

**DRAFT Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting Held on Tuesday, March 16, 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 Jamey Tesler, Acting 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  
Holly McNamara-----Town of Somerset  
Leilani Dalpe-----Town of Middleborough  
Alan Slavin-----SRPEDD Commission Chair  
Mark Sousa-----GATRA  
Shayne Trimbell-----SRTA

**The following were also present:**

Cassie Ostrander-----FHWA  
Ben Muller-----MassDOT  
Pamela Haznar-----MassDOT  
Barbara Lachance-----MassDOT  
Bryan Pounds-----MassDOT  
Michelle Ho-----MassDOT  
Lee Azinheira-----JTPG Chair  
Nancy Durfee-----Town of Somerset  
MaryEllen DeFrias-----MassDevelopment  
Paul Mission-----SRPEDD  
Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD  
Lilia Cabral-Bernard-----SRPEDD  
Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD  
Jennifer Chaves-----SRPEDD  
Sean Hilton-----SRPEDD

**Handouts:**

SMMPO Agenda March 16, 2021  
SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes February 16, 2021

AGENDA:

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

Chairman Woelfel opened the SMMPO meeting at 1:03 pm. Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard announced she would read through the entire roll for attendance and asked all MPO members and designees to please unmute themselves. She then called the complete roll of MPO members, with the following being present at the time of the roll call.

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

**2. Approval of Minutes – February 16, 2021 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed)**

Chairman Woelfel requested a motion to approve the minutes from the SMMPO meeting from February 16, 2021. The motion was made by Bill Roth of Taunton and seconded by Alan Slavin, the SRPEDD Commission Chair. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then called the roll:

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

**THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO 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-**

Shayne Trimbell from SRTA reported that SRTA would begin to charge fares once again as of April 1, but at a discounted rate, with full fare rates returning on October 1.

Mark Sousa from GATRA informed the group that GATRA is extending their service back to nearly full service by the end of the month, so keep an eye out for schedule changes.

### **5. Providence UZA MOU Discussion (Roll Call Vote needed to approve)**

Paul Mission explained the MPO has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Providence urbanized area and various MPOs in Massachusetts, including this SMMPO, the Boston MPO, as well as the central Mass MPO and this also includes GATRA and SRTA.

This is necessary as part of our 3C federal documents and is essentially a cooperative agreement between the MPOs, RTAs and state DOTs for coordination on transportation planning activities. This includes the obligation to cooperate in coordination of planning matters, and shared interests across boundaries for the development of Metropolitan Transportation Plans, statewide Transportation Improvement Programs and coordination of planning activities through the Unified Planning Work Program.

It also is a coordination and collection of data regarding travel patterns with adjacent Metropolitan Planning areas that includes traffic counts, household surveys, if necessary, as well as Big Data acquisitions. There's also a clause in this agreement for sharing the latest estimates and projections and planning assumptions related to population growth, freight and the movement of goods, employment, land use, travel, transit, congestion and economic activity. This is essential for developing and using data for compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the executive order concerning Environmental Justice. The exchange of information is also necessary for matters of mutual interest and collaboration of projects and studies, with other MPOs that share transportation corridors, service routes, and assets spanning MPO boundaries. This includes the state DOT's as part of this agreement for collection of performance measure data with the selection of performance targets and reporting on those targets and actual achievement of performance measures related to those targets for

congestion mitigation, air quality performance, as well as for other management concerns that are involved with the UZAs.

It also involves conducting cross boundary coordination of matters affecting congestion management process, the sharing of relevant data with adjoining MPOs. It is also a coordination to maintain the air quality in terms of the roles and responsibilities with Massachusetts MPOs concerning the transportation conformity that has been fully described in the current Massachusetts air quality memoranda of understanding dated of July 31, 1996.

The Regional Transit Authority's responsibilities are a coordination with MPOs as appropriate to share service information, ridership data, and other data that is used in the planning process, including the congestion management process, as well as to coordinate with relevant MPOs on planning and programming for investments including services that cross various MPO boundaries.

This agreement will be signed and executed by the Secretary of Transportation on behalf of the MPOs and will also be signed by the GATRA administrator, Mark Sousa, and Eric Rousseau, the administrator of SRTA.

Ben Muller added that the only thing he would add is that this largely formalizes work that already exists. A lot of this data is already shared between these agencies, but this one's specific to the Providence UZA, and Rhode Island is taking the lead on some of the reporting for the Providence area. But essentially the functional impact for us is the same which is we'll share information and we'll all play nice.

The Chair asked for a motion and a second. The motion was made by Alan Slavin and seconded by Bill Roth. 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) - FFY2022 Development Discussion**

Paul Mission explained that, as required, we are developing our Unified Planning Work Program, which is the document that outlines the scope of work that SRPEDD staff will be doing during the federal fiscal year, from October 2021 to September 2022. Staff is putting out a call for projects and ideas for study. We have several ideas in place that will help us develop our FFY2022 work program which includes an update of our regional bicycle plan. We also are considering a Regional Resiliency Plan for next year. This is a multi-year effort involving several departments within SRPEDD that will look at economic development, land use, population, as well as transportation, and determine what steps are necessary to make all these factors more resilient in the event of an extreme weather event that does significant damage to any portion or to all of these components.

