AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome

2. Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2021* (Vote requested)

3. Reports
   a. Chair
   b. Executive Director

4. Consent Agenda
   a. Regional Reviews- none this month
   b. Contracts* (Vote to receive and place on file)

5. Committee Reports
   a. Finance Committee *(Vote to receive report and place on file)
     - Deferral of PTO Carryover Limit Implementation until June 30, 2021 (Vote)
   b. Joint Transportation Planning Group/MPO* (Vote to receive and place on file)

6. Program and Project Updates
   a. 2021 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Project Funding
   b. SRPEDD Regional Resilience Plan development initiative

7. Old Business
   a. Technical Assistance* (Vote to receive and place on file)
   b. HD.1684/SD.1334 Co-Sponsor Solicitation/Support Request *
   c. FEMA Flood Map Bylaw Update issue
   d. Report on MBTA Middleborough and Taunton SCR virtual meetings *

8. New Business

9. Roundtable: Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest

10. Adjourn

FUTURE MEETINGS:  March 24, 2021; April 28, 2021; May 26, 2021 (traditional Annual Meeting date); June 23, 2021; July 28, 2021

NOTE: An Exec. Cmte Meeting will be convened in the absence of a Commission quorum.
*Attached
1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was virtually called to order by Chairman Alan Slavin at 6:30 P.M. A roll call was taken by municipality. The meeting was recorded.

2. **Presentation COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation Funding by Terry Regan, Prin. Tech Advisor, Innovation Transportation Planning and Financing, USDOT Volpe Center:** Mr. Regan presented a series of transportation data indicators to the Commission highlighting several potential changes and emergent trends following the pandemic. Among them, were continuing changes from fossil fuel reliance to electric vehicles, and changes in commuting patterns vehicle miles traveled owing to increased teleworking/working from home. His remarks were followed by an informative question and answer session.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion was made to approve the December 2, 2020 minutes. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Reports:**

   a. **Chair:** Chairman Slavin provided an update and shared some thoughts on the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, reporting that people of 75 plus years old can now get a vaccine with an appointment. He indicated that he shared people’s frustration with the online appointment process and limited number of sites.
Next, he reported that there were concerns on the part of both existing retail marijuana businesses and their host communities in regards to the prospect of deliveries being allowed by the CCC by out of area businesses and increased competition by entities not subject to original host agreements/diminution of revenues forthcoming from those entities that are.

b. **Executive Director**: In follow-up to the discussion from last month’s meeting on the subject of affordable housing and a series of Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) assistance that SRPEDD is able to offer, Mr. Walker referenced that as a number of Commissioners had expressed interest in seeing if SRPEDD could identify a workable time for housing expert Judy Barrett to come and speak to the Commission, a convenient evening session expressly for Commissioners was being arranged for Wednesday, March 10 at 6:30, the same time as monthly Commission meetings. She will be discussing Chapter 40 B, and SRPEDD personnel ways in which the agency may be able to help, from assistance with the development of Housing Production Plans, to housing unit data collection and review which resulted in the crediting of previously missed units for the town of Mansfield. Mr. Taylor stated that he would support this and asked if Mr. Walker could clarify who is consider a Commissioner and who is not. Mr. Walker explained that in order to maximize opportunity for interaction with Ms. Barrett and staff, the workshop being arranged was intended for the Select Board/Mayoral and Planning Board appointees (one each for a total of two) from each of SRPEDD’s twenty-seven communities, plus six at-large member Commissioners; not all seats currently filled.

Mr. Taylor asked when we get on the subject of Chapter 40B can someone in the session explain to those of us who don't know exactly how the different towns are grouped in with different other towns, why that is, and when those regroup. Chairman Slavin stated that it is done by HUD. He mentioned that Wareham is in the Boston market rate which is ridiculous because it should be in New Bedford or Brockton. He stated coming into Wareham values are low and it is really a great place to come because costs are so much lower on 40B projects. Mr. Walker stated that Commissioner Mancovsky has also previously commented on that same issue and that staff will be happy to gather such questions and send to Ms. Barrett prior to the March 10th session.

Mr. Walker mentioned that SRPEDD had received the DLTA contract for execution and that funding for upcoming area projects should be forthcoming shortly. Mr. King will be sending out notification soon to communities interested in proposing a project.

He reported that the agency continues to grow and has currently has three new positions open with a series of very promising candidates identified, and hopefully information regarding incoming new personnel to be made available next meeting.

