

**DRAFT Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting Held on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 1:00 PM  
- Held Remotely via Zoom due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency in Massachusetts**

**The following members were in attendance:**

Steve Woelfel,	Representing Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary and CEO, Chair
Pamela Haznar,	Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Jamie Ponte,	Representing Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford
Bill Roth,	Representing Shaunna O’Connell, Mayor of Taunton
Catherine Feerick,	Representing Paul Heroux, Mayor of Attleboro
Leilani Dalpe,	Town of Middleborough
Nancy Durfee,	Representing Holly McNamara, Town of Somerset
Alan Slavin,	SRPEDD Commission Chair
Shayne Trimbell,	Representing Erik Rousseau, Administrator, SRTA
Mark Sousa,	Administrator, GATRA

**The following were also present:**

Cassie Ostrander,	FHWA
Andrew Reovan,	FHWA
Leah Sirmin,	FTA
Chris Timmel,	FHWA
Ben Muller,	MassDOT
Barbara Lachance,	MassDOT
Lee Azinheira,	Town of Mansfield
Lyle Pirnie,	Town of North Attleborough
Paul Foley,	Town of Fairhaven
MaryEllen DeFrias,	Mass Development
John LeBert,	SRTA
Charlie Kilmer,	OCPC
Lisa Sherman,	CDM
Paul Mission,	SRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro,	SRPEDD
Lilia Cabral-Bernard,	SRPEDD
Jackie Jones,	SRPEDD
Guoqiang Li,	SRPEDD
Sara Brown,	SRPEDD

Kevin Ham, SRPEDD  
Jeffrey Walker, SRPEDD  
Karen Porter, SRPEDD

**Handouts:**

SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes December 9, 2021  
FFY 2021 UPWP Amendment for GATRA & SRTA  
FFY2021-2025 Proposed TIP Amendments #2  
GATRA Final PTASP and PTASP Targets  
SRTA Final PTASP and PTASP Targets

**AGENDA:**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call-**

Chairman Woelfel welcomed attendees to the SMMPO meeting. Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
City of Attleboro	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

Mr. Paul Mission then introduced the SRPEDD staff, MassDOT staff and federal partners from Federal Highway and Federal Transit.

**2. Approval of Minutes – October 20, 2020 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed)**

Chairman Woelfel requested a motion to approve the minutes from the SMMPO meeting from December 9, 2020. The motion was made by Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair and seconded by Bill Roth of Taunton. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
City of Attleboro	Abstain
City of New Bedford	Abstain
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Abstain
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Abstain
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR ABSTENTIONS.**

**3. Public Comments - Opportunity for the public to address the SMMPO-**

Chairman Woelfel invited members of the public to make any comments. None were presented.

**4. SMMPO Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Report – Opportunity for RTAs to address the SMMPO**

Mark Sousa from GATRA stated that they signed the Region 3 HST (Human Service Transportation) contract with the state. So GATRA will now be in charge of all of the HST trips from southeastern Massachusetts, as well as the cape and the islands. GATRA has also ordered six new electric Gillig buses which are due in July.

He also said that ridership is steadily moving up a little bit here and there, but not much.

Shayne Trimbell from SRTA stated that they are seeing their ridership starting to recover, mostly during the midday. SRTA is also anticipating a return to fare collection beginning on

March 1 with a discounted fare set that would then readjust in September to our traditional historic fare set.

**5. Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Presentation – GATRA & SRTA (Roll Call Vote needed to Adopt Targets)**

Mr. Mission began by explaining that on July 19 2018, the FTA published the PTASP final ruling which requires certain operators and public transit systems that receive federal funds under FTA urbanized area formula grants to develop safety plans that include the processes and procedures to implement safety management systems.

The plan must include safety performance targets, and the transit operators also must certify that they have a safety plan in place meeting the requirements of the rule by December 31, 2020. The plan must be updated and certified by the transit agency annually. The rule applies to all operators of public transportation systems that are recipients and sub recipients of federal financial assistance and under the urbanized area formula program. He informed the group the need to adopt these targets, as part of the planning process and they would hear both sets of targets before conducting a roll call to adopt.

