

SRPEDD ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Cover image: Drone photo of Attleboro MBTA Station by Kevin Ham

It is the policy of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 13166, Executive Order 12898, and related federal and state statutes and regulations. SRPEDD also upholds the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 §§92a, 98, 98a, and the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4. For a complete policy statement, please visit www.srpedd.org/title-vi-compliance.

Letters to the Region



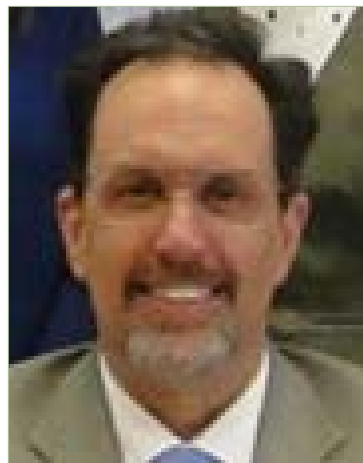
Chair's Report: Alan Slavin

Another year has passed and the Covid epidemic has taken its toll on all of us. Over the last three-plus years most municipalities and government entities have had employee retention issues, financial budget issues, and challenges of working through CARES Act, ARPA, BIL, and other stimulus requirements.

I'm extremely proud of how SRPEDD has negotiated through these difficult times. We have had long-time employees retire which has been happening throughout the state. Our administration has been proactive in filling positions and not missing a beat. The Finance and Personnel Committees, working with Executive Director Walker, have provided a pathway for continued growth. We have continued to expand capacity and services to our 27 communities. Transportation was always our core, but has since been diversified to include robust planning services across the board. Environmental planning, increased technical assistance. In order to meet these and other needs additional talented people have been recruited and and numerous personnel promoted from within.

Our budget for 2023/2024 is showing substantial growth. We now need more space and are looking at possible options. I need to thank all the SRPEDD employees, Commissioners, and partners and liaisons across the region and state who made my job easy.

This will be my last annual meeting as Chair. I believe that succession plans are important as are term limits. My time at SRPEDD has been both satisfying and productive and it never could have happened without all your support. For that I say thank you!



Welcome from the Executive Director: Jeffrey Walker

What is it that has enabled some communities to keep going after the closure of a key employer or even loss of an entire industry? To pivot to other assets and opportunities, persevere in identifying new sources of jobs and revenue, and effectively reinvent themselves and their economies?

Research by folks such as Sean Safford, originally of MIT, whose work focuses on social, economic and technological change and whose book, "Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown: Social Capital and the Transformation of the Rust Belt" argues that the "structure of social networks among the cities' economic, political, and civic leaders account for the divergent trajectories of post-industrial regions."

Indeed, it is the extent of a place's 'social capital' that has been shown to be the key. Which includes not just a community's leaders and an active, informed citizenry, but the "existence of a certain set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permit cooperation." Past history, trust and goodwill, are all essential elements, as social capital is "fundamentally about how people interact with each other."

But it is our continuing solidarity, identity as Southeast MA, and shared sense of purpose that has not only seen our amazing region of four historic and beautiful Gateway Cities and twenty-three towns through the past three years of the pandemic, but that will see us through new challenges to come.

As always, we look forward to partnering, and working to ensure that the future of our communities is bright.

About SRPEDD

About SRPEDD Commission

SRPEDD serves a regional community of 27 cities and towns in southeastern Massachusetts. Our work is place-based and community-focused, meaning that we work to formulate and implement plans that will achieve real quality of life improvements on the ground, and to ensure that these plans reflect the expressed needs of civically-engaged local communities.

The Commission of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) includes the chief elected officials (mayors and boards of selectmen) in SRPEDD's 27 cities and towns (or their appointee); the region's 27 planning boards (or their appointee); and up to six at-large seats representative of low-income and minority group interests.

The Commissioners govern the agency as a board of directors, setting policy, establishing priorities and representing their communities in regional deliberations. The Commission has administrative responsibilities including electing officers, adopting the budget, appointing committees, employing the executive director and establishing the policies for employment of the staff. The SRPEDD Commission generally meets 9-10 times per year, usually on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Finance and Personnel Committee Report

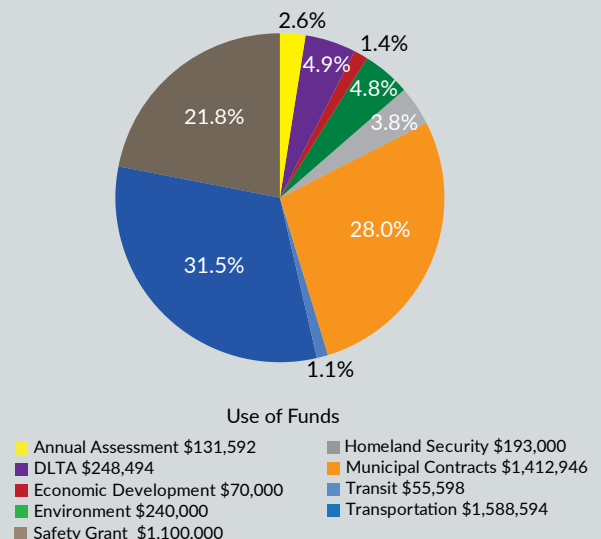
The agency's annual budget of \$5,045,224, derived from a mix of primarily state and federal sources shown below, has enabled the agency not only to advance its mission across multiple planning fronts, from Transportation and Transit, District Local Assistance projects and Municipal contracts, to Economic Development, Environmental Planning and Homeland Security, but to continue to hold down costs for member municipalities.

The 28 SRPEDD staff members and 50 Commissioners have worked hard throughout the pandemic to focus additional resources on helping the region recover and continue to advance.

Finance Committee members, the Executive Director, and the CFO meet once a month to review all financial transactions, monitor expenditures, and tend to the purchasing and maintenance needs of the expanding organization. Members of the Personnel Committee meet quarterly, or as needed, to attend to staffing needs, policies, and the ongoing growth of the SRPEDD staff.

Members of the Finance and Personnel Committees serving over the past year have been:

- D. Austin Horowitz, Mansfield - Treasurer
- Marie Clarner, North Attleborough - SRPEDD Vice Chair, Assistant Treasurer
- Norm Hills, Marion
- Jim Whitin, Westport
- Alan Slavin, Wareham - SRPEDD Chair, Ex Officio



Transportation Planning

Outreach Efforts - Moving Forward 2050 - The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identifies, analyzes, and prioritizes the region's transportation needs.. The recommendations included in the RTP represent the basis for the future development of southeastern Massachusetts that will influence our region for decades and centuries.

SRPEDD transportation staff began outreach efforts for the RTP back in 2020 with a plan for an Informational Video Series to inform our communities and residents about the different facets of planning in our region. This effort resulted in five webinars (Getting Back to the New Normal: Repurposing Public Spaces, Regional Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure, Rethinking Safety in the Region, Driving Economic Development, and Where the River Meets the Road) which can all be found on YouTube here: [RTP Outreach video series](#) beginning with a short intro to the RTP.

More recently, staff composed a comprehensive survey, translated into our Safe Harbor languages of Portuguese, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese and Mon Khmer Cambodian, concerning transportation issues in the region. The survey was advertised in a variety of methods. Flyers were posted on GATRA and SRTA buses, distributed by staff to the public libraries and city/town halls of each community throughout the entire SRPEDD region, with libraries also receiving bookmarks for distribution to patrons. The survey was posted on SRPEDD's website, [Moving Forward 2050](#), on social media platforms, and requests were made to all 27 of our communities to post it on their websites, with over 20 of them doing so. There was also a special effort made with the older adult population in the region, with distribution of paper copies to all Councils on Aging and at an event at the Marion COA where staff made a presentation, spoke to attendees, and garnered additional survey results. These efforts have garnered us over 900 survey responses containing a myriad of feedback from a wide array of people who live and work in the region.

