

**Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) Meeting.
Draft Minutes for the Meeting Held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 2:00 PM
Held Remotely via Zoom due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Massachusetts.**

The following members and alternates were in attendance:

Lee Azinheira, Chair.....Town of Mansfield
Alan Slavin, Vice Chair.....Town of Wareham
Robert Araujo.....City of Attleboro
John Woods.....Town of Carver
Thomas Ferry.....Town of Dighton
Paul Foley.....Town of Fairhaven
Kaitlin Young.....City of Fall River
Deborah Pettey.....Town of Freetown
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
Josh Reinke.....Town of Mansfield
Norm Hills.....Town of Marion
Stephanie CramptonCity of New Bedford
Ed Buckley.....Town of Raynham
Bill Roth.....City of Taunton
Janine Peccini.....At-Large, City of Taunton

The following members/alternates were NOT in attendance:

Town of Acushnet
Town of Berkley
Town of Dartmouth
Town of Mattapoisett
Town of Middleborough
Town of North Attleborough
Town of Norton
Town of Plainville
Town of Rehoboth
Town of Rochester
Town of Seekonk
Town of Somerset
Town of Swansea
Town of Westport
At-Large, City of Fall River

At-Large City of New Bedford

Also in Attendance:

Kevin Dumas.....Town of Mansfield
Shayne Trimbell.....SRTA
Barbara Lachance.....MassDOT
Derek Krevat.....MassDOT
Ali Hiple.....CLF
Sid Kashi.....GPI
Paul MissionSRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD
Lilia Cabral-Bernard..... SRPEDD
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD
Sean Hilton.....SRPEDD
Julianne Griffiths.....SRPEDD
Luis De Oliveira.....SRPEDD

Handouts:

The JTPG Agenda March 9, 2022
DRAFT JTPG February 9, 2022 Minutes
PPP Update Presentation
JTPG Draft FFY2023-27 TIP Presentation
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Presentation

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chair Lee Azinheira called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the complete roll call of JTPG members, with the following being present at the time of the roll call.

Robert Araujo-----City of Attleborough
John Woods-----Town of Carver
Thomas Ferry-----Town of Dighton
Paul Foley-----Town of Fairhaven
Franklin Moniz-----Town of Lakeville
Lee Azinheira-----Town of Mansfield
Norman Hills-----Town of Marion
Leeann Bradley-----Town of Middleborough
Stephanie Crampton-----City of New Bedford

Ed Buckley-----Town of Raynham
Alan Slavin-----Town of Wareham

2. Public Comments - Opportunity for the public to address the JTPG

Tom Ferry of the Town of Dighton informed the group that they will be crossing Route 138 at Main Street with a water main replacement.

3. Approval of Minutes – February 9, 2022 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)

Chairperson Azinheira called for a motion to approve the minutes of February 9, 2022. The motion was made by Thomas Ferry and seconded by Norm Hills. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then called the roll:

City of Attleboro.....Yes
Town of Carver.....Yes
Town of Dighton.....Yes
Town of Fairhaven.....Yes
City of Fall River.....Yes
Town of Lakeville.....Yes
Town of Mansfield.....Yes
Town of Marion.....Yes
City of New Bedford.....Yes
Town of Raynham.....Yes
Town of Wareham.....Yes
At-Large, City of Taunton.....Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Regional Transit Authorities (RTA's) Report

Shayne Trimbell announced that SRTA was holding a public meeting to look at some possible service changes to the routes that serve New Bedford's south end. The public meeting will be held from 6 to 7pm at the Howland-Green library.

5. FFY2023-2027 TIP Development Discussion –

Ms. Estrela-Pedro began her discussion by telling the group that the draft 2023-27 TIP is being developed and she is going to run through all of the Regional Target projects, the Statewide projects, and the RTA projects. She started with the Regional Target projects in FFY2023 with 3 projects. In Rehoboth - Route 44 at 118, in New Bedford - County Street and in Dartmouth - Route 6 from Faunce Corner Road to Hathaway Road. During TIP Day, discussions focused on the readiness, specifically of the Dartmouth project. The recommendation is to move the Dartmouth project out, with only two projects programmed in FFY2023 in this proposed scenario, leaving an unallocated balance of approximately \$11.1 million. In FFY2024, there are currently 4 projects. In Taunton - Broadway phase

II, in Mansfield - Chauncey Street, in Wareham - improvements at Route 6 and Swifts Beach Road, and in Swansea - Route 6 at Gardner's Neck Road. If the Dartmouth project was brought in, that year would be over programmed, but fortunately for us, the state has picked up the Swansea project and will be funding that with statewide funds. So, for FFY2024 with the three original projects, minus the Swansea project, plus the Dartmouth project leaves the region with a balance of approximately \$448,000.