Ms. Stacy Forte of GATRA explained to the group that the plan is taking all of their safety requirements and putting them in one plan that they have to follow and certify. Added to that was safety targets, which is an average of the last few typical years of service. Their goal for fatalities is zero. Their goal for injuries is 3 on fixed route and 2 on demand response. The goal for system reliability is 45,000 miles between breakdowns for fixed route, and 55,000 miles between breakdowns for demand response. She concluded by saying that GATRA worked on their plan with Cambridge Systematics under a contract with MassDOT.

Mr. John LeBert of SRTA explained that they also worked with Cambridge Systematics for their plan. The goal for their fatalities are zero, and goals for injuries are 8 on fixed route and one on demand response. The goal for system reliability is 35,000 miles between breakdowns for fixed route, and 250,000 miles between breakdowns for demand response.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions and hearing none, called for a motion and a second for the SMMPO to adopt the targets. Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair, made a motion that was seconded by Leilani Dalpe of Middleborough. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair

Yes

City of Attleboro	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 UPWP Amendment for SRTA (Roll Call Vote needed to release to a 21-day comment period)**

Mr. Mission explained that there are two amendments before the group, one concerning GATRA and one concerning SRTA and he would go through both of them before a roll call vote to release both of them for the 21-day public comment period.

SRPEDD respectfully requests the following amendments for the FFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program that was endorsed by the SMMPO on June 16, 2020. According to the guidance documents within the UPWP the amendment is necessary as a major revision, including the addition or removal of a UPWP task. Amendments are presented to the MPO and voted on for a 21-day public comment period. And then, at the completion of the comment period, there is a vote of endorsement by the MPO.

The first amendment with GATRA, is the removal of Task 4.2 Transit Data Maintenance/NTD due to COVID-19. Those funds are transferred to fund Task 4.1 – GATRA Technical Planning Assistance. For SRTA, a change in the scope and proposed budget for Task 4.3 - SRTA Technical Planning Assistance, including specific studies, as well as a reduction in the budget from \$90,000 to \$75,286.82.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions and hearing none, called for a motion and a second. Mark Sousa of GATRA made a motion that was seconded by Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
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City of Attleboro	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. CY 2021 Safety Target Presentation/Discussion (Roll Call Vote needed to Endorse and Adjust into FFY2021-2025 TIP) -**

Ben Muller of the Transportation Planning staff at MassDOT presented calendar year 2021 statewide safety targets for the SMMPO's consideration. He explained that MassDOT set these annual statewide safety targets at the beginning of September 2020, based on projections from 5-year rolling averages of available data, which run up until 2018.

The MPO's, including the SMMPO, have the option of voting to support statewide targets or developing region specific targets. Historically, MPOs in Massachusetts have voted to support the statewide target for federal measures, but have developed region specific targets through their long-range planning efforts.

The first target shown was for the total number of fatalities and the rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. This has been slowly decreasing year over year, and MassDOT has adopted targets for calendar year 2021 that reflects that. For total fatalities for 2021, they've set a target of 339, with a rate of .55 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

The next target was for total serious injuries and the rate of serious injuries, which has been increasing much more quickly than fatalities in Massachusetts and the targets reflect that as well. For total serious injuries, MassDOT has set a statewide target of 2580, with a rate of 4.23 serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

The final target shown was the total number of fatalities and serious injuries for all non-motorized modes of transportation, which includes walking, biking, people in wheelchairs, people using skateboards, etc. This target does not have a rate associated with it because

there's a shortage of meaningful data on the total vehicle miles traveled or person miles traveled using non-motorized modes, and the trends here are a bit more complex. There was a steady increase in the total number of serious injuries and fatalities running up until 2016. However, in recent years, the actual numbers of serious injuries and fatalities have gone down, and the new target reflects that downward increase and they anticipate 506 serious injuries or fatalities for non-motorized travelers.

Mr. Muller concluded by stating that MassDOT is requesting that the MPO consider a vote to support the statewide targets presented.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions and hearing none, called for a motion and a second. Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair made a motion that was seconded by Leilani Dalpe of Middleborough. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
City of Attleboro	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**8. FFY2021-2025 TIP Proposed Amendment - Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 Highway Amendment (Roll Call Vote needed to release to 21-day comment period)**

Lisa Estrela-Pedro presented the amendment to the group, which involves 2 projects, the first of which is the New Bedford, Rockdale at Allen intersection improvement project which has risen in cost by 33% (\$648,493) due to the extension of work to the Betsy B. Winslow school crossing and some drainage issues that need to be addressed.