At the same time, SRPEDD transportation staff offered to meet with the department heads and staff from each of our communities to discuss and document their transportation issues, and other concerns and needs. These included, but were not limited to, congestion, safety, bike and pedestrian accommodations, electric vehicles and infrastructure, transit, pavement, zoning, various funding opportunities, GIS, and evacuation route mapping. At the time of this writing, staff had met with 21 communities, both of our Regional Transit Authorities and the Taunton Housing Authority to discuss needs.

The draft RTP is scheduled to be released for public comment in August 2023.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies and outlines the annual transportation planning activities that are conducted in the SMMPO/SRPEDD region during the Federal Fiscal Year from October 1 through September 30. Over the previous year, this included, but was not limited to: ongoing tasks such as the 3C planning process which includes support to the SMMPO, the JTPG, the SRPEDD Commission, and MassDOT; public outreach and engagement with emphasis on Title VI and EJ populations; TIP project equity analyses; the development of the TIP and UPWP, GIS and data collection, which included pavement management, traffic counting, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and public transit work; and congestion, safety, and bike and ped plans. It also included some minor studies under the Community Technical Assistance Program for the communities of Attleboro, Wareham, Dartmouth, Lakeville, Freetown, and Fairhaven. Larger, singular tasks included the corridor study of Route 140 in Taunton, and data and outreach portions of the Regional Transportation Plan which is completed every 5 years.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) was updated and endorsed April of 2022. The PPP guides the SMMPO in its public outreach efforts, with the goal of early, inclusive, accessible and continuous public participation, including traditionally underrepresented populations, such as minority, low-income, Limited English Proficient (LEP), as well as older adults, and persons with a disability. The PPP is a fluid document, being updated as staff assesses effectiveness, adding lessons learned, new technologies, and new federal guidelines. This is completed regularly to improve the public involvement process.

Some of the things added in this update include language on virtual/online and hybrid meetings, and a scoping process and public engagement resource developed by SRPEDD staff. The scoping process identifies all underserved populations before the start of a project. The public engagement resource addresses common barriers to participation such as language, transportation access, work schedules and child care, (dis)comfort with technology, accessibility, and safe meeting spaces for minority/BIPOC populations.

Additional updates include text on Virtual Public Involvement (VPI), the use of digital technology to engage individuals or to visualize projects and plans, and new equipment including a Meeting Owl with a 360° camera that allows remote participants of a hybrid meeting to see and hear all participants attending the meeting in-person, and new software for live auto-captioning for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and for translations for persons who are LEP.



Photo from the Taunton Route 140 public meeting on February 8, 2023.

Community Technical Assistance

SRPEDD provides community technical assistance when requested by communities in the region for issues that do not require a larger comprehensive study. This assistance usually includes the need for data collection or reviewing existing data, site evaluations and a technical memorandum. The technical memorandum and data collected (which is provided with the final report) provides the community with the recommendations, alternatives and a course of action based on the request received. Some requests by communities only require data collection with no further report or recommendations needed. Some of the projects completed in the past include signal warrants, multi-way stop evaluations, road issues evaluation, and heavy vehicle analysis/exclusions to name a few.

In 2022 SRPEDD assisted eight communities: Attleboro, Wareham, Dartmouth, Lakeville, Freetown, and Fairhaven. This included 6 community technical assistance requests involving left-turn exclusion analysis and its effects on nearby intersections, traffic count (volume and class) analysis, speed counts analysis, four-way stop warrants analysis, multi-way stop/signal warrants analysis, and an intersection safety analysis were completed. In addition, a technical memorandum was completed, and a parking study requested by Marion to analyze the parking demands impacting the shoreline community known as the Marion Village was conducted.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

SRPEDD transportation staff works with our communities and MassDOT to guide potential transportation projects through the planning process, including scoring and readiness tasks, to get them placed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) list for federal and state funding and ultimately, for implementation. The TIP is the official 5-year document that lists all transportation projects in the region by federal funding category, including roads, bridges, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Our region of 27 communities was allocated \$22,246,785 in federal & state funds in FY2022. Although \$22 million seems like an awful lot of money, only three roadway projects were funded with those regional target funds. In addition, we flexed some funds to GATRA for bus replacements, support vehicles and mobile fare collection equipment. The table below displays the federal obligated amount for both regional and statewide projects that were awarded funding in FFY2022. Over \$98 million dollars was programmed for our region. SRPEDD's transportation staff is available to assist any community in navigating the Transportation Improvement Program's (TIP) planning process to fund improvements in their city or town. Please contact Lisa Estrela-Pedro at 508 824-1367 x236 or lestrela@srpedd.org with any questions or concerns. [Our TIP Funding Guide](#) is also a practical handbook for the TIP and MaPIT process.

FFY 2022 TIP Projects	Communities	Obligation
Hamlin St. over the Acushnet River bridge Replacements	Acushnet	\$4,294,093
Interchange Improvements at Rtes 24 & 140*	Taunton	\$6,704,217
Reconstruction of Rte 44 (Dean St.), From Arlington St. to Rte 104 (South Main St.)	Taunton	\$17,564,662
Intersection Improvements at Rte 1 (Washington St.)/Rte 1A (Newport Ave.) and Rte 123 (Highland Ave.)	Attleboro	\$6,749,836
Rail Trail Extension (World War II Veterans Trail)	Norton/Mansfield	\$4,342,055
Corridor Improvements on Rte 79/Davol St. *	Fall River	\$54,425,419
Intersection Improvements on Acushnet Ave. at Peckham Rd/Sassaquin Ave.	New Bedford	\$1,828,319
Bridge Painting and Repairs along I-295	North Attleborough	\$2,066,272
GATRA - Mobile Fare Collection Equipment		\$340,000
GATRA - Replacement <30 FT Buses (2)		\$400,000
GATRA - Electric Support Vehicles (2)		\$64,000
* Multi-Year Funded Projects	Total	\$98,778,873

Traffic Count Program

SRPEDD transportation staff deployed Automatic Traffic Recorders (ATRs) to collect traffic count data at 96 locations throughout the region during the 2022 season. Of these counts, 25 were MassDOT assigned revolving counts, and 33 were part of SRPEDD's third year of a 3-year revolving program. An additional 18 counts were conducted as part of our community technical assistance program and 4 counts were completed to assist with the Taunton High School circulation study. Six counts were also completed as part of the Route 140 study in Dartmouth and Westport, while the remaining 10 counts were completed to update historical data. Data gathered at each location includes the average number of vehicles per day, the 85th percentage speed, and the average speed of vehicles, and the different classes of vehicles (motorcycles, passenger cars, buses, and light and heavy trucks) to assist in analyzing traffic patterns and conducting studies. See [MassDOT's Transportation Data Management System](#) for more information on these counts.

SRPEDD transportation staff also conducted 86 Turning Movement Counts (TMCs) during the 2022 count season. Of these counts, 33 were conducted to update the signalized intersection database, 32 were conducted for the Route 140 study, and 6 were completed as part of the Taunton High School circulation study. As part of community technical assistance program, 15 TMCs were completed to analyze intersection operations for the evaluation of a left-turn exclusion, and to complete a multi-way stop and signal warrants analysis.

SRPEDD continued maintenance of its [Signalized Intersection Database](#) for every signalized intersection in the region. This database provides a wide range of information including volume, safety, crash statistics, and level of service for each of the 364 signalized intersections in the region.

Pavement Management

Pavement Management is the process in which a network of roads is evaluated and rated to determine a schedule of maintenance to keep the roads in good to excellent condition. The ultimate goal of a pavement management program is to maintain these good to excellent road conditions into the future in the most cost-effective manner. SRPEDD's Pavement Management Program is an ongoing effort to evaluate pavement conditions on federal aid eligible roads in the region. Staff completes windshield surveys to evaluate criteria such as potholes, cracking, bleeding, surface wear, drainage, and other conditions. The collected data is uploaded to Road Manager Software which rates the pavement conditions. This collected data has also been used for various studies in the past. In 2022, surveys were complete throughout Fall River, Middleborough, and Taunton, three of the larger communities in our region.

During the 2022 season, SRPEDD began converting the data collection process from pen and paper to a digital survey via Field Maps using a tablet. This will ensure efficient and organized data collection while in the field. The updated process will allow for a detailed GIS database of the pavement conditions evaluated and rated to be made available for each community through SRPEDD's website. The database will be uploaded each year and the entire region should be available when the final communities are surveyed in 2024.

