

**Draft Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 1:00 PM - Held remotely via Zoom.**

**The following members were in attendance:**

Stephen Woelfel-----Representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Acting MassDOT Secretary, ***Chair***  
Sandra Serpa-----Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator  
Daniel Aguiar-----Representing Paul Coogan, Mayor of Fall River  
Jay Pateakos-----Representing Shauna O’Connell, Mayor of Taunton  
Alan Slavin-----Town of Wareham  
MaryEllen DeFrias-----GATRA Administrator  
Shayne Trimbell-----Representing SRTA Administrator Erik Rousseau

**The following were also in attendance:**

Jenna Massoud-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss  
Joshua Barber-----FHWA  
Raissah Kouame-----MassDOT  
Barbara Lachance-----MassDOT  
Andrew Wang-----MassDOT  
Colleen Pekarul-----MassDOT/Safe Routes to School  
John-----LakeCAM TV  
Sandra Medeiros-----Southcoast Bikeway Alliance  
Will Gardner-----Southcoast Bikeway Alliance  
Tricia Wurts-----Wareham SelectBoard  
Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD  
Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD  
Andrea Duarte-----SRPEDD  
Sean Hilton-----SRPEDD

**Handouts:**

SMMPO Agenda November 21, 2023  
SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes October 17, 2023  
FFY2024 UPWP Proposed Amendment 1a  
FFY24-28 TIP Proposed Adjustment 1a  
FFY24-28 TIP Proposed Amendment 1a

## **AGENDA:**

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

Chairman Stephen Woelfel called the SMMPO meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Ms. Andrea Duarte asked all MPO members and designees to please unmute themselves so she could call the roll for attendance. She then called the complete roll of MPO members, with the following being present at the time of the roll call:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes  
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes  
City of Fall River-----Yes  
City of Taunton-----Yes  
Town of Wareham-----Yes  
GATRA-----Yes  
SRTA-----Yes

### **2. Approval of Minutes – October 17, 2023 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)**

Chairman Woelfel requested a motion to approve the minutes from the October 17, 2023 SMMPO meeting. The motion was made by Alan Slavin and seconded by Daniel Aguiar. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes  
MassDOT Administrator-----Abstain  
City of Fall River-----Yes  
City of Taunton-----Yes  
Town of Wareham-----Yes  
GATRA-----Yes  
SRTA-----Yes

## **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **3. Public Comments**

Chairman Woelfel invited members of the public to make comments. There were no comments presented.

### **4. Regional Transit Authorities Report – RTA Updates**

MaryEllen DeFrias announced that GATRA will be running its free service for six weeks starting Black Friday running through New Year's Eve, aiming to encourage more transit users. This is a program GATRA ran last year with a lot of success. GATRA has also been adding Sunday service to routes as it can add drivers. Its goal is to have full Sunday service that mirrors its Saturday service by January. GATRA is pleased to see increased ridership across the region.

Shayne Trimbell announced that SRTA will be providing free service across all its fixed routes and demand response services starting January 1 through the end of June. SRTA's Sunday service will be starting by the end of January.

**5. FFY24-28 TIP Proposed Amendment #1 – Inclusion of New Bedford Raise Grant, Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector, Total Cost \$2,186,700 - (Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse, Materials Attached)**

Lisa Estrela-Pedro informed the group that this Amendment was presented at the October SMMPO meeting. FFY24-28 TIP Proposed Amendment #1 is for inclusion of the \$1.7 million RAISE grant that the City of New Bedford received for the New Bedford Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector. The total amount is approximately \$2.1 million with the grant providing approximately \$1.750 million and the city providing a 20% match. There was a public meeting held on November 13th for the Amendment. At that time, there were no comments received and no additional comments were received otherwise. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked the body to endorse this amendment into the FFY 24-28 TIP.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Amendment and seeing none asked for a motion and second to endorse the Amendment. The motion was made by Daniel Aguiar and seconded by Alan Slavin. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes  
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes  
City of Fall River-----Yes  
City of Taunton-----Yes  
Town of Wareham-----Yes  
GATRA-----Yes  
SRTA-----Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**6. FFY24-28 TIP Proposed Adjustment #1 – Community Transit Grant Match for GATRA (Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse, Materials Attached)**

