

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

DRAFT Minutes for the JTPG Meeting

Held on Wednesday, August 13, 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:

Victoria Alfaro, Chair.....Town of Acushnet
Byron Holmes.....Town of Berkley (Attended at SRPEDD office)
John Woods.....Town of Carver
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Ralph Vitacco.....Town of Dighton
Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Sarah Page.....City of Fall River
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
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
Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
Michael Borg.....Town of North Attleborough
Marie Clarner.....Town of North Attleborough
TJ Torres.....Town of Plainville
Norman Sturtevant.....Town of Raynham
Camerson Durant.....Town of Rochester
Amy Messier.....Town of Somerset
William Anderson.....Town of Swansea
Joshua Faherty.....Town of Wareham
Michael Burris.....Town of Westport
James Hartnett.....Town of Westport
Chris McDermott.....At-Large, City of Attleboro
Gloria Saddler.....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 Fairhaven
Town of Freetown
Town of Norton
Town of Rehoboth
Town of Seekonk
City of Taunton

Also in Attendance:

Gail Rodrigues.....Southcoast Bikeway Alliance Member
Barbara Lachance.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Chris Klem.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Anthony Jones.....Federal Highway Administration
Derek Krevat.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Leah Pickett.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Mary Ellen DeFrias.....GATRA
Christina Mendoza.....SRTA
Emma Yeh.....Pare Corp.
Nick Schonberger.....Mass Development
Sid Kashi.....GPI
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte.....SRPEDD
Noah Soutier.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Rebekah Rose.....SRPEDD
Sean Hilton.....SRPEDD
Kevin Ham.....SRPEDD

Handouts:

JTPG Meeting Agenda for August 13, 2025
DRAFT June 11, 2025, JTPG Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chair Victoria Alfaro called the meeting to order at 2:02 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:

Victoria Alfaro, Chair.....Town of Acushnet
John Woods.....Town of Carver
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth

Ralph Vitacco.....Town of Dighton
 Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
 Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
 Josh Reinke.....Town of Mansfield
 Norm Hills.....Town of Marion
 Janice Robbins.....Town of Mattapoisett
 Leann Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
 Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
 Michael Borg.....Town of North Attleborough
 TJ Torres.....Town of Plainville
 Norman Sturtevant.....Town of Raynham
 Camerson Durant.....Town of Rochester
 Amy Messier.....Town of Somerset
 William Anderson.....Town of Swansea
 Joshua Faherty.....Town of Wareham
 James Hartnett.....Town of Westport
 Gloria Saddler.....At-Large, City of Fall River
 Ashley Eaton.....At-Large, City of New Bedford
 Alan Slavin.....At-Large, Wareham/New Bedford Subregion

2. Approval of Minutes – June 11, 2025 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)

Chair Alfaro called for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2025, meeting. The motion was made by Janice Robbins and seconded by Alan Slavin. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

Town of Acushnet.....Yes
 Town of Berkley.....Yes
 Town of Carver.....Yes
 Town of DartmouthYes
 Town of Dighton.....Yes
 City of Fall River.....Yes
 Town of Lakeville.....Abstain
 Town of Mansfield.....Yes
 Town of MarionYes
 Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes
 City of New Bedford.....Abstain
 Town of Raynham.....Yes
 Town of Rochester.....Abstain
 Town of Somerset.....Abstain
 Town of Swansea.....Abstain
 Town of Westport.....Yes

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

THE MOTION PASSED WITH 6 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 the launch of the new Gateway Link service on August 4, connecting Brockton, Taunton, and Fall River. Early ridership numbers have been strong in the first few days of operation. With a stop at Bristol Community College (BCC), the route links the college's four campuses across two transit systems. A direct connection to the VA Hospital in Brockton is also provided. Ms. DeFrias stated that GATRA will monitor the program to evaluate its success and explore how it will be maintained in the long term. GATRA is also planning for additional service enhancements for this fall.

Christian Mendoza, the new Director of Transit Planning at SRTA, introduced herself to the group. She shared that she did not have updates at this time.

