

October 22, 2025

6:30 PM Regular Meeting
Remote SRPEDD Commission Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85950325218?pwd=Q4xjw4fwBS64P1XhN0JM44ZaBiaQuF.1>

AMENDED-AGENDA

- Page 2 1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome
- 2. Approval of Minutes – July 23, 2025* (*Vote requested*)
- 3. Reports
 - a. Chair
 - b. Executive Director
- Page 6 4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Contracts *(*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
- Page 7 5. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance Committee *(*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
 - Page 8 • FY' 26 Q1 Budget Update *(*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
 - Page 10 b. Joint Transp Planning Group/MPO *(*Vote receive report and place on file*)
- Page 23 6. Programs and Project Updates:
 - a. Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (Phase 1) *
 - b. [Regional Parking Utilization Assessment](#) (Phase 1)
 - Page 34 c. Environmental Subcommittee Report (inclusive of MEPA report) *(*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
- Page 42 7. Old Business
 - a. [Technical Assistance](#) * (*Vote to receive and place on file*)
- 8. New Business
- 9. Roundtable: Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest
- 10. Adjourn

Per MGL c. 30A § 18-25, all meetings posted at: <https://srpedd.org/about-srpedd/meetings/>

FUTURE MEETINGS: Dec. 10, 2025; Jan. 28, 2026; Feb. 25, 2026;
Mar. 25, 2026; Apr. 22, 2026; May 27, 2025

NOTE: An Exec. Cmte Meeting will be convened in the absence of a Commission quorum.

*Attached

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes, # 2

SRPEDD Commission Meeting – Draft Minutes

July 23, 2025

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Present:**Commissioners:**

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| V. Alfaro, Acushnet | S. Elliott, Attleboro | R. Cote, Berkley | T. Bott, Carver |
| C. Vitale, Dartmouth | A. Romano, Fairhaven | J. Fidalgo, Fairhaven | B. Roche, Mansfield |
| L. Bradley, Middleboro | N. Hills, Marion | J. Robbins, Mattap. | M. Borg, No. Attleboro |
| M. Clarner, No. Attleb. | C. Desprez, Plainv. | T. Torres, Plainville | C. Sullivan, Raynham |
| P. Menconi, Raynham | W. Raposa, Somerset | S. Smith, Seekonk | R. Peirce, Somerset |
| C. Parayno, Swansea | J. Moran, Wareham | J. Whitin, Westport | G. Saddler, F.R A/L |
| A. Slavin, N.B. A/L | | | |

Guests/Staff:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| D. Belknap, SRPEDD | A. Hoes, SRPEDD | G. King, SRPEDD | L. Estrela-Pedro, SRPEDD |
| K. Pettinelli, SRPEDD | K. Robinson, Carver | S. Royer, SRPEDD | M. Tinger, SRPEDD |
| L. Tsang, SRPEDD | J. Walker, SRPEDD | | |

Absent:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| D. Wojnar, Acushnet | G. Ayrassian, Attleboro | S. Leary, Berkley | K. Robinson, Carver |
| K. Estes, Dartmouth | J. Carvalho, Dighton | D. Aguiar, Fall River | D. Pettey, Freetown |
| N. Durfee, Freetown | D. Lodge, Lakeville | R. Burke, Marion | W. Pike, Middleboro |
| J. Ponte, New Bedford | D. Luciano, Norton | S. Warchal, Norton | L. Ferreira, Rehoboth |
| M. Shoemaker, Roch. | S. Cadime, Seekonk | J. Hansen, Swansea | B. Fitzgerald, Taunton |
| J. Pateakos, Taunton | M. Soares, Westport | C. McDermott, Attl. A/L | A. Eaton, N.B. A/L |
| T. Lobo, Taunton A/L | | | |

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M by Chairwoman Clarner.

2. Approval of Minutes – June 25, 2025: A motion was made and seconded to approve the June 25, 2025 minutes. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY

Chairwoman Clarner mentioned that a few new Commissioners have not been sworn in. Mr. Hills asked the new members to raise their hands and he read the oath of office to those members.

3. Reports:

a. **Chair:** Ms. Clarner reported on the progress of the Environmental Committee and invited suggestions from new subcommittees.

b. **Executive Director:** Mr. Walker welcomed new members and acknowledged all who participated in the recent Commission Orientation and offered to provide packets to those who missed it.

4. Consent Agenda:

- a. **Contracts:** Chairwoman Clarner referred Commissioners to the contracts listed in the packet and read each contract for approval.

Be it resolved that the SRPEDD Commission authorizes the Chairman, Treasurer, Officers, and Executive Director, as appropriate, to negotiate and execute the following contracts:

1. With the Taunton River Watershed Alliance, as the fiscal agent for the Taunton River Stewardship Council (TRSC), to update and format a current version of the TRSC's pocket map for printing, for an amount not to exceed \$3,500.
2. To amend SRPEDD's contract with The Nature Conservancy, to extend the water quality sampling and pond level monitoring program for the Assawompset Ponds Complex for an additional year, for an additional amount not to exceed \$186,000.
3. To amend SRPEDD's contract with the United States Geological Survey to extend their service implementing the Assawompset Ponds water quality and pond level monitoring program for an additional year, for an additional amount not to exceed \$186,000.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the contracts listed above and as read. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Committee Reports:

- a. **Finance Committee:** Mr. Hills reported the Finance Committee met on July 16, 2025, at SRPEDD's office (88 Broadway, Taunton) and via Zoom. The June 18, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes were approved; the Treasurer's Report for June 2025 was received and accepted; and the warrant for expenses in the amount of \$319,727.20 was approved. He also mentioned the Finance Committee received and accepted the June 2025 month-end general journal entries. Finally, the Finance Committee reviewed the OPEB trust account statement from Charles Schwab for April 1- June 30, 2025.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Finance Committee report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

- b. **Environmental Committee Report:** Ms. Belknap mentioned she does not have a formal report for the Environmental Committee since they did not meet this month. She did mention that the next meeting will be held on August 6th, and she stated if anyone is interested in getting involved in the Committee, please feel free to reach out to Mr. Walker, herself or Chairwoman Clarner. Ms. Belknap then referred the Commission to the MEPA report that was included in the packet on page 11 and explained in detail. She entertained questions from the Members.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Transportation report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Programs and Project Updates:

- a. **Nature-Sensitive Designs for Open Space and Housing:** Ms. Tinger presented the Nature-Sensitive Designs for Open Space and Housing along with Ms. Pettinelli from the SRPEDD Environmental Team. She opened the StoryMap titled "*Nature-Sensitive Design for Open Space and Housing*" explores an approach to land development known as Open Space Residential Design (OSRD), which balances new housing construction with the conservation of natural landscapes. This planning

model encourages clustering homes on smaller lots to reduce land disturbance and preserve larger, contiguous blocks of open space. She mentioned the StoryMap emphasizes the value of this approach not only for environmental protection but also for community well-being and cost-effective development. By reducing the overall footprint of development and preserving natural features like forests, wetlands, and wildlife corridors, OSRDs protect scenic views, maintain habitat connectivity, and promote recreational opportunities for residents. It also enables developers to potentially lower costs associated with roads, grading, and utilities while still building the same number—or more—housing units than a conventional subdivision layout.

A central theme of the OSRDs is that development should work *with* the natural landscape rather than impose rigid, conventional layouts that often ignore ecological patterns. This nature-sensitive design philosophy integrates topography, hydrology, vegetation, and open space into the overall development pattern. Instead of fragmenting habitats or paving over critical drainage areas, OSRD plans seek to preserve sensitive environmental features, reduce impervious surfaces, and create visually appealing and ecologically functional neighborhoods.

The StoryMap's narrative outlines several benefits of the OSRD model, including aesthetic appeal, increased property values, and the preservation of rural character—all while meeting housing needs. The StoryMap presents implementation guidance that includes zoning and subdivision regulations that enable OSRD, the importance of the Four-Step Design Process (starting with identifying primary conservation areas), and long-term stewardship strategies for maintaining preserved open space. While the StoryMap celebrates the strengths of nature-sensitive design—such as enhanced quality of life, ecological resilience, and cost savings—it also recognizes potential challenges, such as gaining developer buy-in, addressing municipal regulatory hurdles, and ensuring effective long-term management of conserved areas through land trusts or homeowners' associations.

Ms. Pettinelli indicated this StoryMap ultimately serves as both an educational and advocacy tool, aiming to assist communities in how they think about land development. It supports the idea that residential growth and environmental conservation are not mutually exclusive, and that with thoughtful design and policy support, communities can achieve both. Ms. Tinger provided the link to the StoryMap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/416a394415104f78bef2ead43027c12b> and she entertained questions from the Members.

- b. **District Siting Tool for Rural MBTA Communities:** Ms. Perez presented the District Siting Tool for Rural MBTA Communities along with Ms. Tsang, and Mr. Hoes from her department. She indicated that the District Siting Tool for Rural MBTA Communities, was funded by a 2024 Community Planning Grant. She stated that the tool is designed to help communities identify suitable sites for housing development while considering environmental and infrastructure factors. Mr. Hoes and Ms. Tsang demonstrated the tool's functionality, including navigating the map, adding data, and understanding group scores. The tool is also applicable to general planning exercises outside of MBTA communities. Ms. Perez concluded with the presentation and entertained questions from the Members.

