



8 Montachusett Planning Scenarios



MONTACHUSETT PLANNING SCENARIOS

Executive Order No. 579 established the Commission on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth. This Commission was charged with examining issues related to transportation in Massachusetts in the year 2040. Five key trends identified for consideration by the Commission included: “changing demographics; a more volatile climate; disruptive technological advances; increased electrification; and a higher level of automation.” In response to this Executive Order, the Commission compiled and released a report entitled “*Choices for Stewardship: Recommendations to Meet the Transportation Future.*”

MRPC staff reviewed this document during the RTP development. Along with feedback from MassDOT, it was decided to use a scenario planning approach for the Montachusett Region. Subsequently, using the Commission report as a guide and based on trends and data, applicable scenarios were developed for the region.

Massachusetts Commission on the Future of Transportation Planning

As mentioned, part of the state Commission’s work, a scenario planning approach was utilized. Scenario planning is used as a tool to describe possible future scenarios/alternatives as a way to consider various future funding options or investments.

Based on a review and analysis of trends in the state and in transportation, four scenarios were developed and considered by the Commission. These scenarios are summarized in the following section.



1. Scenario 1 – Gridlock

Headline - The fast growth of Boston and its surrounding municipalities has continued, but without expansion of existing transportation capacity.

Summary - Jobs and housing continue to grow primarily in the Greater Boston region (GBR). However, employers are frustrated with Boston's high-density commercial and housing environment, and its residents, who once embraced city-oriented life, are discouraged by traffic congestion and unreliable and inconsistent public transit service. Alternatives to SOV travel are not as convenient, reliable, or available as projections had suggested. Investment in active transportation infrastructure is limited and considered supplemental to traditional infrastructure needs. These issues are causing residents and employers to look for opportunities outside of the GBR and the state in general. Other regional job hubs in the state face the same threats as the GBR. Despite Mobility as a Service (MaaS) opportunities inside the core, uneven adoption of transportation technologies and new mobility services exacerbates congestion, GHG emissions, social inequities, and conflicts between public, private, and new mobility transportation services.

2. Scenario 2 – Vibrant Core

Headline - The GBR continues to grow, supported by new transportation technologies and systems that facilitate the success of a vibrant and livable metro region.

Summary - Jobs and housing growth continues primarily in Boston's core and close-in communities, especially those with MBTA service. With employers who still value face-to-face interaction over remote work environments and a society that embraces city-oriented life, the GBR has absorbed most of the state's jobs and population growth while some rural communities located farther away from Boston shrink as they continue to lose population. Many communities in the GBR feature high-density, walkable commercial and housing environments. However, the cost of housing and commercial property pushes some people and businesses to more affordable areas farther from the Boston-centric core, effectively growing the footprint of the urban core to Rt 495 and beyond. The adoption of technology advances in C/AVs, supported by a sophisticated clean energy demand/supply grid, combined with a shared approach to MaaS, support a vibrant, livable, and mobile core on target to meet GHG and related goals. Reliable public transit and micro-mobility options provide trips around the core and beyond.



3. Scenario 3 – Multiple Hubs

Headline - High-density growth takes place in several cities and their regions throughout the Commonwealth. Increased density and expanded mobility options create the opportunity to take advantage of lower cost housing and promotes job creation outside of the GBR core.

Summary - Jobs and housing growth happen in regional hub cities with their own economies, cultural identities, histories, and challenges. This dispersed growth occurs because the GBR and Boston itself is crowded, expensive, vulnerable to extreme weather, and hard to traverse. The commercial and housing development generally concentrates in the core of the regional hub cities and also drives growth in less dense suburbs. In these regions, there is the adoption of C/AV and MaaS with travel by shared rides, and many of the RTAs have come together with the private sector to adapt a new paradigm of serving lower density hubs and travel between them. Outside of these regions, adoption of new transportation technologies and new mobility options is more limited due to longstanding infrastructure challenges and the aging of populations in rural and low-density communities. Because economic development is distributed throughout the state, most rural communities are not far from opportunities for jobs, education, shopping, healthcare, etc. The growth in electric vehicles of all types is supported by a sophisticated clean energy demand/supply grid, which moves the Commonwealth toward meeting its GHG emissions targets and related goals. However, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has increased as the rise of C/AVs and EVs both incentivize the use of and mitigates some negative impacts of SOV travel.

