

**Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) Meeting**

DRAFT Minutes for the JTPG Meeting

Held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 2:00 PM

**Held Hybrid via Zoom and SRPEDD Office in Accordance with Massachusetts Open
Meeting Law**

The following members and alternates were in attendance:

Michael Tyler.....City of Attleboro
John Woods.....Town of Carver
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Thomas Ferry.....Town of Dighton
Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Deborah Pettey.....Town of Freetown
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
Kevin Dumas.....Town of Mansfield
Josh Reinke.....Town of Mansfield
Norm Hills.....Town of Marion
Janice Robbins.....Town of Mattapoisett
Leann Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
Adam Hart.....City of New Bedford
Michael Yunits.....Town of Norton
William O'Rourke.....Town of Plainville
TJ Torres.....Town of Plainville
David Cabral, Vice-Chair.....Town of Seekonk
Katherine Nunes.....City of Taunton
Michael Burris.....Town of Westport
Chris McDermott.....At-Large, City of Attleboro
Gloria Saddler, Vice-Chair.....At-Large, City of Fall River
Ashley Eaton.....At-Large, City of New Bedford
Alan Slavin.....At-Large, Wareham/New Bedford Subregion

The following members/alternates were NOT in attendance:

Town of Acushnet
Town of Berkley
Town of Fairhaven
Town of North Attleborough
Town of Raynham

Town of Rehoboth
Town of Rochester
Town of Somerset
Town of Swansea
Town of Wareham

Also in Attendance:

Ralph Vitacco.....Town of Dighton
Gail Rodrigues.....Southcoast Bikeway Alliance Member
Sandra Medeiros.....Southcoast Bikeway Alliance Member
Barbara Lachance.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Chris Klem.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Anthony Jones.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Mary Ellen DeFrias.....GATRA
Emma Yeh.....Pare Corp.
Katie Peterson.....Mobility House
Sid Kashi.....GPI
Pamela Haznar.....McClure
Phil Viveiros.....Bowman
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Andrea Duarte.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Noah Soutier.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Rebekah Rose.....SRPEDD
Dan Brogan.....SRPEDD
Grant King.....SRPEDD
Jen Chaves.....SRPEDD
Jon Gray.....SRPEDD

Handouts:

JTPG Meeting Agenda for May 14, 2025
DRAFT April 9, 2025, JTPG Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Vice-Chair Gloria Saddler called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Andrea Duarte asked all JTPG members to unmute themselves so she could call the complete roll call of JTPG members, with the following being present at the time of the roll call:

Michael Tyler.....City of Attleboro

John Woods.....Town of Carver
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Thomas Ferry.....Town of Dighton
Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Deborah Pettet.....Town of Freetown
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
Kevin Dumas.....Town of Mansfield
Norm Hills.....Town of Marion
Janice Robbins.....Town of Mattapoisett
Leann Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
Adam Hart.....City of New Bedford
Jared Ferrara.....Town of Norton
William O'Rourke.....Town of Plainville
David Cabral, Vice-Chair.....Town of Seekonk
James Hartnett.....Town of Westport
Michael Burris.....Town of Westport
Chris McDermott.....At-Large, City of Attleboro
Ashley Eaton.....At-Large, City of New Bedford
Gloria Saddler, Vice-Chair.....At-Large, City of Fall River
Alan Slavin.....At-Large, Wareham/New Bedford Sub Region

2. Approval of Minutes – April 9, 2025 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)

Vice-Chair Saddler called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2025, meeting. The motion was made by Alan Slavin and seconded by Norm Hills. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

City of Attleboro.....Abstain
Town of Carver.....Yes
Town of DartmouthYes
Town of Dighton.....Yes
City of Fall River.....Yes
Town of Freetown.....Yes
Town of Mansfield.....Yes
Town of MarionYes
Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes
Town of Middleborough.....Abstain
City of New Bedford.....Yes
Town of Norton.....Yes
Town of Plainville.....Yes
Town of Seekonk.....Abstain

Town of Westport.....Yes
At-Large, City of Attleboro.....Yes
At-Large, City of New Bedford....Yes
At-Large, City of Fall River.....Yes
At-Large, Town of Wareham.....Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH 3 ABSTENTIONS.