Lastly, as many had likely heard, he shared that Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack’s last day was yesterday, in that she has been called to DC to serve as Deputy Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He mentioned that he and others had had the opportunity to meet yesterday with Jamie Tesler, the Governor’s newly appointed Secretary.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

a. **Regional Reviews**: Mr. King referred the Commission to the Regional Review section referred the Commission to the attached comment letter from SRPEDD regarding the redevelopment of Lakeville Hospital.
A motion was made and seconded to place the Regional Reviews on file. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. **Contracts:** Chairman Slavin presented the five contracts below.

Be it resolved that the SRPEDD Commission authorizes the Chairman, Treasurer, Officers and Executive Director, as appropriate, to negotiate and execute the following contracts:

1. With the town of Berkley for assistance with the process of creating a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plan for an amount not to exceed $15,000.

2. With the town of Mattapoisett for professional project management and administrative services on the Industrial Drive Roadway Project for an amount not to exceed $20,000.

3. With the city of Taunton for assistance with the process of creating an Economic Development and Permitting Guide for an amount not to exceed $25,000.

4. With the town of Carver for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program technical assistance for an amount not to exceed $8,500.

5. With the Massachusetts Audubon Society (Mass Audubon) as part of the Southeast New England Program Technical Assistance Network, for support of the Taunton Watershed - Canoe River Aquifer Resilience Through Regional Application of Nature Based Solutions project for an amount not to exceed $5,000.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the five contracts as written above. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. **Committee Reports:**

   a. **Finance Committee:** Mr. Horowitz reported that the Finance Committee met on Dec. 10, 2020 via Zoom. The Nov. 18, 2020 Finance meeting minutes were approved. The Treasurer’s Report for November 2020 received, and a warrant for expenses approved in the amount of $21,436.30.

The Committee reviewed OPEB statement for October 2020 included in the packet along with November 2020 month-end general journal entries.

The Committee also met on January 20, 2021 via Zoom. The Dec. 10, 2020 Finance meeting minutes were approved. The Treasurer’s Report for December 2020 received, and a warrant for expenses approved in the amount of $19,774.33.

The Committee reviewed OPEB statement for November 2020 included in the packet along with December 2020 month-end general journal entries.

Lastly, it reviewed the 2010 population figures and recent year annual assessment rates on which the agency’s per capita rates are based (see attached spreadsheet). Following discussion, the Committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending that the Commission, per the bylaws, set the rate at $0.1986 per capita for FY’22, a 2.5% increase, at its upcoming next meeting.
The Committee also reviewed and accepted the FY’2021 Q2 budget update.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Finance report and place on file. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

- **Q2 FY’21 Budget Update:** Mr. Horowitz referred the Commission to the Q2 FY’21 SRPEDD budget update. He mentioned that there had been some minor adjustments to budget line items, together with an increase in revenues since the last update.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FFY’22 Annual Assessment Rate and place on file. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

- **Review, Consideration and Adoption of FY’22 Annual Assessment Rate:** Mr. Horowitz referred the Commission to Annual Assessment Rate for FY’22 attachment. The Commission reviewed the assessment rates for their communities.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FFY’22 Annual Assessment Rate as recommended and place on file. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Slavin inquired about the agency’s plans concerning remote operations and also necessity of shortly having to find a larger office upon return. Mr. Walker reported that plans are to continue remotely until such time as all can safely return to the building following vaccination, and potentially in shifts, given building constraints, so that people can distance as there are a number of offices where people are in rather close quarters. In regards to the eventual need for a larger building, he shared that the max capacity of the building is not far off, with the ability to accommodate roughly five more people tops; that staff has already outgrown the parking lot. Accordingly, Mr. Walker stated that concurrent with getting through the pandemic, SRPEDD is also gearing up to identify possible alternative offices that might work for everyone’s needs.

b. **Joint Transportation Planning Group/MPO:** Mr. Mission reported that January is TIP month. SRPEDD is soliciting where projects should be placed in the Transportation Improvement Program. There is about $20 million to spend this year, as well as over $20 million for the next four years and SRPEDD is hoping to get a lot of solid projects. The Joint Transportation Planning Group met on the 13th and had presentations from communities on their proposed projects. The next JTPG meeting is on February 10th at 2PM with presentations on projects for consideration with the TIP. In February, SRPEDD has a TIP day which is basically working with the MassDOT District office as well as the Boston office and our neighboring MPO’s, on coordination of projects for readiness. This takes into account the right of ways and the actual designs, and how far along the projects are on the State level in terms of reviews. Mr. Mission stated that SRPEDD will have scenarios for consideration by the JTPG and the MPO in March. Staff hopes to have a draft TIP in April with endorsement in May.