7. Old Business:

- a. **Joint Cmte on Environment and Natural Resources (S638/H1000) Testimony:** Mr. Walker reported on testimony provided for Senate Bill 638 and House Bill 1000, which propose to create a Wastewater Financing Committee. The bills received unanimous support in the public hearing. Mr. Walker thanked those who testified and provided written comments, indicating that staff would

continue to monitor and looked forward to participating were the Financing Committee to be established.

- b. **Technical Assistance:** Mr. King referred Commissioners to the monthly update on projects contained in the packet on page 17. Mr. King mentioned that he and fellow staff are available to discuss projects as needed by email or calling the office.

A motioned was made and seconded to approve the Technical Assistance report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. New Business:

- a. **Hold the Date: Wed, 9/24 SRPEDD Annual Mtg at Hillside CC in Rehoboth:** Mr. Walker mentioned that SRPEDD Annual meeting will be held on September 24th at Hillside Country Club in Rehoboth, and he hoped to see all there.
- b. **Call for Nominations- 2025 Special Recognition, Commissioner of the Year and Commissioner Distinguished Service Awards:** Mr. Walker referred the members to page 25 in the packet and discussed the awards nomination forms.

- 9. **Roundtable: Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest:** Ms. Fidalgo mentioned at the orientation the Route 6 speeding issue was discussed, and she ask what staff member could discuss it further with her. Ms. Estrela-Pedro mentioned she would reach out to her to discuss the issue in further detail.

- 10. **Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM. The SRPEDD Annual Meeting will be held on September 24, 2025 at the Hillside Country Club in Rehoboth at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Saddler, Secretary

Date: 10/22/2025

AGENDA ITEM: Contract Approvals, # 4.a.

Be it resolved that the SRPEDD Commission authorizes the Chairman, Treasurer, Officers, and Executive Director, as appropriate, to negotiate and execute the following contracts:

1. With the Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District to create a *Land Alternatives and Reuse Study* for an amount not to exceed \$43,100 (supplemented by a DLTA award).
2. With the South Coast Community Foundation on behalf of AHA! New Bedford to guide community engagement efforts associated with AHA! New Bedford's Downtown Management Services award from the New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC) for an amount not to exceed \$11,309 (supplemented by a DLTA award).
3. With the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to provide clean energy planning and program management assistance to participating Green Communities, for an amount no to exceed \$106,500.
4. With the University of Southern Maine to amend our contract to provide an additional year of technical assistance as a SNEP Network provider for an amount not to exceed \$61,734.86.
5. With The Nature Conservancy to provide permitting and design services for a pilot permeable reactive barrier installation along the Long Pond shoreline in Clark Shores, Lakeville, MA, for an amount not to exceed \$28,000.
6. With the Town of Swansea to provide MVP 2.0 planning assistance for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.
7. With the Town of Wrentham to provide MVP 2.0 Program Community Engagement and Facilitation Services for an amount not to exceed \$45,250.
8. With the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to conduct Buzzards Bay Regional Watershed Planning for Nitrogen Impacted Areas for an amount not to exceed \$160,865.00.
9. With the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to implement the Buzzards Bay Regional NPS Coordinator Program for an amount not to exceed \$100,000.
10. With Biodrawiversity Ecological Consulting to conduct a freshwater mussel habitat survey on behalf of SRPEDD to support Upper Nemasket River Restoration permitting needs for amount not to exceed \$9,000.
11. With the Town of Mansfield to provide Green Communities competitive grant management and technical assistance for an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

AGENDA ITEM: Finance Committee Report # 5.a.

The Finance Committee met on August 20, 2025, at SRPEDD's office (88 Broadway, Taunton) and via Zoom. The July 16, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes were approved; the Treasurer's Report for July 2025 was received and accepted; and the warrant for expenses in the amount of \$169,758.27 was approved.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cash & Funds: July 1, 2025 | \$ 891,629.43* |
| Cash Receipts: July 1-31, 2025 | <u>\$ 701,712.83</u> |
| Total Cash Accounted for: | <u>\$ 1,593,342.26</u> |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disbursements: July 1-31, 2025 | \$ 700,605.54 |
| Cash & Funds: July 31, 2025 | <u>\$ 892,736.72</u> |
| Total Cash Accounted for: | <u>\$ 1,593,342.26</u> |

** Last month's ending cash & funds balance was previously recorded as \$892,273.40. The difference of \$643.97 reconciles costs incurred and disbursed in FY25 but erroneously not recorded until the end of year closeout process.*

In addition, the Finance Committee received and accepted the July 2025 month-end general journal entries and FY25 year-end journal entries. Finally, the Finance Committee reviewed the OPEB trust account statement from Charles Schwab for July 1-July 31, 2025.

The Finance Committee met on September 17, 2025, at SRPEDD's office (88 Broadway, Taunton) and via Zoom. The August 20, 2025, Finance Committee meeting minutes were approved; the Treasurer's Report for August 2025 was received and accepted; and the warrant for expenses in the amount of \$142,974.03 was approved.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cash & Funds: August 1, 2025 | \$ 892,736.72 |
| Cash Receipts: August 1-31, 2025 | <u>\$ 942,767.83</u> |
| Total Cash Accounted for: | <u>\$ 1,835,504.55</u> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disbursements: August 1-31, 2025 | \$ 424,373.09 |
| Cash & Funds: August 31, 2025 | <u>\$ 1,411,131.46</u> |
| Total Cash Accounted for: | <u>\$ 1,835,504.55</u> |

In addition, the Finance Committee received and accepted the August 2025 month-end general journal entries. Finally, the Finance Committee reviewed the OPEB trust account statement from Charles Schwab for August 1-August 31, 2025.

SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Revenues Budget
For the Year Ended June 30, 2026

| | <i>FY25 Actual</i> | <i>FY 26 Budget, Original</i> | <i>Q1 Estimate</i> | <i>Q2 Estimate</i> | <i>Q3 Estimate</i> | <i>Q4 Estimate</i> |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Revenues: | | | | | | |
| <i>Federal:</i> | | | | | | |
| Direct grants and contracts | \$ 1,327,321 | \$ 487,764 | \$ 108,589 | \$ 108,685 | \$ 134,291 | \$ 136,199 |
| Pass-through funding | 1,908,274 | 1,897,561 | 473,532 | 451,500 | 485,589 | 486,940 |
| Total federal revenue | 3,235,595 | 2,385,326 | 582,121 | 560,185 | 619,880 | 623,139 |
| <i>State, excluding pass-through federal funding:</i> | | | | | | |
| Massachusetts grants and contracts | 1,111,707 | 1,094,773 | 228,842 | 296,262 | 282,767 | 286,903 |
| <i>Other, excluding pass-through Federal funding:</i> | | | | | | |
| Local government grants and contracts | 874,352 | 976,567 | 224,620 | 250,306 | 251,396 | 250,245 |
| Private grants and contracts | 154,185 | 365,651 | 127,797 | 111,670 | 73,474 | 52,711 |
| Member community assessments | 142,481 | 141,770 | 141,770 | - | - | - |
| Investment income | 29,325 | 30,000 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 | 7,500 |
| Miscellaneous | (435) | 1,000 | 250 | 250 | 250 | 250 |
| Total other revenue | 1,199,908 | 1,514,989 | 501,937 | 369,726 | 332,619 | 310,706 |
| Total Revenues | <u>\$ 5,547,209</u> | <u>\$ 4,995,088</u> | <u>\$ 1,312,901</u> | <u>\$ 1,226,173</u> | <u>\$ 1,235,266</u> | <u>\$ 1,220,748</u> |