In addition, SRPEDD continued an inventory of pavement markings, using Field Maps, on federal aid eligible roads to create a Pavement Marking GIS layer which will also be made available on SRPEDD's website when complete, and which may be used for future data needs and studies.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Update

SRPEDD continued to work closely with our communities and regional advocacy groups to advance bicycle and pedestrian planning and infrastructure throughout 2022. Staff provided technical assistance to communities with the planning and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, assisted with grant applications, and provided safety-related educational materials. The Westport/Dartmouth Route 6 Corridor Study was also completed, which included two locations with recent pedestrian fatalities.

SRPEDD staff worked to advance the Southcoast Bikeway in collaboration with the South Coast Bikeway Alliance (SCBA), cities and towns along the bikeway, and the East Coast Greenway. Staff successfully led efforts to refine routing between Marion and Wareham, via a connection to Route 6, which enhanced the planned Southcoast Bikeway route with expanded access to more densely populated areas and local businesses in the region while also improving route efficiency. Staff further advanced the recommendations from the Closing the Gap: South Coast Bikeway Feasibility Study completed by SRPEDD in 2021. As a result, the SCBA voted on new routing. The resulting simplified route plans completed in 2022 will both ease advocacy efforts and pay dividends in the future when seeking support and funding for individual project segments.

The Taunton River Trail also continued to advance in 2022. The Taunton Pathways Committee has initiated a TIP project to fund a 2.4-mile segment of shared use path through the Weir Village neighborhood in Taunton. In July 2022, MassDOT announced a Complete Streets project to add bike lanes on Weir Street in Taunton which will enhance the Taunton River Trail by improving connectivity between the Wild & Scenic Taunton River and downtown Taunton. In September 2022, the Department of Conservation and Recreation proposed their initial design for a 2-mile shared use path through Sweets Knoll State Park in Dighton from Somerset Avenue to Sandpiper Lane. In addition, a feasibility study initiated by the Dighton Trails Committee in 2022 will examine possible connections north and south of the proposed Sweets Knoll State Park shared use path and propose connections to Taunton and Somerset.

Design proceeded on the Mansfield/Norton Rail Trail Extension, the Marion Pathway Phase 1, and the Wareham Minot Avenue/Narrows Road Shared Use Path projects, which are programmed on the TIP for Fiscal Years 2022, 2027 and 2028 respectively. Several projects under design by MassDOT also advance the South Coast Bikeway routing including three projects on Route 6 in Wareham, a project on Route 6 in Marion, a project on Route 6 in Westport, and the Fall River Route 79 Davol Street Corridor Project.

SRPEDD continued the automated bicycle and pedestrian counting program using TrafX Infrared counters that measure the volume of bicycle and pedestrian movements. These counters can be placed in a variety of locations including sidewalks and trails at the request of any member community within the region. If you are interested in gathering bicycle and pedestrian data in your community the Transportation Program staff would be happy to assist.



South Coast Bikeway Alliance's proposed route, as of May 2023.

New Service to Logan Airport

Blue Apple Bus, an affiliated company of Plymouth and Brockton Bus Company, provides an airport express roundtrip service from the Mansfield MBTA station to Boston's Logan Airport. This service launched on November 5, 2022, with 10 daily round trips from 3:00 AM to 9:00 PM. On January 1, 2023, they announced an additional 5 roundtrips to Logan for a total of 15 round trips from 3:00 AM to 1:00 AM. The company anticipates increasing to 20 daily roundtrips in the near future. Ridership has increased 250% from the first month of service compared to March 2023. Regional target funds were flexed through GATRA to launch this new service. It is a public-private partnership with the support of the Town of Mansfield, GATRA, MassDOT, MBTA, and others.



Blue Apple airport shuttle bus.

Seeing a need for reliable and frequent bus service to Boston's Logan Airport Blue Apple's CEO, John Cogliano, initiated the idea for this public-private partnership. Serving the Mansfield MBTA creates an enhanced transportation hub by coordinating with GATRA bus service and the MBTA commuter rail service to benefit the public with bus amenities, reasonable rates, and parking available at and around the Mansfield MBTA Station, as well as at two private-owned parking lots known as Ditchman Parking Lot and Foundry Parking Lot. For more information, please access www.blueapplebus.com.

Freight Action Plan

To assess the flow of goods at a regional level, SRPEDD conducted a Regional Freight Action Plan using a variety of data sources. Data collected for the project included, but was not limited to, truck travel time reliability, plans for offshore wind development, high truck crash locations, redevelopment of roadways near freight facilities, South Coast Rail, and many other MassDOT projects past and present. A critical element of SRPEDD's [Freight Action Plan](#) included data collected through the Regional Integrated Transportation System (RITIS) to assess system-wide performance of the region's interstate and non-interstate highways for truck movement.

Analysis from RITIS allowed SRPEDD to identify those roadways which were underperforming based on Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) goals set for interstate and state highways. Analysis showed that for Truck Travel Time Reliability on interstates in 2019 and in 2021, there were 24 and 13 miles of various roadway segments, respectively, that were found to be below the statewide standard set by FHWA, meaning they were slowed by congestion. Additional data for all vehicles on Non-Interstate Roadways in 2019 and 2021 showed there were 32 and 26 miles of various roadway segments, respectively, found to be below the statewide standard set by FHWA, meaning they were slowed by congestion.

In addition to these findings, SRPEDD found the replacement of the New Bedford/Fairhaven bridge was a top priority not only for movement across the bridge but for the continued development of the Port of New Bedford which is currently inhibited in expansion efforts due to the operation of the bridge. As a broader conclusion, it was found freight moves freely in the SRPEDD region but still calls for consistent and regular monitoring to identify issues as they arise. Contact Sean Hilton at shilton@srpedd.org.

Taunton High School Traffic Assessment

On behalf of the Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA), SRPEDD completed an assessment of traffic operations and pedestrian accommodations for the Taunton High School campus located at 50 Williams Street in May 2022.

Taunton High School is a public school serving grades 8-12, with school hours from 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM. The total student population for the 2021-2022 school year was 2,805 students with 345 school faculty and staff. There are two entrances and two exits via Williams St. and Hon. Gordon M. Owen Riverway.

Schools have unique characteristics compared to traditional trip generators as they see their peak daily traffic volumes occurring within two 30-minute windows, one in the morning, and one at the end of the school day. Over the last several years (with an exceptional increase due to COVID-19) children have been increasingly brought to and picked up from school via private vehicles. This increase, together with the increase in population of school-aged children, has contributed to traffic congestion within and around school property. As a result of parent drop-off, parent pick-up, student drivers, school buses, and GATRA buses, congestion has overwhelmed the school ground during morning and afternoon school peak hours (6:45 AM to 7:45 AM and 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM).

Taunton High School policy is that students in grades 8-12 who live more than two miles from the campus are eligible to receive transportation but those who live within a two-mile radius of the campus are required to provide their own means of transportation. As part of its regular fixed route bus service, GATRA serves Taunton High School on Routes 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Considering Taunton High School's core issues and researched guiding principles, SRPEDD recommends the Taunton School Committee work with the City of Taunton, MassDOT, H & L Bloom, and GATRA to implement immediate and future recommendations such as, but not limited to: add pavement markings on Hon. Gordon M. Owen Riverway, in both directions, for left and right turns into the high school; provide a safety officer or school personnel to allow school buses and vans priority to exit the campus; create a tiered dismissal; create a new GATRA bus stop area south of Head Start with space for two bus shelters and three 35' buses.



Drone image of Taunton High School showing the driveways to the school.

SRPEDD's Trail Mapping Program

The goal of SRPEDD's Trail Mapping Program is to identify the extensive trail network in the SRPEDD region to provide a reliable guide to the region's natural resources. The region's extensive trail networks are available to the public and grant access to nature, open space, and lends itself to recreation and ecotourism.

