



6 Transportation Equity



TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Transportation and social equity, Title VI and Environmental Justice all play a key role in the quality of life in the region by shaping access to jobs, housing, services and recreational opportunities and is essential to addressing poverty, unemployment and other equal opportunity goals. **Transportation and social equity** is a civil and human rights priority and major goal for the Montachusett Region. It requires making investments that provide all residents - regardless of age, race, color, national origin, income or physical ability - with opportunities to work, shop, be healthy, and play.

Title VI was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. In 1994, Executive Order 12898 was issued by President Clinton. Its purpose is to focus federal attention on the environmental and human health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities. The order is also intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs that affect human health and the environment, as well as provide minority and low-income communities' access to public information and public participation. The order also directs each agency to develop a strategy for implementing environmental justice.

The Executive Order 552 was issued on November 25th, 2014 requiring Secretariats to take action in promoting environmental justice (EJ). “**Environmental Justice** is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits” (www.mass.gov) . In Massachusetts a community is recognized as an Environmental Justice community if any of the following are true:



- Block group whose annual median household income is equal to or less than 65 percent of the statewide median; or
- 25% or more of the residents identifying as minority; or
- 25% or more of households having no one over the age of 14 who speaks English only or very well - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

EJ neighborhoods where more than one criterion is met may be at an even greater risk of exposure to environmental and health hazards.

There are 54 identified EJ areas within the Montachusett Region – identified through the 2010 Census – representing 72,624 residents (approximately 31% of total Montachusett residents in 2010). 32 of Montachusett EJ areas have low-income designation: 14 are EJ-designated due to income alone, 17 also have high minority populations, and one EJ area is due to high numbers of minority, non-English speaking as well as low-income residents. The additional 22 areas received EJ designation due to a high proportion of minority residents; these are predominantly located in Fitchburg (10) and Leominster (7), along the Route 2 Corridor.

In 2000, Executive Order 13166 was issued "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency". The Executive Order requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them.

Target Populations

The target populations used for the Transportation Equity Analysis include:

- a) Elderly
- b) Individuals with Disabilities
- c) Minority
- d) Foreign Born
- e) Language
- f) Low Income



Detailed information for these populations can be found in the Demographic section of this document.

Target Communities

To conduct a social equity analysis, it is necessary to identify people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Target communities within the Montachusett Region were communities that exceeded the regional average for any of the target populations listed below (also see the maps located at the end of this chapter).

- a) Elderly (% of Total Population > 65 that is higher than the regional average of 15.11%)
– Athol, Gardner, Harvard, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, Petersham, Royalston, Sterling, Templeton, Westminster and Winchendon
- b) Individuals with Disabilities (% of population with a disability that is higher than the regional average of 12.03%) – Athol, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston and Winchendon
- c) Minority (% of population that is considered non-white and is higher than the regional average of 12.24%) – Ashburnham, Ayer, Fitchburg, Harvard, Leominster and Shirley
- d) Foreign Born (% of population that is Foreign Born and is higher than the regional average of 8.12%) – Ayer, Clinton, Fitchburg, Harvard, Leominster and Shirley
- e) Language (% of Population Spoken Language Other than English that is higher than the regional average of 14.42%) – Clinton, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Shirley
- f) Low Income (% Estimated Below Poverty Level that is higher than the regional average of 10.85%) - Athol, Ayer, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, and Winchendon

Highway - Past Projects

To conduct a review of past highway transportation projects within the region and their potential impact on the target populations and communities, projects that were listed on the most recent MPO Endorsed FFY2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) were analyzed. This analysis is broken into two parts. The first is an examination of federal target eligible projects



contained within this TIP, i.e. FFY 2020-2024. The second involves a five year “look back” at prior TIP projects. For this analysis that would include projects from FFY 2015 to 2019.