Mr. Mission mentioned that the SMMPO is busy with the federal certification with upcoming meetings, reviews and adjustments for projects.

Mr. Mission stated that in addition to working on the TIP, staff is looking for solicitation of studies for consideration in the FFY 2022 for the Unified Planning Work Program. The UPWP is a document that guides SRPEDD through what we are to focus on for transportation studies and activities for the
federal fiscal year that runs from October one to September 30. Mr. Mission indicated that if anyone has questions to please contact Assistant Transportation Manager Lisa Estrela Pedro.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the JTPG/MPO report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Program and Project Updates:
   
a. **Ongoing EDA CARES Act Outreach and related Economic Development and Recovery Assistance to SRPEDD Municipalities:** Mr. King referred the Commission to included slides with information on ongoing EDA CARES Act outreach and technical assistance shared at the last RESC meeting, discussing projects in the pipeline, various award highlights, and the plan for outreach to further communities moving forward.

   b. **SRAC/Homeland Security Program:** Mr. Ham presented to the Commission on SRAC and the Homeland Security Program. He highlighted some of the projects and exercises that have been completed recently. He reported that they have recently been working on Cyber Security exercises, dive training and tabletop exercises, among other projects. Mr. Ham asked if any Commissioner had questions to please contact him.

   Mr. Walker stated that SRPEDD is pleased to have such advanced Homeland Security capabilities in house that he encouraged communities to take advantage of.

8. Old Business:
   
a. **Technical Assistance:** Mr. King referred the Commission to the technical assistance page and mentioned that all projects are moving forward. He stated that if Commissioners had questions to please contact him on any specific project.

   The motion was made and seconded to approve the Technical Assistance report and placed on file. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

   b. **FEMA Floodmap Bylaw Update:** Mr. Walker updated the Commission on the 14 communities affected by floodmap changes: Acushnet, Carver, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Marion, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, Rochester, Wareham, and Westport, as required under the National Flood Insurance Program. During COVID many communities have been hampered in their ability to assemble and pass requisite bylaw updates. He stated that all should be on the look-out for upcoming communications from Bill Napolitano, Helen Zincavage or himself in regards to the upcoming new July 6, 2021 bylaw update deadline, the letter of final determination having been sent by FEMA on January 6th.

   c. **Report on MBTA Middleborough and Taunton SCR efforts (2/24 SRPEDD Mtg):** Chairman Slavin stated that there is a meeting tonight in Middleborough for the SCR being presented by Jean Fox. He mentioned there will be a meeting in Taunton next month; both of which will be reported on in February. He indicated that in early April, that he, Commissioner Dalpe, and the Cape Cod Commission will be meeting to talk about the spur from the new Middleborough station, down to Wareham, and also to Buzzards Bay, which basically is in place.
9. **New Business:** None.

10. **Roundtable:** Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest: None.

11. **Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM. The next Commission meeting will be on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 6:30 P.M., to be held virtually.

Respectfully submitted,

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Janice E. Robbins, Secretary

Date: 2/24/2021
None to report this month.
Be it resolved that the SRPEDD Commission authorizes the Chairman, Treasurer, Officers and Executive Director, as appropriate, to negotiate and execute the following contracts:

1. With the town of Plainville for assistance with the development of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self Evaluation & Transition Plan for an amount not to exceed $35,000.

2. With COMMONPLACE LANDSCAPE and PLANNING for support services related to the Nemasket River Community Workshop Plan for an amount not to exceed $7,500.
The Finance Committee met on Feb. 18, 2021 via Zoom. The Jan. 20, 2021 Finance meeting minutes were approved. The Treasurer’s Report for January 2021 received, and a warrant for expenses in the amount of $91,706.47.

