

DRAFT Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting
Held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 1:00 PM held jointly with the JTPG meeting
Held Remotely via Zoom due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency in Mass

The following members were in attendance:

Bryan Pounds	Representing Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO, Chair
Bob Wheeler	Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Bill Roth	Representing Shaunna O’Connell, Mayor of Taunton
Shawn McDonald	Town of Dartmouth
Nancy Durfee	Representing Holly McNamara, Town of Somerset
Alan Slavin	SRPEDD Commission Chair
Mark Sousa	Administrator, GATRA

The following were also present:

Lee Azinheira	Town of Mansfield
Joe Callahan	Town of Berkley
Paul Foley	Town of Fairhaven
Mark Hollowell	Town of North Attleborough
Leeann Bradley	Town of Middleborough
Manuel Silva	City of New Bedford
James Hartnett	Town of Westport
Franklin Moniz	Town of Lakeville
Fred Cornaglia	City of Taunton
David Cabral	Town of Seekonk
Ed Buckley	Town of Raynham
Norman Hills	Town of Marion
Thomas Ferry	Town of Dighton
Stephanie Crampton	City of New Bedford
Kevin Dumas	Town of Mansfield
Andrew Reovan	FHWA
Mary Ellen DeFrias	MassDevelopment
Janine Peccini	At-Large, City of Taunton
Barbara Lachance	MassDOT
Michelle Ho	MassDOT
Cheryl Senior	MassDOT
Benjamin Muller	MassDOT
Lisa Sherman	CDM Smith

Shawn Syde	City of New Bedford
Jeff Oakes	SouthCoast Bikeway
Joe Federico	BETA Group
Sid Kashi	GPI
Phil Viveriros	McMahon Associates
Jamie Pisano	VHB
Lloyd Mendes	Member of the Public
Karen Porter	SRPEDD
Paul Mission	SRPEDD
Gregory Guertin	SRPEDD
Guoqiang Li	SRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro	SRPEDD
Lilia Cabral-Bernard	SRPEDD
Jackie Jones	SRPEDD
Luis de Oliveira	SRPEDD
Jen Chaves	SRPEDD
Benjamin Menezes	SRPEDD

Handouts:

SMMPO Meeting Draft Minutes November 17, 2020
 FFY2020 UPWP Proposed Amendment for Route 6 Study
 FFY2021-2025 Proposed TIP Amendments #1

SMMPO BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

Chairman Bryan Pounds, representing Secretary Pollack, called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call. Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard reminded the group that this roll call was for the MPO and she would call every member's name to verify who is present. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
GATRA	Yes

2. Approval of Minutes – November 17, 2020 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed)

Chairman Pounds requested a motion to approve the minutes from the SMMPO meeting from November 17, 2020 as presented. The motion was made by Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair and seconded by Mark Sousa of GATRA. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) –

- a. Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 UPWP Amendment for Route 6 Corridor Study **(Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to approve)**

Paul Mission explained that there was an amendment presented to the MPO at the last meeting that was released for 21-day public comment period in regards to a study of the Route 6 corridor. He further explained that there are fatalities and other serious crashes occurring and the board of selectmen in the town of Westport were very concerned, and consulted with the MassDOT District 5 office, as well as with their state representatives. The district office suggested that the corridor be examined by SRPEDD staff as has been done for other corridors, to identify safety problems and to make recommendations for improvements. Essentially, Phase 1 will be a data collection effort that will take place in this fiscal year, which will conclude in September of 2021. Phase 2 will begin in October 2021, where staff will examine future conditions and conduct public outreach. We held a public meeting on December 1, where there were no comments received, nor have we received any written comments over the 21-day public comment period. We need approval by the MPO board to include this in the UPWP to begin work this year.