The second amendment involves the Seekonk, Route 44 resurfacing project which involves statewide funding. This project had dropped by 46% (-\$2,076,526) due to the project being split in two. Ms. Estrela-Pedro concluded by explaining it need to be released for a comment period and would become final at the next SMMPO meeting.

The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions and hearing none, called for a motion and a second. Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair made a motion that was seconded by Leilani Dalpe of Middleborough. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
City of Attleboro	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**9. Date and Time for Next Meeting**

The next SMMPO meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2021 at 1:00PM via Zoom.

**10. Other Business**

Mr. Ben Muller of MassDOT wanted to remind the group of the Shared Winter Streets Grant Program, with the next applications due January 29, and then the final round on February 26. He wanted to inform the RTAs that during the last round of grants BAT received grants for shelters at their intermodal center, and the MBTA received grants for some transit signal priority treatments and bus lanes and other rider amenities, so they should keep in mind that those are also eligible.

## **11. Adjourn SMMPO Business Meeting**

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn, the motion was made by Catherine Feerick of Attleboro and seconded by Leilani Dalpe of Middleborough. The Chairman asked that those in favor please say aye. Ayes were heard and the meeting was adjourned at 1:38 PM.

## **SMMPO Federal Certification Public Involvement Session**

Andrew Reovan from FHWA explained to the group that the SMMPO is under the process of the Federal Certification review and that public involvement is a critical component of this, something that happens every four years and is required as part of the federal planning process. He went on to explain the process and the possible outcomes and opened the floor to comments.

Ms. Pamela Haznar of MassDOT said that in her capacity as the project development engineer at MassDOT District 5 since 2006, she has worked with SRPEDD, attended the SMMPO meetings and worked collaboratively with SRPEDD on many studies over the past 14 years. She wanted to mention projects that have developed from SRPEDD studies. She explained that SRPEDD has been very successful in Dartmouth, with 3 projects developed, with two constructed and one under design and programmed on the TIP. In Dartmouth, Faunce Corner Road at Route 6, was one of the largest growing areas in Southeast Mass at that time and the project included replacing a structurally deficient bridge over an interstate, which was very complicated and involved multiple traffic signals.

She also mentioned the New Bedford Kings Highway project, which is right next to the Route 140 Interchange, and is also a high crash, high congestion area. The City of New Bedford advanced that project that came from a SRPEDD study. Ms. Haznar continued by mentioning the Fall River, Plymouth Avenue project was completed a few years ago, and had the highest high crash location in Southeastern Mass which was addressed. The project, as well as a full corridor included the first set of bike lanes in the city of Fall River when they were just starting to think about Complete Streets. She continued by mentioning Attleboro Route 1, Route 123 and 1A that resulted from a SRPEDD study. Ms. Haznar also mentioned the Route 6 at Swift's Beach Road Road that came out of a study. She concluded by saying that she could go on and on about the collaborative, very good work done by the region and the SMMPO that there have been some fantastic projects that have come out of all these studies. She wanted to praise the region for doing a great job and concluded by stating that what a pleasure it is to work with them.

Mr. Mission thanked Ms. Haznar for her comments and called on Charles Kilmer, from the Old Colony Planning Commission, to offer comments.

Mr. Kilmer said it's his pleasure to comment on how impressed he is by the transportation planning process that's implemented by the SRPEDD staff and the Southeastern Mass MPO. Whether it's safety, public participation, transit planning, it's just been truly impressive. He offered a recent example of the region's commitment to safety in a collaborative effort when he and Paul Mission worked with Brianna Pitts from WBZ Channel 4 concerning safety along Route 24. He and Paul shared data with the reporter, and Paul ended up on TV, being the public face of safety for Rote 24 and beyond. Mr. Kilmer shared that he thought it was a good spotlight their commitment to not only data integrity, safety, but public participation as well. He pointed out that Paul is also the chairperson of the Transportation Managers group, an important committee, and he's well respected by not only folks in your region, but beyond the Southeastern Mass region as well.