Methodology

Projects identified for the two analyses include site specific projects, i.e. bridge replacements/rehabilitations and intersection improvements, as well as road and highway segments that may stretch several miles and across multiple communities. The identified projects were then mapped for each analysis against identified Environmental Justice (EJ) and/or Title VI populations. Staff then assessed the project locations relative to the identified populations.

For each of these analyses, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year estimates were utilized. All applicable maps can be found in the appendix of this document. For some of the data, census estimates were only available at the Census Tract level. This data dealt with Foreign Born, Disabilities and Non-English Spoken at Home populations. The remaining census data estimates were available at the Block Group level. The tables below list the ACS data sources as well as whether they were broken down to the Census Tract or Block Group level. These tables, therefore, were used to determine Environmental Justice and Title VI designated areas.

**Table 6-1: 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates
By Block Group**

Variable	2013-2017 ACS Table No.
Total Population	B03002
Majority Population	B03002
Poverty Determined Population	B17021
Below Poverty Population	B17021
Population 65 Years or Older Population	B09020
Median Household Income	B19013
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Households	C16002



**Table 6-2: 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates
By Census Tract**

Variable	2013-2017 ACS Table No.
Total Population	B05002
Foreign Born	B05002
Individuals with Disabilities	S1810
Percent Household Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	S1602
Percent Language Spoken at Home – Non-English	DP02

Environmental Justice (EJ) and Title VI populations are defined differently by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In addition, EJ analysis is based on different criteria, ex. poverty based on the statewide median income rather than the regional median income. The tables below define the Title VI and EJ criteria utilized in the regional analysis.

Table 6-3: Environmental Justice and Title VI Definitions for Analysis

Environmental Justice Block Groups	Analysis Criteria
1. Block group whose annual median household income is equal to or less than 65 percent (%) of the statewide median (\$74,167 in 2017);	Statewide Median Income: \$74,167 65% of Median Household Income: \$48,209 Geography: Block Group
2. Twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the residents identifying as minority;	Minority Population Equal or Greater Than 25% Geography: Block Group
3. Twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the households having no one over the age of 14 who speaks English as their primary language or have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English - Limited English Proficiency (LEP).	Limited English Proficiency Equal or Greater Than 25% Geography: Block Group

FTA Title VI Communities	Analysis Criteria
1. Minority – Percent of population including Hispanic or Latino of any race that is considered non-white and is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 12.24% Geography: Block Group
2. Low Income - Percent estimated below poverty level that is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 10.85% Geography: Block Group



FHWA Title VI Communities	Analysis Criteria
1. Elderly – Percent of Total Population > 65 that is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 15.11% Geography: Block Group
2. Individuals with Disabilities – Percent of population with a disability that is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 12.03% Geography: Census Tract
3. Minority – Percent of population including Hispanic or Latino of any race that is considered non-white and is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 12.24% Geography: Block Group
4. Foreign Born – Percent of population that is Foreign Born and is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 8.12% Geography: Census Tract
5. Language – Percent of Population Spoken Language Other than English that is higher than the regional average	Regional Average: 14.42% Geography: Census Tract

FFY 2020-2024 Target Eligible Projects

To assess the possible benefits or burdens of the projects within the FFY 2020-2024 TIP, those projects identified as federal aid target eligible were identified. The analysis for this TIP is limited to these projects as they are the projects with the most programming control of the MPO. Bridge projects as well as those on the Interstate system, etc., are prioritized at the state level.

The following table identifies 24 target eligible projects in the Montachusett Region, listed by their calculated TEC score as well as their anticipated FFY year listing for this TIP. Some of the projects are identified as being listed in the Appendix of the TIP. The Appendix is a listing of projects without an identified funding source or program year due to design status and/or fiscal constraint issues.