Chairman Pounds called for a motion to approve the amendment as presented. Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair, made the motion and it was seconded by Shawn McDonald of Dartmouth. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes

City of Taunton	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

4. FFY 2021-2025 TIP Proposed Amendment–

Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 A Highway & Transit Amendments (**Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to approve**)

Lisa Estrela-Pedro presented the FFY2021-2025 TIP amendment which includes both highway and transit amendments. She explained that we are requesting a vote to approve the amendment that was presented at the last SMMPO meeting on November 17. The amendment was released to a 21-day comment period and there was a public meeting held on December 1, where there were no comments at the public meeting or during the comment period. She went on to explain that, on the highway side, there was a redistribution of funds exercise that was conducted at the end of FFY 2020. Funds were obligated to the Route 24 at Route 140 project earlier than anticipated, which triggered this amendment, which is removing those funds from FFY2021. On the transit side, there are several amendments being proposed for GATRA. These include the addition of new projects, including the addition of funding for a parking garage feasibility study in the TOD area surrounding the commuter rail station, and the engineering and construction for a pedestrian walkway on East Fourth Street in Taunton. For SRTA, they have an amendment which includes some additional operating funds, which would be incorporated into FFY 2021.

Chairman Pounds asked for a motion and a second to approve these amendments. A motion was made by Sean McDonald of Dartmouth and it was seconded by Bill Roth of Taunton. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

5. The Date and Time for the Next Meeting –

Mr. Mission announced the date and time for the next meeting as January 19, 2021 at 1pm, held virtually. He explained that there would be the regular meeting and discussion, as well as a public meeting after the MPO meeting as part of the federal certification review.

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Public Comments-Opportunity for the public to address the SMMPO and the JTPG -

Chairman Pounds opened the general meeting to public comments, and offered the opportunity for the public to address the joint board, the MPO and the JTPG. He explained that he would wait a few minutes to see if any members of the public had a comment.

Jeff Oakes, the town of Marion's representative on the South Coast Bikeway Alliance had some questions regarding the town of Marion's shared use path, regarding phase one, which is currently under review by the DOT. He explained that he had spoken with the project engineer last week who indicated the 75% submittal would be presented on December 18 and includes the highway design plan and the right-of-way plans. His question was, in consideration of the 75% plans submittal by the end of the year, is there anything that the South Coast Bikeway Alliance and the town of Marion could do to accelerate the construction funding, which is currently slated for 2024? Is there anything in addition to those submittals that might expedite that?

Bob Wheeler responded that they'll be able to better answer that question once they see the plans which are expected next week.

Chairman Pounds further explained that the STIP is a live document and they come back and revisit it every year. They look at updated design schedules, and if projects that are programmed in the TIP are still on track to advertise in the year they are in. So, if they do feel like a project is ahead of schedule, they do take that into consideration when revising the TIP. So, there is an opportunity in the upcoming months to discuss the project and the status.

Mr Oakes asked a second question involving Phase 2 of the Shared Use Path project in Marion, which has the preferred alternative route on County Road. He explained that given the past feasibility study of Route 6 and ongoing work in the town of Wareham, it looks as though incorporating the shared use path connector from Marion to Wareham along the Route 6 corridor from Point Road to the town line on the Weweantic Bridge might be a better alternative than trying to pursue the County Road route. He then asked, given that, is there anything the South Coast Bikeway Alliance and/or that town of Marion should do to promote or try and get the connector along Route 6 as our preferred alternative for phase 2?

Mr. Wheeler responded that there isn't a good answer for that. He explained that the developing plans for the Marion/Wareham Route 6 bridge over the Weweantic includes bike

accommodations on that bridge. He continued by saying that how that will connect with Point Road, they'll have to discuss as the plans are further developed.

Mr. Oakes asked if there is some point along that planned development where input can be offered regarding the incorporation of the shared use path from Point Road to the Wareham line and when would be the best point to try and interject or get involved?

Mr. Wheeler responded that once the first plan submission in, they will provide comments on the plans and have a comment resolution meeting and at that time we could bring that issue up.

Ms. Jackie Jones offered to comment on the process, explaining that they would need the town and the Southwest Bikeway Alliance to change the routing by some sort of formal vote, and forward the information to SRPEDD to update the routing, and then that will inform state plans as well. Because currently the County Road routing is somewhat problematic and Point Road is about a half mile from the Weweantic River.

2. Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Report – RTA Updates

Mr. Mark Sousa of GATRA informed the group that this Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00, GATRA, working with a local nonprofit, was holding an event to stuff a bus with toys, similar to the Toys for Tots program, but local. He explained that anyone could stop by with a toy donation and staff would be there passing out candy canes. He finished by saying that projects are continuing and they continue to deal with COVID-19.

There was no one present from SRTA for an update.

3. TIP Development

a. Project Updates - Bob Wheeler of MassDOT provided the following updates:

In FFY 2021 -

New Bedford- Intersection Improvements and Related Work at Rockdale Avenue and Allen Street Design is currently at 75%. 100% plans are due this week and the ad date is in March. This will need a TIP Amendment soon.

Raynham- Taunton- Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 138 - At 100% submission. The PS&E are due in February, with an ad date in July.

Non-Target 2021 Projects:

Rehoboth - Reed Street over Palmer River – This is at 100% design.

Seekonk - Resurfacing of Route 44 – The design is at 75%. The 100% submission will be sent in next week.

Fall River - Weaver Street over the Coastal Mass Railroad - The plans are at 75%. The 100% design is scheduled to be submitted next week.

Acushnet - Hamlin Street over the Acushnet River - The review of the final 100% PS&E plans was completed and it's on schedule to be advertised in 2021.

In FFY 2022 -

New Bedford- Intersection Improvements on Acushnet Avenue at Peckham Road/Sassaquin - Working toward 25%. The 25% plans are scheduled to be submitted on January 8.

Rehoboth- Intersection Improvements & Related Work at Winthrop Street (Route 44) and Anawan Street (Route 118) - A roundabout design currently at 75%. The 100% plans are due next week.

Taunton- Reconstruction of Route 44 (Dean Street), From Arlington Street to Route 104 (South Main Street) - At 75% design, currently under review.

Attleboro – Intersection Improvements at Route 1 (Washington Street)/Route 1A (Newport Avenue) and Route 123 (Highland Avenue) - At 75% design, the 100% design plans are due next week.

Swansea- Route 6 at Gardener's Neck Road - 75% design plans are under review.

Regional Non-Target 2022 Projects:

Fall River- Route 79/Davol Street - Public information meeting is scheduled for next June and 25% design is due in July.

Norton-Mansfield - Rail Trail - At 25% design. The 75% design is due in January.

Marion/Wareham - Route 6 Bridge Project over Weweantic River – The 25% submission is due in January.

In FFY 2023 -

Dartmouth - Corridor Improvements on Dartmouth Street and Prospect Street – We received revised concept plans for Prospect Street. A utility meeting and a design public hearing are next.

New Bedford - Corridor Improvements and Related Work on County Street from Nelson Street to Union Street - Currently at 25%, but is pending approval of a Design Exception Report. Once approved, design public hearing can be held.

Dartmouth - Tucker Road, Including Intersection Signalization – MassDOT received concept plans for a redesign to eliminate ROW takings and plans are under review.

Non-Target 2023 projects:

Plainville - Intersection Improvements at Washington Street (Route 1) And George Street - The 25% plans are due March 13.

New Bedford – Route I-195 ramps over Route 18 – The 75% plans are expected January 28, 2022.

In FFY 2024 -

Wareham - Construction of Bike Lanes Along Narrows Road and A Shared Use Path Adjacent to Minot Avenue Including Related Work – At 25% design and currently under review.

Mansfield - Reconstruction on Chauncy Street (Route 106) – The 25% plans are due March 4.

Wareham – Route 6 at Swift’s Beach Road - The 25% design plans are expected April 1.

Taunton- Corridor Improvements and Related Work on Broadway (Route 138), from Purchase Street to Jackson Street (Phase 2) - Waiting for the 25% design plans in January.

Non-target 2024 projects:

Swansea - Signal and Safety Improvements at Route 136, Maple Street, and Route 118 - The 75% plans are due March 30.

Marion - Shared Used Path Phase 1 – The 75% design plans are due next week.