The program launched in 2020 in conjunction with statewide efforts to collect data on these trail systems in order to provide a unified resource for the public, municipalities, and first responders. While the COVID-19 pandemic posed some challenges regarding the statewide collaboration, efforts were reignited in 2022 with a heavy focus on bringing in state agencies to help create an authoritative data set. During the 2022 field season many miles of trail data was captured or verified, and a large effort was given to cleaning up existing data in preparation to move to a statewide standard.

The program's next step is to work closely with communities to focus efforts and finalize trail networks, with the ultimate goal of starting a rotational validation effort for our communities so that we can keep our data sets as updated as possible.



Leonard Pond Properties in Rochester.

Westport/Dartmouth Route 6 Corridor Study

Based on safety concerns sparked by fatal crashes and the changing needs of the corridor, the towns of Dartmouth and Westport, and in collaboration with MassDOT, requested that SRPEDD perform a study of the state-owned Route 6 corridor. The overall goal of this study was to examine alternatives that improve travel conditions and equity for all users (regardless of age, ability, and socioeconomic status) and build consensus towards a more livable corridor.

SRPEDD performed an in-depth analysis of the corridor from the Westport/Fall River line to the intersection of Cross Road and Route 6 in Dartmouth. Results highlighted the lack of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, the difficulty in navigating intersections, high crash locations, high traffic speeds, poor bus stop conditions, and difficult crossing conditions for all users. These concerns were mirrored by input from stakeholders, businesses along the corridor and residents in both communities.

Staff presented recommendations from the studies to the stakeholder groups for input and are working with the towns and MassDOT to advance projects in line with recommendations from the study.



Desire lines on the side of Route 6 where there are no sidewalks.

Economic Development

New CEDS and EDD Web Page

Over the course of 2022, SRPEDD staff worked with Marion-based Design Principles to update the Economic Development District's web pages. This work involved streamlining materials, revisiting aspects of design and user-friendliness, and highlighting SRPEDD's role in advancing and supporting the regional economy. Major highlights of the enhanced website include an interactive version of the new 2023 CEDS (written and designed by SRPEDD staff), overview of services, featured projects, as well as market data that highlights all that southeastern Massachusetts has to offer. The new website also identifies Critical Regional Economic Development Sites – a mapping tool to help communities market priority sites to prospective developers.

The work for this project was funded by the CARES Act. For more information, please visit www.srpedd.org/Economic-Development.

CARES Act Return on Investment

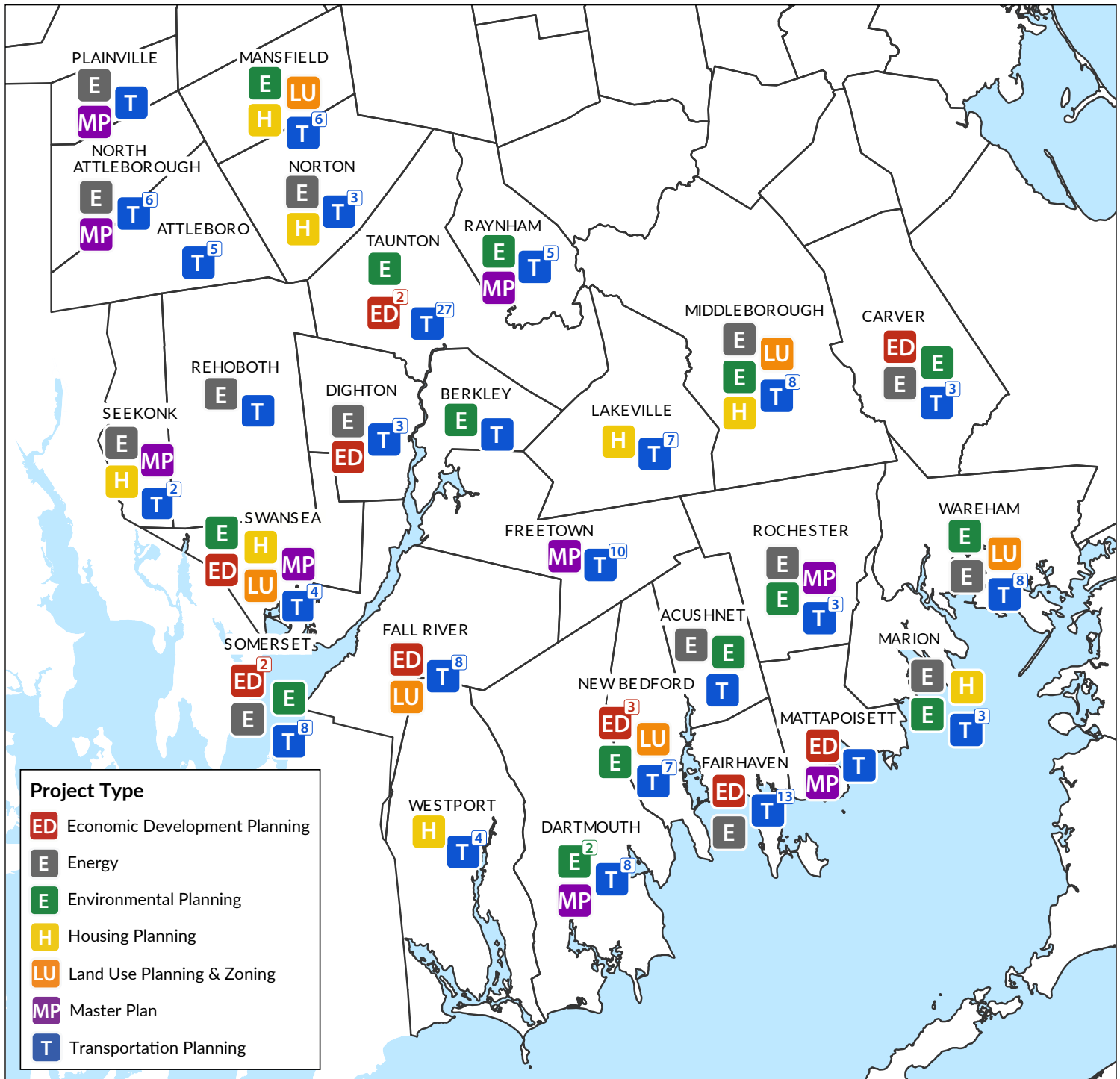
Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognized the important role that regional economic development districts, such as SRPEDD, play in fostering growth and helping communities recover from the adverse economic impacts of the crisis. EDA awarded SRPEDD and other Economic Development Districts (EDDs) \$400,000 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act emergency funding to build capacity, assist local communities, and update the tools and technology the agency relies upon in order to advance its mission and deliver high-quality economic development and planning-related services. Under this umbrella of broad goals, SRPEDD surged staff support and significantly expanded its economic development and recovery outreach, including large- and small-scale project and program development, grant-writing and grants administration, and related technical assistance.

Concluding our CARES Act work in 2022, SRPEDD directly assisted communities in bringing over \$3,400,000 in additional funding into the region – an excellent return on EDA's \$400,000 investment. The CARES Act also resulted in a renewed vision for the Regional Economic Strategy Committee (RESC), which serves as the steering committee for SRPEDD's economic development efforts. Finally, CARES resources also allowed SRPEDD to publish the new economic development portion of the website (more on this below) and create a modern, graphically designed, and easy-to-read 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – the guiding document that coordinates local and regional economic development goals – all while supporting the continued growth and resilience of our communities through SRPEDD's general services.



The graphic above is the Critical Economic Development Site [interactive map](#), featured on the updated Economic Development District web page. This project was funded by SRPEDD's CARES Act award.

Technical Assistance



This map and facing table summarize the technical assistance projects SRPEDD completed for its member communities during the past year. The table does not include the 141 traffic and turning movement counts that we completed across the region. Project funding came from multiple sources including District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) from the Massachusetts Legislature, Municipal Assistance (MA) from SRPEDD assessments, US Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), US EPA, MA Office of Disability (MOD), local contracts, and various foundations.