In FFY 2025 is the Lakeville - Route 79, in Wareham - Shared use path construction on Narrows Road and Minot St. With only those two projects, the region would have a remaining balance of approximately \$6.4 million. Looking to the supplemental project list, both regional priorities based on our evaluation criteria scoring and project readiness, two projects were considered. Norton – Route 123 at North and South Worcester and Mansfield - School Street are proposed for FFY2025, leaving the region with a balance of approximately \$62,000. In the existing FFY2026, there are currently two projects, Mattapoisett – Main, Water, Beacon at Marion Road, and Plainville – South Street at Route 1A leaving a balance of approximately \$5 million. Looking to the supplemental project list and at high priority projects that kept the region fiscally constrained. New Bedford - Mount Pleasant at Nash Road was selected leaving the region with a balance of approximately \$1.6 million.

In FFY2027, looking again to the supplemental project list, all of the other remaining projects were able to be programmed, which are Mansfield - Chauncy Street phase II, Dartmouth - Faunce Corner Road, Dartmouth - Dartmouth Street at Prospect Street, and the Route 177 at Roberts and Tickle Road in Westport, leaving a balance of approximately \$126,000 for FFY2027. That leaves the region with three projects on the supplemental project list which are Middleborough, Fairhaven and Dartmouth, and these will be monitored for readiness.

Returning to FFY2023, there is still a large unallocated balance of approximately \$11.1 million. Staff is working with MassDOT to take up some of that funding, options including to flex some of that funding to our Regional Transit Authorities, or to program a statewide project within our region and Jackie Jones is looking to see if there's still a need for bike racks or a bike share program. Staff is hoping that when the group meets next month, there will be a vote to recommend the preferred alternative to the MPO.

Alan Slavin had a question regarding the status of the bike path at the Weweantic Bridge, since the state is re-doing the bridge and putting lanes on both sides and possibly considering expanding those to meet up with Swift's Beach Road and dropping the County Road concept entirely and to basically go onto Route 6, which would fit in with the long-term Route 6 project of bringing four lanes to three, hopefully.

Jackie Jones replied that there are 4 projects, 2 on the TIP and 2 are on the supplemental list for these. There's only one small gap in that section that's not covered by a project and it's from Point Road to the Weweantic Bridge.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro informed the group that the project review committee, are going to be meeting in June, and the pre-project review committee is in May, and if there are any communities that are

developing projects, now's the time to get in into the Mapit program and start having discussions with MassDOT on developing those projects.

Shayne Trimbell asked if the MPO chose to flex funds to the RTAs, would it be able to be used for rolling stock or restricted to physical assets?

Ms. Estrela-Pedro responded that they are waiting on specifics from MassDOT on that.

She then moved on to the statewide lists of TIP projects. She explained that the gray shaded projects are a continuation of a project that's been programmed in an earlier year and some of them may span several years. The orange shaded projects are new projects in that year.

For FFY2023, in Mansfield - bridge replacement at Balcom Street over the Wading River. In Attleboro - bridge replacement I-295 over the Ten Mile River. In Attleboro and North Attleboro – guide and traffic sign replacement on Interstate 295. In Somerset - stormwater improvements. In Fall River - corridor improvements on Route 79, Davol Street. In Marion - the shared use path from Marion to the Mattapoisett town line to Point Road.

In FFY2024 Marion and Wareham - bridge replacement over the Weweantic River. In New Bedford - superstructure over County Road. In Dartmouth to Raynham - guide and traffic sign replacement. In Somerset stormwater improvements along Route 6, Route 138 and Route 103 for the Taunton River. In New Bedford - pavement preservation on Route 140 was actually programmed in 2026 and has moved up to 2024. In Fairhaven – the Leroy Wood Elementary School improvements was programmed in 2023 and has been pushed out one year to 2024. In Mansfield, intersection improvements at Route 140 at 106 which will be combined with the other project that is currently programmed with regional target funds.