**Table 6-4: FFY 2020-2024 Target Eligible Projects**

TIP Year	MassDOT ID #	Community	Description	TEC	Est Cost FFY 2020 Dollars
2020	605651	Leominster	Leominster- Reconstruction on Route 13, From Hawes Street to Prospect Street	46	\$5,994,626
2020	607902	Ayer	Ayer- Reclamation & Related Work on Route 2A, from Harvard Road to Main Street	32	\$3,837,875
2021	608779	Lancaster	Lancaster- Intersection Improvements on Route 117/Route 70 at Lunenburg Road and Route 117/Route 70 at Main Street	31	\$2,619,830
2021	607431	Westminster	Westminster- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 140, from Route 2A to Patricia Road	15	\$1,500,746
2021	608548	Winchendon	Winchendon- Improvements & Related Work on Central Street (Route 202), from Front Street to Maple Street (0.5 Miles)	29	\$4,954,875
2021	608888	Gardner	Gardner- Reclamation and Related Work on Pearson Boulevard	25	\$864,519
2022	604499	Leominster	Leominster- Reconstruction/ Rehabilitation on Route 12 (Central Street), Including Rehabilitation of L-08-022	38	\$9,537,724
2023	607604	Multiple	Sterling- West Boylston- Improvements on Route 140 at I-190	14	\$773,000
2023	608793	Hubbardston	Hubbardston- Highway Reconstruction of Route 68 (Main Street), from 1,000 Ft North of Williamsville Road to Elm Street	25	\$4,869,038
2023	608891	Gardner	Gardner- Resurfacing and Rumble Strip Installation on Route 140	12	\$1,791,202
2023	608784	Templeton	Templeton- Roundabout Construction at The Intersection of Patriots Road, South Main Street, North Main Street and Gardner Road	22	\$2,227,694
2024	608832	Lancaster	Lancaster- Interchange Improvements at Route 2 Exit 34 (Old Union Turnpike)	23	\$4,800,000
2024	609244	Ashburnham	Ashburnham- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 101	25	\$5,075,000
Appendix	608424	Templeton	Templeton- Reconstruction of Route 68, from King Phillip Trail (Route 202) North to The Phillipston Town Line (2.65 Miles)	17	\$5,134,779
Appendix	607432	Westminster	Westminster - Rehabilitation & Box Widening on Rt 140, from Patricia Rd to the Princeton T.L.	15	\$4,200,000
Appendix	608415	Athol	Athol- Intersection Improvements at Route 2A and Brookside Road	30	\$1,544,720
Appendix	608723	Athol	Athol- Intersection Improvements at Crescent Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue	30	\$4,371,060
Appendix	609213	Harvard	Harvard- Resurfacing and Box Widening on Ayer Road, from Route 2 to the Ayer Town Line	27	\$5,520,000
Appendix	609279	Gardner	Gardner- Roundabout Construction at Elm Street, Pearl Street, Central Street and Green Street	25	\$3,000,000
Appendix	609227	Ayer	Ayer- Roadway Rehabilitation on Route 2A/111 (Park Street and Main Street)	23	\$4,800,000
Appendix	606420	Fitchburg	Fitchburg- Intersection & Signal Improvements @ Rt 2A (Lunenburg St) & John Fitch Highway	28	\$1,800,000
Appendix	606640	Ayer	Ayer- Resurfacing & Related Work on Rt 2A (Fitchburg Rd & Park St)	25	\$2,400,000
Appendix	608177	Ashby	Ashby - Reconstruction of Route 119 (Townsend Road) from Bernhardt Road to Route 31.	21	\$6,727,500
Appendix	608879	Winchendon	Winchendon- Resurfacing & Related Work on Maple Street (Route 202), from Vine Street to Glenallen Street (1.36 Miles)	15	\$1,680,444



FFY 2020-2024 Target Eligible Projects Equity Analysis

An analysis of the geographic distribution of the twenty-four projects within the 2020-2024 TIP resulted in an understanding of the percentage of TIP projects and TIP funds allocated within Environmental Justice and Title VI geographic areas. The results of this analysis are as follows:

- Of the 24 projects analyzed based on EJ and Title VI identified populations, a population impacted by the TIP project was calculated. This is listed in row 4 in the table below.
- When compared to the total regional EJ or Title VI population listed in row 2 of the table, the impacted percentage of these EJ and Title VI populations range from 10.24% to 72.88 % (as listed in row 6 of the table).
- The EJ population of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) per Household does not figure into this analysis as only one block group met the EJ criteria of 25% or more there were no projects impacting this block group.