Approved by the Finance Committee October 22, 2025

SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Expenditures Budget

For the Year Ended June 30, 2026

Approved by the Finance Committee 10/22/2025

| | <i>FY 26 Budget,</i> | | <i>Q1 Actual</i> | <i>Q2 Estimate</i> | <i>Q3 Estimate</i> | <i>Q4 Estimate</i> |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | <i>FY25 Actual</i> | <i>Original</i> | | | | |
| Expenditures: | | | | | | |
| <i>Direct:</i> | | | | | | |
| Salaries | \$ 1,869,272 | \$ 2,149,783 | \$ 434,750 | \$ 576,870 | \$ 565,937 | \$ 572,225 |
| Consultants (Pass Through) | 1,477,592 | 922,527 | 277,527 | 215,000 | 215,000 | 215,000 |
| Municipal Assistance | 89,686 | 45,000 | - | 5,000 | 5,000 | 35,000 |
| Other Direct Costs | 76,860 | 89,459 | 29,459 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Total Direct Expenditures | 3,513,409 | 3,206,769 | 741,736 | 816,870 | 805,937 | 842,225 |
| <i>Indirect:</i> | | | | | | |
| Salaries | 1,014,119 | 1,018,824 | 285,415 | 246,523 | 242,307 | 244,578 |
| Fringe Benefits | 686,285 | 556,057 | 152,129 | 135,682 | 134,061 | 134,184 |
| Travel | 2,972 | 3,302 | 1,073 | 743 | 743 | 743 |
| Bank Charges | 25 | 19 | - | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Printing | 1,973 | 1,480 | - | 493 | 493 | 493 |
| Supplies | 8,279 | 8,323 | 2,114 | 2,070 | 2,070 | 2,070 |
| Accounting & Legal | - | 40,000 | 10,000 | 30,000 | - | - |
| Computers | 38,159 | 31,191 | 2,571 | 9,540 | 9,540 | 9,540 |
| Dues & Subscriptions | 37,463 | 36,707 | 8,610 | 9,366 | 9,366 | 9,366 |
| Equipment Purchase/Lease | 15,281 | 13,410 | 1,950 | 3,820 | 3,820 | 3,820 |
| Insurance | 24,963 | 20,337 | 1,615 | 6,241 | 6,241 | 6,241 |
| Utilities | 11,916 | 12,306 | 3,369 | 2,979 | 2,979 | 2,979 |
| Meetings & Conferences | 13,146 | 13,679 | 3,819 | 3,287 | 3,287 | 3,287 |
| Advertising | 4,706 | 3,530 | - | 1,177 | 1,177 | 1,177 |
| Postage & Telephone | 6,052 | 5,951 | 1,412 | 1,513 | 1,513 | 1,513 |
| Services (GMS & IT) | 3,236 | 2,572 | 145 | 809 | 809 | 809 |
| Building Costs | 24,408 | 24,432 | 6,126 | 6,102 | 6,102 | 6,102 |
| Traffic Count Vehicle | (968) | (2,220) | (1,494) | (242) | (242) | (242) |
| Equipment Service & Repair | 25,562 | 19,267 | 95 | 6,390 | 6,390 | 6,390 |
| Educational Benefits | 2,092 | 1,795 | 225 | 523 | 523 | 523 |
| Consultants | 360 | 270 | - | 90 | 90 | 90 |
| Other | 426 | 886 | 567 | 106 | 106 | 106 |
| Total Indirect Expenses | 1,920,455 | 1,812,117 | 479,742 | 467,219 | 431,381 | 433,775 |
| Total Expenditures | <u>\$ 5,433,864</u> | <u>\$ 5,018,886</u> | <u>\$ 1,221,478</u> | <u>\$ 1,284,089</u> | <u>\$ 1,237,319</u> | <u>\$ 1,276,001</u> |
| Excess Revenue Over Expenditures | <u>\$ 113,345</u> | <u>\$ (23,798)</u> | <u>\$ 91,423</u> | <u>\$ (57,916)</u> | <u>\$ (2,052)</u> | <u>\$ (55,253)</u> |

Approved by the Finance Committee October 22, 2025

Draft Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 1:00 PM - Held remotely via Zoom.

The following members were in attendance:

Derek Shooster-----Representing Monica Tibbits-Nutt, Acting MassDOT Secretary, **Chair**
 Shaun Handy-----Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
 Christopher McDermott-----Representing Cathleen DeSimone, Mayor of Attleboro
 Daniel Aguiar-----Representing Paul Coogan, Mayor of Fall River
 Jamie Ponte-----Representing Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford
 Jay Pateakos-----Representing Shauna O'Connell, Mayor of Taunton
 Josh Reinke-----Representing Diana Bren, Town of Mansfield
 Sarah Hewins-----Town of Carver
 Andrew Romano-----Town of Fairhaven
 Jennifer Vincent-----Town of Berkley
 Marie Clarner-----SRPEDD Commission Chair

No Ex-Officio, non-voting members were in attendance**The following were also in attendance:**

Chris Klem----- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
 Barbara Lachance----- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
 Dana Hanson-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
 Alan Slavin-----JTPG At-Large Commissioner/Wareham
 Pam Haznar-----McClure
 Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD
 Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD
 Andrea Duarte-----SRPEDD
 Dan Brogan-----SRPEDD
 Noah Soutier-----SRPEDD
 Amber Davis-----SRPEDD
 Jon Gray-----SRPEDD
 Jen Chaves-----SRPEDD

Handouts:

SMMPO Agenda September 16, 2025
 SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes August 19, 2025

AGENDA:**1. Call to Order and Roll Call-**

Chairman Derek Shooster called the SMMPO meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Ms. Andrea Duarte-Campos 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 Attleboro-----Yes

City of Fall River-----Yes
 City of New Bedford-----Yes
 City of Taunton-----Yes

Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes

SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes

Chair Shooster inquired about announcements and Ms. Duarte-Campos announced that there are two new SMMPO members present who weren't at the last meeting, Andrew Romano from Fairhaven and Josh Reinke from Mansfield just began their terms on the SMMPO. Josh Reinke is replacing Kevin Dumas, alternate for Diana Bren, who resigned from his Mansfield Town Manager position.

2. Approval of Minutes – August 19, 2025 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)

Chairman Shooster requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2025, SMMPO meeting. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Jamie Ponte. Ms. Duarte-Campos then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Attleboro-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes

City of Taunton-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Abstain
Town of Fairhaven-----Abstain
Town of Berkley-----Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS.

3. Public Comments

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

4. Regional Transit Authorities Report – RTA Updates

In the absence of GATRA and SRTA officials, Dan Brogan and Lisa-Estrela Pedro provided announcements from both RTAs. Mr. Brogan announced that GATRA will be fare free starting October 1st, and that GATRA is actively working to reinstate Sunday service. Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that SRTA is expanding service on the micro connector; both service zones and service spans have changed, and the service is now available from 4:00 AM to 9:30 AM for morning trains and 5:30 PM to 11:00 PM for the evening trains Monday through Friday. The service zones are also expanding, and the service is filling the gap of the times when SRTA routes are out of service. SRTA is also continuing its efforts to develop its comprehensive regional transit plan with Mass DOT.

5. FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Close Out Presentation

Lisa Estrela-Pedro highlighted SMMPO staff's accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2025 and upcoming priorities for Fiscal Year 2026 across planning, data management, and community support. Achievements included:

- **3C Planning & Studies:** Conducted 13 MEPA reviews; coordinated with MassDOT, federal partners, and municipalities on multiple projects; and completed federal certification.
- **Public Participation:** Engaged in safety education tabling in New Bedford and Fall River and tabling and outreach for the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan and Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (FAST Plan), as well as outreach with food system organizations. An infographic on the South Coast Rail opening was also highlighted, which received over 20,000 views and more than 40 shares on social media.
- **UPWP:** Continued development of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Federal Fiscal Year 2026 UPWP is available on the website.
- **TIP:** Coordination and assistance with project development for all communities. Ongoing amendments and adjustments to the 2025–2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP),

development of the 2026–2030 TIP includes an analysis of funding distribution. Communities were encouraged to review the analysis so staff can collaborate with those that have not yet fully utilized TIP resources and support the advancement of projects across the region.

- **Data Management, GIS and Modeling:** Continued maintenance of the signalized intersection database and interactive map, conducted counts at park-and-ride and non-MBTA commuter rail lots, and performed crash data collection and analysis. Analysis of land use data, U.S. Census, and ACS data to support traffic studies and requests through the traffic count program.
- **Traffic Counting:** Completed 94 Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts to date, along with 55 turning movement counts - 16 supported specific studies and 39 contributed to updates for the signalized intersection database.
- **Pavement Management:** Surveyed 6 communities and conducted analysis for 13.
- **Performance Measurement:** Ongoing monitoring of statewide and agency performance measures and reported continued updates to the performance measures dashboard, available on the agency website.
- **Community Technical Assistance:** Completed 12 Technical Assistance requests, 4 are currently in progress and 1 is waiting to be started.
- **Integrated Management Systems:** Closed out Phase 1 of the FAST Plan and the Parking Lot Utilization Plan. Continued participation in Road Safety Audits and monitored roadway congestion and bottlenecks. Finalized a draft of the Regional Evacuation Route study.
- **Active Transportation:** Closed out Phase 1 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan and ongoing Regional Network support. The year-end trails mapping report was completed, data collection in 7 communities, and assisted several communities with applications for MassTrails grants.
- **Environmental Planning:** Continued support for coastal communities with identifying, prioritizing, and implementing coastal flood mitigation and adaptation projects, along with stormwater needs assessments and mapping vulnerable flood zone areas related to stormwater and general flooding.
- **Transit Planning and Support:** Created public service announcements and developed an interactive transit-accessible parkland map. Reinstated the Southeast Regional Coordination Council on Transportation (SERCCOT) to help identify gaps in regional transit, the new Gateway Link service was previously identified as a need and is now in operation.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro noted that in Fiscal Year 2026 the Transportation Department will continue Phase 2 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan, FAST plan, and the parking utilization assessment, conduct a corridor study along Pleasant Street in Fall River, update the congestion management plan, and support emergency preparedness exercises with the Homeland Security Department.

Sarah Hewins noted that the South Shore Community Action Council (SSCAC) in Plymouth does significant food access work in some SRPEDD communities including Carver and Middlesbrough and asked if staff had contacted SSCAC during outreach for the Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan. Noah Soutier answered that they hadn't been contacted yet but noted that he would add this to his outreach list.

The Chair asked where the PSAs created by Dan were shared, to which Mr. Brogan responded that the videos are currently posted on SRPEDD's YouTube page, with plans to expand distribution to Instagram and Facebook reels, as well as TikTok, to reach a wider and more diverse audience. The Chair expressed support for the PSAs and mentioned that MassDOT is also exploring ways to improve their own outreach efforts. He encouraged tagging or hash-tagging MassDOT in related videos so the agency can help amplify public safety messages.