Staff will continue with the Route 6 study in Dartmouth and Westport, which is scheduled to begin this summer with the data collection effort. Next year's effort will be an analysis portion of the existing data as well as what future development may look like, assessing the safety and congestion issues along this corridor and making recommendations for improvement.

Staff is in the midst of something that we call Continuous Public Outreach, which is an effort to garner input from the general public on the transportation issues over the next three years as we work towards an update of our Regional Transportation Plan, which is scheduled for 2024. Our second webinar is going to be taking place on April 15, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian activities. Staff will be scheduling several different webinars to not only garner the information necessary for our Regional Transportation Plan, but also to educate people on the transportation planning process.

Data collection efforts continuing next year include our trails mapping data collection effort and our turning movement counts for use with the signalized intersection database. Staff will conduct a bus stop inventory update to continue maintaining an inventory of all bus stops within the GATRA & SRTA areas. Staff will also conduct a pilot program on data mapping and technical assistance that is similar to our community Technical Assistance Program, to help out communities that do not have some of the GIS technology and to provide them with some assistance and ongoing updates for our maintenance and to our travel demand forecasting model.

### **7. FFY2021-2025 TIP Proposed Amendments -**

- a. Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 Transit Amendment **(Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to approve)**
- b. Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 Highway Amendment **(Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to release to 21-day comment period)**

Lisa Estrela-Pedro explained item # 7a on the agenda. This amendment was proposed at the last MPO meeting on February 16 and was released to a 21-day comment period. There was a public meeting held on March 4, with no comments received at the meeting or otherwise. The amendment is to add the project into the 5339 program with an 80% federal, 20% state split between the funding. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked this body to approve this amendment.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the transit amendment that Lisa just presented. The motion was made by Leilani Dalpe and seconded by Alan Slavin. The Chair opened the floor to questions and there were none. 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.**

Lisa Estrela-Pedro explained item # 7b on the agenda, a proposed highway amendment for a project that is programmed with statewide funding. It has stormwater improvements along I-95 in Attleboro and concerns a cost decrease of approximately \$2 million. She asked the body to release this to a 21-day comment period.

The Chair asked for a motion and a second to vote to release. Alan Slavin made the motion and it was seconded by Leilani Dalpe. The Chair opened the floor to questions and there were none. 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. FFY2022-2026 TIP Development**

- a. Regional Target Highway Project Scenarios **(Roll Call Vote needed to select preferred Draft Highway Project Scenario)**
- b. Statewide Projects
- c. Transit Projects

Ms. Estrela-Pedro wanted to inform the group that there were some recommendations that were received during TIP readiness days and a subsequent comment that was made at the JTPG meeting for consideration of pushing out a few projects that were not quite ready for that TIP year based on readiness. One of those projects is the New Bedford County Street project currently in FFY 2023. Staff looked at possibly pushing that project out, but due to its large cost, and the readiness of projects in outter years, it would be difficult to bring another project in, so it was left it in place. The recommendation for the Broadway Phase 2 in Taunton project, currently in FFY 2024 was considered, and in Scenario 2, it has been pushed out a year.

She further explained that all of the scenarios take into consideration the programming of the Lakeville Route 79 project, previously placed on a supplemental project list due to the lack of funding commitment, but that has changed and the project is now advancing with full town support.

In Scenario 1 in FFY 2022, due to over programming, we would be pushing out Rehoboth to FFY 2023 and Swansea to in 2025. In FFY 2023 the Dartmouth, Dartmouth Street at Prospect Street project actually falls off of the programming years all together and would end up on the supplemental list. In FFY 2024, we'd look to push out 3 projects to remain fiscally constrained including Wareham improvements at Route 6 & Swift's Beach Road, as well as the shared-use path adjacent to Narrows Road. Also, Mansfield-Chauncy Street at Route 106. We'd like to try and keep this project in its current year, as it has a complimentary project being funded with statewide money for the intersection of Routes 140 at 106. In FFY 2025, we'd be looking to push out the Mattapoisett project into FFY 2026.

For Scenario 2, we'd be looking to bring Lakeville into FFY 2024 and once again, Rehoboth and Swansea would be pushed out. The Dartmouth project would be programmed in FFY2026. In FFY2024, Taunton Phase 2 Broadway, Wareham at Route 6 & Swift's Beach, and the shared-use path in Wareham would all be pushed out. And then in FFY2025, we would push out Mattapoisett Improvements at Main, Water, and Beacon Streets.

In Scenario 3, once again we'd be pushing out the Rehoboth and Swansea projects and the Dartmouth- Dartmouth Street at Prospect project would end up on the supplemental project list. In 2024, we would push out the Wareham shared-use path, in 2025 Mattapoisett at Main Water & Beacon and the Plainville project, and we would bring Lakeville in FFY 2025.