5. MassDOT Local Early-Stage and Actionable Planning (LEAP) Program Presentation([Link](#))

Derek Krevat from the MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning provided an overview of the new Local Early and Actionable Planning (LEAP) Program, led by the Municipal Planning and Support Team. The program is designed to help rural communities and Gateway cities advance infrastructure projects by providing technical assistance and consultant support for early-stage planning and design. Awards will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 per project, which may include conceptual design, preliminary engineering, traffic and safety analysis, and cost estimation—helping projects become competitive for funding or ready for inclusion in programs such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Complete Streets. Municipalities can submit requests through an online form, which will be reviewed jointly by MassDOT and regional planning agencies, with approved projects matched to consultant teams beginning this fall. Mr. Krevat introduced his colleague, Leah Pickett.

Ms. Pickett continued the presentation by introducing the LEAP Program application process, which is managed through a streamlined Qualtrics survey. Applicants are asked to provide a project description, relevant documentation such as planning studies or community input, and information about the project's current stage of development, including funding sources, PRC status, and anticipated next steps following technical assistance. The survey also invites details on proposed scope and budget where available, though it is not required given the early-stage nature of many projects. Ms. Pickett

stated that MassDOT is conducting outreach statewide to encourage applications while also developing an internal inventory of potential candidate projects. It was also noted that she will serve as the primary contact for Southeastern Massachusetts and participants were invited to reach out to her or Mr. Krevat with questions as the program moves forward. Chair Alfaro asked when the application deadline is for the LEAP program. Mr. Krevat replied that the program accepts requests on a rolling basis but noted that September 30th, 2025, has been set as a priority deadline for the first wave of submissions. Applications received by that date will be given initial consideration as the review process begins. Nick Schoenberger from MassDevelopment asked whether the list of projects MassDOT identifies as potential candidates for the LEAP program would be publicly shared. Mr. Krevat explained that, at least for now, the inventory is intended as an internal tool to guide MassDOT's outreach, rather than a polished public list, though they are open to considering ways to share it. He noted that the inventory is based on regional and statewide planning efforts—such as the Southeast Mass MPO's recently endorsed Comprehensive Safety Action Plan—and includes locations with clear safety or active transportation needs that could benefit from consultant support. Derek added that MassDOT is using this information to proactively approach resource-limited communities and is willing to share details directly with interested partners.

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

There were no comments offered.

7. Draft Regional Evacuation Route Plan - Presentation and Discussion

Kevin Ham provided an update on the Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Evacuation Route Plan. He emphasized the importance of increasing participation in Code Red notifications, while acknowledging that achieving full coverage is unlikely. He discussed funding opportunities for preparedness initiatives, and several immediate priorities have been identified. Key among these are regional evacuation tabletop exercises, which will allow municipalities to practice coordinated response procedures in realistic scenarios. Communities are encouraged to volunteer as hosts for these exercises, which will facilitate participation from neighboring jurisdictions and enable testing of evacuation protocols. If a community is interested in being a volunteer they were encouraged to reach out to Kevin at kham@srpedd.org. In addition, future efforts will focus on the widespread dissemination of public information regarding emergency warnings and procedures.

Mr. Ham also discussed additional priorities pertain to enhancing evacuation infrastructure and route management. These included procuring regional shelter equipment, providing shelter training, and improving wayfinding and signage along critical evacuation corridors. The deployment of electronic sign boards is being considered to enable dynamic updates and timely communication of route changes during emergencies. The overarching objective is to ensure that residents can follow consistent, clear evacuation paths and that routing information is systematically incorporated into

project planning and prioritization, strengthening regional emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Norman Hills asked about the timeline for the reports release. Mr. Ham replied that the document is complete, and Lisa Estrela-Pedro confirmed that it will be made available for public comment in September, with the intention of seeking MPO endorsement in October. While exact dates are still being finalized, stakeholders should expect to receive the materials prior to the public comment period.

8. FFY2025-2029 TIP Projects Status Updates

Barbara LaChance from MassDOT District 5 provided the group with updates on several ongoing roadway and intersection improvement projects from the Federal Fiscal Years 2025-2029 Transportation Improvement Program.