In FFY2025, there are a couple of new projects. In Freetown - superstructure replacement Main Street over Route 24 and also in Freetown - bridge replacement Chase road over Route 140. In Swansea we have that project that was previously funded with regional target funds which is Route 6 at Gardner's Neck Road. In Taunton - guide and traffic sign replacement on a section of Route 140. In Taunton - bridge replacement Scadding Street over the Snake River. In Somerset and in Swansea pavement preservation on I-195 that was currently programmed in 2026 and has moved up to 2025. In Fall River - the Mary Fonseca Elementary School Safe Routes to School project. In Swansea - traffic sign and safety improvements at three intersections on Route 6.

In FFY2026, in Fall River - bridge replacement Jefferson Street over Sucker Brook. In Middleboro - interstate maintenance and related work on I-495.

In FFY2027, in North Attleboro - superstructure replacement on Mendon Road over Abbott Run River. In North Attleboro and Attleboro - interstate maintenance and related work on I-295. In North Attleboro, Mansfield and Foxborough - resurfacing and related work on I-95. In Somerset - intersection improvements at Route 6 and Lee's River Ave, and in New Bedford - bicycle and pedestrian ramp construction, Route 6 to MacArthur Drive.

Alan Slavin asked a question about the Route 6 project, going from four lanes to three lanes, and the third lane being a turning lane, which MassDOT was interested in, and do we have any idea where that's going to be, you know, as far as what year it might be in the TIP, if it actually comes forward.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro responded that it would be a state-initiated project, and right now, the TIP is being proposed through federal fiscal year 2027 and it would probably be programmed beyond that point, or being state initiated it may be funded with statewide funding, but there are occasions where we also pick up projects with regional target funding.

Barbara Lachance from District 5 wanted to let the group know that the next PRC is actually going to be in May. It's scheduled for May 12.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro thanked her for the updated information and continued with lists from MassDOT on the draft capital improvement program for both of the Regional Transit Agencies. For GATRA over the next 5 years. approximately \$67 million for all of their needs including operating assistance, replacement of vans and buses, rehabilitation of the Attleboro station, as well as support equipment.

For SRTA it's \$57 million over the next 5 years and those includes support vehicles, replacements of vans and buses, tire leases, equipment, etc. and staff will get these draft lists out to the group for further review.

6. PPP Update Release – Request for Review and Feedback

Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard presented the update to the public participation plan by explaining that the draft plan has been released for a 45-day public comment period with the plan to endorse at the April MPO meeting. The goal is early inclusive, accessible and continuous public participation, especially geared toward traditionally underrepresented populations, such as minority, low income, limited English proficient, as well as older adults and persons with a disability. This is a fluid document, being updated as staff assesses the effectiveness of their methods, with lessons learned, and with new technologies and new federal guidelines. This is all done to improve the public involvement process. Unlike other planning documents, the PPP requires a 45-day public comment period and a wide distribution of the draft for feedback. Ms. Cabral-Bernard then asked for review and feedback of the draft PPP.

The PPP is required to be updated every 5 years, but staff updates more often, as needed, including 2016, 2017, 2019 and this year. Some of the things added in this update are virtual online and hybrid meeting guidelines a scoping process and public engagement resource developed by SRPEDD staff. The scoping process IDs, those underserved populations just mentioned, and this is completed before the start of a project. The public engagement resource addresses common barriers to participation such as language, transportation access, work schedules, discomfort with technology accessibility, and safe meeting spaces for minority and BIPOC populations. Also added was text on

virtual public involvement, and examples of VPI include online meetings, interactive and story maps, surveys and social media. Also added was new equipment at SRPEDD including assisted listening devices, a public address system with wireless microphones, and a meeting owl with a 360-degree camera that will allow remote participants of a hybrid meeting to see and hear all the participants attending the meeting in person. New software includes live captioning for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and Wordly software for translations for persons who are Limited English proficient, and this is to better enable accessibility.

There may be another update this year due to President Biden's executive order that may include the setting of new goals, how public comments are incorporated and measuring the effectiveness of outreach methods and outcomes. So, in essence, performance measures for participation. Due to the extension of the update to the Open Meeting Law, extending virtual meetings until July 15, 2022, another update to the PPP is possible, with any further extensions or permanent changes to this law. Ms. Cabral-Bernard informed the group how to easily find the PPP page on the SRPEDD website and asked for review and feedback on the document and thanked the group.