In FFY 2025 -

Plainville - The Reconstruction of Route 1A (South Street) – This is at 25% design.

Mattapoisett- Corridor Improvements and Related Work on Main Street, Water Street, Beacon Street and Marion Road – the 25% plans are due December 21.

Ed Buckley from Raynham asked a question concerning the start of construction on the Route 138 project and Mr. Wheeler responded that it's going to be advertised July 31, so construction may begin three or four months later.

b. Development of FFY 2022-2026 TIP Discussion -

Ms. Lisa Estrela-Pedro began by giving a quick update that staff has begun looking at projects internally, for the draft FFY2022 to 2026 TIP, and have met with District 5 staff to discuss project statuses. TIP readiness days will be taking place sometime in February with the Boston Office and District 5, and feedback is given then, from all the departments, including environmental, right-of-way, so we can get a good handle on where projects should be programmed in the TIP. This is to ensure that everything gets advertised when it's supposed to. Staff will be reaching out to communities to request new project schedules if they have not received any, and reaching out to

those with new projects that have gone through the project review committee to attend the JTPG meeting in January to present their projects, so that we can become more familiar with those to assist staff in completing the evaluation criteria, as well as seeing if there is placement for them in the FFY2022-2026 TIP.

Ms. Estrela further stated that as a snapshot from the current FFY2021 to 2025 TIP, there are three projects in FFY2022 that have increased in cost, one significantly, which is the Taunton Route 44 Dean Street project, causing our target to be over budget by almost \$5 million. Due to this, some of the projects that are currently in this year are going to have to be pushed out, so there will be a ripple effect when this happens. At the next meeting in January, we're hoping to have some scenarios so that the JTPG can be focusing on the development of the new TIP.

Chairman Pounds announced that TIP readiness days will be on February 9 and 10 for SRPEDD, so after these meetings, Lisa will have a better idea where things are in the TIP.

Lisa continued by saying that there are a lot of variables, so it's ever changing, and that the Marion Shared Use Path project discussed earlier in the meeting is currently programmed in FFY2024 and that project is actually being programmed with state wide funds. This means that the SMMPO doesn't have any control over those funds, since MassDOT programs these projects. She said there was no reason to be discouraged, however, since there may be the opportunity for that project to be funded sooner and move up. There are no guarantees, but just keep the project moving.

Chairman Pounds continued by explaining that the statewide program goes through the same process as far as readiness is concerned. They are not just covering the MPO regional target projects that Lisa is showing here, but also the statewide projects.

Mr. Manuel Silva of New Bedford then informed the group that the New Bedford project in FFY2022 was on schedule and will be in on time.

4. Shared Winter Streets and Open Spaces Program Discussion -

Mr. Muller of MassDOT informed the group of the Winter Shared Streets Program. The second of four rounds of applications for these programs are due January 5, with additional rounds later in January and February. Projects through this program would have to be complete and in place by the end of May. This program is a follow-up from the Shared Streets and Spaces grant program which provided about \$10 million. These grants are between \$5,000 and \$300,000 to do quick build improvements to streets and to off-street parking lots, with added incentive for projects that add safe outdoor winter activities, and bonus points for access for seniors and students, for equity populations, for transit improvements, and for investment in new or expanded bike share or other micro mobility programs. Towns may also apply to make previous installations more permanent, regardless of the original finding source. Mr. Muller recommended a website for the city of Edmonton that looks at making the public space a year-round asset during the winter months, including incorporating exercise into public space in the winter. If your town needs guidance, reach out to SRPEDD or to the program managers of the shared streets program.

<https://www.mass.gov/shared-winter-streets-and-spaces-grant-program>

5. SRPEDD Trails Mapping Presentation -

Jackie Jones explained that SRPEDD had launched a trails-mapping program in June to map and collect information on unpaved trails in the region and the goal is to have a consolidated statewide trail database. This effort can also assist communities with trail data needs and potentially help fill some gaps in our multimodal network, and has the potential to assist with tourism efforts.