Acushnet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Municipal Vulnerability Planning
Attleboro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood Cut thru traffic counts
Berkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Vulnerability Planning
Carver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Pre-Application Business Park Development
Dartmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike Path (Regional Plan) Assistance Coastal Resilience Planning Fisher Road & Gulf Road Traffic Count Data Tech Memo Master Plan Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Route 6 Corridor Study
Dighton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Plan Green Communities Technical Assistance Speed Zone Sign Placement
Fairhaven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alden Road Redevelopment Study Benoit Square Traffic Assessment Green Community Technical Assistance
Fall River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle at Broadway Safety Study Mothers Brook Sewer Upgrades EDA Application TOD Market Study, Zoning, and Design Guidelines
Freetown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan
Lakeville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Production Plan (Tier I) Old Powderhouse Road & Heritage Hill Drive South Intersection Analysis
Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle Planning Technical Assistance Green Communities Assistance Housing Production Plan Phase 2 Signal Warrant Analysis TOD Area Build-Out and Indicators
Marion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Housing Production Plan Update Marion Village Parking Assessment Open Space and Recreation Plan Update
Mattapoisett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial Drive Infrastructure Improvement Master Plan and Housing Production Plan
Middleborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Historic/General Use District Bylaw Amendments Housing Production Plan (Tier 3) Open Space and Recreation Plan Update

New Bedford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine Commerce Terminal North Terminal Extension Phase II and Pier Fendering Project Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Quest Center, Armory District TOD Market Study, Zoning, and Design Guidelines Traffic Count Study
North Attleborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Master Plan
Norton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle Committee Technical Assistance Green Communities Technical Assistance Housing Production Plan (Tier 3, Phase 1)
Plainville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Master Plan
Raynham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan Municipal Vulnerability Planning
Rehoboth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance
Rochester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture and PPA Planning Green Communities Technical Assistance Master Plan
Seekonk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Communities Technical Assistance Housing Production Plan (Tier 2, Phase 1) Land Use Master Plan Element Services and Facilities Master Plan Element
Somerset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflow & Infiltration EDA Application Municipal Vulnerability Planning Route 103 Access Management Study Wastewater District Assistance
Swansea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Plan, Open Space & Recreation Plan, and Housing Production Plan Town-Wide Growth Model Wastewater District Assistance
Taunton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Marketing and Permitting MSIP V-Business Park Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Route 140 Corridor Study
Wareham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle Committee Technical Assistance Coastal Resilience Project Support Green Communities Technical Assistance Plymouth Ave Speed & Volume Counts Village Plan
Westport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Housing Production Plan (Tier 1, Phase 1) Route 6 Corridor Study

Homeland Security

SRPEDD's Ongoing Support of the Southeast Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (SRAC)

Since 2004, SRPEDD has directly supported the Southeast Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (SRAC) in their efforts to fund activities and purchase equipment that help member communities better respond to acts of terrorism. The Council's members (representing a variety of disciplines such as law enforcement, fire services, emergency management, emergency medical services, public health, public works and transportation, and local governments, etc.) work together to serve the ninety-eight member communities of the SRAC region. Their primary objectives are to provide necessary training and exercises, purchase specialized equipment, and to oversee the spending of the region's annual State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) grant funding – roughly \$1,200,000 annually.

In 2022, highlighted projects included, but were not limited to:

- Integrated Rapid Rescue Active Shooter Training – SRAC purchased equipment and a trailer to support ten future deliveries of integrated police/fire/EMS training.
- Search & Rescue (SAR) Team certification – Members of regional teams obtained National Search and Rescue Association SAR Technicians level 2 certification, greatly enhancing the SAR capabilities in the region.
- Law Enforcement Council (LEC) Command Post Vehicles - Several regional Command Post Vehicles received upgrades, including modernized cameras, monitors, and laptops, increasing on-scene situational awareness capabilities.

As with any grant program, a written, strategic plan for monetary spending is required. SRAC members, with the help of SRPEDD's Homeland Security team, develop a yearly plan that outlines the projects for that federal fiscal year. For example, to review the FFY23 Plan – or to find out more about SRPEDD's work with SRAC in general, please visit SRPEDD's updated Homeland Security website www.srac.us.

Taunton School District and SRPEDD to Create ASHE Response Tools for City Schools

SRPEDD's Homeland Security Department is proud to announce [a partnership with the City of Taunton School District](#) to create an Active Shooter/Hostile Event (ASHE) Response Tool for all 12 Taunton Schools. This work – which began over Veteran's Day weekend at Taunton High School – will take place over roughly 12 months and result in both physical and digital deliverables that would aid first responders in the event of an emergency at any school facility. The need for pre-incident planning, detailed and clearly labeled building floor plans, and other pre-planned mutual aid has been clearly established by "After-Action Reports" for ASHEs across the country. This project seeks to meet that need through a low-cost, functional product that aligns with existing emergency plans and procedures in Taunton.



The 3d camera used to create the floorplans, in place at Taunton High School.

SRPEDD will work directly with School Department Officials and City police, fire, EMS, and emergency management personnel. We will build upon the techniques, workflows, and best practices established during [SRPEDD's recent ASHE Response Tool project with Old Rochester Regional \(ORR\) High School](#).

SRPEDD is honored to complete this work with the City of Taunton. Our goal is to help create a safe, well-prepared region. For more information, please visit the Southeast Region Homeland Security Council website and contact [SRPEDD's Homeland Security team](#).

SRPEDD's Matterport camera, pictured here in the Taunton High School gym, helps create accurate floorplans and 3d models for the ASHE deliverable.

SRPEDD Looking for Partnerships for FEMA's Cyber-Ready Game

Communities have only so much funding, personnel, and time to invest in cybersecurity. How do you know if you've made the right decisions and investments to fend off and maintain critical services during a cyberattack? One way to explore these issues is to participate in an exercise called the Cyber Ready Community Game. Developed by FEMA, aligning with the national cybersecurity framework, and facilitated by SRPEDD Homeland Security program personnel, this game runs around three hours. During play, members of the community will weather multiple simulated cyber incidents, share information, and negotiate to prioritize cyber responses to sustain the community's critical services.



The Cyber Ready board game is an easy way to gauge community readiness to withstand a cyber attack.

The game splits players among up to six community organizations: Emergency Management, Local Government, Local Utilities, Hospital, Bank, and Business. The number of organizations and sizes can be adjusted based on participation (for example, a community with no local hospital wouldn't benefit strongly from playing on the Hospital board). The ideal audience of participants includes cybersecurity/information technology personnel as well as non-cyber personnel.

This lively game will encourage substantive discussion among community stakeholders about cyber preparedness and response planning. Whether your community is well entrenched behind a layered cyber defense or just starting its cybersecurity journey, the Cyber Ready Community Game will elevate discussions and help to build stronger ties between essential members of the community.

For more information, or to request a hosted game in your community, please reach out to Kevin Ham in SRPEDD's Homeland Security Department at kham@srpedd.org.

The photo above displays FEMA's Cyber Ready Community Game. SRPEDD's Homeland Security Staff can facilitate this exercise for your community.

Comprehensive Planning

SRPEDD Partners with the MBTA and the Commonwealth to Update PDAs and PPAs

The South Coast Rail project isn't just about transit connections. It's also about coordinated land use planning. Roughly a decade ago, from 2012 to 2013, a coalition of communities and state agencies worked together to update Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) around the region. These straightforward land use designations started with cities and towns – communities simply mapped where they wanted to grow and where they wanted to conserve. Next, regional planning agencies (RPAs) and the Commonwealth worked from local designations to identify those community priority areas that were the most important from a regional and Commonwealth-wide perspective.

At all levels – local, regional, and state – this work involved over 100 meetings and working sessions, significant GIS and policy analysis, and lots of civic engagement. This work resulted in the 2013 Community Priority Areas of Regional Significance Report.

In 2022, SRPEDD was pleased to announce a new partnership with the MBTA and state agencies to once again update PDAs and PPAs. This work began in late 2022 and will take place in all 27 cities and towns in the region.

Just as we did in 2013, the 2023 project team will rely on a combination of local knowledge and community goals, high-quality mapping, and a transparent public process. This time around, we also hope to add modern outreach techniques (such as online maps and educational videos), visualizations for key sites, and commonsense implementation strategies.