Table 6-5: FFY 2020-2024 TIP Target Eligible Projects Equity Analysis Summary – Populations Impacted

		EJ Block Groups			FTA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Census Tracts		
		Income	Minority	LEP HH	Minority	Low Income	Elderly	Minority	Disabilities	Foreign Born	Language
1	Total Regional Population	242,671	242,671	91,041 (HH)	242,671	233,995	242,671	242,671	242,671	242,671	242,671
2	Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population	N/A	29,695	2,322 (HH)	29,695	25,377	36,671	29,695	29,194	19,710	34,985
3	Percent of Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population vs. Total Regional Population	N/A	12.24%	2.55%	12.24%	10.85%	15.11%	12.24%	12.03%	8.12%	14.42%
4	Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects	N/A	3,603	0	21,124	18,495	3,755	6,155	3,335	6,212	9,441
5	Percent of Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects vs. Total Regional Population	N/A	1.48%	0.00%	8.70%	7.90%	1.55%	2.54%	1.37%	2.56%	3.89%
6	Percent of Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects vs. Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population	N/A	12.13%	0.00%	71.14%	72.88%	10.24%	20.73%	11.42%	31.52%	26.99%

- An examination of the project costs versus the EJ/Title VI populations impacted, shows that of the approximate \$90,024,000 for the 24 identified target projects, anywhere from a low of 25.00% (\$22,508,000 to a high of 80.02% (\$72,039,000) are expect to be spent impacting, or benefiting, EJ and Title VI populations.
- As with the previous table, no impacted was identified for the EJ LEP Household population due to the limited number of block groups (one) that meet the EJ criteria.

Table 6-6: FFY 2020-2024 TIP Target Eligible Projects Equity Analysis Summary – Project Costs

	EJ Block Groups			FTA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Census Tracts		
	Income (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	LEP HH (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	Low Income (\$ * 1,000)	Elderly (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	Disabilities (\$ * 1,000)	Foreign Born (\$ * 1,000)	Language (\$ * 1,000)
Total Cost of TIP Projects in Region	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024	\$90,024
Total Cost of Projects Impacted by EJ/Title VI Populations	\$22,508	\$24,843	\$0	\$47,101	\$48,498	\$72,039	\$50,178	\$29,874	\$39,806	\$27,601
Percentage of EJ/Title VI Project Costs vs. Total Regional Project Costs	25.00%	27.60%	0.00%	52.32%	53.87%	80.02%	55.74%	33.18%	44.22%	30.66%



2015-2019 Projects Five Year Lookback

The following table identifies 27 projects for the Montachusett Region implemented in the last five years, i.e. from FFY 2015 to FFY 2019. All projects appeared in a prior TIP and were advertised for construction, initiated construction or completed construction prior to the development of this TIP.

