
ES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Fiscal Years 2016–20 Transportation Improvement Program

INTRODUCTION

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) five-year, nearly \$2 billion transportation capital plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), is the near-term investment program for the region's transportation system. Guided by the MPO's visions and policies, the TIP prioritizes investments that preserve the current transportation system in a state of good repair, provide safe transportation for all modes, enhance livability, and improve mobility throughout the region. These investments fund major highway reconstruction, arterial and intersection improvements, maintenance and expansion of the public transit system, bicycle path construction, and improvements for pedestrians.

The Boston Region MPO is a 22-member board with representatives of state agencies, regional organizations, and municipalities; its jurisdiction extends from Boston north to Ipswich, south to Duxbury, and west to Interstate 495. Each year, the MPO conducts a process to decide how to spend federal transportation funds for capital projects. The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), which

is the staff to the MPO, manages the TIP-development process.

MPO staff coordinate the evaluation of project requests, propose the programming of current and new projects based on anticipated funding levels, support the MPO in the development of a draft document, and facilitate a public review of the draft document before the MPO endorses the final document.

FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2016–20 TIP OVERVIEW

The federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2016–20 TIP consists of approximately \$940 million worth of transportation investments in the Highway Program and more than \$1 billion in the Transit Program. These investments reflect the MPO's goal of targeting a majority of transportation resources to preserve and modernize the existing roadway and transit system and maintain it in a state of good repair.

This TIP devotes a more significant portion of funding for the targeted expansion of the rapid transit system and new shared-use paths than previous TIPs. In addition, a number of the infrastructure investments in this TIP address needs identified in the MPO's Long-

Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *Charting Progress to 2040*, or implement recommendations from past studies and reports that were funded through the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program.

FFYS 2016–20 TIP INVESTMENTS

Transit Program

The Transit Program of the TIP provides funding for projects and programs that address capital needs that have been given priority by the three transit agencies in the region: the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the Cape Ann Transportation Authority (CATA), and the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA). The Transit Program is predominantly dedicated to achieving and maintaining a state of good repair for all assets throughout the transit system.



Over the next four fiscal years, the MBTA will invest heavily in its bus fleets.

The MBTA will also invest in the MBTA's bridges and tunnels. Funds will also be dedicated to improving accessibility at MBTA subway stations and other light rail, commuter rail, and bus stations throughout the system, as well as the Silver Line. Transit expansion will be funded in the Highway Program as discussed below.

Highway Program

The Highway Program of the TIP funds priority transportation projects advanced by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and cities and towns within the 101-municipality MPO region. The program is primarily devoted to preserving and modernizing the existing roadway network through the resurfacing of highways, replacement of bridges, and reconstruction of arterial roadways.

Over the next five years, more than \$230 million (25 percent) of funds in the Highway Program will be used to resurface interstate and state routes, replace highway lighting and signage, and add travel lanes and shoulders to more than three miles of Route 128. Approximately \$260 million (27 percent) will be spent to modernize roadways in order to balance the needs of all users—motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Multimodal projects, such as the improvements to Route 9 in Brookline, will improve safety and enhance access for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. In total, roadway modernization projects will improve nearly 50 lane miles of substandard pavement traveled by nearly 500,000 vehicles. These

corridor investments will also add 24 miles of new on-road bicycle accommodations.

Nearly \$260 million (27 percent) of the Highway Program will be used to address functionally obsolete and structurally deficient bridges. These improvements will benefit the more than 600,000 vehicles that cross these substandard bridges on a typical weekday.



The program also invests in the targeted expansion of transit service and bicycle and pedestrian facilities to grow the transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks. In the TIP, \$158 million (17 percent) of the Highway Program funds are allocated to transit to extend the Green Line beyond College Avenue to Route 16/Mystic Valley Parkway in Medford. Lastly, the MPO will invest nearly \$35 million (4 percent) to

extend rail trails, construct shared-use paths, and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities around schools. A majority of these facilities will also provide direct access to MBTA stations: the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail will link to the West Concord Station, the Cochituate Rail Trail will connect to the Natick Station, and the New Fenway Multi-use Path will improve access to the Fenway Station and the Yawkey Station.

FINANCING THE FFYS 2016–20 TIP

Transit Program

Funds programmed in the Transit Program of the TIP are allocated by the Federal Transit Administration by formula. The three regional transit authorities in the Boston Region MPO area that are recipients of these funds are the MBTA, CATA, and MWRTA. The MBTA, with its extensive transit program and infrastructure, is the recipient of the preponderance of federal transit funds in the region.

Under the federal transportation legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), funding is allocated by the following categories:

- **Section 5307 (Urbanized Area Formula Grants):** provides grants to urbanized areas to support public transportation based on the level of transit service, population, and other factors
- **Section 5337 (Fixed Guideway/Bus):** seeks to maintain public transportation systems in a state of good repair through replacement and rehabilitation capital projects

- **Section 5339 (Bus and Bus Facilities):** provides funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities

Highway Program

The Highway Program of the TIP was developed under the assumption that there would be \$600 million of federal dollars available annually over the next five years for highway projects statewide. In Massachusetts, federal highway program funding is allocated to several main funding categories.

First, MassDOT allocates federal funding to Grant Anticipation Notes (GANs) payments. Over the four years of this TIP, approximately \$245 million of the Highway Program is dedicated to GANs payments for the Accelerated Bridge Program. MassDOT matches the remaining amount of federal funding with an 80 percent (federal) and 20 percent (state) split.