6. Draft Regional Evacuation Route Plan Presentation (Link, Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)

Jackie Jones reported that the draft Regional Evacuation Route Study, developed in collaboration with

communities and partners, has been completed, was presented in detail at the last SMMPO meeting, and is now ready for public release. The plan contains a large amount of information and is currently posted on SRPEDD’s website, though it has not yet been promoted publicly due to its file size. A link to the study was shared, and it was noted that a major component of the plan involves establishing or re-establishing regional evacuation routes. Ms. Jones noted that by voting to release the plan to a public comment period, members would also be endorsing these routes. She noted that an interactive draft map is available online, allowing viewers to explore the routes alongside layers such as civic buildings, transportation facilities, hazard models, and census data. She encouraged members to review the materials thoroughly and noted that a formal vote to endorse the plan will take place at the next meeting, following the public comment period.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Draft Regional Evacuation Route Plan and seeing none asked for a motion to release it to a 21-day public comment period as presented. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Jamie Ponte. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| MassDOT Chair-----Yes | Town of Mansfield-----Yes |
| MassDOT Administrator-----Yes | Town of Carver-----Yes |
| City of Fall River-----Yes | SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes |
| City of New Bedford-----Yes | GATRA-----Yes |
| City of Taunton-----Yes | SRTA-----Yes |
| Town of Berkley-----Yes | |

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (Phase 1) Update

Noah Soutier provided an update on Phase 1 of the Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (FAST Plan), which aims to assess and improve healthy food access across the SMMPO region through transportation planning and public health principles. The plan combines strong public engagement, GIS data analysis, and regional coalition input to identify current food access disparities, particularly among vulnerable populations. Phase 1 included a report and a public GIS mapping toolkit that visually represents food access locations (e.g., grocery stores, food pantries, farmers markets) alongside transportation networks (bus routes, bike/ped networks) and supplemental community resources (hospitals, schools, housing authorities). Key findings highlighted that over 37% of Massachusetts households experienced food insecurity in 2024, and programs like the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) are underutilized locally, with only 2–3% of eligible households participating. Phase 2 will expand upon this data with additional public engagement, survey feedback, and refined GIS analysis, including incorporating transit stop data and evaluating transportation barriers to healthy food access. The toolkit will remain publicly accessible, supporting transportation staff, local officials, community organizations, and residents in understanding and addressing food access needs across the region.

The Chair noted the statistic showing that 69% of food-insecure residents must choose between paying for food and transportation, and asked how many rely on public transit, to which Mr. Soutier explained that data on transportation modes is not yet available but will be explored further through surveys aimed at understanding how community members balance expenses like food, housing, and healthcare. Ms. Hewins asked about mapping community gardens, victory gardens, and other non-retail food sources, to which Mr. Soutier emphasized the study’s focus not only on food access but also on food sovereignty that encourages local food production and stewardship. Ms. Hewins suggested incorporating land-use data to identify local restrictions on growing food and noted that “right-to-farm” communities in the region allow residents to grow produce and raise animals, often resulting in roadside farm stands. She mentioned additional local food resources, including Carver’s weekly farmers market, the Shane Gives Thanks food pantry, and a

community garden in the Crystal Lake neighborhood. She again recommended adding South Road Community Action Council and the Greater Boston Food Bank as key stakeholders, given their food distribution and delivery programs. Mr. Soutier thanked members for their insights, noting that this feedback will help staff fill data gaps in the regional food access study.

8. Parking Lot Utilization Plan (Phase 1) Update -

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d9dd4561b4534f378f096e5c8e8ff79f>

Jon Gray provided an overview of the regional parking utilization assessment, which analyzed municipal lots in Attleboro, New Bedford, and Taunton during spring 2025. Data was collected over several weekdays between March and May to capture a representative picture of downtown and port-area parking use. Results showed that most lots had low to moderate utilization overall, with Taunton recording the highest demand near City Hall, Attleboro showing mixed results including some commuter rail-adjacent parcels identified as potential redevelopment sites, and New Bedford reflecting the lowest utilization, likely due to data being gathered prior to the peak summer ferry season. Overall, the study concluded that parking supply generally exceeds demand in these areas, indicating that community perceptions of shortage are often greater than actual conditions. Mr. Gray emphasized the importance of the 85% utilization benchmark for evaluating parking management and pricing strategies and noted that the findings align with previous municipal and regional studies. He highlighted opportunities for municipalities to use transportation demand management, continued data collection, and targeted policy adjustments to more effectively balance parking needs with broader goals for housing, small business vitality, land use efficiency, and multimodal access.

The Chair expressed appreciation for the regional parking study, noting his support for the similar “Better Fit Parking” study previously conducted by MAPC. He asked whether any communities within the SRPEDD region currently have transportation demand management (TDM) ordinances in place. Mr. Gray responded that he was not aware of any formal TDM ordinances but noted that related concepts sometimes appear within zoning bylaws, particularly in tables of use or within downtown parking studies, where TDM measures are often listed as recommendations. He stated that some transit-oriented development (TOD) zoning districts may also contain relevant language. The Chair shared that his own community, the City of Everett, adopted a TDM ordinance in 2021 and encouraged other municipalities not to wait for state mandates to implement similar measures. He explained that such ordinances can be structured to require certain TDM strategies for larger developments—such as bike share programs, MBTA pass subsidies, or other multimodal incentives—and recommended that SRPEDD communities take advantage of the agency’s technical assistance to pursue these opportunities.

Shaun Handy asked for clarification about California’s initiative that compensates people for biking to work, wondering if it involved prorating salaries and whether it was mandatory or voluntary. Mr. Gray explained that the program he was referring to is the California Parking Cash-Out Law, a statewide mandate that applies to employers of a certain size and requires eligible employers to offer financial compensation or equivalent benefits to employees who choose not to use a company-provided parking space, effectively rewarding those who bike, walk, or use alternative transportation to commute. He noted that the law is likely connected to broader state efforts led by the California Air Resources Board to reduce vehicle emissions and promote sustainable commuting.

9. Age-Friendly Mobility Plan (Phase 1) Update

Ms. Duarte-Campos provided an update on Phase 1 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan. The plan aims to identify transportation needs, priorities, and recommendations that will guide SRPEDD’s future technical assistance and investments in infrastructure supportive of healthy aging. She noted that older adults (65+) make up 18% of the region’s population, with the fastest growth in communities that have limited transit service including Middleborough, Berkley, Norton, and Rochester. About 9% of households lack access to a

vehicle, underscoring the need for alternatives.

Phase 1 (April–August 2025) involved collecting background research, quantitative data, and GIS spatial analysis to assess transportation accessibility for older adults. Using modified AARP Livability Index metrics, SRPEDD developed customized Age-Friendly Mobility Livability Scores for neighborhoods of COAs in the region, placing greater weight on transportation and transit access. COAs located closer to bus or train stops scored higher. Preliminary findings show that while some COA neighborhoods score well, most see a decline in livability scores when transportation access is factored in. GIS mapping illustrated spatial relationships among COAs, older adult residential clusters, and regional transit networks (GATRA, SRTA, and MBTA), revealing significant service gaps and weak connections between where seniors live and where they can access COA resources. Walkshed analyses showed that even where transit exists, it often remains disconnected from some older adults’ neighborhoods. SRPEDD will also map paratransit, dial-a-ride, and van services—critical mobility options for seniors without access to fixed-route transit—and will integrate information on popular destinations to evaluate multimodal accessibility and infrastructure gaps such as missing ADA ramps or sidewalks.

Feedback received during public engagement so far highlighted reliance on demand-response services and carpooling, the need for more frequent and reliable transit (especially to healthcare), limited awareness of paratransit options, and volunteer driver shortages. Phase 2 will expand transit, walk and bike-shed data collection and public engagement through surveys and focus groups, evaluate bus stop and senior housing accessibility, and coordinate discussions with municipalities and regional transit authorities. The final plan will be released in fall 2026 following MPO review and a public comment period.

Marie Clarner shared her personal experience as an older adult who uses a cane, highlighting accessibility challenges that affect her and others with limited mobility. Although she can use GATRA’s dial-a-ride service, she explained that many curbs are too high and that sloped sidewalk corners can be dangerously slippery, particularly in wet or icy conditions—even where textured metal plates have been installed. Because of these barriers, she sometimes avoids certain destinations altogether when traveling alone. She urged planners to consider these real-world obstacles in their accessibility and mobility planning efforts. Ms. Duarte-Campos thanked Ms. Clarner for her valuable perspective and confirmed that her concerns align closely with the goals of the age-friendly mobility study. She noted that future phases of the project could include walk audits and ADA accessibility assessments, ideally involving residents with mobility challenges to inform actual usability rather than just technical compliance. Amber Davis emphasized that accessibility is not only about physical infrastructure like ramps but also about understanding how people with varying abilities actually experience the environment. She discussed incorporating these lived experiences into dynamic transit access audits, focusing on practical barriers such as carrying groceries, navigating slippery surfaces, or walking in poor weather conditions.

The Chair added that other regional planning agencies have successfully conducted “wobble audits”—activities that simulate mobility challenges by having planners and officials use mobility aids themselves to gain first-hand understanding of accessibility issues. He recommended SRPEDD consider adopting a similar approach in collaboration with local Councils on Aging.

10. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro stated that SRPEDD’s annual dinner will be held on September 24th at the Hillside Country Club in Rehoboth and is an opportunity to talk with SMMPO staff and all SRPEDD staff and learn about the work that is happening across the agency.

11. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on October 21, 2025 at 1:00 pm, held virtually.

12. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Dan Aguiar made the motion and Jay Pateakos seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 PM.

Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) Meeting

DRAFT Minutes for the JTPG Meeting

Held on Wednesday, September 10, 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:

Byron Holmes.....Town of Berkley
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Joshua Crabb.....Town of Fairhaven
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
Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
Michael Borg.....Town of North Attleborough
George Solas.....Town of Rehoboth
William O'Rourke.....Town of Plainville
TJ Torres.....Town of Plainville
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 Acushnet | Town of Raynham |
| Town of Carver | Town of Rochester |
| Town of Dighton | Town of Seekonk |
| Town of Freetown | Town of Somerset |
| Town of Middleborough | Town of Swansea |
| Town of Norton | City of Taunton |

Also in Attendance:

Barbara Lachance.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Chris Klem.....Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Mary Ellen DeFrias.....GATRA
Christina Mendoza.....SRTA
Marie Clarner.....Town of North Attleborough/SRPEDD Commission Chair
Emma Yeh.....Pare Corp.
Will Gardner.....SouthCoast Places for People
Miles Grant.....SouthCoast Places for People
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD (Attended at SRPEDD office)
Andrea Duarte-Campos.....SRPEDD
20251022 SRPEDD Commission Mtg

Noah Soutier.....SRPEDD
Rebekah Rose.....SRPEDD
Jon Gray.....SRPEDD
Jen Chaves.....SRPEDD

Handouts:

JTPG Meeting Agenda for September 10, 2025
DRAFT August 13, 2025, JTPG Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Vice Chair Gloria Saddler called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. Andrea Duarte-Campos 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:

Byron Holmes.....Town of Berkley
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Joshua Crabb.....Town of Fairhaven
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
Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
Michael Borg.....Town of North Attleborough
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

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

Vice Chair Alan Slavin called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2025, meeting. The motion was made by Norman Hills and seconded by Janice Robbins. Ms. Duarte-Campos then called the roll:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Town of Berkley.....Yes | Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes |
| Town of DartmouthYes | City of New Bedford.....Yes |
| Town of Fairhaven.....Abstain | Town of North Attleborough.....Yes |
| City of Fall River.....Yes | Town of Westport.....Yes |
| Town of Lakeville.....Yes | At-Large, City of New Bedford....Yes |
| Town of Mansfield.....Yes | At-Large, Town of Wareham.....Yes |
| Town of MarionYes | |

THE MOTION PASSED WITH 1 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 shared an update that GATRA is preparing for a new hiring push to address a current driver shortage, which is constraining service expansion. The Wareham facility is progressing and is anticipated to be operational this fall. Ms. DeFrias highlighted the Gateway Link, connecting Brockton, Taunton, and Fall River, which carried 1,068 passengers in its first month, demonstrating strong demand for direct bus connections to transit hubs, the VA hospital, and Stonehill College. GATRA is exploring extending the service for another year with new funding and evaluating long-term sustainability options.

Christina Mendoza shared an update that SRTA has expanded its Micro Connector service, providing direct transit connections from Fall River and New Bedford to the South Coast rail stations. Service hours now run weekdays 4:00–9:30 a.m. and 5:30–11:00 p.m., with expanded service zones. Ms. Mendoza noted that fare-free service will continue through June 30, 2026, and SRTA is actively developing the 2025 Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan with MassDOT, including a public survey to gather input on regional transit needs.

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

Ms. Duarte-Campos informed the group that a walk audit will be conducted on Route 6 (Pope’s Island), from the Bedford/Fairhaven bridge to the intersection with Middle Street, following recent fatalities on the road. She explained that South Coast Places for People group has formed a working group to involve community members in advocating for safety improvements along this corridor.

6. FFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Close Out Presentation

Lisa Estrela-Pedro highlighted SRPEDD accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2025 and upcoming priorities for Fiscal Year 2026 across planning, data management, and community support. Achievements included:

- **3C Planning & Studies:** Conducted 13 MEPA reviews; coordinated with MassDOT, federal partners, and municipalities on multiple projects; and completed federal certification.
- **Public Participation:** Engaged in safety education tabling in New Bedford and Fall River and tabling and outreach for the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan and Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (FAST Plan), as well as outreach with food system organizations. An infographic on the South Coast Rail opening was also highlighted, which received over 20,000 views and more than 40 shares on social media.
- **UPWP:** Continued development of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Federal Fiscal Year 2026 UPWP is available on the website. Ongoing coordination and assistance with project development for all communities.
- **TIP:** Ongoing amendments and adjustments to the 2025–2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), development of the 2026–2030 TIP includes an analysis of funding distribution. Communities were encouraged to review the analysis so staff can collaborate with those that have not yet fully utilized TIP resources and support the advancement of projects across the region.
- **Data Management, GIS and Modeling:** Continued maintenance of the signalized intersection database and interactive map, conducted counts at park-and-ride and non-MBTA commuter rail lots, and performed crash data collection and analysis. Analysis of land use data, U.S. Census, and ACS data to support traffic studies and requests through the traffic count program.
- **Traffic Counting:** Completed 94 Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts to date, along with 55 turning movement counts - 16 supported specific studies and 39 contributed to updates for the signalized intersection database.
- **Pavement Management:** Surveyed 6 communities and conducted analysis for 13 communities.
- **Performance Measurement:** Ongoing monitoring of statewide and agency performance measures and reported continued updates to the performance measures dashboard, available on the agency website.

- **Community Technical Assistance:** Completed 12 Technical Assistance requests, 4 are currently in progress and 1 is waiting to be started.
- **Integrated Management Systems:** Closed out Phase 1 of the FAST Plan and the Parking Lot Utilization Plan. Continued participation in Road Safety Audits and monitored roadway congestion and bottlenecks. Finalized the Regional Evacuation Route study.
- **Active Transportation:** Closed out Phase 1 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan and ongoing Regional Network support. The year-end trails mapping report was completed, data collection in 7 communities, and assisted several communities with applications for MassTrails grants.
- **Environmental Planning:** Continued support for coastal communities with identifying, prioritizing, and implementing coastal flood mitigation and adaptation projects, along with stormwater needs assessments and mapping vulnerable flood zone areas related to stormwater and general flooding.
- **Transit Planning and Support:** Created public service announcements and developed an interactive transit-accessible parkland map. Reinstated the Southeast Regional Coordination Council on Transportation (SERCCOT) to help identify gaps in regional transit, the Gateway Link cited as an example of a previously identified need.

Ms. Estrela-Pedro noted that in Fiscal Year 2026 the Transportation Department will continue Phase 2 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan, FAST plan, and the parking utilization assessment, conduct a corridor study along Pleasant Street in Fall River, update the congestion management plan, and support emergency preparedness exercises with the Homeland Security Department. Vice Chair Slavin noted that Wareham was designated an Age-Friendly Community nine years ago but had not completed all follow-up requirements after the initial survey. The town's council and subcommittee are working to complete the remaining steps to fully implement their Age-Friendly Transportation program.

7. Draft Regional Evacuation Route Plan Presentation (Roll Call Vote Needed to recommend to SMMPO for Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)

Jackie Jones reported that the Regional Evacuation Route Study, developed in collaboration with communities and partners, has been completed and is ready for public release. The SMMPO is expected to vote next week to release the study for a public comment period. The study is available on SRPEDD's website and is anticipated to be tested through tabletop exercises. Ms. Jones requested the group vote to recommend that the SMMPO release the report for public comment.

Vice Chair Slavin called for a motion to recommend to the SMMPO that the study be released for public comment. A motion was made by Justin Chicca to recommend the study to the SMMPO and was seconded by Dan Aguiar. Ms. Duarte-Campos then called the roll:

Town of Berkley.....Yes
 Town of DartmouthYes
 Town of Fairhaven.....Yes
 City of Fall River.....Yes
 Town of Lakeville.....Yes
 Town of MarionYes

Town of Mattapoisett.....Yes
 City of New Bedford.....Yes
 Town of North Attleborough.....Yes
 Town of Westport.....Yes
 At-Large, City of New Bedford....Yes
 At-Large, Town of Wareham.....Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (Phase 1) Update

Noah Soutier provided an update on Phase 1 of the Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan (FAST Plan), which aims to assess and improve healthy food access across the SMMPO region through transportation planning and public health principles. The plan combines strong public engagement, GIS

data analysis, and regional coalition input to identify current food access disparities, particularly among vulnerable populations. Phase 1 included a report and a public GIS mapping toolkit that visually represents food access locations (e.g., grocery stores, food pantries, farmers markets) alongside transportation networks (bus routes, bike/ped networks) and supplemental community resources (hospitals, schools, housing authorities). Key findings highlighted that over 37% of Massachusetts households experienced food insecurity in 2024, and programs like the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) are underutilized locally, with only 2–3% of eligible households participating. Phase 2 will expand upon this data with additional public engagement, survey feedback, and refined GIS analysis, including incorporating transit stop data and evaluating transportation barriers to healthy food access. The toolkit will remain publicly accessible, supporting transportation staff, local officials, community organizations, and residents in understanding and addressing food access needs across the region.

Ashley Eaton inquired if food pantries were included in the online toolkit. Mr. Soutier confirmed that the public GIS mapping toolkit included food pantries.