4. Scenario 4 – Statewide Spread

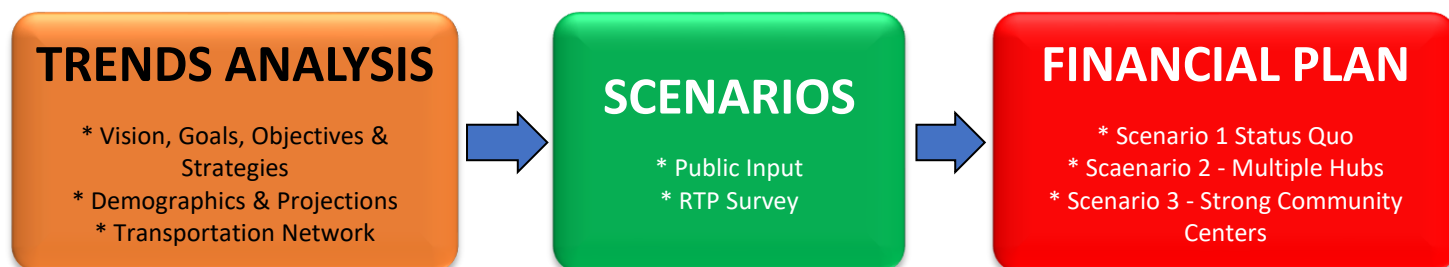
Headline - Technology has transformed not just transportation but every aspect of people's lives, including work, communication, commerce, and service delivery. This widespread use of technology allows for more choice for those with access to technology, while potentially disadvantaging others.

Summary - Jobs and housing growth are spread across the state in communities of all sizes and types as the importance of physical location has diminished via increased reliance on telecommunications networks. However, reliance on ride and vehicle sharing including MaaS and public transit is low outside of the GBR and other regions with a critical mass of people and jobs which is a result of the marginal cost of running transit service remaining high in those areas against increasingly more affordable C/AVs and EVs. Inside the Greater Boston core, the MBTA has effectively been forced to expand by including new mobility options such as shared rides as well as active transportation options like e-bikes and scooters alongside traditional buses, subways, and paratransit vehicles in order to remain competitive. Climate change makes many areas unviable for residents and businesses but new connections are forged between regions as population spreads out. Social equity is an increased concern as many workers displaced by technology face ongoing high rates of unemployment; and seniors and others with more limited mobility options are "stranded" in place, needing access to affordable housing and transportation to critical services and jobs.



Montachusett Scenario Planning

As previously stated, after a review of scenarios developed by the Commission, staff developed some scenarios based on the general concepts put forward by the Commission but more



applicable to the region's trends and communities. From an analysis of the trends identified in the prior sections of the RTP as well as the stated Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies, three different scenarios were compiled. Along with the broader concepts of each scenario, a list of applicable funding options and concepts were also examined. These funding options (or programs) are based upon input derived through the outreach process and detailed in the Public Outreach, Input and Participation chapter of this RTP. By tying program funding options to the scenario concepts, a financial plan can be developed and evaluated. The following chapter of the RTP provides more detailed information regarding the financial analysis conducted for the scenarios. The developed Montachusett scenarios are summarized on the following pages.

Scenario Development Summary

1. Scenarios developed by the Commission on the Future of Transportation in the Commonwealth were reviewed. Trend analysis was also examined to see how they relate to the developed scenarios.
2. Regional trends in demographics and projections were identified. Issues such as an aging population, changes in housing and employment, increases in educational attainment, etc. help to identify needs that must be addressed in order for municipalities and the region to continue to grow and thrive. As an example, the projected slowdown in population, employment and household growth, will need to be addressed by communities as they determine how to best provide access to basic necessities for their residents.



3. An analysis of responses derived from the RTP survey highlight how residents and officials prioritize transportation needs as well as how they characterize their communities now and in the future. The results indicate that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the existing character of their town and wish to see that it is maintained in the future, i.e. a bedroom community now and a bedroom community 25 years from now. This would indicate that large scale expansion of the highway network is not a favorable solution/scenario to address the projected demographic changes. Rather scenarios should make use of the current road networks (with safety and infrastructure upgrades), expand and enhance bike, pedestrian and transit options within and across communities and maintain the regions current characteristics. The question therefore to ask is, “Do municipalities want to stay within their boundaries and provide more opportunities for residents by improved local mobility (Scenario 3 Strong Community Centers) or do they take advantage of established commercial and employment districts in the region by improved long distance mobility (Scenario 2 Multiple Hubs)?”
4. This question, in conjunction with the Regional Vision Statement that seeks to “*provide a multi-modal transportation system that is safe, secure, efficient and affordable to all individuals*” led to the three scenarios developed and outlined in this chapter.