Cash & Funds: Jan. 1, 2021 $ 649,050.70
Cash Receipts: Jan. 1 – 31, 2021 $ 206,730.86
Total Cash Accounted for: $ 855,781.56

Disbursements: Jan. 1 – 31, 2021 $ 214,748.81
Cash & Funds: Jan. 31, 2021 $ 641,032.75
Total Cash Accounted for: $ 855,781.56

The Committee reviewed OPEB statement for December 2020 included in the packet along with January 2021 month-end general journal entries.
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 No. 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  
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  

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

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

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<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Yes</th>
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<tr>
<td>MassDOT Chair</td>
<td>Town of Somerset</td>
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<td>City of Attleboro</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>City of New Bedford</td>
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<td>City of Taunton</td>
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<td>MassDOT Administrator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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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
- 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 Route 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.
Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) Meeting
DRAFT Minutes for the Meeting Held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 2:00 PM Held Remotely

The following were in attendance:

Lee Azinheira, Chair...........Town of Mansfield
Manuel Silva......................City of New Bedford
Alan Slavin.........................Town of Wareham
James Hartnett ..................Town of Westport
Franklin Moniz...................Town of Lakeville
Fred Cornaglia .................City of Taunton
Tim Barber.........................Town of Dartmouth
Norman Hills......................Town of Marion
Leeann Bradley..................Town of Middleborough
Paul Scott...........................Town of Plainville
Stephanie Crampton..........City of New Bedford
Shayne Trimbell..................SRTA
Mary Ellen DeFrias.............MassDevelopment
Barbara Lachance..............MassDOT
Pamela Haznar...............MassDOT
Chris Roy..........................Beta Group
Paul Nelson..................HSH
Joe Wanat.........................VHB
Rick Rhodes......................VHB
Lisa Sherman...............CDM Smith
Joe Federico...............BETA Group
Phil Viveiros...............McMahon Associates
Paul Mission .....................SRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.........SRPEDD
Lila Cabral-Bernard......... SRPEDD
Jackie Jones..............SRPEDD
Luis de Oliveira..........SRPEDD

Handouts:
The JTPG Agenda February 10, 2021
DRAFT JTPG January 13, 2021 Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:
Chairman Lee Azinheira called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM and asked for a roll call of attendants. Ms. Lisa Estrela-Pedro called the roll.

   Town of Carver....................Yes
   Town of Dartmouth...............Yes
   Town of Lakeville.................Yes
   Town of Mansfield.................Yes
   Town of Marion.....................Yes
   Town of Middleborough.........Yes
   City of New Bedford...............Yes
   Town of Plainville...............Yes
   City of Taunton ..................Yes
   Town of Wareham..................Yes
   Town of Westport...............Yes

2. Public Comments - Opportunity for the public to address the JTPG
There were no comments offered.

3. Approval of Minutes – January 13, 2021 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)
Chairman Azinheira called for a motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2021. The motion was made by Alan Slavin of Wareham and seconded by Manny Silva of New Bedford. Ms. Estrela-Pedro then called the roll:

   Town of Carver....................Yes
   Town of Dartmouth...............Yes
   Town of Lakeville.................Yes
   Town of Mansfield...............Yes
   Town of Marion.....................Yes
   Town of Middleborough.......Abstain
4. Regional Transit Authorities (RTA’s) Report
Shayne Trimbell from SRTA reported that SRTA would begin to charge fares once again as of March 1, but at a discounted rate, with full fare rates returning on September 1.

5. FFY21-25 TIP Project Updates
Ms. Barbara LaChance of MassDOT gave the TIP projects updates as follows:

In FFY 2021-

**New Bedford** - Intersection Improvements and Related Work at Rockdale Ave. and Allen Street – The design is currently at 100%. PS&E are due this month.

**Raynham-Taunton** - Resurfacing & Related Work on Route 138 - At 100% submission. The PS&E are due this month.

In FFY 2022-

**New Bedford** - Intersection Improvements on Acushnet Avenue at Peckham Road / Sassaquin Ave - the 25% design is under review.

**Rehoboth** - Intersection Improvements & Related Work at Winthrop Street (Route 44) and Anawan Street (Route 118) - The 100% design is under review.

**Taunton** - Reconstruction of Route 44 (Dean Street), from Arlington Street to Route 104 (South Main Street) - a 75% Comment Resolution Meeting was held in November. The 100% design due in August.

**Attleboro** – Intersection Improvements at Route 1 (Washington Street)/Route 1A (Newport Avenue) and Route 123 (Highland Avenue) - The 100% design is under review.

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

In FFY 2023-

**Dartmouth** - Corridor Improvements on Dartmouth Street and Prospect Street – a Comment Resolution Meeting was held in November. The 25% design was received in December. Waiting for town concurrence on the design. 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 - pending approval of a Design Exception Report. Once approved, a design public hearing can be held. A revised schedule for this project is needed.

**Dartmouth** – Corridor improvements on Route 6 from Faunce Corner Road to Hathaway Road – the 25% design is due in May.