3. Public Comments – Opportunity for the Public to address the JTPG

There were no comments offered.

4. Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Report - RTA Updates

Mary Ellen DeFrias from GATRA shared an update on continued growth of ridership. She reported that GATRA's pilot expansion of night service has been successful, and as a result, GATRA plans to continue adding service incrementally as staffing allows. She also announced that due to the popularity of the South Coast Rail station in Taunton, the station will be added as a permanent stop on Route 8 starting June 1st, with the station being served on every trip. Lastly, she shared that construction is now underway for GATRA's new Rehoboth facility. Dan Aguiar expressed interest in understanding how much the multimodal transportation connections—particularly between bus routes and the South Coast Rail—are being used. Specifically, he asked GATRA for data on the number of riders being dropped off at the train stations, like the Taunton station, on a daily basis. Mr. Aguiar was interested in whether people are utilizing the integrated bus-to-rail service that has been designed to enhance regional mobility. Ms. DeFrias replied by stating that there are challenges to tracking such information on fixed-route services. She explained that while it's relatively easy to monitor usage at the Middleborough station via their Dial-a-Ride system, it's more difficult to determine how many passengers are getting off at specific stops on fixed routes like Route 8. She stated that she would check with her team to see which data is currently available.

5. Community of Practice Discussion - Opportunity for Members to Share Questions, Project Updates, Challenges, Success Stories, Lessons Learned

Vice-Chair Saddler brought up concerns that have been raised regarding challenges with transportation access to some of the new South Coast Rail commuter stations. These issues reportedly include service breakdowns and understaffing. Vice-Chair Saddler asked if anyone else had heard similar concerns from local residents or constituents. Mr. Aguiar confirmed that he had heard similar concerns and mentioned an upcoming public meeting with the MBTA to address these issues, including service challenges and resident complaints—such as train noise and idling during the evening hours. The meeting will take place at Morton Middle School in Fall River on May 22, and it is open to the public. Vice-Chair Saddler followed up by asking whether the challenges related to South Coast Rail access have been isolated to New Bedford and Fall River, or if Taunton has also experienced similar issues. Ms. DeFrias replied that Taunton benefits from being the central hub where all South Coast Rail trains pass through before splitting into the two branches serving those other cities. As a result, even if some trains are canceled, Taunton still retains consistent hourly service, whereas New Bedford and Fall River feel the impact more significantly due to reduced frequency. Lisa Estrela-Pedro commented that due to recent service disruptions, South Coast Rail will be extending free weekend service through the end of

May. Dan Brogan also commented that staffing shortages on the South Coast Rail are due to Keolis, the company that operates the trains. MBTA General Manager Phil Eng is working with Keolis to resolve the issue, and the shortages on the New Bedford and Fall River branches are expected to be resolved by June.

Leann Bradley of Middleborough shared that she has not received any formal complaints about the South Coast Rail service but, speaking from personal experience as a resident, she mentioned that train noises have noticeably increased since the rail service became operational. Deborah Pettey also stated that Freetown is also experiencing significant train noise issues. She noted that the town has 11 rail crossings, which has contributed to a high frequency of horn use and associated noise complaints from residents living near the tracks.

Ms. Duarte noted reports of confusion among older adults in Fairhaven about how to get discounted transit passes and how to navigate parking and payment at stations in New Bedford. Vice-Chair Saddler also confirmed riders in Fall River expressed concerns and reported unclear signage, difficulties with payment apps, and general anxiety about using the commuter rail. She provided suggestions which included adding clear signage and on-site staff to help first-time users feel more comfortable. Ms. Duarte stated these concerns would be brought to the MBTA public meeting on May 22nd.