1. Scenario 1 – Status Quo

Scenario 1 relates to the Statewide Scenario 1 – Gridlock in that growth is expected to continue in the Greater Boston region without any expansion of transportation capacity. Within the Montachusett Region, communities will continue the approach of addressing network problems as they arise. Municipalities lack funding that would allow them to pro-actively identify and implement projects in order to offset impacts associated with the growth in the eastern part of the state. Unable to actively fund the needed designs required as part of the project development process in a timely fashion, most communities must allocate funds over several years in order to see one project advance. Consequently, deterioration continues across the transportation networks leading to more complicated and costly improvement projects. This scenario assumes that conditions remain as is, i.e. the “Status Quo.”



During the TIP process, projects continue to be funded as in previous years. An examination of Federal Aid eligible Target projects from FFY 2010 to 2020, when categorized along the same lines as the RTP survey descriptions, shows that of the \$163.5 million programmed, approximately 66% went towards Road Maintenance & Infrastructure, 13% towards Safety and 11% towards Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities. No funds were defined as supporting, Transit Options and Regional or Community Access.

Average Percent of Total Funding Per Category FFY 2010 to FFY 2020		
Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	\$107,666,164	65.83%
Safety (High Crash Locations)	\$20,999,284	12.84%
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	\$17,392,242	10.63%
Complete Streets	\$9,744,916	5.96%
Climate Change & Environment	\$4,248,888	2.60%
Congestion Relief	\$3,494,626	2.14%
Transit Options		
Regional Access		
Community Access		
Totals	\$163,546,120	100.00%

Montachusett Region - Scenario 1 Status Quo Summary

Headline - Population and household growth continue while employment continues to decline in the Montachusett Region. No changes or expansions are planned or made to the existing transportation systems.

Description - By 2040 employment has declined across the region as employers find it difficult to attract perspective workers due to limited commercial options. Households increase as a result of the advantages housing costs of the Montachusett Region and the commuter rail option offered by the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail line. The problems associated with the existing system remain as any growth adds to current congestion, safety and accessibility issues.

Highlights

- Job declines continue as state growth is concentrated in the Greater Boston area.
- Alternatives to single occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel like ride-sharing and vehicle-sharing are not as convenient, reliable, or available.
- Investment in active transportation infrastructure is limited and considered supplemental to traditional infrastructure needs.
- The population of some rural towns and cities may shrink as they lose working age population.

Transportation Investments – Projects and investments in the entire transportation and transit network remain relatively unplanned. Projects are developed and prioritized as problems within the system arise. The region continues to try to play “catch-up” to various deteriorating conditions. As a result, little progress is made in the overall performance of the various components of the network.



2. Scenario 2 – Multiple Hubs

This Scenario assumes that within the Montachusett Region, the municipalities that are the current major commercial, industrial and employment centers continue in that role much like Scenario 3 developed by the MA Future Transportation Commission. As growth spreads from the Boston region, communities expand their housing options and seek to retain their rural, small community characteristics and lifestyles. In order to do this, they will seek to improve and expand their connections to the existing commercial and employment centers or “regional hubs.” Thus, the focus is on “**inter-community**” connections, i.e. longer distance roads and networks that facilitate travel between communities. This assists residents as they seek out employment or goods but still maintain the “laid back” rural lifestyle.

Transportation funding under this Scenario puts a greater emphasis on improving and maintaining their long distance, major roads and networks. Roads such as Route 12, Route 119, etc. facilitate the flow of residents to jobs and goods, therefore, the need to keep these “inter-community” networks efficient and viable.

As defined in the Public Outreach, Input and Participation chapter of this RTP, a preferred emphasis of Montachusett Federal Aid Target funds was derived as follows:

	Funding Percentage Per Strategy Federal Aid Target Funds MRPC Communities	
		%
1	Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%
2	Transit Options	14%
3	Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%
4	Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%
5	Climate Change & Environment	6%
6	Congestion Relief	4%
7	Complete Streets	5%
8	Regional Access	5%
9	Community Access	4%
10	Other	1%

To advance projects that would meet the needs of Scenario 2, each of the listed funding strategy can then be broken down further to ensure a majority of the strategy funds goes towards advancing “inter-community” projects and networks. This results in a funding strategy for Scenario 2 as follows:



	Funding Percentage Per Strategy Federal Aid Target Funds Scenario 2 – Multiple Hubs	Total Allocation % to Funding Category	Allocated % Funding Towards Inter Community Network	Allocated % Towards Remaining Projects
1	Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%	30%	10%
2	Transit Options	14%	10%	4%
3	Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%	10%	2%
4	Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%	7%	2%
5	Climate Change & Environment	6%	4%	2%
6	Congestion Relief	4%	3%	1%
7	Complete Streets	5%	3%	2%
8	Regional Access	5%	5%	0%
9	Community Access	4%	4%	0%
10	Other	1%	1%	0%

Projects or Federal funding categories that can meet these identified strategies include but are not limited to the following types:

Strategy	Project Funding or Type
Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	STBG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurfacing • Rehabilitation • Full Depth Reconstruction • Box Widening • Geometric Improvements
Safety	HSIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal Installation/Upgrade • Roundabout Construction • Pavement Markings/Signage • Guardrails • Geometric Improvements
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	TAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail Construction - On & Off Street • Sidewalks • Benches & Bike Racks/Shelters • Trail Signage & Markings
Complete Streets	STBG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening for Bike & Ped Lanes • Sidewalks • Crosswalks • Ped Signals • ADA Upgrades & Improvements
Climate Change & Environment	CMAQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion Reduction • Air Quality Improvements • Signal Re-Timing • Stormwater Runoff • Drainage Improvements • Catch Basin Installation

Strategy	Project Type
Congestion Relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection Improvements • Corridor Improvements • Interchange Upgrades • Signal Re-Timing
Transit Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Street Bus Cutouts • Sidewalk Improvements on/to Bus Routes • Sidewalk Improvements on/to Commuter Rail • ADA Access Improvement • Rolling Stock (Bus/Van)
Regional Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Highway Resurfacing/Improvements • Signage Upgrades • Accel/Deccell Lane Improvements
Community Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage Upgrades • Resurfacing • Geometric Improvements • Sidewalks
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Routes to School



Montachusett Region - Scenario 2 Multiple Hubs Summary

Headline - Growth takes place across the Montachusett Region as well as throughout the Commonwealth. Expanded mobility options create the opportunity to take advantage of housing costs and expanded markets outside of the Greater Boston core which includes Montachusett Region cities and towns. The region's larger, more urban communities, i.e. Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner, Athol and Clinton, remain the major commercial and employment destinations for the more rural communities. Longer distance commutes to Boston and Worcester continue.

Description - More dispersed growth occurs in the Montachusett Region because Greater Boston, and Boston itself, is crowded, expensive, vulnerable to extreme weather, and difficult travel. Greater Worcester also shares similar traits to a lesser extent. This results in Montachusett Region cities being transformed into regional hub cities and several towns into hub towns. This is also due to the supply of relatively affordable business and residential real estate in relation to Greater Boston and Greater Worcester. As a result, travel between communities and regional hubs are an emphasis area for transportation investments in order to facilitate **inter-community** movement.

Highlights

- Job and housing growth occur in the Montachusett Region hub cities, and rural towns due to:
- Expanded mobility options.
- The significant and relatively higher congestion and cost of living in the Greater Boston and Greater Worcester regions.
- Their own economies, cultural identities, histories, and challenges.
- In the Montachusett Region, Connected and Autonomous vehicles (C/AV) with travel by shared rides is adopted. The RTA has joined with the private sector to serve lower density towns and the travel between them. However, challenges remain due to the infrastructure and the aging population.
- Because economic development is concentrated among the larger hub cities throughout the Montachusett Region, rural towns within the Montachusett Region are not far from opportunities for jobs, education, shopping, healthcare, etc.
- The growth in electric vehicles of all types is supported.
- The commercial and housing development generally concentrates in the Montachusett Region hub cities and helps to drive growth in neighboring towns.

Transportation Investments – Projects and investments are developed based upon results from the RTP development process that prioritized investments with MPO target funds in the following breakdown:



Funding Program Category	Percent of Target Funds to Allocate	Percent to Sub Allocate to <u>INTER-Community</u> Facilities
Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%	21% plus
Transit Options	14%	8% plus
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%	7% plus
Climate Change & Environment	6%	4% plus
Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%	5% plus
Congestion Relief	4%	2% plus
Complete Streets	5%	3% plus
Regional Access	5%	5%
Community Access	4%	4%
Other (TBD)	1%	1%

For further detail on the development of the prioritized categories, please refer to the Public Input and Financial chapters of this report.