The process will begin with SRPEDD meeting with Boards of Selectmen, Mayors and City Councils, continue into working sessions with Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions, and other partners, and conclude with local and regional presentations of the updated 2023 PDAs and PPAs.

We look forward to working with you again to make these essential land use decisions for our region! For more information, please visit www.srpedd.org/Priority-Areas.



The 2023 PDA/PPA logo and project timeline.

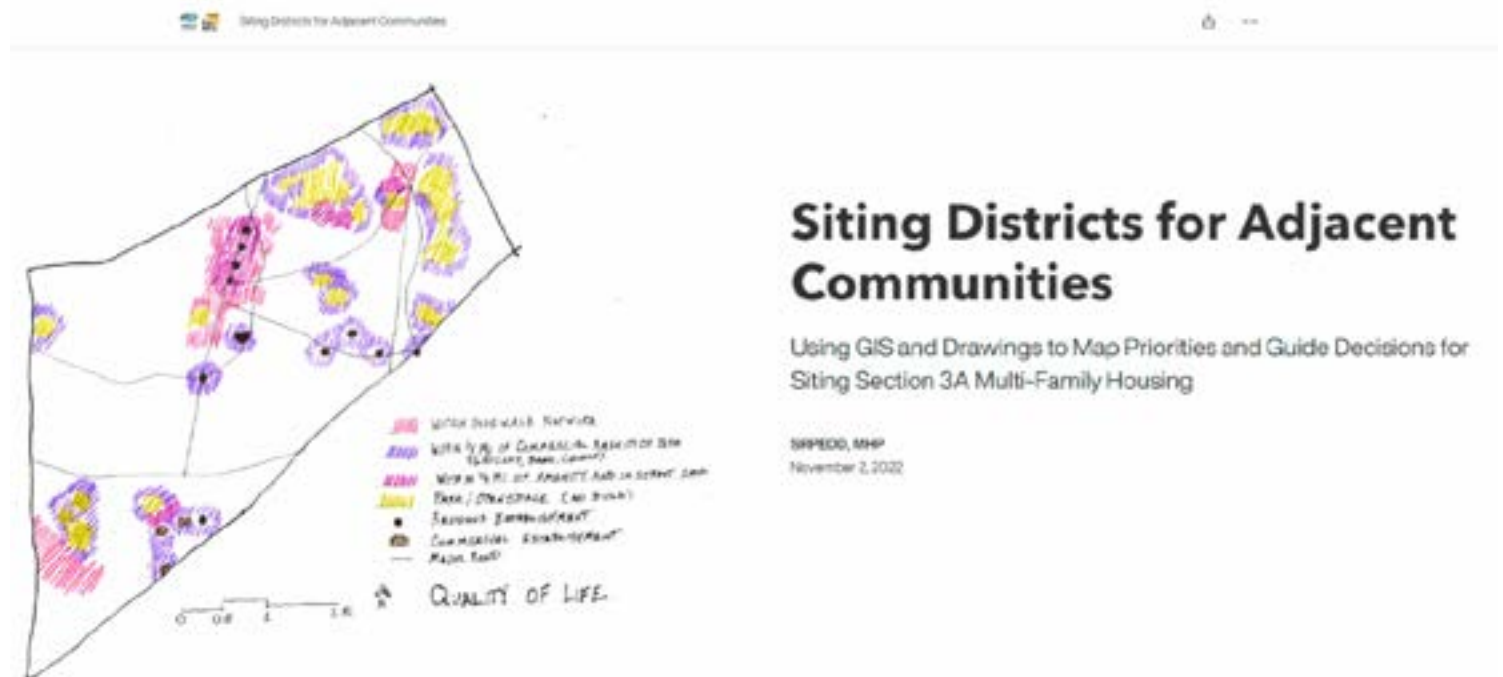
SRPEDD Hosts Two Webinars in Partnership with MHP and the “3A-TA” Initiative

SRPEDD’s Comprehensive Planning team recently hosted two webinars for the [Massachusetts Housing Partnership’s “3A-TA” trainings](#). This nine-part series, entitled “More Than Compliance: Multifamily Districts That Work in Your Community,” supports cities and towns as they seek to comply with the new Section 3A of Chapter 40A. SRPEDD is honored to have participated in this initiative.

We created our first session, “[Exploring Housing at Different Densities](#),” in partnership with Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group. The StoryMap presentation tours several multi-family housing developments from across the MBTA Communities region. It features drone and street-level photos and videos, maps, and descriptions of high-quality projects at greater than 15 units per acre (UPA) – the density required by Section 3A. These developments demonstrate that “density can be beautiful” – and that thoughtfully planned, carefully sited housing can help communities comply with Section 3A while also complementing other community development goals. You can [watch a video of the presentation here!](#)

Our second session, “[Siting Your District for Adjacent Communities](#),” examines various techniques you might use to help decide where to locate multi-family zoning districts in your community. It is especially relevant in situations where there are no requirements to be met under Section 3A Guidelines. The combination of approaches that appear in the presentation, ranging from GIS “Suitability Scoring” to hand-drawn maps, can help you organize your priorities, explore different scenarios, and test your location decisions using a variety of good data. A [recording of this presentation is available here!](#)

SRPEDD would like to thank MHP for allowing us to participate in 3A-TA; the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for their guidance and resources; and our municipal partners for adding your valuable insights to the Section 3A process. For more information, please reach out to SRPEDD’s Taylor Perez.



A hand-drawn alternative to the GIS “Suitability Scoring” techniques featured in SRPEDD’s “Siting Your District” for Adjacent Communities” webinar.

SRPEDD is always looking for new partnerships and ways to better engage with our communities

In 2022, Wareham studied the future of its town center, which runs along Main Street and the Wareham River. While there are many active businesses in the Village, the district has many underutilized buildings and is threatened by the impacts of climate change. SRPEDD partnered with Wareham, the Wareham Redevelopment Authority (WRA), and Innes Associates to propose climate-forward urban design and zoning recommendations. SRPEDD worked closely with Innes Associates to host two outdoor workshops at the old train depot. Bringing the planning workshop outside and at the heart of the Village brought the issues of climate change and creative placemaking right into people's minds. The workshops also educated residents and visitors who were passing by and did not know about the plan. Overall, the workshops helped residents overcome their initial skepticism and opened their minds to new solutions, such as allowing taller buildings with floodable, flexible ground floors.

SRPEDD is also partnering with Plainville on its community Master Plan. In the beginning, the town planner mentioned the challenges of getting residents to attend meetings. As a solution, SRPEDD proposed a series of 'Traveling Workshops' and partnered with local businesses and civic centers, meeting people where they're at rather than having them come to us. At the Council on Aging, we heard from seniors who shared their stories about Plainville's history. After the service at St. Martha Church, we heard from parishioners about their thoughts on Plainville's Town Center. And at An Unlikely Story, we heard from young families and teens, groups of people who usually cannot attend a planning meeting on a weekday evening. We hope to continue these tactical engagement methods, from high school civic class collaborations to youth sports games, all to hear from a diverse set of residents. Many participants stay involved; our online survey has had a record turnout, receiving over 660 responses.

SRPEDD is excited to continue fostering new partnerships and finding creative ways - in-person and virtually - to engage with our region's residents.



How do Different Strategies Look and Feel?



Images created for two public events held last summer on Merchant's Way in Partnership with Innes Associates and the WRA.

Swansea is Updating and Coordinating Three Long-Range Plans

In recent years, SRPEDD's Comprehensive and Environmental Planning teams have had the honor to work with numerous communities to create Master Plans, Housing Production Plans, and Open Space and Recreation Plans. In 2022, Swansea launched an ambitious and coordinated effort to update all three major long-range plans for the community at the same time! This 2-year effort benefits from several funding sources, including significant town funds, a large grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development, and District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA).

All three planning projects include proactive coordination between Swansea Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments. They also feature an extensive "hybrid civic engagement program" of online and in-person and formal and informal events. For example, in late May, the Comprehensive Plan project team hosted an in-person "Discovery Workshop" at the Swansea Police Department followed by an online, rolling event held via Zoom and through online activities available over the course of several weeks.

