

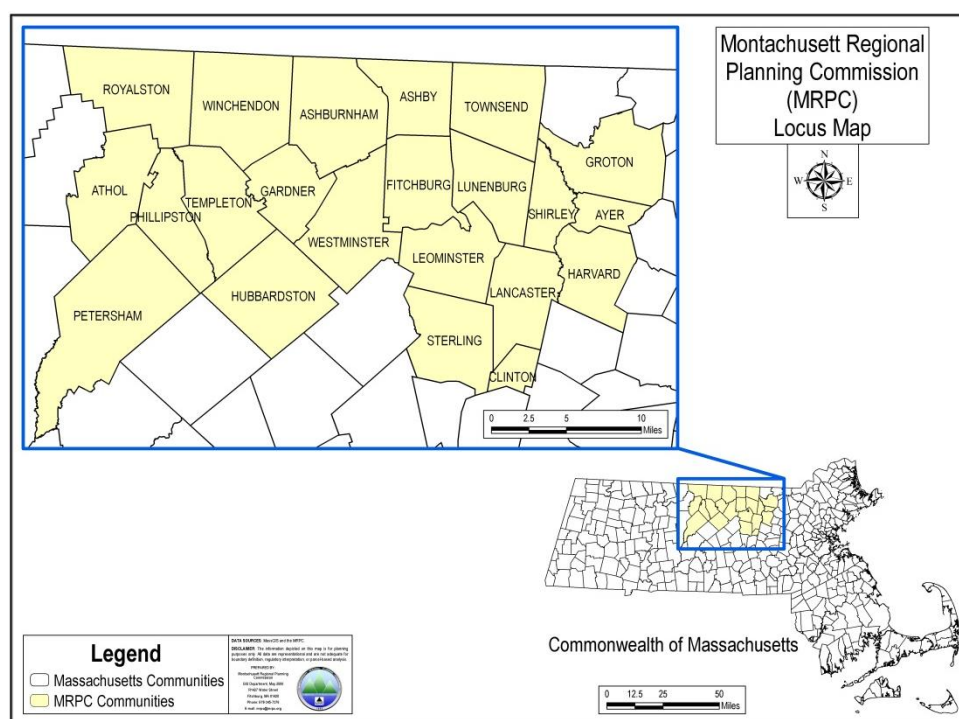


# *1 Introduction*



## INTRODUCTION

***Working Toward the Future*** is the long-range transportation plan (RTP) developed by the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The RTP is an assessment of the multi-modal transportation network within the Montachusett planning region, its needs now and in the future, the resources available and the projects and policies, both state and federal, which will guide the region over the next 20 years to 2040. The development of this plan has followed a robust outreach program of public meetings and surveys in an effort to solicit local input and guidance on topics of performance measures, areas of concern, possible projects and prioritization.



### Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)

All urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 are required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal regulations to designate an MPO for the area. The



establishment of an MPO is necessary for the State to receive Federal transportation funds. The Montachusett MPO region is situated in north central Massachusetts and includes 3 cities and 19 towns covering approximately 685 square miles. Overall, the population of the region in 2017 was 242,671 according to the American Community Survey. Route 2 runs east-west throughout the region and serves as the second major east-west highway in the Commonwealth. In the Montachusett Region, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) serves as staff for the MPO.

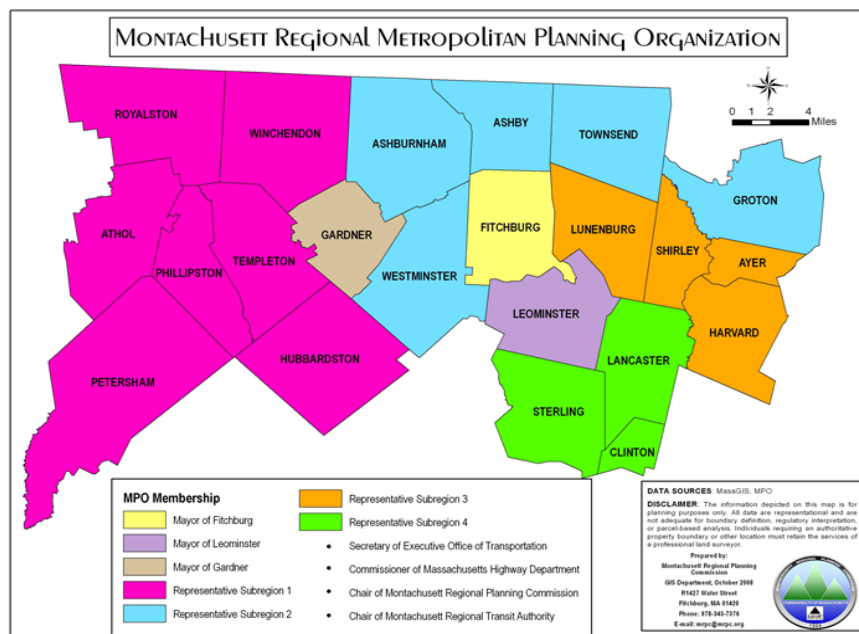
The MPO is currently comprised of the following signatories:

- Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT);
- Administrator of MassDOT Highway Division
- Chairman of the MRPC,
- Chairman of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART),
- Mayor of Fitchburg,
- Mayor of Leominster
- Mayor of Gardner
- One Selectman from Subregion 1, 2, 3, and 4

The 19 rural communities have been grouped into one of these four geographically defined sub Regions:

- Subregion 1) Athol, Hubbardston, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Templeton, and Winchendon;
- Subregion 2) Ashburnham, Ashby, Groton, Townsend, and Westminster;
- Subregion 3) Ayer, Harvard, Lunenburg and Shirley; and
- Subregion 4) Clinton, Lancaster, and Sterling.

These members serve as the MPO Policy Board that seeks to ensure a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing (3C) transportation planning process in the Leominster - Fitchburg Urbanized Area and the Montachusett Region.



## Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee

As part of the outreach and local participation process, a special advisory committee known as the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) serves as the Transportation Policy Advisory Group for the Region. The principal mission of the MJTC is to foster broad and robust participation in the transportation planning process by maintaining a forum that brings together representatives of cities and towns, citizens concerned with the transportation planning process, other public agencies, and transportation providers, thereby facilitating, wherever possible, the consistency of transportation plans and programs for the Region with the policies, priorities, and plans of affected state and regional agencies, local communities, private groups and individuals within the region. Membership in the MJTC is comprised of locally appointed representatives (one designated by the community planning board and one by the Chief Elected Official) as well as representatives of area organizations or agencies. The MJTC strives to be as inclusive as possible and regularly encourages those groups wishing to be part of the process to formally request membership. The MJTC also participates in all Montachusett MPO meetings and has the opportunity to, whenever possible, review, comment and advise the MPO on matters being discussed.



## Planning Documents and the MPO

The Regional Transportation Plan provides the basic framework for implementing future short-range and long-range transportation and air quality improvements in the Montachusett Region. In addition, it sets the basic transportation goals and objectives for the region. In addition to the RTP, the MRPC staff annually produces a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP is a financial programming tool developed annually as part of the federally certified transportation planning process. This document contains task descriptions of the transportation-planning program of the MPO, with associated budget information and funding sources for the program year.

The TIP is a prioritized listing of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the future five federal fiscal years. TIP projects are identified by funding category so that where necessary priorities may be established for projects within each funding program.