To facilitate movement between rural towns and hub centers, additional emphasis within the funding categories is placed on long distance **inter-community** roads, facilities and transit options. As an example: within the Road Maintenance & Infrastructure program, 40% of available target funds are allocated to these types of projects and within this category the majority of this 40% is then sub allocated to the identified **inter-community** facilities. These facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Road ways such as Routes 12, 13, 68, 117, 119, 140, 202, etc.;
- Trails that reach across municipalities and allow for long distance travel;
- Transit connections to and from rural towns and commuter rail facilities;
- Fixed route connections to commercial and employment centers to and from rural towns;
- Safety and congestion improvements along these routes and within hub communities.

As a result, progress is made in the overall performance of the various components of the network and corresponding improvements in housing costs, population retention and employment are seen as travel is more efficient.

3. Scenario 3 – Strong Community Centers

Scenario 3 assumes that each community within the Montachusett Region would seek to grow and enhance their own particular municipality through the improvement of transportation networks within their boundaries. Emphasis would be place on developing a strong town center area or destination that supports the commercial and employment needs of their citizens. As in the prior scenario, growth spreads from the Boston region and communities seek to expand their housing and employment options in order to attract new residents and retain their current ones.



To do this, transportation investments focus on “intra-community” facilities rather than those systems that would take individuals out of the community to shop, work, etc. By prioritizing the travel needs within their existing borders, strong town or community centers can be obtained.

As with Scenario 2, this Scenario would also make use of the preferred emphasis of Montachusett Federal Aid Target funds as outlined above, i.e. the emphasis funding categories and their percent of emphasis remain the same.

	Funding Percentage Per Strategy Federal Aid Target Funds MRPC Communities	
		%
1	Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%
2	Transit Options	14%
3	Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%
4	Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%
5	Climate Change & Environment	6%
6	Congestion Relief	4%
7	Complete Streets	5%
8	Regional Access	5%
9	Community Access	4%
10	Other	1%

To advance the projects that meet the needs of Scenario 3, each of the listed and identified funding strategies are broken down further to ensure a majority of the strategy funds goes towards advancing “intra-community” projects and networks. This results in a funding strategy for Scenario 3 similar to Scenario 2. The difference would be seen in the TIP process by the types of projects prioritized and funded.

	Funding Percentage Per Strategy Federal Aid Target Funds Scenario 2 – Multiple Hubs	Total Allocation % to Funding Category	Allocated % Funding Towards Inter Community Network	Allocated % Towards Remaining Projects
1	Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%	30%	10%
2	Transit Options	14%	10%	4%
3	Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%	10%	2%
4	Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%	7%	2%
5	Climate Change & Environment	6%	4%	2%
6	Congestion Relief	4%	3%	1%
7	Complete Streets	5%	3%	2%
8	Regional Access	5%	5%	0%
9	Community Access	4%	4%	0%
10	Other	1%	1%	0%



Again, the types of projects and Federal funding categories that meet the goals of Scenario 3 include but are not limited to the following:

Strategy	Project Funding or Type	Strategy	Project Type
Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	STBG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurfacing • Rehabilitation • Full Depth Reconstruction • Box Widening • Geometric Improvements 	Congestion Relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection Improvements • Corridor Improvements • Interchange Upgrades • Signal Re-Timing
Safety	HSIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signal Installation/Upgrade • Roundabout Construction • Pavement Markings/Signage • Guardrails • Geometric Improvements 	Transit Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Street Bus Cutouts • Sidewalk Improvements on/to Bus Routes • Sidewalk Improvements on/to Commuter Rail • ADA Access Improvement • Rolling Stock (Bus/Van)
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	TAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail Construction - On & Off Street • Sidewalks • Benches & Bike Racks/Shelters • Trail Signage & Markings 	Regional Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Highway Resurfacing/Improvements • Signage Upgrades • Accel/Deccell Lane Improvements
Complete Streets	STBG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening for Bike & Ped Lanes • Sidewalks • Crosswalks • Ped Signals • ADA Upgrades & Improvements 	Community Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage Upgrades • Resurfacing • Geometric Improvements • Sidewalks
Climate Change & Environment	CMAQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion Reduction • Air Quality Improvements • Signal Re-Timing • Stormwater Runoff • Drainage Improvements • Catch Basin Installation 	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Routes to School

Montachusett Region - Scenario 3 Strong Community Centers Summary

Headline - Growth takes place across the Montachusett Region as well as throughout the Commonwealth. Expanded mobility options create the opportunity to take advantage of housing costs and expanded markets outside of the Greater Boston core which includes Montachusett Region cities and towns. The region's communities take advantage of these conditions by seeking to upgrade and improve travel within their communities and in particular to their town centers which are typically the major commercial and employment centers.