Table 6-7: FFY 2015-2019 TIP Five Year Look Back Projects

TIP Year	MassDOT ID #	Community	Description	Est Cost
2015	604439	Winchendon	Multi-Use Trail Construction (North Central Pathway - Phase V) Includes W-39-023, W-39-024 & W-39-028	\$1,987,709
2015	604960	Clinton	Reconstruction & Related Work on Water Street and Bolton Road (1.2 Miles)	\$4,433,939
2015	607114	Lancaster	Bridge Replacement, L-02-018, Jackson Road Over Route 2	\$5,924,599
2015	607419	Westminster	Deck Replacement, W-28-023, Route 2A/140 Over Route 2	\$2,672,775
2015	607909	Sterling	Bridge Joints Repairs and Beam-End Repairs At 5 Bridges On I-190	\$10,021,616
2016	604515	Royalston	Bridge Replacement, R-12-006, North Fitzwilliam Road Over Lawrence Brook	\$1,313,437
2016	604838	Winchendon	Bridge Replacement, W-39-001, Harris Road Over Tarbell Brook	\$2,129,943
2016	604928	Leominster	Reconstruction of Mechanic Street, From Laurel Street to The Leominster Connector	\$2,929,315
2016	604699	Sterling	Intersection Improvements at Rt 12 And Chocksett Rd	\$4,700,000
2017	607529	Winchendon	Bridge Replacement, W-39-015, North Royalston Rd Over Tarbell Brook	\$2,243,868
2017	608250	Royalston	Bridge Replacement, R-12-001 (B35), Stockwell Road Over Lawrence Brook	\$857,005
2017	607475	Winchendon	Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 12, From Mill Street/Beginning of State Highway to New Hampshire State Line	\$1,571,623
2018	608188	Gardner/ Leominster/ Sterling	Intersection Improvements at 3 Locations	\$2,622,497
2018	606124	Fitchburg/ Lunenburg/ Leominster	Reconstruction of Summer Street and North Street	\$9,939,131
2018	608179	Royalston	Bridge Replacement, R-12-009, North Fitzwilliam Road Over Lawrence Brook	\$1,721,880
2018	605094	Fitchburg	Bridge Replacement, F-04-003, State Route 31 over Lawrence Brook	\$3,120,258
2018	608864	Gardner	Bridge Replacement, G-01-008, Pleasant Street over the B&M Railroad	\$4,404,240
2019	608728	Winchendon	Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 202, From the Templeton Town Line to Main Street (3.1 Miles)	\$1,795,875
2019	604961	Clinton	Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 110 (High Street)	\$3,153,674
2019	607848	Hubbardston	Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 68, From Williamsville Road to the Gardner C.L.	\$4,190,296
2019	607446	Westminster	Intersection Improvements, Route 2A at Route 140	\$2,139,574
2019	608260	Athol	Bridge Replacement, A-15-005, Washington Ave Over Athol Pond Outlet & A-15-004 Morgan Ave Over Athol Pond Outlet	\$2,160,029
2019	608259	Townsend	Bridge Replacement, T-07-013, West Meadow Road Over Locke Brook	\$3,163,200
2019	607127	Hubbardston	Bridge Replacement, H-24-009, Evergreen Road Over Mason Brook	\$3,361,720
2019	608612	Athol	Bridge Replacement, A-15-008, Crescent Street Over Millers River	\$5,112,455
2019	608475	Lancaster/ Harvard	Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 2	\$18,558,222
2019	608193	Fitchburg/ Leominster	Rail Trail Construction (Twin Cities Rail Trail)	\$13,000,250
				\$119,229,130



2015-2019 Projects Five Year Lookback Equity Analysis

An examination of projects funded over the last five TIPs, identified 27 individual projects with an estimated total cost of \$119,229,130. A geographic distribution of these 27 projects against those areas categorized as Environmental Justice (EJ) or Title VI areas resulted in the following:

- Of the 27 projects analyzed based on EJ and Title VI identified populations, a population impacted by the TIP project was calculated. This is listed in row 4 in the table below.
- When compared to the total regional EJ or Title VI population listed in row 2 of the table, the impacted percentage of these EJ and Title VI populations range from a low of 4.82% (or 112 LEP Households) to a high of 73.86% for Low Income individuals defined by FTA Title VI guidelines. See row 6 of the following table.
- The EJ population of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) per Household has the lowest percent impact again due to the criteria developed for this population.