Next, MassDOT allocates funding across the following funding categories:

- **Statewide Infrastructure Items:** interstate highway maintenance, intelligent transportation systems, Safe Routes to School programs, and other infrastructure needs
- **Bridge Program:** replacement or rehabilitation of public bridges
- **Regional Major Infrastructure Projects:** modernization of major highway infrastructure (funding for this category will conclude in 2017 after reconstruction of the I-91 Viaduct in Springfield has been completed)

- **Other Statewide Items:** change orders for existing contracts

After these needs have been satisfied, MassDOT allocates the remaining federal funding among the state's MPOs for programming. This discretionary funding for MPOs is suballocated by formula to determine "Regional Target" amounts. MassDOT develops these targets in consultation with the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies. Each MPO can decide how to prioritize their Regional Target funding.

THE TIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Overview

In order to determine which projects to fund through the Regional Target funding process, MPO members collaborate with municipalities, state agencies, members of the public, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders. The MPO's project selection process uses evaluation criteria to help identify and prioritize projects that advance the MPO's goals. The criteria are based on the MPO's visions and policies, which were adopted for its current LRTP, *Paths to a Sustainable Region*. These criteria closely align with the LRTP, *Charting Progress to 2040*, and MPO staff plan to update the evaluation criteria to guide future TIP investments after *Charting Progress to 2040* is finalized.

Outreach and Data Collection

The outreach process begins early in the fiscal year when MPO staff begin to brief local officials and members of the public on the upcoming year's

development process. Each November, MPO staff ask the staffs of cities and towns in the region to identify their priority projects for consideration for federal funding. MPO staff compile the project requests and relevant information into a Universe of Projects list for the MPO. The Universe of Projects list includes projects in varied stages of development, from projects in the conceptual stage to those that are fully designed and ready to be advertised for construction. MPO staff also collect data on each project in the universe so that the projects can be evaluated.

Project Evaluation

Once project updates are complete, the staff evaluates projects based on how well they address the MPO's policies in the following categories:

- System Preservation, Modernization, and Efficiency
- Livability and Economic Benefit
- Mobility
- Environment and Climate Change
- Environmental Justice
- Safety and Security

This year, the staff completed evaluations for approximately 50 projects. A basic level of design is needed to provide enough information to fully evaluate a potential TIP project. In some cases, not enough information is available to fully evaluate a project across all six policy categories. The evaluation results are posted on the MPO's website, allowing

municipal officials and members of the public to view and provide feedback on the evaluation results.

Staff Recommendation and Draft TIP

MPO staff use the project information and evaluation results to prepare a First-Tier List of Projects—projects that have received high scores through the TIP evaluation process and could be made ready for advertisement within the time frame of the upcoming TIP. MPO staff then prepare a recommendation for the TIP considering the First-Tier list and other factors, such as the construction readiness of a project, the estimated project cost, community priority, geographic equity (to ensure that needs are addressed throughout the region), and consistency with the MPO's LRTP. The staff recommendation proposes the projects to be funded with the MPO's Regional Target funding over the next five years. This year, the MPO voted to add a fifth year to the TIP in order to align with the first time band of the LRTP.

The staff recommendation is always financially constrained. This year, there was approximately \$440 million available for MPO Regional Target projects in FFYs 2016–20. In April 2015, the staff recommendation was submitted to the MPO and was discussed.

APPROVING THE TIP

The MPO considers the evaluation results, First-Tier List of Projects, and staff recommendation when prioritizing which projects should receive Regional Target funding. In addition to prioritizing the Regional Target funding, the MPO also reviews the Statewide Infrastructure Items and Bridge Programs, as well as

the capital programs for the MBTA, CATA, and MWRTA before voting to release a draft TIP for public review.

In mid-June of 2015, the MPO voted to release the draft FFYs 2016–20 TIP for a 30-day public comment period. The MPO invited members of the public, regional and local officials, and other stakeholders in the Boston region to review the proposed program during this period. In addition, several outreach sessions are held during the public comment period to solicit comments on the draft TIP.

After the comment period, the MPO reviewed all of the comments and endorsed the FFYs 2016–20 TIP on July 30, 2015. The MPO-endorsed TIP will be incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is a compilation of TIPs from all of the MPOs in Massachusetts, and sent to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to enable the document to be approved by the federal agencies by September 30, 2015 before the start of FFY 2016.

UPDATES TO THE TIP

Even after the TIP has been finalized, administrative modifications and amendments often must be introduced because of changes in project status, project cost, or available revenues. This may necessitate reprogramming a project to a later funding year or programming additional funds for a project.

Notices of amendments and administrative modifications are posted on the MPO's website. If an amendment is necessary, the Regional Transportation Advisory Council is informed, and the

affected municipalities and other stakeholders are notified through the MPO's email listserv, MPOinfo. The MPO holds a 30-day public comment period before taking action on an amendment. Administrative modifications are generally minor adjustments that usually do not warrant a public comment period.

STAY INVOLVED WITH THE TIP

Public input is an important aspect of the transportation-planning process. Please visit www.bostonmpo.org for more information about the MPO, to view the full TIP, and to submit your comments. You may also want to sign up for our email news updates by contacting us at publicinformation@ctps.org.

To request a copy of the TIP in CD or accessible formats, please contact us by any of the following means:

Mail: Boston Region MPO
Certification Activities Group
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116-3968

Telephone: 857.702.3700

TTY: 617.973.7089

Fax: 617.570.9192

Email: publicinformation@ctps.org