- **Mansfield Multimodal Accommodations (School Street, Spring St. to West St.)**
 - Project advertised; bids opened end of July.
 - Award pending.
- **Lakeville Reconstruction (Rhode Island Rd./Route 79, Taunton City line to Clear Pond Rd.)**
 - Design wrapping up.
 - Advertising anticipated August 30.
- **Wareham Road Corridor Improvements (Route 6 at Swiss Beach Rd.)**
 - Currently in PS&E stage.
 - First PS&E submission completed end of June.
- **Dartmouth Corridor Improvements (Route 6, Faunce Corner Rd. to Hathaway Rd.)**
 - At 75% design stage.
 - 100% design anticipated end of December.
- **Norton Intersection Improvements (West Main St./Route 123 & North & South Worcester St.)**
 - PS&E stage.
 - PS&E Revision 2 received end of July; under review.
- **Westport Intersection Improvements (Route 177 at Roberts Rd. and Tickle Rd.)**
 - 75% design stage.
 - Awaiting 100% submission.
- **Mansfield Chauncy St. (Route 106, Phase 2)**
 - Pre-25% stage.
 - Checklist reviewed in February.
- **Plainville Reconstruction (South St./Route 18, Sharlene Lane to Everett St.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Awaiting revised 25% submission (Revision 2).
- **Mattapoisett Corridor Improvements (Main St., Water St., Beacon St., Marion Rd.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Revised 25% comment resolution meeting scheduled August 20.

- 75% submission due end of December.
- **New Bedford Corridor Improvements (On Tarkiln Hill Rd. & Ashley Blvd.)**
 - Pre-25% stage.
 - 25% submission anticipated February 2026.
- **Middleborough Reconstruction (Wareham St. & Wood St.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Sketch plan review completed in August.
 - 75% submission expected February 2026.
- **New Bedford Intersection Improvements (Mount Pleasant & Nash Rd.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Comment resolution meeting completed.
 - 75% submission anticipated February 2026.
- **Attleboro Corridor Improvements (Route 123, Lathrop Rd. to Thatcher St.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Design justification and utility field meeting completed last year.
- **Wareham Shared Use Path Construction (Narrows Rd & Minot Ave.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Revised 25% submission under review.
- **Dartmouth Corridor Improvements (Dartmouth St. & Prospect St.)**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Awaiting next submission.
- **Dartmouth Crossroad Road Corridor Improvements**
 - 25% design stage.
 - Awaiting 75% submission.
- **New Bedford Corridor Improvements (County St., Union St. to Kempton St.)**
 - Pre-25% design stage.
 - Scope and checklist received in July and recently reviewed.

Alan Slavin raised concern over the delay of the Route 6/Swifts Beach Road improvement project, noting it was originally scheduled for 2024 and noted the urgency given new senior housing and the fully active Damien's Pantry at the intersection. Ms. LaChance confirmed the project is in the PS&E stage, scheduled for March advertising, and noted timelines may adjust depending on readiness, reiterating that the project is progressing toward completion.

9. Other Business

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

- **Marion–Wareham Bridge Replacement Public Meeting** – Thursday, August 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Virtual public informational meeting to present the design for the proposed Bridge Replacement project.
- **New Bedford I-195/Route 18 Interchange Public Meeting** – Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Virtual public information meeting to discuss the Interchange Rehabilitation Project.

- **Safe Routes to School *Signs, Lines, and Infrastructure* Webinar** – Wednesday, September 3, 2025, 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **MassDOT 2025 *Moving Together* Conference** – Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 7:45 a.m to 4:30 p.m at The Sheraton Boston Hotel. Early registration deadline is August 27th.

10. Date and Time for Next Meeting

Date and Time for the next meeting is September 10, 2025, at 2:00 PM as a hybrid meeting, in which attendees can join at the SRPEDD office in Taunton or via Zoom.

11. Adjourn

The Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was made by Norm Hills and seconded by Alan Slavin. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 PM.