Table 6-8: FFY 2015-2019 TIP Five Year Look Back Projects Equity Analysis Summary – Populations Impacted

		EJ Block Groups			FTA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Census Tracts		
		Income	Minority	LEP HH	Minority	Low Income	Elderly	Minority	Disabilities	Foreign Born	Language
1	Total Regional Population	242,671	242,671	91,041 (HH)	242,671	233,995	242,671	242,671	242,671	242,671	242,671
2	Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population	N/A	29,695	2,322 (HH)	29,695	25,377	36,671	29,695	29,194	19,710	34,985
3	Percent of Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population vs. Total Regional Population	N/A	12.24%	2.55%	12.24%	10.85%	15.11%	12.24%	12.03%	8.12%	14.42%
4	Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects	N/A	12,133	112	20,519	18,744	10,463	18,600	16,691	12,890	24,983
5	Percent of Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects vs. Total Regional Population	N/A	5.00%	0.12%	8.46%	8.01%	4.31%	7.66%	6.88%	5.31%	10.30%
6	Percent of Regional EJ/Title VI Population Impacted by TIP Projects vs. Total Regional EJ/Title VI Population	N/A	40.86%	4.82%	69.10%	73.86%	28.53%	62.64%	57.17%	65.40%	71.41%



- An examination of the project costs versus the EJ/Title VI populations impacted, shows that of the approximate \$119,229,000 spent on the 27 look back projects, anywhere from 28.73% (\$34,253,000) to 81.29% (\$96,922,000) was spent that had an impact or benefit on EJ and Title VI populations.
- As with the previous table, no impacted was identified for the EJ LEP Household population due to the limited number of block groups (one) that meet the EJ criteria.

Table 6-9: FFY 2015-2019 TIP Five Year Look Back Projects Equity Analysis Summary – Project Costs

	EJ Block Groups			FTA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Block Groups		FHWA Title VI Census Tracts		
	Income (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	LEP HH (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	Low Income (\$ * 1,000)	Elderly (\$ * 1,000)	Minority (\$ * 1,000)	Disabilities (\$ * 1,000)	Foreign Born (\$ * 1,000)	Language (\$ * 1,000)
Total Cost of TIP Projects in Region	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229	\$119,229
Total Cost of Projects Impacted by EJ/Title VI Populations	\$34,253	\$49,085	\$0	\$96,922	\$92,828	\$78,188	\$60,561	\$55,272	\$59,749	\$36,078
Percentage of EJ/Title VI Project Costs vs. Total Regional Project Costs	28.73%	41.17%	0.00%	81.29%	77.86%	65.58%	50.79%	46.36%	50.11%	30.26%

Summary of Equity Analysis for Highway Projects

The percentage of TIP funds that have been allocated in Environmental Justice and FHWA or FTA areas is greater than the percentage of the region's population that reside in those areas. Overall, it can be determined that the projects implemented through the TIP process in the past five years have benefitted the Environmental Justice and Title VI populations in an equitable manner. Such analysis will be conducted on a yearly basis to ensure that the Environmental Justice and Title VI populations continue to benefit from the transportation planning process in the Montachusett Region.

Public Right of Way – ADA Transition Plans

As part of the Montachusett Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), MRPC staff coordinated with the MassDOT effort, and other MRPC staff efforts, to bring about municipal Americans with



Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan compliance in the MRPC region. The ADA Act provides standards that secure accessibility of public services and facilities for people with disabilities.

What is a Plan?

- A Plan details how accessibility issues or deficiencies within the PROW will be corrected, scheduled, budgeted for, and monitored for progress and compliance
- A Plan is a living document that must be updated regularly as projects are completed or changes occur within the PROW to reflect real world conditions and monitor any noncompliance areas within the public right of way

What led to Plans being required?

- The Americans with Disabilities Act - 1990, ADA, is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability
- Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination in all services, programs and activities provided to persons with disabilities by State and Local governments, including the pedestrian facilities in the PROW
- The ADA applies to all facilities built both before and after 1990

MRPC Member Municipalities ADA Plan Compliance

To accomplish this task for Member Municipalities, the MRPC first sought to learn the full ADA Transition Plan (ADA Plan - is for all services, programs and activities, not only PROW) compliance status for each Member Municipality. Staff sought to assess the ADA Plan compliance status of each Member Municipality as follows:

- Sought MassDOT input from their ongoing public engagement process for the purpose of possibly obtaining the ADA Plan compliance status of each Member Municipality
- Sought input from the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) concerning the ADA Plan compliance status of each Member Municipality
- Communicated this effort to the Member Municipalities at meetings and other venues
- Developed an online ADA Plan Status Survey (Survey) for Member Municipalities to complete



- Member Municipalities were notified that the Survey was available for their completion on Monday May 7th, 2018. The Survey was closed on Friday June 1st, 2018

Municipal ADA Plan Status Survey Key Findings

17 of 22 (77%) of the MRPC Member Municipalities completed the Survey

Key Survey Findings:

Key Question: Does your Municipality have an ADA Plan in place?

- Seven (41%) Municipalities **DO NOT HAVE** an ADA Plan in place

All seven are interested in:

- Developing an ADA Plan
- Receiving assistance to develop an ADA Plan
- Receiving training to develop an ADA Plan

Six of the seven:

- Agreed to be contacted at a later date with additional follow up info pertaining to developing an ADA Plan

- Seven (41%) Municipalities **HAVE** an ADA Plan in place

Of the seven Municipalities that HAVE an ADA Plan in place, six Municipalities

- Need to update their ADA Plan
- Are interested in updating their ADA Plan and may be interested in receiving assistance to update the ADA Plan

Of the seven Municipalities, five agreed to be contacted at a later date with additional follow up info pertaining to developing an ADA Plan

- Two Municipal Officials completed the Survey for each of the three remaining Municipalities that completed the Survey

Of those Municipalities:

- One Municipality has an ADA Plan in place and does not need to be updated
- One Municipality has an ADA Plan in place that needs to be updated, is interested receiving assistance to update the ADA Plan and agreed to be



contacted at a later date with additional follow up info pertaining to updating the ADA Plan

- One Municipality is interested in developing an ADA Plan, is interested receiving assistance to develop an ADA Plan and agreed to be contacted at a later date with additional follow up info pertaining to developing an ADA Plan

Survey Summary

Of the 17 Member Municipalities that completed the Survey:

- Eight (47%) Municipalities need ADA Plan development
- Seven (41%) Municipalities need an updated ADA Plan
- Two (12%) Municipalities do not need an ADA Plan or an ADA Plan Update

Lancaster Pilot Plan

Since the completion of the Survey, Staff began the development of a Pilot Plan with the Town of Lancaster (Town). Staff began with the Self-evaluation phase of the Plan which, in cooperation with Town officials, created a municipal ADA Advisory Team that includes:

- Local ADA Officials
- Disabled community members
- Public works
- Disabled advocates
- Other interested parties and Staff

The ADA Advisory Team met to discuss the expectations, need, importance and purpose of the Plan. Staff then conducted a technical survey with a local volunteer of a prioritized list of the existing PROW pedestrian facilities within Town jurisdiction. However, pedestrian facility elements such as curb ramp width, ramp running slope, ramp cross slope and gutter flow line slope were not measured for compliance. The Pilot Plan was put on hold as the MRPC decided to take this task in a new direction by procuring a consultant to undertake this task.

Procuring a Consultant

After going through an extensive procurement process, the MRPC procured Stantec as a consultant to assist Staff in completing Plans for three Member Municipalities. Stantec has the



traffic engineering experience that is needed to assist Staff in completing the Plans and is well informed of the current Federal and Massachusetts guidelines and design standards for evaluating the compliance of PROW pedestrian facilities. Stantec has completed Plans for Somerville, MA and other municipalities in Massachusetts. The three Member Municipalities that Plans will be completed for include Lancaster, Lunenburg and Winchendon.

Transit Equity

The Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) operates the fixed route transit system in the region. Fixed route service is concentrated within the urban cities of Fitchburg, Leominster and Gardner. Over the years, service has expanded slowly into neighboring communities based upon need, local requests and area attractions. MART has been striving to accomplish many of the goals that were set established in the 2015 RTP. Below are some bullets points on the many changes and growth experienced – or perhaps not experienced over the last four years.