Staff has thus far collected information on 120 miles of trail, conducting boots-on-the-trail data collection and has added over 200 miles to the database of map trails, some of it through partnerships with municipalities and groups such as the Buzzards Bay coalition, that provided GPS data to us. Staff uses a collector app that allows the use of phones and tablets to collect data right on the trail. This tool is used to record GPS data on previously unmapped trails that only exist on paper and verify the actual trail. Data collected includes surface type, trail condition, parking available and several other factors. Data shows that the majority of trail surface is natural surface, that 64% of trails are in really good shape and that 41% of the trails have trail markers. It also shows that the large majority (70%) is appropriate for beginners, and can be used by a wide range of hikers, or mountain bikers.

The next steps are a year-end report that will be released in January, and staff is also planning on doing a public outreach campaign. We also have a website if you're interested in more information.

Mr. Lee Azinheira asked why the town Mansfield is not on the trail map. Ms. Jones replied that it was only because we don't have any data as of yet for Mansfield.

Mr. Mark Hollowell asked about the collector app being used and Ms. Jones responded that it is Esri Collector.

6. Freight Action Plan Presentation and Discussion -

Mr. Gregory Guertin gave a brief presentation on the freight action plan. He explained that the intent of this effort is to analyze and incorporate global, national, and statewide goals and trends into the framework of southeastern Massachusetts; assess how freight movements may benefit or impact communities and infrastructure, and to equip our communities and business leaders to respond to and mitigate the effects of those potential impacts.

He explained the incorporation of the NCHRP guidebook for freight policy planning in producing our freight plan, conducting self-assessment, establishing our freight planning directive, and drawing up a regional freight profile. Staff will also review existing planning documents to better understand how freight is already incorporated with our agency's goals, objectives and policies.

There have been over 9000 truck crashes, including 35 fatalities since 2010, and staff will consider setting goals to reduce or eliminate these fatalities. In February of 2021, staff would like to have a discussion with any of you who are interested in participating in our efforts, so please feel free to email him at gguertin@srpedd.org.

7. Federal Certification Review Discussion -

Mr. Paul Mission explained that staff is in the midst of federal certification, conducted every four years. It involves Federal Highway and Federal Transit reviewing the planning process with the MPO and with SRPEDD staff in the interactions with the communities, as well as our state and other agencies throughout the Commonwealth. It is typically conducted after the development of a Regional Transportation Plan, which was released last year.

This is an evaluation with our federal and state partners to see how we can improve, it's constructive criticism of where we need to focus on for the next round of planning for the four years leading up to development of the Regional Transportation Plan. The federal certification hearings will be conducted in January via Zoom. We will have discussions on the planning process with the MPO, JTPG and other bodies that are part of the MPO process. The next JTPG meeting, will occur on Wednesday, January 13 at 2pm, and the next MPO meeting, will take place on January 19 at 1pm. Following the MPO meeting, we will have a public meeting, hosted by Federal Highway and Federal Transit, to invite any member of the general public to come in and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the MPO planning process from the past four years. Essentially, it's open to anyone within our region to come in and discuss this process.

The actual certification review typically is conducted in one day in our office, with members of the MPO and various agencies present to talk about different aspects of planning, in coordination with the JTPG and the MPO. The usual one-day meeting will be broken up over three days, on Tuesday January 26, from 1pm to 4pm; on Wednesday, January 27th from 9am to 12pm; and then on Thursday, January 28, from 9am to 12pm.

Mr. Mission further explained that in early January there will be an agenda of topics of discussion that will be distributed to the MPO, the JTPG, and state partners, as well as neighboring RPAs and MPOs, and they will be invited to come in to participate in that discussion on the planning process. We encourage everybody to come in and participate in this process.

8. Other Business -

Other business included reiterating the dates and times for the upcoming JTPG meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, January 13 at 2pm and the next SMMPO meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, January 19 at 1:00 pm.

9. Adjourn -

Chairman Pounds asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Alan Slavin of Wareham and was seconded Shawn McDonald of Dartmouth. With no objections, Chairman Pounds adjourned the meeting at 2:23 PM.