7. UPWP Development Discussion – Request for Project and Community Tech Ideas

Mr. Paul Mission explained to the group that it's the time of year to start working out details of the Unified Planning Work Program for the federal fiscal year from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The UPWP is the outline and guidance for the transportation staff on how to spend the Federal Highway Administration planning money that we receive, in addition to the Federal Transit Administration money that we receive for planning activities in transportation throughout Southeastern Mass. It allows an opportunity for communities to take advantage of some of these funds for the study of various transportation corridors, intersections, anywhere where there's transportation, including public transit, bike and pedestrian, and even airport planning for that matter. It allows the opportunity for communities to get some planning and evaluations done with very little or no cost to the community. As every year, we are asking if any of the communities have a particular transportation issue they would like to see addressed in some way and we can incorporate these studies into our work program. Staff can then prioritize the tasks that we have and, in the work, that we anticipate for the coming year. Staff has received some requests including from the town of Somerset about some evaluations of an existing intersection on Route 6 near the Veterans Memorial Bridge. There are some concerns about some safety issues there. Staff does need these requests to come in sooner than later and this also alerts us to any issues that may be outstanding that we should highlight within our Regional Transportation Plan, which we will begin data collection for next year in development for a completed plan in 2024.

8. Presentation on Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL)

Derek Krevat presented the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL) including these highlights: Massachusetts five-year apportionments (FY22-FY26) under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) include approximately \$5.4 billion in highway formula funds.

BIL's highway formula funds are composed of:

- \$3.5 billion in reauthorized amounts already programmed in the FFY22-FY26 STIP
- \$449 million in increased funding for existing STIP programs
- \$1.4 billion for other formula programs

The \$1.4 billion in other formula funds includes:

- \$1.125 billion for a new bridge program
- \$106.5 million for a new resiliency program (PROTECT)
- \$93.7 million for a new carbon reduction program
- \$63.5 million for a new electric vehicle infrastructure program
- \$9.1 million for ferry boats and terminals

Regional Target Funding in the TIPs is based upon formula funds annually apportioned to the state from the Highway Trust Fund. Consistent with a long-established process, Massachusetts distributes approximately 1/3 of these funds among the state's MPOs based upon a formula developed by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies.

Based upon an assumed obligation authority of 90% (five-year rolling average), for FY23-FY26 the statewide increase in STIP funding is \$442.2 million; the increase in overall regional target funding is \$150.7 million; and the increase in Southeastern Mass MPO target funding is \$17.7 million. The fifth year of the TIP, FY27, will be based on an assumed amount consistent with BIL's annual amounts.

Over the five-year period FY22-FY26, BIL increased Massachusetts transportation formula funding by over 34% including:

- \$449 million in increased apportionments for existing programs
- \$200 million for two new HTF funded programs – Carbon Reduction and PROTECT
- \$1.2 billion for two new Supplemental Appropriation funded programs – Formula Bridge and Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Mr. Mission asked that although this is a significant increase, the recent rate of inflation may be nothing more than a stop gap as far as the cost of projects. Mr. Krevat said they're still using a 4% adjustment for inflation but that may be adjusted going forward.

Mr. Mission asked if we start seeing the release of funds, will MassDOT be looking for shovel-ready projects and Mr. Krevat said yes, they would be looking for those this year.

Mr. Mission asked about increases for off system bridges and Mr. Krevat responded that there will be proportional increases for off system bridges.

Mr. Mission asked about the electric charging stations, does a corridor have to be established as an alternative fuel quarter before you can designate or start building charging areas or charging stations? Mr. Krevat responded that a certain percentage of the funding for the program has to fund stations or chargers on alternative fuel cord or designated roads, but half of it is meant to be for more local roads.

9. Other Business

Mr. Mission announced that Lee Azinheira has officially retired and wanted to offer him congratulations. Mr. Azinheira said that he is retired but that he would continue to Chair the JTPG through the end of June.

Mr. Mission also reminded the group that we will be electing the officers in June, and a new Chairman to replace Lee. That's also an opportunity for us to have an in-person meeting for the first time in well over two years. And if people are comfortable with that, we will certainly try to program such a meeting in an outdoor space to be able to socially distance and to follow any guidelines that may be in place at that time.

Kevin Dumas asked that the amendments and other presentations be sent out to the group and Lisa agreed.

10. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The date and time for the next meeting was set for April 13, 2022 at 2 PM, virtually.

11. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made and seconded and hearing no objections, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:16 PM.