Ms. Estrela-Pedro stated that GATRA recently received a Community Transit grant and the federal portion was programmed in the FFY23-27 TIP. This is the match to execute that grant, which adds \$177,600. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked the body to adjust this amount into the existing FFY24-28 TIP as the project was already programmed in the previous TIP.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Adjustment and seeing none asked for a motion and second to endorse the Adjustment. The motion was made by Daniel Aguiar and seconded by Alan Slavin. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes  
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes  
City of Fall River-----Yes  
City of Taunton-----Yes  
Town of Wareham-----Yes  
GATRA-----Yes  
SRTA-----Yes

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**7. FFY24 UPWP Proposed Amendment #1 - Inclusion of GATRA FFY2023 Contract**

**Extension/Scope of Services (Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse, Materials Attached)**

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that FFY24 UPWP Proposed Amendment #1 was also discussed and released to comment period at the October SMMPO meeting. SRPEDD's FFY23 contract with GATRA had a remaining balance of \$21,000 and GATRA is requesting SRPEDD extend the contract through May 2024. The scope of the contract was shown to the group and released to comment period. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked the body to amend this into the FFY2024 UPWP so that SRPEDD staff can proceed with these tasks.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Amendment and seeing none asked for a motion and second to endorse the Amendment. The motion was made by Daniel Aguiar and seconded by Alan Slavin. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes  
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes  
City of Fall River-----Yes  
City of Taunton-----Yes  
Town of Wareham-----Yes  
GATRA-----Yes  
SRTA-----Yes

**8. Proposed 2020 MassDOT Urbanized Areas Discussion**

Raissah Kouame informed the group that data was recently published for urbanized area boundaries, which have been updated as part of the 2020 Census update. The Federal Highway Administration in coordination with MassDOT and regional planning partners are asking for

comments before the end of calendar year 2023. MassDOT set an internal deadline of mid-November to hear from regional and municipal partners to ensure sufficient time to meet the federal deadline. Ms. Kouame emphasized that the process of determination to adjust an urban area boundary and submit to FHWA for approval is a state and local decision that should be made cooperatively between state and local officials and MPOs if the boundary is located within an MPO's metropolitan planning area. The MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning's GIS services group is mapping urbanized areas and looking for feedback from municipalities and RPAs on whether the census urbanized area geographies are consistent with what stakeholders are seeing on the ground, considering future needs and potential population growth due to activities such as redevelopment. Urbanized area information is used for activities like grant eligibility, roadway classification, and may impact federal funding formulas.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro stated that SRPEDD also presented this at the JTPG meeting this month. The SMMPO region has two communities that are impacted by this process, known as "smoothing." Ms. Estrela-Pedro showed the group the proposed urbanized area changes in red on a map for the towns of Dartmouth and Marion. SRPEDD staff have been in contact with the affected communities, and they have not voiced opposition to the changes.

#### **9. Other Business**

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that SRPEDD will be hosting a TIP workshop on December 14 from 9AM-12 PM at the MassDOT District 5 Office. SRPEDD staff will send out details about the workshop. Representatives from the MassDOT District 5 and Boston offices will be present to discuss various TIP topics, including how to get a project on the TIP, the design process, and right of way process. She encouraged all SMMPO members to attend. Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that there will be a design public hearing for the replacement of the Fairhaven-New Bedford bridge on January 9 at the Hayden McFadden Elementary School in New Bedford at 6pm.

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

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on December 19, 2023, at 1:00 pm, held virtually as of right now.

#### **11. Adjourn**

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Alan Slavin made the motion and Daniel Aguiar seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 PM.