For more information, please visit the main project web page – www.srpedd.org/Swansea-Plan – to get a sense of the unique project branding, expanded civic engagement, and coordinated planning.

SWANSEA 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Discovery Workshop

**In-Person
May 24**

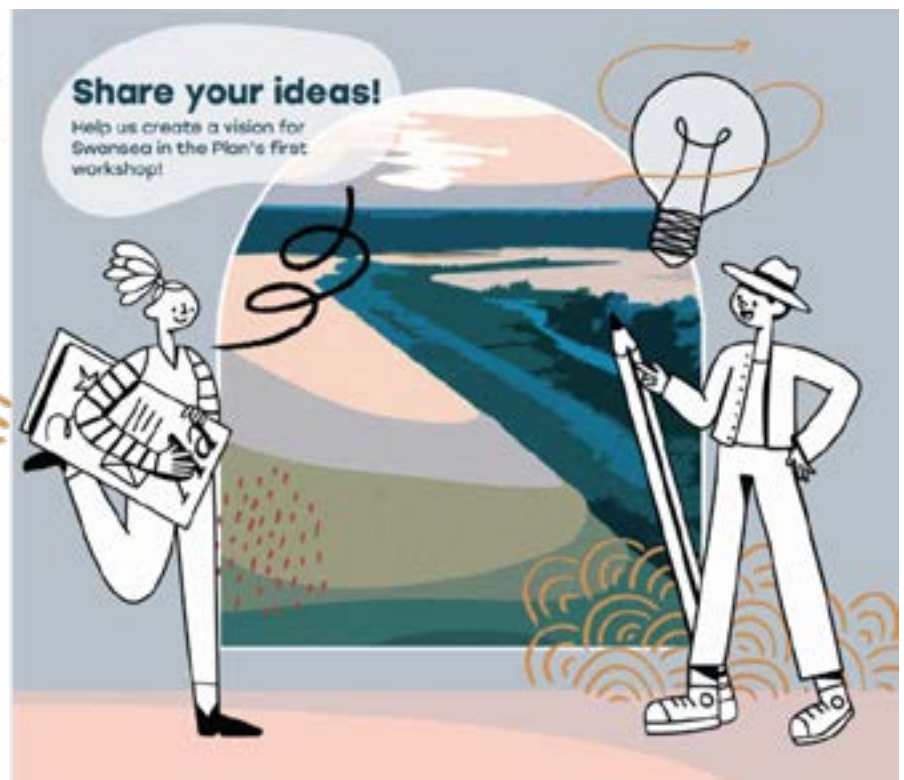
6:30pm - 8:00pm
Swansea Police Station
1700 Grand Army of
the Republic Highway

**Online
May 26**

6:30pm - 8:00pm
Register online
on Zoom!



SRPEDD
Swansea Regional Planning
& Economic Development Council



Environmental Planning

From Planning to Implementation in the Assawompset Pond Complex and Upper Nemasket River

In August 2022, SRPEDD and its project team finished the Assawompset Ponds Complex (APC) and Nemasket River Watershed Management and Climate Action Plan. The Plan, funded by the MVP Action Grant program, represented a two-year effort aimed at balancing the needs of water supply, fisheries and rare species habitat, floodwater management, and recreation.

While the plan contains over 100 optional recommendations that support water quality, fish passage, recreation, water supply, and floodwater management, the project team and committee decided to highlight the most important and urgent actions with a 12-point prioritized plan. This Plan, endorsed by both the Middleborough and Lakeville Select Boards and presented to the Rochester Select Board, is a helpful method for tracking projects and directing implementation funding. In the last year, state legislators Michael Rodrigues, Norm Orall, and Paul Schmid have supported continued implementation, securing \$280,000 in fiscal year 2023 for projects that can improve invasive species and floodwater management. Managed by SRPEDD, these funds, alongside a previous ARPA award, have made several implementation activities possible, including:

- The removal of 10 acres of invasive weeds from Long Pond in the summers of 2022 and 2023 in Lakeville;
- An initial design concept and continued collaboration around planning for the removal of the Wareham Street Dam in Middleborough;
- The hiring of engineering services and coordination with MassDOT to develop design alternatives for the replacement of the Snake River Culvert under Bedford Street in Lakeville between Long Pond and Assawompset Pond;
- The hiring of engineering services to conduct design and engineering for sediment removal and river channel restoration in the first 1,200 feet of the Nemasket River;
- The procurement of a monitoring well and stream flow gauge to collect initial data on the flow direction and variability in the Snipatuit Brook in Rochester; and
- The delivery of 4 workshops on pond-friendly lawn care, pond side buffer landscaping, and septic system management, sponsored by SRPEDD and Save The Bay.



APC Management Team with the Weed Harvesting Barge at Hilltop Park Freetown.

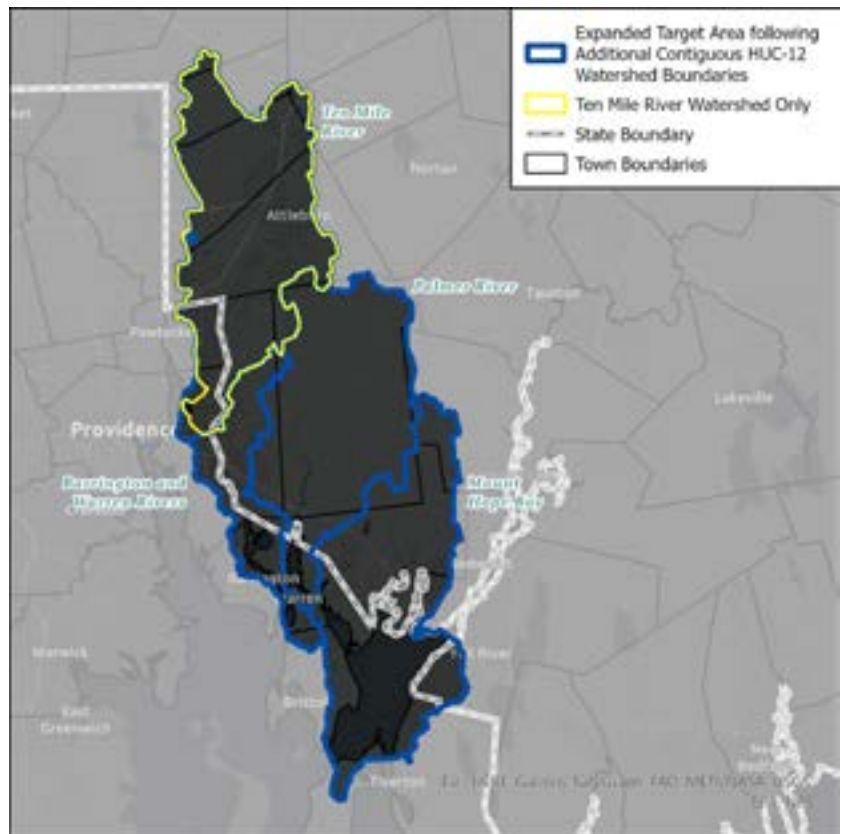
In all these endeavors and project development initiatives, there has been consistent and on-going coordination between the APC Management Team, water suppliers, local town staff in Rochester, Lakeville, Freetown, and

Middleborough, state representatives, state agencies, SRPEDD, and other partnership specialists, all dedicated to making headway in improving the conditions of the APC-Nemasket system. It has been a true education in the power of partnership, targeted planning, and implementation initiatives. We cannot wait to see what the next year will bring for our work in this project area.

Brownfields Annual Report Article

SRPEDD has received a three-year EPA Brownfields Community Assessment Grant. The grant will enable brownfield site environmental evaluation and community reuse planning activities at up to ten sites in several adjacent sub-watersheds connecting the Ten Mile River to Mount Hope Bay, comprised of areas in Plainville, North Attleborough, Attleboro, Seekonk, and Swansea. Grant work is focused around two main types of work. First, SRPEDD has hired Verdantas to act as the project's Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), conducting 10 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), 7 Phase II ESAs, and 5 Site Clean Up Plans. Second, SRPEDD staff will conduct a series of reuse planning activities, including Land Use Assessments, Infrastructure Evaluations, Resource Roadmaps, three Site Reuse Assessment, and one Site Reuse Vision.

