What is the Unified Planning Work Program?

The Unified Planning Work Program, (UPWP) is the federal certification document that details the anticipated work of Merrimack Valley's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO) over the course of a single year. Because MVMPO's primary funding sources are federal aid, the document must show the tasks and subtasks that MVMPO staff intend to perform, how many hours will be dedicated to those tasks, and any projected direct cost expenditures that support MVMPO's work. Staff typically prepare the document in the spring and summer of each year, aiming for MVMPO Board approval by mid-summer. Following endorsement, the work program becomes effective at the start of the new federal fiscal year on October 1.

Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Sources and Uses

Sources

Four different federal aid sources fund 18 subtasks allocated across four different tasks. As is typical, federal Metropolitan Planning Program (PL) funds are the primary source of support of MVMPO work. MVMPO staff also hold a contract with Merrimack Valley Transit (MeVa), the region's transit authority, which passes Section 5307 funds—and in this cycle, potentially American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds—to the MVMPO to support short-term planning work. While $450,000 of ARPA funding has been programmed in previous UPWP cycles and remains programmed in this cycle, MeVa has not yet determined what percentage of those funds will be passed to the MVMPO for short-term planning. Finally, the FY24 UPWP programs Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program funding, which will result in the development and endorsement of a comprehensive safety action plan. Figure 1 and and Figure 2 summarize the FFY24 UPWP's percentage of funding sources, with and without potential ARPA funds.
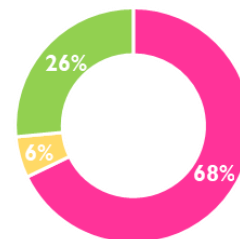
Figure 1 - Program Sources incl. ARPA and Figure 2 - Program Sources excl. ARPA

Program Sources, including ARPA Funds
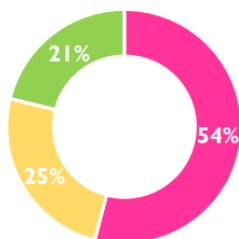
- Metropolitan Planning (PL) — 54%
- Section 5307 and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) — 25%
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) — 21%

Program Sources, excluding ARPA Funds

- Metropolitan Planning (PL) — 68%
- Section 5307 Only — 6%
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) — 26%

Uses: Tasks, Subtasks and Deliverables

The FFY24 UPWP programs four tasks—3C Program Management, Data Collection and Analysis, Transportation Planning, and Other Planning Support—and 18 total associated subtasks, as listed below. Detailed descriptions of each subtask can be found in Section V. under the "Tasks" header.

Task 1 - 3C Program Management

Subtask 1.1 – Program Management, Support, and Growth

Subtask 1.2 – Public Participation

Subtask 1.3 – Unified Planning Work Program

Subtask 1.4 – Transportation Improvement Program

Subtask 1.5 – Title VI, Environmental Justice and Equity

Task 2 - Data Collection and Analysis

Subtask 2.1 – Supportive Field Services

Subtask 2.2 – Asset Management Program Development

Subtask 2.3 – Supportive GIS and Information Technology

Subtask 2.4 – Travel Time Reliability and Competitiveness

Subtask 2.5 – Benchmarks and Performance Measures

Task 3 - Transportation Planning

Subtask 3.1 – Active Transportation and Complete Streets

Subtask 3.2A – Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Subtask 3.2B – Safe Systems Planning and SS4A Supplemental Work

Subtask 3.3 – Transit Planning

Subtask 3.4 – Regional Vitality

Subtask 3.5 – Network Sustainability and Resilience

Task 4 - Other Planning Support

Subtask 4.1 – County & State Planning Support

Subtask 4.2 – Local Technical Assistance and Grants Coordination

Work on performed in support of these tasks will generate the following deliverables:

- Regional Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (Task 3.2A/3.2B)
- Active Transportation Plan (Task 3.1)
- Fare Free Report for MeVa (Task 3.3)
- Capital Purchase Program (Task 3.4)
- FFY25-29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP, Task 1.4)
- FFY25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP, Task 1.3)
- Revised Transportation Evaluation Criteria Scoring Process (Task 1.4)
- Regional Analysis of Performance Measure One (Task 2.5)

- Traffic Counting for the MS2 Program (to be integrated into a regional web viewer, Tasks 2.1 and 2.3)
- Local and Regional Traffic Counting (to be integrated into a regional web viewer, Tasks 2.1 and 2.3)
- Updated Equity Maps (to be integrated into a regional web viewer, Task 1.5)
- Automatic Passenger Counter Validation for MeVa (Task 3.3)
- American with Disabilities Act Third Party Review for MeVa (Task 3.3)
- Local Technical Assistance Menu (Task 4.2)

The FY24 UPWP also includes resources for continued prospecting and exploration of programs, services, and topics that could potentially support the region. These deliverables are not concrete, but include:
- Pavement and Asset Management Exploration (Task 2.2)
- Bus Stop Planning for MeVa (Task 3.3)
- Interactive Transit-Vehicle Mode Share Competitiveness Mapping (Tasks 2,3 and 2.4)

Figure 3 depicts task expenditures by task and subtask for the purposes of comparison regarding level of effort.

Figure 3 - Comparison of Expenditures by Task and Subtask