Mr. Kilmer explained that Paul has been responsive in forming a PL formula subcommittee, and led that charge in response to some recommendations from federal highway in years past and carefully crafted a peer working group that has kept core principles in place and really done a nice job with looking at equity, what's fair, how can people complete their planning process, and then walking the executive directors from MARPA through the process and keeping them informed, and he thinks Mr. Mission has been a really excellent example of commitment to the process. Mr. Kilmer considers it truly fortunate to have agencies such as the Southeast Mass MPO, to coordinate and prepare coordinated planning documents with OCPC.

Mr. Mission thanked Mr. Kilmer for his comments and called on Bill Roth, of the city of Taunton, to offer comments.

Mr. Roth informed the group that he has worked for 3 different municipalities in the region, including Fairhaven, Fall River and Taunton, and has seen from these 3 different perspectives and different jobs, the excellent work that the SMMPO has done. He mentioned the work with the Fairhaven Bike Path, the first bike path in the region, and numerous studies that SRPEDD has been responsible for. Mr. Roth explained that he once suggested a study for one-way circulation in Fairhaven that he was convinced was going to work. SRPEDD staff looked at, and in a very polite way, pointed out how it wasn't going to work. And he was glad that he had reached out to them before putting any more effort into it.

He continued by saying that as far as pedestrian and bike involvement, that Jackie has done a great job, and between his time in Fairhaven and Fall River, which have the two most significant bike paths in the region, that SRPEDD played a great role in helping get those completed. He continued by saying that Lisa has been a great help when Fall River, due to a lot of transition, fell behind on TIP projects, and Lisa met with him and the city engineer and a consultant

decided to dedicate funding and, go after an aggressive 10-year TIP development program. He concluded by saying that it's almost 20 years that he has been on the JTPG or the SMMPO working with SRPEDD and it's always been excellent service, even when they tell you something that you don't want to hear, they're professional and they back it up, and you've got to respect that. So, kudos to them.

Mr. Mission thanked Mr. Roth for his comments and called on Alan Slavin, of the town of Wareham, and the SRPEDD Commission Chair, to offer comments.

Mr. Slavin said that being from a town a lot smaller than a city, that they are used to seeing funding for projects go to cities, like the trickle-down theory of funding eventually getting to the smaller places. He stated that his experience with SRPEDD has been just the opposite. When he brings up things that they wouldn't expect happening very easily, every time it gets taken care of, and the MPO also picks the projects that make the most sense and also helps the municipalities equally and fairly. He explained that at one point, Wareham had a bike path project and Mattapoisett had a bike path project and the decision was to go with Mattapoisett, simply because they had much more money and time invested. There was no issue at all doing that and everybody worked well on that. He said that he finds that SRPEDD helps all of them equally. At the same time, they are able to get things done that he doesn't find in other organizations that he is involved with. He just has to reach out to SRPEDD and MassDOT because they have things going on with Route 6 and 28 projects, they have a bike path that keeps moving along. And he is hoping that bike path eventually goes from Fall River to Provincetown. So again, thank you all very much.

Mr. Mission thanked Mr. Slavin for his comments and called on Lee Azinheira of the town of Mansfield, and the Chairman of the JTPG, to offer comments.

Mr. Azinheira stated that he was the JTPG chair and has been working with the SRPEDD team for 20 years, involving many good projects over the years, including Route 140 and Route 106 and the bike path. The region has been a tremendous help, from traffic counts to complex corridor studies, and all you have to do is ask. He continued by saying that there hasn't been a problem they haven't addressed, and they do great work and provide a great support to towns. Some of the projects they've done for us, especially since Mansfield is at the intersection of Routes 495 and Route 95 with a lot of growth, and there are a lot of projects happening between the towns of Mansfield and Norton. They are a tremendous asset, even though some of the faces have changed over the years, but the team itself has been a constant as far as the level of support that they provide for everyone. He concluded by saying that he has nothing but positive things to say about the whole group at SRPEDD.

Mr. Mission thanked Mr. Azinheira for his comments.

Andrew Reovan provided email addresses for Cassandra, Leah and himself and reiterated that the comment period is open and comments are being accepted until January 29th.

Mr. Woelfel encouraged everyone to stay safe and thanked them for their attendance and participation. The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 PM.