Description - More dispersed growth occurs in the Montachusett Region because Greater Boston, and Boston itself, is crowded, expensive, vulnerable to extreme weather, and difficult travel. Greater Worcester also shares similar traits to a lesser extent. This results in Montachusett Region municipalities improving mobility within their communities in order to



foster growth in housing, commercial and where appropriate employment centers. Improved, safer **intra-community** networks result in a more vibrant town center for all populations. Travel within communities is an emphasis area for transportation investments in order to facilitate and continue community growth.

Highlights

- Job and housing growth occur in the Montachusett Region cities, and towns due to:
- Expanded mobility options within the communities.
- The significant and relatively higher congestion and cost of living in the Greater Boston and Greater Worcester regions.
- Their own economies, cultural identities, histories, and challenges.
- The RTA has joined with the private sector to serve lower density towns. However, challenges remain due to the infrastructure and the cost of service start-up and operation.
- In the Montachusett Region, Connected and Autonomous vehicles (C/AV) are limited, especially in the smaller communities.
- Modes such as walking and bicycling are enhanced and gain in popularity as sidewalks, trails and streets are improved.
- Expansion of Safe Routes to School are seen as walking/biking connections to community schools are promoted.
- Travel by shared rides is adopted.
- Because **intra-community** access is improved, economic development is spread throughout the Montachusett Region. Rural towns within the region now have more opportunities for jobs, education, shopping, healthcare, etc.
- The growth in electric vehicles of all types is supported.
- Commercial and housing development is seen throughout Montachusett Region.

Transportation Investments – Projects and investments are developed based upon results from the RTP development process that prioritized investments with MPO target funds in the following breakdown:

Funding Program Category	Percent of Target Funds to Allocate	Percent to Sub Allocate to <u>INTRA</u> - Community Facilities
Road Maintenance & Infrastructure	40%	21% plus
Transit Options	14%	8% plus
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	12%	7% plus
Climate Change & Environment	6%	4% plus
Safety (High Crash Locations)	9%	5% plus
Congestion Relief	4%	2% plus
Complete Streets	5%	3% plus
Regional Access	5%	5%
Community Access	4%	4%
Other (TBD)	1%	1%



For further detail on the development of the prioritized categories, please refer to the Public Input and Financial chapters of this report.

To facilitate movement through a community and towards the town center, additional emphasis within the funding categories is placed on what are considered as **intra-community** roads, facilities and transit options. This would be the opposite of the prior scenario, i.e. shorter travel networks and options. Again, as an example: within the Road Maintenance & Infrastructure program, 40% of available target funds are allocated to these types of projects and then within this category the majority of this 40% is then sub allocated to the identified **intra-community** facilities. These projects include, but are not limited to:

- Sidewalk connections to the town center;
- ADA improvements within the community;
- Safety improvements at locations in a community that might impact local travel patterns;
- Road projects on eligible travel ways such as Routes 12, 13, 68, 117, 119, 140, 202, etc. but with short project limits;
- Trails that improve access within the community and to local commercial, municipal or employment centers;
- Transit/ride share options for community residents to facilities in the municipality, such as medical and commercial locations;
- Transit connections to and from rural towns and commuter rail facilities remain an area of interest and when possible emphasis.

As a result, progress is made in the performance of the community's transportation network along with a corresponding improvement in housing costs and population retention as the community becomes more attractive and easier to navigate for its residents.

Conclusion

The development of future planning scenarios for the Montachusett Region are focused on two options that emphasize how local communities will work to meet their future demands. Expected continued growth in the Greater Boston area, along with current demographic trends, should provide municipalities with the continued potential to grow and expand. How this growth is managed is reflected in Scenarios 2, Multiple Hubs, and Scenario 3, Strong Community Centers. Both scenarios allow the communities to grow but they differ on how it is managed. Project priorities differ but the funding allocations and categories are consistent between the two scenarios.



Scenario 2 seeks to promote and emphasize the longer transportation networks that connect one town to another. This promotes inter (or between) community access at the cost of the in-town transportation networks.

Scenario 3 places the priority on projects that promote travel within (or intra) the community. An emphasis on funding a shorter more contained transportation network promotes a more vibrant town center.

Action related to the advancement of these scenarios would occur as part of project development process by the municipalities and within the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) prioritization and development process.