Vice Chair Slavin reported that Damien’s Pantry is experiencing increasing demand, with current operations (two days per week) reaching maximum capacity for both visitors and parking. The pantry currently has one bus and one box truck, but a second box truck is needed to support food pickups and meet the growing demand. Mr. Soutier agreed and emphasized that the plan is expected to include strategies to support community-based organizations in strengthening their resources, enabling them to continue providing access and services to local communities

9. Parking Lot Utilization Plan (Phase 1) Update - [Story Map Link](#)

Jon Gray provided an overview of the regional parking utilization assessment, which analyzed municipal lots in Attleboro, New Bedford, and Taunton during spring 2025. Data was collected over several weekdays between March and May to capture a representative picture of downtown and port-area parking use. Results showed that most lots had low to moderate utilization overall, with Taunton recording the highest demand near City Hall, Attleboro showing mixed results including some commuter rail-adjacent parcels identified as potential redevelopment sites, and New Bedford reflecting the lowest utilization, likely due to data being gathered prior to the peak summer ferry season. Overall, the study concluded that parking supply generally exceeds demand in these areas, indicating that community perceptions of shortage are often greater than actual conditions. Mr. Gray emphasized the importance of the 85% utilization benchmark for evaluating parking management and pricing strategies and noted that the findings align with previous municipal and regional studies. The discussion also highlighted opportunities for municipalities to use transportation demand management, continued data collection, and targeted policy adjustments to more effectively balance parking needs with broader goals for housing, small business vitality, land use efficiency, and multimodal access.

Vice Chair Slavin noted that both Wareham Village and Onset Village face significant parking shortages for businesses. To address this, a warrant article has been prepared for the upcoming spring town meeting. The proposal, modeled after a Boston approach, would allow businesses to meet zoning parking requirements by counting public parking located within a half mile of their site.

Will Gardner raised a question regarding parking scarcity concerns in New Bedford, particularly related to new housing developments and neighborhood perceptions. He asked whether there are case studies of residential permit systems or priced parking programs that address these challenges. Vice Chair Slavin shared Wareham’s experience, noting that Wareham Village has operated a residential permit program for about three years, where residents pay a small fee for permits and violators are ticketed or towed. Additional permits can sometimes be purchased for guests or businesses, and revenue goes into the town’s general fund. He acknowledged that the program initially faced strong opposition but became more accepted after modifications over several years. Mr. Garner noted that New Bedford’s situation is more

complex, tied to balancing the needs of long-term residents and new residents in developments that cannot provide all the required parking on site. Mr. Gray emphasized that parking solutions often need to be location-specific rather than applied uniformly across an entire municipality.

Emma Yeh noted that during Attleboro's comprehensive plan meetings, many residents expressed concerns about a lack of parking. She added that the assessment data is helpful in showing that parking is not as constrained as often perceived, and that public frustration often arises when convenient spaces directly in front of destinations are unavailable. Mr. Gray recommended Ms. Yeh review the 2022 Downtown Attleboro Parking Plan for additional data and context. He noted that on-street spaces typically show higher utilization because of their convenience, which contributes to the perception of limited parking. Mr. Gray also stated that in many downtowns and village centers, available lots are located behind buildings and are not immediately visible, creating a sense of scarcity compared to big box stores where large, front-facing lots are obvious. He emphasized that this perception challenge is a common tradeoff for having compact, vibrant downtown areas.

10. Age-Friendly Mobility Plan (Phase 1) Update

Ms. Duarte-Campos provided an update on Phase 1 of the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan. The plan seeks to identify transportation needs and priorities that support healthy aging and dementia-friendly infrastructure, noting that older adults (65+) make up 18% of the region's population, with the fastest growth in communities with limited transit. About 9% of households lack access to a vehicle, underscoring the need for alternatives. Phase 1 focused on research, GIS mapping, and adapting AARP Livability Index scores with a mobility adjustment for Councils on Aging (COAs). Results showed higher scores in urban areas with transit access, while suburban and rural areas scored lower. Public engagement highlighted reliance on demand-response services and carpooling, the need for more frequent and reliable transit (especially to healthcare), limited awareness of paratransit options, and volunteer driver shortages. Phase 2 will expand data collection and engagement through surveys and focus groups, evaluate bus stop and senior housing accessibility, and coordinate with municipalities and regional transit authorities. The final plan will be released in fall 2026 following MPO review and a public comment period.

11. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that MassDOT has opened the application cycle for Community Transit Grants. Eligible applicants include Councils on Aging (COAs), municipalities, nonprofits, and private operators of public transit services. Additional grant information and slides from today's presentations will be distributed following the meeting.

12. Date and Time for Next Meeting

Date and Time for the next meeting is October 8, 2025, at 2:00 PM as a hybrid meeting, in which attendees can join at the SRPEDD office in Taunton or via Zoom.

13. Adjourn

The Vice Chair Slavin asked for a motion to adjourn which was made by Norm Hills and seconded by Ashley Eaton. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 3:17 PM.

Food Access and Security in Transportation (FAST) Plan

Phase 1 Update | SRPEDD Commission | October 22, 2025

Noah Soutier, Public Health and Transportation Planner
nsoutier@srpedd.org

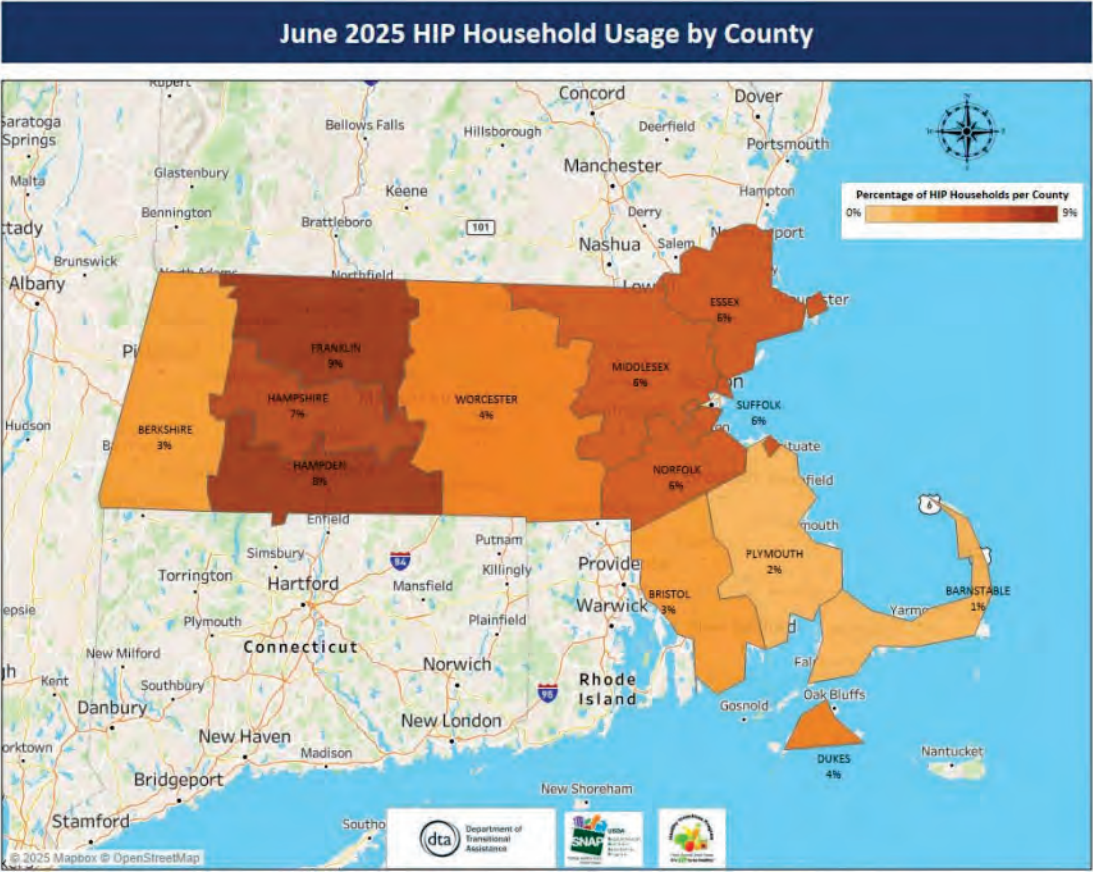








In 2024, more than **1 in 3** households (37%) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reported experiencing food insecurity within the **last year**.





| | | | |
|---------------|--|----------------|---|
| 1.2.25 | Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) | 2.3.25 | Coastline Elderly Services |
| 1.6.25 | United Neighbors of Fall River (UNFR) | 2.27.25 | South East Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation (SERCCOT) |
| 1.8.25 | Coastal Foodshed | 3.5.35 | Greater Attleboro Self-Sufficiency Coalition (GASSC) |
| 1.9.25 | Damien's Place Food Pantry | 6.16.25 | Mass in Motion FR, FR DPH |
| 1.9.25 | Farm and Community Collaborative (FCC) | 7.29.25 | SERCCOT |





- Has your ability to access food changed in the past 12 months? Why or why not?
- How do you usually get to where you buy food?
- What local food resources (e.g. pantries, programs) are you aware of, and how have they helped or not helped you?
- What would make it easier for you or your community to access healthy food options?

Phase 2 of the FAST Plan seeks to further public engagement efforts through greater participation of individuals experiencing food insecurity and transportation barriers within the SMMPO communities. Specifically, an online and physical survey will be conducted to garner both quantitative and qualitative information related to these focus areas. SMMPO staff will participate in public engagement opportunities to promote the survey and gather responses. The results of this survey will be used to better inform the necessary next steps in advancing a transportation system across the SMMPO region that advances greater accessibility to healthy and affordable food options.



FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY IN TRANSPORTATION (FAST) PLAN

SRPEDD seeks to better understand the current regional landscape regarding barriers, facilitators, and other factors influencing food access across the region's 27 municipalities.