The breadth of work that this grant enables allows for the investigation of brownfield sites along a spectrum of site readiness. Sites at the very beginning of the process, where no environmental assessment has yet taken place, will gain the benefit of an initial evaluation, starting their journey on the path to cleanup, recovery, and reuse. At sites where local action has already advanced cleanup past the initial evaluation phase, the site reuse planning work component will allow for a community-oriented site visioning process that considers specific reuse options and determines those that are most attractive and beneficial to the local community. In the last year, SRPEDD has convened a Project Steering Committee made up of local town and city staff in the target area, has facilitated the selection of an initial set of sites for environmental assessment, and has worked with the QEP on initial communications with property owners. We look forward to the next year of the project when environmental assessment will begin in earnest to inform site cleanup plans.



Brownfields Assessment Grant focus area.

Open Space Planning Across the District

Open space and recreation lands are some of our most locally treasured community assets. They provide space to have fun, gather, and enjoy fresh air and sunshine. Open space areas, both large and small also provide environmental benefits, such as tree cover, air quality improvements, climate pollution reduction, aquifer recharge,

stormwater filtering, wildlife habitat, and floodwater management, among others. Following Massachusetts state guidelines, SRPEDD's Environmental Team regularly provides technical assistance to communities to create and update Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRPs). The planning process allows municipalities to engage community members in conversations about their open space and recreation visions and makes state park and conservation grant money accessible. Plans must be updated every seven years to remain eligible for grant funding.

In the 2023 fiscal year the team assisted Dartmouth, Carver, Freetown, Marion, and Taunton. Each of these local plans had unique elements that showcased their local characteristics. Dartmouth created a 15-point prioritized action list, among which are goals related to enhancing water-based recreational access, water quality, and establishing a multipurpose community center for land-based recreation. Freetown now plans to retain a permanent, elected or appointed Open Space Committee and host an Open Space Committee page on the town website to keep the community engaged in land conservation and recreation opportunities in between plan updates. Marion's plan included creating or updating shared use paths and adding crosswalks and sidewalks that create safe alternate transportation routes between parcels of open space. Taunton will continue to protect the quality and quantity of the city's ground and surface water resources through ongoing pollution prevention and land conservation. In the coming year, we look forward to assisting Mansfield with its OSRP update.

Environmental Department kicks off regional review of Open Space Development Bylaws

Last year, SRPEDD launched a study to understand how Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) is being implemented across the region. Also known as "Cluster" or "Natural Resource Protection" zoning, OSRD bylaws allow developers to create a subdivision with smaller lot sizes, so long as they place the balance of the project's overall land into permanent land preservation. Developers win by being able to create the same amount of house lots as they would under conventional lot layouts (and in some cases, the flexibility to add more units as a density bonus). Communities win by having land preservation accompany development.

A review of all 27 of our communities' bylaws reveals that nearly 75% of communities in the region do have some type of OSRD-related bylaw; however, communities are seeing varying degrees of OSRP bylaw utilization. SRPEDD met with municipal staff in communities that do and do not allow OSRD, as well as local developers and engineers, to understand the common challenges to accomplishing OSRD development and learn what is and isn't helping to advance this smart growth development strategy. In the coming year, we will be synthesizing all that we have learned into a best practices resource for communities looking to update or adopt OSRD bylaws. We will also be assisting the Towns of Dighton and Mansfield in the update of their OSRD bylaws.

Green Communities 2.0

In 2022, SRPEDD continued to provide technical assistance to our 19 designated Green Communities, bringing over \$6.5 million into our region for various renewable energy projects since 2013. These 19 communities are included in the current 290 Green Communities throughout the Commonwealth who work together to reduce energy use across the state.

In the latest round of regional assistance funding (REPA), the Green Communities program expanded to include funding for activities that help communities become Climate Leaders by utilizing the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap to achieve "Net Zero", the process of extremely reducing, or eliminating, Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG's). State and regional entities have developed key tools to aid in municipal Net Zero planning. First, communities can use the MAPC/DNV-GL GHG tool to quantify the amount of GHG emitted in a baseline year. After this initial step, communities can develop Climate Action Plans, establishing a goal year for reaching Net Zero and

selecting from many types of activities that reduce GHG emissions toward that end. In 2023, SRPEDD presented these key community Net Zero planning tools to the SRPEDD Commission.

Is your community interested in Net Zero planning? Going forward into the next Green Communities REPA cycle, SRPEDD is actively seeking municipalities that would like SRPEDD assistance (via REPA funding) to develop a municipal GHG inventory and Climate Action Plan for reaching Net Zero. If your community is interested in participating, please contact Helen Zincavage at hzincavage@srpedd.org

Designing a stormwater management retrofit in Marion

Managing stormwater impacts on water quality is an issue in many watersheds. In 2022-2023, SRPEDD partnered with the Town of Marion to participate in a Stormwater Training Series offered by the SNEP Network, a technical assistance network of which SRPEDD is a partner. SRPEDD and the Town of Marion participated in the training with three other communities from Massachusetts (including district member New Bedford as well!) and Rhode Island who were awarded this technical assistance opportunity.

Over the course of five two-hour sessions, the series provided in-depth training on selecting and designing nature-based stormwater management systems. Participants were encouraged to consider projects that represented both new stormwater management installations and projects that were retrofits to improve the nutrient pollution reduction abilities of existing stormwater infrastructure.

To start the stormwater planning process, the Town of Marion considered known water quality impairments and stated MS4 goals and requirements. Town staff chose to frame the project around retrofit options for a high priority stormwater detention basin discharging into Sprague's Cove. The town held a site visit at the Sprague's Cove detention basin with the training team (captured in the image) and formulated a problem statement summarizing the existing condition issues and goals for its retrofit project. Next, SRPEDD and Marion reviewed the SNEP Network's Stormwater Retrofit Manual, an excellent resource that suggests various types of stormwater retrofit projects, and worked with trainers to select a subsurface gravel wetland at the basin's outlet to Sprague's Cove as a solution that would help remove nutrients and bacteria from the water before it enters the Cove. Finally, the Town used readily available soil, land use and drainage area data as inputs into the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center's Stormwater Best Management Practice Performance Curve Calculator, which uses these basic inputs and the type of project to calculate the amount of pollutive nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus, among others) that the chosen approach could be expected to remove. The concept design and quantification of benefits that resulted from this facilitated training series can be used to secure funding for further project engineering and installation.

Other communities who are working on prioritizing and implementing stormwater management improvements can find resources and request technical assistance from SRPEDD and/or the SNEP Network. Start by contacting Danica Belknap at dbelknap@srpedd.org The SNEP Network is a project of the New England Environmental Finance Center and is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Southeast New England Program.



SRPEDD staff visited Sprague's Cove with the Town of Marion and SNEP Network partners to assess the stormwater detention pond and identify opportunities for improvements.

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SRPEDD STAFF

Danica Belknap

Senior Environmental Planner

Sara Brown

Senior Comprehensive Planner,
CPO

Lilia Cabral-Bernard

Senior Transportation Planner /
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Phillip Hu, AICP

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Maria Jones

Public Engagement and Com-
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Transportation Planning
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Benjamin Myers*

Comprehensive Planner

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Rivers, Trails, and Watershed
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Joseph Osborne

Transportation Technician

Taylor Perez

Senior Comprehensive Planner
/ Community Engagement
Specialist

Karen M. Porter

GIS Specialist / IT Manager

Stacy Royer

Office Administrator

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Executive Director

Chris Welch

Senior Comprehensive Planner

Helen Zincavage, AICP, CFM

Manager of Environmental
Programs

*No Longer at SRPEDD



SRPEDD

Southeastern **Regional Planning**
& **Economic Development** District

88 Broadway

Taunton, MA 02780

508-824-1367

www.srpedd.org



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