1. MART, as a result of the Comprehensive Service Analysis, revised its bus schedules for all local routes in Fitchburg/Leominster and Gardner effective in September 2015.
2. Route 11 was re-routed to the new Great Wolf Lodge resort in Fitchburg to accommodate the workforce of that business.
3. Brokerage services continue to increase in volume every year. Services have grown from \$105 million in 2014 to \$160 million in 2018.
4. MART added three new fixed route shuttles since the last RTP:
 - a. Wachusett Shuttle run between Gardner and Wachusett Station began on 9/30/2016 to coincide with the opening of Wachusett Station.
 - b. On April 24, 2017 MART began a pilot project to provide service between Fitchburg/Leominster, Shirley, Ayer and the Devens Enterprise Zone. The service was designed by a public-private collaborative between MART, the Devens Enterprise Commission, Mass Development, and private companies.



- c. On June 4, 2018 MART began a “last mile” commuter rail shuttle service. This shuttle travels between the MBTA Littleton Commuter Rail Station and run along Route 110 in Littleton and Westford out to the Westford Technology Park.

Additionally, on a regular basis, the MRPC conducts Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the fixed route communities that involve a review of demographics, attractions and local public outreach to identify issues and needs for the system. From these studies, adjustments are made to better serve the population.

In September 2018, the Montachusett MPO endorsed a “Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HST)” Update that documents the region’s unmet human-service transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals (or persons below the poverty level) and the elderly. The target populations for the CPT-HST align with the Title VI and EJ target populations.

The CPT-HST Plan was developed as a tool to help local transportation providers and communities improve transportation services, increase efficiency of service delivery, and expand outreach to meet growing needs. It also seeks to provide a framework to guide the investment of existing transportation resources and the acquisition of future funds. A series of priorities and recommendations are included in the CPT-HST Update to address transit equity issues and are incorporated in this RTP within the Transit chapter.

Trends

After analyzing the types of projects being implemented, it seems that the majority of highway projects continue to consist of improvements to already existing infrastructure (ex. roadway resurfacing and rehabilitation, and bridge repair) as opposed to building new facilities and therefor do not bear an undue burden or benefit as compared to the rest of the region. These types of projects allow for smoother navigation through these areas (by personal vehicle, bicycling, walking or public transit) and provide improved access for commuting.



The region continues to make strong connections with Title VI and EJ populations through email communication and meeting attendance. This pattern continues to increase yet the return on participation has yet to catch up. It is the hope that participation will show signs of increasing as the connections continue to grow.

Recommendations

The MRPC continues to strive to solicit meaningful participation with Title VI and EJ populations through their Public Participation Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan, and its submittals to MassDOT and the Federal transportation agencies through the Title VI. For this planning document there was extensive outreach to the EJ and Title VI populations by both daytime and evening meetings with locations along the public transportation routes, contacted public service agencies, online surveys in English and Spanish, and were included as meeting topics during other agency meetings. With that being said, there is always room for improvement. These improvements may include the following:

- Advance the outreach process by making stronger connections with Title VI and Environmental Justice type organizations and individuals.
- Continue to coordinate with local communities/organizations/advocates to monitor and address issues as they relate to identified target populations.
- Expand our mailing list to include other Title VI and EJ populations and organizations.
- Continue to monitor and advocate for TIP projects that show a benefit to Title VI and EJ areas.

Equity in the Development of Recommendations

A majority of the recommendations developed were not targeted towards a specific EJ/Title VI population but rather were based upon comments received and the trends and deficiencies identified throughout the RTP development process. The needs of the equity populations do however play a role in the recommendation development process, i.e. the specific needs of these individuals have benefits beyond their particular populations. Improvements such as expanded



transit options, improved road, bicycle and pedestrian networks, medical, commercial and employment access and safety improvements, affect the efficiency, reliability and accessibility of the various transportation networks in the Montachusett region and subsequently benefit all populations. This same approach was utilized in the development of the planning scenarios discussed later in this RTP.