FAST FACTS

In 2024, 1 in 3 MA households reported experiencing food insecurity at some point in the last 12 months.

In the last year, 69% of food insecure people had to choose between paying for food and paying for transportation.

Food insecure people are more likely to experience chronic disease, poor mental health, and greater healthcare costs.

HELP US UNDERSTAND

- What transportation mode(s) do you use to get to food access locations? What barriers make these places difficult to access?
- What barriers do you face in meeting your family's food needs?
- How has food insecurity impacted your health/wellbeing?

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Comments may be offered by a variety of methods, including:

- nsoutier@srpedd.org
- www.srpedd.org/contact-us/
- [@srpedd](https://www.instagram.com/srpedd)

Socioeconomic Experiences that Influence Food Access and Choices in Southeastern MA

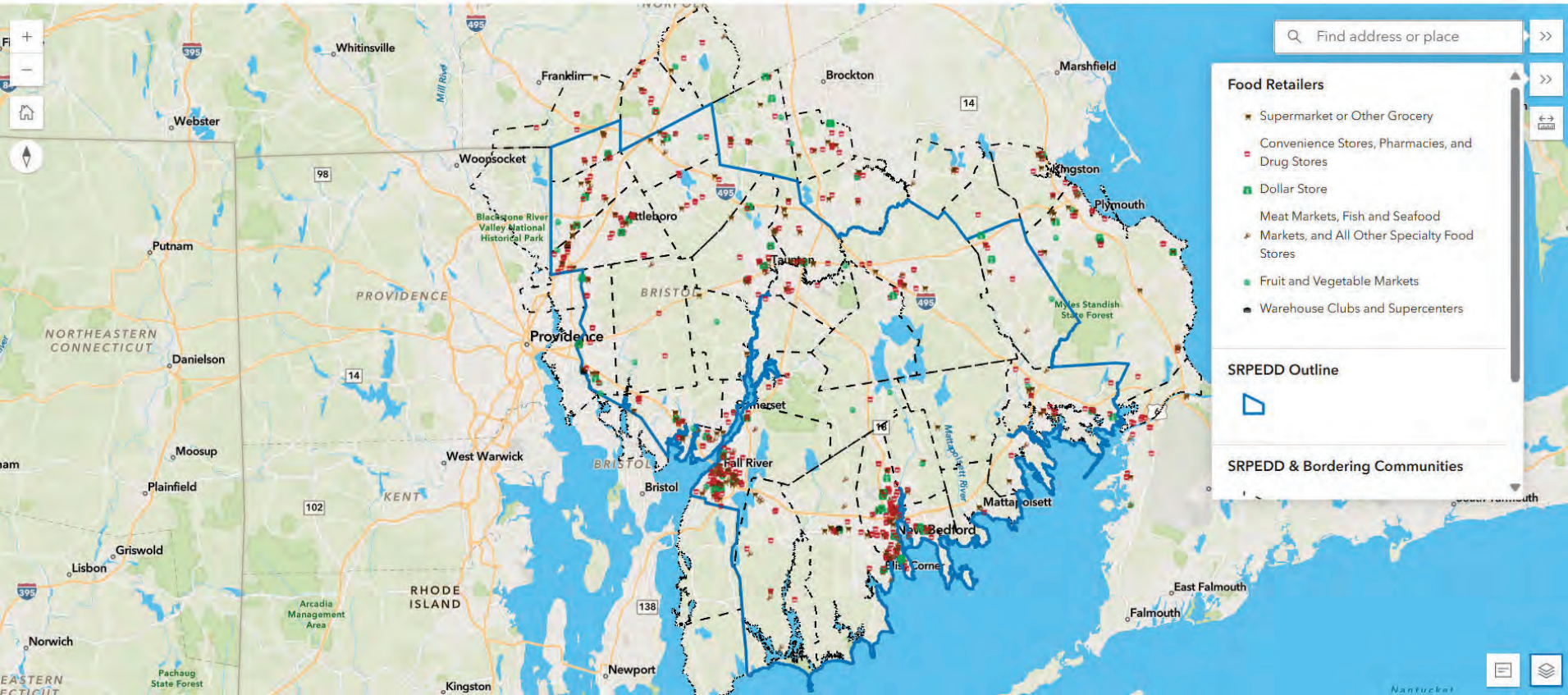
The 2025 report, "The Cost of Hunger in Massachusetts" by the Greater Boston Food Bank found that Bristol County has one of the highest rates of food insecurity among all counties in the Commonwealth, with 46% of households reporting they are unable to afford enough food to eat or worrying about where their next meal will come from (Greater Boston Food Bank, 2025). Equally alarming, 30% of Plymouth County residents reported being food insecure. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation's "Measuring Food Access to Improve Health" study conducted in 2024, which utilized a mixed method approach and machine learning model, revealed that population density and vehicle ownership are the most important determinates of food access in the Commonwealth (Massachusetts Department of Transportation, 2025). MassDOT's study showed that residents living within nearly 2/3 of Massachusetts census tracts do not have access to food within a 10-minute walk, indicating highly uneven distribution of food access across non-driving transportation modes in the state (Massachusetts Department of Transportation, 2025). Race, ethnicity, income, car ownership, poverty level, and housing density were determined to be the factors that most influence access to quality food across the state. Residents in Massachusetts' rural communities are highly dependent on personal vehicles to access food. Low-income households and those receiving assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have the lowest levels of food access in the state.

Vehicle Access

Across demographic groups and types of communities, vehicle ownership is one of the key indicators of food access, as households that have access to a car generally have access to the largest number of grocery stores, frequent a larger variety of stores, and make more grocery trips each month (Massachusetts Department of Transportation, 2025). While food retailers are more limited in rural and some suburban parts of the state and SMMPO region, food accessibility is still relatively high due to high rates of vehicle ownership (Massachusetts Department of Transportation, 2025).

9% of households in the SMMPO region or roughly 58,478 people, however, do not have access to a vehicle (American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates). 18 SRPEDD communities have at least one neighborhood where 9-20% of households do not have a car. SMMPO communities where vehicle ownership is lowest or where 5% or more of the population does not have a vehicle include New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton, Attleboro, Fairhaven, Dartmouth, and Wareham, Middleborough, and Mansfield, with Fall River and New Bedford having above the region's average number of households with no vehicle at 16% and 18% respectively.

Food Access Plan Web Map



[Food Access Plan Web Map](#)

srpedd.org/transportation/food-access/

MEPA ENVIRONMENTAL MONITOR – PROJECTS IN REGION

| Project | Type | Community | Comments Due | Site Visit Details (Indicate if Remote Meeting) |
|--|--|------------------|---------------------|--|
| Memorial Park Pond Restoration Project | FEIR Rollover | Taunton | 11/7/25 | |
| Wareham Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan | EENF | Wareham | 10/24/25 | Past - 10/9/25 (remote) |
| Shaw Street Marine Terminal | ENF | Fall River | Past (10/14/25) | Past - 10/9/25 (remote) |
| Assonet Sewer Extension | ENF | Freetown | Past (10/14/25) | |
| Daggett-Crandall-Newcomb Senior Living Campus | ENF Certificate granted – requires EIR | Norton | n/a | n/a |

SRPEDD Environmental Committee

Remote Meeting – August 6, 2025, 9:00 AM

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88391323949?pwd=9XR1lhKGszOzCg0MqdvqGY2b4F9YkA.1>

ATTENDEES

Committee members: Jim Whitin (Chair), Janice Robbins, Sherry Quirk, Norm Hills

SRPEDD Staff: Jeff Walker, Danica Belknap, Michelle Tinger

Guests/Speakers: Connor Rockett (DOER)

MINUTES

1. Call to order 9:04 AM
2. Acceptance of minutes: June 4, 2025
 - a. The draft minutes from the June 4th, 2025 regular Environmental Committee meeting were presented to the Committee for review and acceptance. One amendment was requested to add the meeting adjournment time.
 - b. **Motion made by Ms. Robbins to accept the June 4, 2025 meeting minutes with the amendment to the meeting adjournment time. Second Mr. Hills. Motion passed unanimously.**
3. Next meeting date: October 1, 2025
 - a. Discussion addressed the next scheduled meeting time, October 1, 2025 at 9am, and it was acknowledged that several Committee members will be unable to make that time. SRPEDD will offer alternative meeting dates via email and confirm each Committee members availability to confirm a new meeting date that works for all (or most).
4. Chair's Report: none.
5. Program & project updates
 - a. Energy Siting & Permitting Regulatory Straw Proposals – presentation from Connor Rockett (Clean Energy Siting & Permitting Regional Coordinator – Southeast, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources)
 - i. Guest speaker Connor Rockett shared about the New Clean Energy Siting and Permitting Division at MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER), established by 2025 Climate Act to conduct outreach to municipalities and regional planning agencies and share proposed and draft clean energy siting regulations. Mr. Rockett is the office's new Southeastern Regional Coordinator, engaging and providing technical assistance to the SRPEDD region. The goal of the new program is to help communities site renewable energy in a way that respects natural resources and the environmental character of communities, in response from concerns from across the state that guidance is needed to encourage energy projects that are less impactful on the environment.
 - ii. Mr. Rockett provided an overview on the proposed permitting processes for small scale (projects generating < 25MW of energy / <1MWh storage / <1 mi long new transmission line, which was noted encompasses the majority of new projects in MA) and large scale (generating > 25MW of energy / >1MWh storage / >1 mi long new transmission line) project types. Small scale projects will remain under local municipal jurisdiction and the draft regulations propose a 12 month review process within which decisions shall be issued. Large projects will be reviewed at the state level by the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) with a proposed 15 month review process. Reviews by all applicable boards/committees shall take place simultaneously and 1 consolidated permit

(up to the discretion of the municipality as to which authority grants the permit) shall be issues within the allowed timeframe. DOER is preparing guidance for and will provide technical assistance to municipalities during the review process to aid in decision-making.