At the JTPG meeting, Taunton was not present, but we did receive comments that they were in favor of keeping the Broadway Phase 2 where it was programmed, so in favor of keeping Scenario 3. The preferred scenario chosen by the group was Scenario 2 and that keeps every project that is currently programmed in the TIP in place. Scenario 3 does push out the Dartmouth project, but offers less shifting for all the projects. We're looking for this body to make a recommendation for one of the scenarios so that we can begin development of the draft TIP.

Alan Slavin stated that after talking to the town administrator, etc. they would obviously like to see that the Route 6 at Swift's Beach completed as soon as possible due to injuries, accidents, etc. The town does not have any particular concern about the shared-use path and pushing it out to FFY2026.

Pamela Haznar stated that the Dean Street project, which is a state highway project in 2022 and they obviously support that and are forging ahead with that. At TIP readiness days, The New Bedford County Street was recommended to be pushed out a year, but it was mentioned in all of your scenarios to keep that in FFY2023.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro responded with the same comment she made at the start of her presentation, that there was not another project with the same status to take its place, so the decision was made to leave it. The mindset was that moving forward year to year, our first consideration was evaluation criteria and priorities, and the secondary consideration was status.

After discussion ensued, the Chair asked if anyone would want to make a motion about a draft scenario. Bill Roth made a motion to recommend Scenario 3 and it was seconded by Alan Slavin. 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.**

Ms. Estrela-Pedro continued with statewide projects and transit projects. These are the highway statewide lists for FFY 2022. In Taunton the Route 24 at 140 Interchange project; Stormwater improvements at various locations for District 5, which is a new project in 2022; Fall River corridor improvements for Route 79/Davol Street; and the Norton-Mansfield Rail Trail extension.

In FFY 2023, the Mansfield bridge replacement over the Wading River; the New Bedford superstructure replacement, which is several ramps on I-195; In Attleboro, the Bridge replacement over the 10-mile River; In Attleboro and North Attleboro guide and traffic sign replacement on Interstate 295; In Somerset, stormwater improvements along I-95 for Mount Hope Bay; the continuation of funding for Route 79/Davol Street in Fall River; In Fairhaven funding for the Leroy Wood elementary school improvements through the Safe Routes to School Program; In Marion, the shared-use path from the Marion/Mattapoisett town line to Point Road.

In FFY 2024, there is once again the New Bedford superstructure; in Mansfield, intersection and signal improvements at Routes 140 and 106; from Dartmouth to Raynham- guide and traffic sign replacement on sections of I-195 and I-495; Somerset stormwater improvements along Routes 6, 138 and 103; and once again corridor improvements along Route 79/Davol Street.

In FFY 2025, once again the New Bedford superstructure; the Taunton bridge replacement over Snake River; From Freetown to Taunton guide and traffic sign replacement on a section of Route 140; Corridor improvements along Route 79 and Davol Street in Fall River; a new project in the city of Fall River, Safe Routes to School at Mary Fonseca elementary school improvements; and Swansea traffic signal and safety improvements at three intersections on Route 6.

In FFY 2026, our new year for TIP development, once again we have the New Bedford superstructure; the Fall River Bridge replacement on Jefferson Street over the Sucker Brook; Somerset to Swansea pavement preservation and related work on I-195; New Bedford pavement preservation and related work on Route 140; and the Fall River Corridor improvements on Route 79 and Davol Street.

For transit we did receive draft lists for both GATRA and SRTA for FFY 2022 to 2026 for CIP projects, and here is a brief overview. For GATRA there is over \$50 million programmed for fixed route operating assistance, miscellaneous support equipment, non-fixed route ADA paratransit, preventative maintenance, purchase of an AVL system, rehabilitation and renovation of the Attleboro commuter rail station, 40 replacement vans, replacement 35-foot buses, short range planning, and mobility management.

For SRTA, over \$109 million is programmed to acquire ADP software and hardware, engineering and design bus support for equipment and facility, rehab and renovate support for equipment and facility, miscellaneous equipment, operating assistance, operation and maintenance support vehicles, replacement of 11 35-foot buses, replacement vans, tire leases, transit enhancements and short-range planning.

## **9. Other Business**

Mr. Mission announced that MassDOT is hosting an Innovation conference being held virtually on May 25, 26, and 27 and registration is open. He also announced a webinar that is occurring on April 15 about bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in our region, being presented by SRPEDD staff. He introduced a new SRPEDD staff member, Sean Hilton. He concluded by informing the group that the South Attleboro Commuter Rail Station has been closed due to dangerous conditions on the track crossover.

## **10. Date and Time for Next Meeting**

The Chairman announced the date and time for the next meeting as April 20, 2021 at 1:00 PM. He encouraged everyone to make time for the next meeting during this busy time of year for us.

## **11. Adjourn**

The Chair asked for a motion and a second to adjourn. Alan Slavin made the motion and Leilani Dalpe seconded it. The Chair asked for all in favor to say "Aye." All ayes were heard and hearing no objections, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 1:49 PM.