than anticipated in the TIP, so LRTA was able to complete this project without using the federal funds programmed in the FY24 TIP.
5. **T00039 – Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) and Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) Systems:** This project was formerly LRTA011460 in the FY23-27 TIP and proposed purchasing and installing a new AVL and APC system in all fixed-route buses to enable live vehicle tracking and automatic passenger counting across the entire system. In FY24, LRTA signed a contract with EQUANS to install these systems and is currently in the process of implementing them. To fund this project, LRTA obligated federal funds in FY23 and plans to obligate state funds in FY24. Since LRTA already obligated the federal funds in FY23 this amendment is to remove the \$800,000 of federal funds programmed for FY24.
6. **RTD0011205 – Purchase Backup Generator:** LRTA proposed removing \$240,000 of Federal (5307) funds and \$60,000 of state (RTACAP) funds for purchasing a backup generator for the Gallagher Terminal and Administration Office from the TIP. LRTA intends to delay the purchase of the generator until the design of the Commuter Rail Access Project is complete and obligate funds in a future TIP.
7. **T00040 - Rehab of Commuter Rail Access Way:** LRTA requested that \$12,000,000 of federal funds and \$3,000,000 of state funds (RTACAP) be removed from FY24. This project is delayed due to a redesign based on feedback from the FTA and MBTA, so LRTA has not yet secured a discretionary source of funding for this project. Once the design is finalized, the LRTA plans to propose programming this project in the FY25-29 TIP and apply for 5339 discretionary federal funding.
8. **T00058 – Maguire and Paratransit Maintenance Facility Improvements:** Initially, the scope of this project depended on the pending final design of the Commuter Rail Access Way project. Because of delays to that project, these improvements were separated

into a stand alone project. Because of timing of this project, the LRTA requested that \$2,880,000 of federal share and \$720,000 of state share (RTACAP) be removed from FFY24. LRTA plans to program this project in the FFY 2025-2029 TIP. The project includes replacing the windows and facade of the Admin and Paratransit Maintenance and Operations Facility, and associated interior rehab to stop water leakage/improve drainage.

ENDORSEMENT OF AMENDMENT 1 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 on February 28, 2024 the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization endorsed Amendment #2 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).

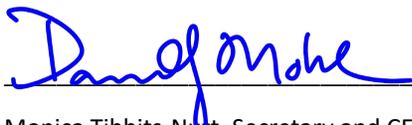
Air Quality Conformity

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 1 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

February 28, 2024

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

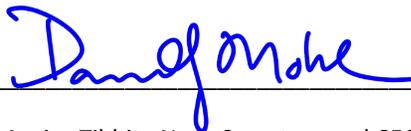
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310 CMR 60.05: GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR AND THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Self-Certification Compliance Statement for Metropolitan Planning Organizations

This will certify that the Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination for the Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) Transportation Improvement Program is in compliance with all applicable requirements in the State Regulation 310 CMR 60.05: Global Warming Solutions Act Requirements for Transportation. The regulation requires the MPO to:

1. 310 CMR 60.05(5)(a)1.: Evaluate and report the aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts of MTPs and TIPs;
2. 310 CMR 60.05(5)(a)2.: In consultation with MassDOT, develop and utilize procedures to prioritize and select projects in MTPs and TIPs based on factors that include aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts;
3. 310 CMR 60.05(5)(a)3.: Quantify net transportation GHG emissions impacts resulting from the projects in MTPs and TIPs and certify in a statement included with MTPs and TIPs pursuant to 23 CFR Part 450 that the MPO has made efforts to minimize aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts;
4. 310 CMR 60.05(5)(a)4.: Determine in consultation with the RPA that the appropriate planning assumptions used for transportation GHG emissions modeling are consistent with local land use policies, or that local authorities have made documented and credible commitments to establishing such consistency;
5. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)2.a.: Develop MTPs and TIPs;
6. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)2.b.: Ensure that RPAs are using appropriate planning assumptions;
7. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)2.c.: Perform regional aggregate transportation GHG emissions impact analysis of MTPs and TIPs;
8. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)2.d.: Calculate aggregate transportation GHG emissions impacts for MTPs and TIPs;
9. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)2.e.: Develop public consultation procedures for aggregate transportation GHG emissions impact reporting and related GWSA requirements consistent with current and approved regional public participation plans;
10. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(c): Prior to making final endorsements on the MTPs, TIPs, STIPs, and projects included in these plans, MassDOT and the MPOs shall include the aggregate transportation GHG emission impact assessment in MTPs, TIPs, and STIPs and provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the MTPs, TIPs, and STIPs; and
11. 310 CMR 60.05(8)(a)1.c.: After a final GHG assessment has been made by MassDOT and the MPOs, MassDOT and the MPOs shall submit MPO-endorsed MTPs, TIPs, STIPs or projects within 30 days of endorsement to the Department for review of the GHG assessment.



for

February 28, 2024

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

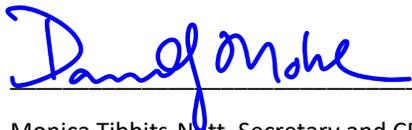
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SELF-CERTIFICATION OF THE 3C PLANNING PROCESS

FFY 2025-2029 Northern Middlesex Transportation Program 3C Process Statement

The Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization certifies that its conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process complies with all applicable requirements, which are listed below, and that this process includes activities to support the development and implementation of the regional Long-Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Conformity Determination, the Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination, and the Unified Planning Work Program.

1. 23 USC 134, 49 USC 5303, and this subpart.
2. Sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7504, 7506 (c) and (d) and 40 CFR part 93 and for applicable State Implementation Plan projects.
3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 USC 2000d-1) and 49 CFR Part 21.
4. 49 USC 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity.
5. Section 1101 (b) of the Fast Act (Pub. L. 114-357) and 49 CFR Part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in U.S. DOT-funded projects.
6. 23 CFR part 230, regarding implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts.
7. The provisions of the US DOT and of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38.
8. The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 USC 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.
9. Section 324 of Title 23 USC regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender.
10. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794) and 49 CFR Part 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
11. Anti-lobbying restrictions found in 49 CFR Part 20. No appropriated funds may be expended by a recipient to influence or attempt to influence an officer or employee of any agency, or a member of Congress, in connection with the awarding of any federal contract.



for

February 28, 2024

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

Date