6. MassCEC Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Program Presentation

Katie Peterson presented details about a new Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Demonstration Project funded by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC). This \$6.3 million initiative aims to deploy 100 bidirectional EV chargers across the state to support residents, commercial fleets, and school bus operators. The technology allows electric vehicles to not only charge but also discharge electricity back to buildings or the grid, turning them into "batteries on wheels." This can provide backup power during outages, reduce electric bills by offsetting peak usage, and enable participants to earn revenue through utility programs like Eversource's Connected Solutions. The Mobility House will manage the technology and ensure that discharging never interferes with daily vehicle use. Applications are open until the end of July 2025, with installations planned for completion by the end of the year, and data collection throughout 2026. Priority will be given to applicants from Western Massachusetts, Gateway Cities, and Environmental Justice communities. Selected participants will receive the chargers for free, along with up to five years of software support. Applicants must provide proof of EV ownership, utility bills, and photos of the installation site. Ms. Peterson encouraged interested individuals or organizations to apply or reach out with questions, even if they are unsure about eligibility.

Vice-Chair Saddler raised several important questions about EV charger installations and public accessibility. First, she asked whether The Mobility House is involved in the free home charger installations offered by dealerships when purchasing a new EV. Ms. Peterson clarified that The Mobility House is *not* part of those programs, which are likely funded by utility "make-ready" programs where utilities cover infrastructure costs up to the install point, with the customer providing the charger itself. Secondly, Vice-Chair Saddler inquired whether municipalities like Fall River could apply to install chargers on city streets. Ms. Peterson responded that the V2X chargers offered through their program are not suitable for public curbside use because they are designed for closed, controlled environments (e.g., fleets or private residences), where discharge can be managed to prevent unintended battery drain. However, she recommended that municipalities explore MassCEC's separate *On-Street Charging*

Solutions program for public curbside EV charging. Lastly, when asked about outreach efforts, Ms. Peterson explained that the promotion of this V2X program has been largely grassroots—through forums, press releases, partnerships with Clean Cities coalitions, and limited social media efforts. She welcomed suggestions for additional outreach strategies, especially to ensure equitable access in less connected or rural communities outside the Boston area.

7. Complete Streets Program Presentation

Rebekah Rose provided a comprehensive overview of the Complete Streets program, aiming to clarify the process. She explained the three-tiered approach communities must follow to access funding: Tier 1 involves attending training and developing a Complete Streets policy (with a policy score sheet in the program guidance document); Tier 2 focuses on developing a prioritization plan (with up to \$38,000 available for initial development); and Tier 3 is the actual application for project funding, which offers up to \$500,000 every four fiscal years. Communities can split this funding across multiple years and projects. Specific project types that are eligible include intersection redesign, traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle network improvements, transit infrastructure, and streetscape enhancements. However, funding cannot be used for maintenance-only work, vertical construction (with a few exceptions), or projects on roads that prohibit pedestrian and bicycle access. Examples of recent awards included projects in North Attleboro, Wareham, and Mansfield, focusing on sidewalk improvements, ADA compliance, bike and pedestrian safety features, and traffic calming measures. Ms. Rose encouraged municipalities to share their projects for potential recognition on the SRPEDD website and directed interested communities to the MassDOT Grant Central portal for inspiration and application resources. Vice-Chair Saddler asked if there are any limitations on width when installing bicycle lanes, particularly when there are pedestrian islands or lane restrictions involved. Jackie Jones replied that the minimum width for a bike lane in Complete Streets projects is five feet. However, the exact width can vary depending on the specific context and location, and this means that factors like the layout of the area and local conditions may influence whether a bike lane needs to be wider than the minimum requirement.

8. Draft FFY2026-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) ([Link](#) & Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse)

Ms. Jones informed the group that the draft TIP was presented last month and has since been released for a 21-day public comment period by the SMMPO. During this period, only minor technical comments were received from MassDOT, and no public feedback was provided during the public meeting. Two earmarked projects in FY 2026 have increased in cost. While they are currently programmed with statewide funding, it remains unclear how the additional funds will be covered, though this is expected to be resolved shortly. No major changes have been made to the draft, and a vote was requested to recommend it for endorsement by the SMMPO.