In FFY 2024-
Wareham - Construction of Bike Lanes Along Narrows Road and A Shared Use Path Adjacent to Minot Avenue Including Related Work – the revised 25% design review is complete.

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

Wareham – Route 6 at Swift’s Beach Road - The 25% design plans are due in June.

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

In FFY 2025-

Plainville - The Reconstruction of Route 1A (South Street) from Charlene Lane to Everett St – This is at 25% design, waiting on information from the designer.

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

Ms. LaChance also reminded the group about the MassDOT Shared Winter Streets grant program is still taking applications until February 26 with a March 26 notification of awards.

6. FFY2022-2026 TIP Development, Presentation of Projects for Consideration & Discussion-

Ms. Jackie Jones explained that as part of the annual development process, the project proponents or their designers are invited to present the new projects under consideration for placement in the TIP. This effort is to aid with decision-making regarding placing these projects in the TIP.

- NEW BEDFORD - INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT MOUNT PLEASANT STREET AND NASH ROAD (610798)

Ms. Lisa Sherman of CDM Smith presented this project for the City of New Bedford. She began by explaining the location of this project is just north of Project 606718, which is the Hathaway triangle that’s currently under construction, and just south of the King’s Highway project, also under construction. This will provide for a nice smooth transition for the entire corridor to be upgraded in five years.

The existing conditions at the location include outdated traffic signal equipment, there are some exclusive turn lanes but there is no exclusive phasing and the existing ramps are Apex style with crosswalks. The hot mix asphalt on both legs of the overpasses are is in poor condition. Based on crash data information, there’s at least four collisions per year at this location and there was a pedestrian collision in 2013. They are planning a road safety audit for this fall.

As far as potential utility improvements, there may be some minor sewer improvements that need to be undertaken by the city before this TIP project. They are planning for improved traffic signal equipment and phasing, protected left turns as needed, improved sidewalks and pedestrian accommodations. The current estimate of the project is $3.1 million.

Shayne Trimbell from SRTA explained that they have a pair of bus stops at the intersection with Newcomb.
Street that serves the Housing Authority, so they would like to be part of the design discussion to make sure that they are providing adequate transit accommodations at that site.

Ms. Shermana agreed to include Mr. Trimbell.

**PLAINVILLE - RECONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH STREET (ROUTE 1A), FROM SHARLENE LANE TO EVERETT STREET AND RELATED WORK (608750)**

Chris Roy from Beta group presented the project on behalf of the town of Plainville.

He explained that within the project, there’s one signalized intersection at the East/West Bacon Street intersection. Bacon Street is Route 106 and connects to Route 1.

This is a very important route through Plainville with a mix of commercial and residential along this corridor including small shops and restaurants, a bank, post office, churches, as well as town offices, including the library, a newly constructed Town Hall and new public safety building, which houses both fire and police.

The project’s main goal is to increase safety for all modes of transportation using the Complete Streets principles, increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety, also to upgrade pedestrian curb ramps and ensure that they meet all of the latest ADA standards.

Proposed improvements include improved traffic operations along the corridor and at intersection with East/West Bacon, including the installation of left-turn lanes, 5-foot minimum sidewalk, both sides, 5-foot bike lanes, separating the bike lanes from traffic where possible, drainage improvements, as well as ornamental streetlights and a section of underground utilities.

As a status update, the town submitted the 25% design back in December of 2018, with next steps to be resubmitting some plans and conducting utility fieldwork. And then shortly after that, hopefully design public hearing sometime this summer.

**DARTMOUTH - RECONSTRUCTION AND RELATED WORK OF FAUNCE CORNER ROAD, FROM OLD FALL RIVER ROAD SOUTHERLY TO THE MASSDOT OWNED RAILROAD CROSSING (606715)**

Rick Rhodes from VHB presented this project for the Town of Dartmouth. He began by explaining that SRPEDD conducted a corridor study in 2006 that evaluated the potential improvements along the corridor. Several improvements have already been constructed, including interchange improvements at Route I-195, improvements along Faunce Corner Road from Route I-195 south to Route 6, and MassDOT is currently advancing the design improvements for Route 6 from Faunce Corner Road easterly towards Hathaway Road.

So this Faunce Corner Road Phase 3 three is really kind of the Keystone in that corridor study and it does connect New Bedford and Route I-195 to retail development along the corridor. It also provides direct access to the Hawthorn Medical Associates, the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office, restaurants, and there is a slew of different parcels that have been slated for future development in the near future.

The town of Dartmouth intends to promote MassDOT’s healthy initiative and reconstruct the roadway incorporating sidewalks and providing on-street bicycle accommodations. with 5-foot bike lanes. They are still evaluating the ADT to determine if off-road accommodations are warranted or needed. They will provide turn lanes as necessary. Also, at the northern end of Old Fall River Road, the plan as of now is to put in a roundabout to act as a gateway to the community. The estimated
Shayne Trimbell commented that SRTA has received numerous requests for bus stops in this part of Faunce Corner Road however, they haven't installed any stops because of the unsafe pedestrian conditions. Their route currently operates on a flag stop, and they'd like to move away from that by designating bus stops along the corridor and this would be an excellent opportunity to do so. He asked that SRTA be included in the design process so that they can identify those locations.

Mr. Rhodes agreed to do so.

**DARTMOUTH- CROSS ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS (610699)**

Rick Rhodes from VHB also presented this project for the Town of Dartmouth, explaining the location of the project and how Cross Road connects UMass Dartmouth and Route I-195. This area provides direct access to retail development areas in employment such as the Dartmouth Mall, Walmart, Target and other restaurants and employers, with several residential properties, places of worship, schools and the senior living community.

Dartmouth is looking to promote MassDOT's Healthy Initiative with this project and reconstruct the roadway with sidewalks on both sides of the road with on-road bike accommodations. They will look at potential off-road bike accommodations, but this location has a little bit tighter right-of-way. This project is currently estimated at $2.5 million dollars. The town intends to construct Cross Roads in three separate phases, with this being the first.

Ms. Jones asked if there had been any interaction with UMass about this project.

And the response was that they have coordinated with the town, but not with the university directly on this.

Ms. Pamela Haznar recommended a coordination meeting with MassDOT sometime in the near future. She explained that in the past, MassDOT had been the project development engineers, and generally the project managers up to 25% design, but they are changing that and having project managers assigned out of headquarters earlier in the process. She will contact headquarters and request a project manager to be assigned for Cross Road.

She then informed the group that MassDOT is updating the pre-25 scoping, so that when a project is advanced to 25% design most of the major issues have been worked out as far as the alignment and complete streets and things of that nature.

Ms. Jones then thanked all the consultants for their presentations.

### 7. Other Business

Mr. Mission thanked everyone who participated in the federal certification review, which took place the last week of January, with a public meeting during the MPO meeting on the 19th.

He informed the group that the Federal Certification team will have some preliminary findings, and a report developed during the month of April. SRPEDD staff will report to the MPO board on their findings and recommendations, and to the JTPG as well.

He again thanked everyone who participated, especially Lee Azinheira, who participated in the public meeting, and said some very nice words regarding the staff and the work that's going on at SRPEDD.
Mr. Mission announced the date and time for the next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 10 at 2pm, held virtually.
Pam Haznar then informed the group that she is the project manager for the New Bedford project at Mount Pleasant and Nash Road, and she will contact MassDOT headquarters and request a project manager and they will be in touch with CDM and the city to move ahead with that project.

She also informed the group that two projects were approved by PRC, the first is Westport, Route 77 at Tickle Road and Roberts Road and the second is Fall River, Bedford Street.

Lisa Sherman asked if the pre-25% guideline that Ms. Haznar mentioned was coming out as an engineering directive.

Ms. Haznar replied yes, it was, and it will be for all projects, bridge and roadway.

9. Adjourn

Chairman Azinheira asked for a motion to adjourn. There was a motion and a second and hearing no objections, Chairman Azinheira adjourned the meeting at 2:48 PM.
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<td>Regional</td>
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<td>Delayed</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Pavement Management - Fed. Aid Road Network</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Eric Arbeene</td>
<td>DLTA, MassHousing</td>
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<td>Regional</td>
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<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
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<td>Cranberry Bog Program Technical Assistance</td>
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Co-Sponsor Request – HD.1684/SD.1334, An Act relative to regional planning agencies

Senator/Representative XXXX,

I am writing to respectfully request that you sign on as a co-sponsor to **HD.1684/SD.1334, An Act relative to regional planning agencies**, filed by Representative Arciero and Senator Gobi. This legislation aims to provide financial stability to the state’s regional planning agencies (RPAs) and allow us to continue to be indispensable partners of the Commonwealth and its municipalities long into the future.

The Commonwealth’s 13 RPAs were created in the 1960s as special state districts charged with providing regional and local planning services the state’s 351 municipalities. Since then, several RPAs have been members of the Massachusetts State Employee Retirement System (MSERS) and two RPAs joined through special legislation after county governments were abolished. These RPAs have never paid an assessment to MSERS.