Vice-Chair Saddler called for a motion to recommend the Draft FFY2026—2030 TIP to the SMMPO for endorsement. The motion was made by Alan Slavin and seconded by Norm Hills. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

City of Attleboro.....Yes
 Town of Carver.....Yes
 Town of DartmouthYes
 Town of Dighton.....Yes
 City of Fall River.....Yes
 Town of Freetown.....Yes
 Town of Mansfield.....Yes
 Town of MarionYes
 Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes
 Town of Middleborough.....Yes
 City of New Bedford.....Yes
 Town of Norton.....Yes
 Town of Plainville.....Yes
 Town of Seekonk.....Yes
 City of Taunton.....Yes
 Town of Westport.....Yes
 At-Large, City of New Bedford....Yes
 At-Large, City of Fall River.....Yes
 At-Large, Town of Wareham.....Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Draft FFY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (Roll Call Voted Needed to Recommend to SMMPO for Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)

Ms. Estrela-Pedro provided an overview of the UPWP for federal fiscal year 2026, which outlines SRPEDD’s transportation planning activities from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026. The UPWP, required by federal law, details how approximately \$1.9 million in funding will be spent across various planning tasks, including data collection, public engagement, safety, mobility, and environmental studies. Some upcoming special projects include a corridor study in Fall River, updates to the congestion management plan, food access and parking utilization studies, and flood-prone roadway mapping. The draft UPWP is expected to be released for a 21-day public comment period following the SMMPO meeting on May 20, with anticipated endorsement on June 17.

Vice-Chair Saddler called for a motion to recommend the Draft FFY2026 UPWP to the SMMPO to be released for a 21-day public comment period. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Ashley Eaton. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

City of Attleboro.....Yes
 Town of Carver.....Yes
 Town of DartmouthYes
 Town of Dighton.....Yes

City of Fall River.....Yes
 Town of Freetown.....Yes
 Town of Mansfield.....Yes
 Town of MarionYes
 Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes
 City of New Bedford.....Yes
 Town of Norton.....Yes
 Town of Plainville.....Yes
 Town of Seekonk.....Yes
 Town of Westport.....Yes
 At-Large, City of New Bedford....Yes
 At-Large, City of Fall River.....Yes
 At-Large, Town of Wareham.....Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. SMMPO SS4A Regional Safety Action Plan Presentation and Discussion

Ms. Jones presented the region’s draft Regional Safety Action Plan which was completed ahead of schedule to align with the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant deadline of June 26. This grant-funded plan aims to help municipalities in the region qualify for federal implementation and demonstration funding. A data-driven analysis identified high-risk and high-injury areas, and the plan includes specific engineering countermeasures and guidance for each community, ensuring municipal-level project eligibility. The RSAP ranks and prioritizes potential safety projects at both the regional and municipal levels to ensure a wide array of opportunities for funding for all 27 communities. The Action Plan identifies locations within each community in the SMMPO region that are eligible to apply for implementation or demonstration project federal SS4A funding to make streets safer. Draft locations and recommendations were shared with communities last week, and a digital tool is in development to aid local planning. Public release of the Plan is expected next week, with SMMPO endorsement anticipated on June 17. Feedback is encouraged to ensure the toolkit is practical and helpful to communities in the region.

11. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro highlighted the following upcoming trainings and announcements:

- JTPG appointment forms for the June 2025–May 2026 term are due. She requested that if municipalities need extra time they should notify SRPEDD staff.
- Two SMMPO Board seats—typically held by Select Board members—are set to expire. Self-nominations are due by June 16.
- MassDOT is seeking public members for the Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board.
- Members are encouraged to review upcoming Bay State Roads trainings; topics include culvert assessments and pavement management.

- Staff is considering holding an onsite JTPG meeting at a member community to showcase a recent local TIP project—interested communities are invited to volunteer. Members were reminded of potential changes to the next meeting’s location and format. The current hybrid meeting format may change to in-person only.

12. Date and Time for Next Meeting

Date and Time for the next meeting is June 11, 2025, at 2:00 PM with the goal of holding a hybrid session.

13. Adjourn

The Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was made by Tim Barber and seconded by Michael Tyler. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 PM.