There is an ongoing effort to have the RPAs pay the state retirement board on behalf of their employees, but the cost would be significant and the outcome dire. RPAs are extremely constrained in their ability to raise new revenue. We are funded through a mix of sources, including a state line item, federal funding, and fees collected from municipalities. These payments would lead to large-scale layoffs, termination of services, and force many RPAs to shut down.

HD.1684/SD.1334 aims to protect the Commonwealth’s Regional Planning Agencies by ensuring that we are not held liable for these payments and are able to continue our work on behalf of the state and local governments. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/HD1684
https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/SD1334
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

James Arciero

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to regional planning agencies.

PETITION OF:

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>James Arciero</td>
<td>2nd Middlesex</td>
<td>2/1/2021</td>
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<td>Vanna Howard</td>
<td>17th Middlesex</td>
<td>2/12/2021</td>
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An Act relative to regional planning agencies.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

The General Laws are hereby amended in Chapter 40B by inserting after Section 30 the following section:-

SECTION 31. (a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following meanings: --

“Agency”, shall mean the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, the Old Colony Planning Council, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District.

(b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an agency that is a member of the state retirement system pursuant to chapter 32 of the General Laws shall be deemed to be or shall continue to be a member of the state retirement system. An agency shall
not be required to annually reimburse the state board of retirement for its pro rata share of any retirement allowance or pension paid by said board during the preceding calendar year which is based on whole or in part on service with such district provided that each agency contributes the required accumulated deductions and interest to the annuity savings accounts of the agency. An agency shall not be held liable for any past due contributions.
MBTA hosts virtual meeting on South Coast Rail

Daniel Schemer  South Coast Today  February 2, 2021

MIDDLEBORO — On January 27, the MBTA hosted a virtual meeting for the public pertaining to all things related to Middleboro regarding the South Coast Rail.

About 70 people, including several elected local and state officials, zoomed in for this presentation and opportunity to ask questions.

Most of what was talked about during the presentation portion of the meeting wasn’t new information, but bullet points meant to educate the average member of the community unfamiliar with the specifics.

The Middleboro Secondary Commuter Line and its accompanying rail station, to be located at the intersections of Rt. 28 and Rt. 105 in the downtown area, are part of Phase 1 of the South Coast Rail Project. The Middleboro line and station will connect lines coming from New Bedford and Fall River to South Station in Boston by connecting with the station in East Taunton.

The Middleboro station will have 500 parking spaces available on-site and ramp access from I-495 connecting to Rt. 105/South Main St.

The old station in Lakeville will stay where it is, as it is currently being used for the Cape Flyer line to Cape Cod. Town officials are pulling for it to serve as a secondary center for additional overflow parking. Discussions between the town and the MBTA on this point are ongoing.

Phase one is slated to be completed and operational by the end of 2023.
“It’s an aggressive but doable schedule,” said Jean Fox, Director of Community Engagement for South Coast Rail.

Local residents can see and hear the initial site preparation for the Middleboro station going on right now in the form of tree clearing and grubbing on the acreage.

Multiple engineers for the project spoke of the work going into this project, including the construction of four new rail stations, including Middleboro, as well as several layover stations, 18 grade crossings, and 27 miles of new tracks being introduced to the route.

The project’s Environmental Manager and Construction Director detailed features like stormwater and erosion controls, dust and rodent management, and fencing for protecting sensitive areas around the station and new rail lines being built.

Fox spoke of the measures being employed to maintain traffic in the area in preparation for the rail station, including new signage and striping at the intersections of Rt. 28 and Rt. 105, and adaptive signal beacons on 105 at 4 key intersections for traffic. To make pedestrian access safer, a sloped walkway for pedestrians will also be constructed connecting 28 with the station site.

Representatives from the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) attended to give an overview of new zoning proposals in town designed to spur new growth opportunities for Middleboro.

One proposal slated to go to Town Meeting is to establish a 40R overlay district around the vicinity of the station. 40R brings massive financial incentives from the state because it encourages and allows affordable housing and mixed-use developments, without removing the original zoning designation of the area.

Another proposal being looked into for helping the town retain more control around the station site is converting properties in the downtown area to a General Use Historic District. This would allow commercial development while preserving the historic characteristics of the area.

Senator Marc R. Pacheco was present and asked reps from MBTA how Phase 1 will affect the Cape Flyer.

“My understanding is that it can’t be a commuter rail line with the Middleboro junction. The constituents along the corridor and the Cape need to understand what this line is doing and what it is not doing,” said Pacheco.

Reps for South Coast Rail couldn’t provide an answer for this as it was stated this wasn’t part of their work.

Middleboro Select Board Chair Leilani Dalpe took the time to reiterate concerns several town Boards have with the new station, including the safety and public health of nearby residents, the station’s vicinity to one of the town’s water resource protection district (WRPD) and the environmental controls in place to protect this resource, increasing options for parking near the
station, and the insistence that the state increase its support for economic development opportunities by freeing up landlocked state and private property.

Said Dalpe: “We don’t always agree, and we keep pushing for these subjects.”

Fox stated the town and MBTA’s staff from its real estate and transit-oriented development departments are looking into the possibility of granting access, through legislation, the mentioned state-owned acreage around the station site for additional parking and development opportunities.

Several residents living near the station site called in to complain about the freight trains idling throughout the night over at the CSX train station, emitting loud noises and causing homes to shake. Many of them confused CSX with work the MBTA is doing.

MBTA hasn’t yet started any overnight work and are only working daylight hours, 7AM – 3:30PM, reps stated.

“With the tree clearing the noise has worsened over there. Our house shakes. Our back porch is sinking,” said one homeowner who lives near CSX.

Moderator for the meeting Nancy Farrell stated CSX owns that land, that MBTA has no control over their station and “they are very difficult to work with.”

Dalpe chimed in to tell any resident living near Station Street that “the town is working with the FDA and the DEP to get CSX to comply with the regulations it is supposed to be following.”

She advised residents with these issues to call the town’s Health Department so it can log the complaints.

Numerous elected officials had questions related to traffic concerns.

Representatives from MBTA weren’t completely prepared for every traffic question as the main objective of the presentation was to go over the construction aspects of the project.

Farrell apologized for this and said they will try and have proper staff present at the next virtual meeting for answering in-depth traffic inquiries.

*Youtube*- 1/27 MBTA SCR Middleborough Meeting
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZK-VL1SgDs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZK-VL1SgDs)
South Coast Rail Middleboro route through Taunton to be complete by end of 2023, MBTA says

Susannah Sudborough  The Taunton Daily Gazette  February 18, 2021

TAUNTON — Construction on the South Coast Rail, which is now 30 years in the making, is well underway, according to the MBTA.

At a town hall meeting earlier this month, program manager Jennifer Tabakin said they are currently undertaking construction work worth approximately $600 million, and that it began late last year.

"It's a sizable investment in the area and a real vote of confidence for the Commonwealth to invest as much money out the area," Tabakin said.

Clearing of right-of-way near the tracks is underway. MBTA

Erosion protection is being installed near the right-of-way. MBTA

Jean Fox, director of community engagement, said that the MBTA plans to finish Phase 1 of the project, which extends commuter rail service on the Middleboro/Lakeville Line to New Bedford,
Fall River and Taunton, by the end of 2023. This part of the project is fully funded through the state's Capital Investment Plan.

When the track is complete, it will be made up of 27 miles of track, four new stations — including one in East Taunton at 1141 County St.

A picture of what the East Taunton MBTA Station will look like. MBTA

So far, Fox said, early work clearing the right-of-way near the tracks and replacing four railroad bridges is nearly complete. She warned residents to stay away from the right-of-way as it will be dangerous during construction and service. The MBTA is working to notify all residents whose homes are near the right-of-way.

Kim Dobosz, director of construction, said that right now in Taunton, encroachments and demolition to prepare the right-of-way are going ahead. The East Taunton Station site is also being cleared.
Clearing is underway at the East Taunton MBTA Station site. MBTA

The East Taunton Station, Fox said, will be a center island platform instead of a side platform station — the only one in Phase 1. It will have elevators, ramps and bridges, an 800-foot platform with four canopies, a transition plaza for bus stops and drop-offs, 363 parking spaces and bike parking.

A picture of what the East Taunton MBTA Station will look like. MBTA
A map of where the entrance to the East Taunton MBTA Station will be. MBTA

When Phase 1 is finished, officials said, it should take 70 minutes to get to Boston by train. Additionally, they said, the project should increase property values and increased development in the area as a result should lower the tax burden on residents.

Fox said that construction should pick up even more this spring.

"Coronavirus is temporary, but the need for service in this area is essential," she said.

Youtube- 2/4 MBTA SCR Taunton Meeting
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mYT1DQPq94