- iii. Mr. Rockett explained these regulations and the associated siting and permitting reforms are directed to be promulgated in accordance with 2024 Clean Energy Law, which directs DOER to streamline the clean energy project permitting process; protect public health, safety and the environment; establish standards for site suitability, permit conditions, environmental mitigation; and provide guidance for project review procedures and timelines.
- iv. A new pre-filing process will require applicants submit a NOI with draft development proposal up to 60 days prior to application, with the aim to help to address any potential issues/disagreements before applications are submitted, to help reviews go quicker and to avoid potential appeals to decisions by addressing any disagreements early on. (Appeals can be made by developers to the Energy Facilities Siting Board.)
- v. Discussion addressed the cumulative impacts experienced by communities where multiple large energy projects already exist that have had a negative impact on local character and contribute to forest loss. DOER is considering a “Safe Harbor” provision for communities that have already permitted projects and contributed their share to meeting the State’s clean energy goals, to relieve those types of local pressures by directing projects to other communities instead, though how these provisions would roll out are still to be determined. DOER is considering options to incentivize pre-developed sites over clearing forested and other habitat in order to limit environmental impacts.
- vi. Mr. Rockett discussed the proposed timeline for the regulations: the final draft regulations are expected in September 2025; subsequent public hearings will be conducted in September and October; the final regulations are expected to be released by March 1 2026; and the new review process is expected to be implemented beginning in July 2026. It is anticipated that municipalities will need to adopt amendments to any local energy siting bylaws Town Meeting next Spring. Discussion was held around this timeline, with Committee Members noting the administrative and legal difficulties municipalities will face with updating their bylaws and getting them passed at Town Meeting in time to adopt the new regulations within the State’s anticipated bylaw.

6. Old Business: None.

7. New business:

- a. State policy updates: 2024 Climate Act (energy siting), 2025 Mass Ready Act, Wastewater Financing Commission (\$638 AND H1000). SRPEDD staff provided the following updates regarding several relevant state policy initiatives:

- i. 2024 Climate Act (discussed above in Mr. Rockett’s presentation).

- 1. The 2024 Climate Act introduces regulatory reforms to accelerate clean energy deployment in Massachusetts while enhancing local engagement and environmental protections. A new Siting and Permitting Office within DOER, represented in the Southeast Region by Connor Rockett, will provide technical assistance to municipalities. The Act proposes a 12-month consolidated permitting timeline, with municipalities retaining authority over small projects (<25MW) and the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) reviewing larger ones. Applicants must submit site details and a stakeholder engagement plan 60 days

before filing, and projects will be scored using an advisory rubric that considers climate resilience, biodiversity, carbon storage, and Environmental Justice impacts. While local zoning remains in effect, questions remain about municipal roles in large project reviews. A common application portal is in development, and a public comment period on the reforms will run from September 15 to October 17, 2025.

ii.2025 MassReady Act

1. On June 24, Governor Healey filed the Mass Ready Act, a comprehensive environmental bond bill that authorizes over \$3 billion in capital funding to support climate resilience, adaptation, environmental protection, and housing initiatives across Massachusetts. The Act provides cost-effective tools to reduce climate risks, safeguard natural resources, and build a more resilient and equitable future.

2. Core Objectives of the Mass Ready Act:

- a. Strengthen infrastructure for climate resilience and adaptation
- b. Preserve and restore natural resources, open space, and biodiversity
- c. Promote environmental equity and support disadvantaged communities
- d. Improve coastal and inland flood control, dam safety, and water quality
- e. Support sustainable agriculture, local food systems, and housing affordability
- f. Modernize permitting processes to streamline environmental review

iii.S638

1. A special legislative commission consisting of 23 members is proposed to be established to address nitrogen pollution and wastewater infrastructure needs in Southeastern Massachusetts, with a focus on the Buzzards Bay watershed. The commission's charge is to study and recommend specific, fair, and equitable revenue sources to fund critical wastewater infrastructure improvements that reduce nitrogen pollution across the region. Its responsibilities include conducting financial assessments, analyzing best practices in municipal finance, and evaluating the economic impacts of various funding options. The commission will develop actionable recommendations, draft legislation to support implementation, and hold at least two public hearings in the region to gather community input. To inform its work, the commission may also engage outside experts in water quality, wastewater infrastructure, nutrient pollution, and public finance.

iv.H1000

1. A special legislative commission consisting of 23 members has been proposed to be established to address nitrogen pollution and wastewater infrastructure needs in Southeastern Massachusetts, with a focus on the Buzzards Bay watershed. The commission's charge is to study and recommend specific, fair, and equitable revenue sources to fund critical wastewater infrastructure improvements that reduce nitrogen pollution across the region. Its responsibilities include conducting financial assessments, analyzing best practices in municipal finance, and evaluating the economic impacts of various funding options. The commission will

develop actionable recommendations, draft legislation to support implementation, and hold at least two public hearings in the region to gather community input. To inform its work, the commission may also engage outside experts in water quality, wastewater infrastructure, nutrient pollution, and public finance.

v. Discussion was held about how utilities are regulated in Massachusetts and whether water utilities are under the jurisdiction of the [Department of Public Utilities \(DPU\)](#). Some communities without public water are faced with high water rates charged by their neighboring communities' utilities, which can be a disincentive for residents to hook up to public water lines, leading to slower adoption and expansion of public water infrastructure.

8. Roundtable: opportunity to share local updates, concerns and regional topics of interest
 - a. Members acknowledged the significant changes coming from DOER on clean energy siting regulatory updates, and that Towns will likely need a lot of help adopting the new regulations. SRPEDD was proposed as a potential source of technical assistance for communities in adopting the new regulations and updating their bylaws.
9. **Motion made by Norm Hills to adjourn the meeting at 10:35am. Second Janice Robbins. Motion passed unanimously.**



Acushnet
Attleboro
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Fairhaven
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New Bedford
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Plainville
Raynham
Rehoboth
Rochester
Seekonk
Taunton
Somerset
Swansea
Wareham
Westport

Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
October 17, 2025

Re: Comments on Draft Regulations and Guidance Implementing the 2024 Climate Act

To the Energy Facilities Siting Board,

On behalf of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD), representing 27 cities and towns in Southeastern Massachusetts, we appreciate the opportunity to provide further comments on the implementation of the 2024 Climate Act and related regulations.

We previously submitted comments on May 30, 2025, focused on critical environmental and regional concerns, including coastal vulnerability, wetlands, drinking water protection, agricultural soils, cumulative impacts, ecological connectivity, decommissioning, cumulative solar impacts, and the integration of transportation planning. While the Draft Regulations (225 CMR 29.00), Draft Guidance on Site Suitability Assessments, and Community Benefits Plan (CBP) Standards address many structural and procedural issues, several of SRPEDD's key concerns remain insufficiently addressed.

Areas Still Not Adequately Addressed:

1. Integration of Local and Regional Planning Priorities

- Draft regulations require applicants to submit consolidated permit applications and pre-filing engagement, but they do not explicitly require consistency with local master plans, open space plans, or watershed-based plans.
- Municipal and regional planning priorities, particularly in Environmental Justice communities, should be directly incorporated into site suitability scoring and mitigation requirements.

2. Comprehensive Energy Strategy and Demand Forecasting

- The regulations still lack a statewide energy demand analysis that ties permitting decisions to coherent generation and transmission strategies.
- Without this, projects may continue to be driven by opportunistic siting rather than a coordinated, environmentally suitable, and equitable plan.

3. Coastal Hazards and Drinking Water Protection

- While "climate change resilience" is included in scoring criteria, the regulations do not sufficiently weight storm surge, saltwater intrusion, or drinking water aquifer vulnerabilities as high-risk exclusions.
- SRPEDD urges explicit designation of Zone II/III wellhead protection areas, surface water supply watersheds, and coastal flood zones as ineligible or high-sensitivity areas.

4. Agricultural Land and Cranberry Bogs

- Draft guidance includes "agricultural resources" in scoring, but it undervalues Prime Farmland soils and active cranberry bogs, which are critical for food security, carbon storage, and resilience.



Acushnet
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Rochester
Seekonk
Taunton
Somerset
Swansea
Wareham
Westport

- We recommend stronger weighting and explicit recognition of cranberry bog systems as high-value landscapes.
- 5. Cumulative Impacts and Project Density
 - Although cumulative impact analyses (CIA) are required in Burdened Areas, there is no regional lens for evaluating the cumulative environmental and land use impacts of solar and battery storage development.
 - Municipalities need clear thresholds or caps to prevent disproportionate siting burdens.
- 6. Ecological Connectivity and Rare Species
 - Draft guidance references biodiversity but does not fully integrate BioMap Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscapes into exclusions or strong weighting for site suitability.
 - Landscape fragmentation and habitat corridor disruption should be considered as cumulative impacts.
- 7. Decommissioning and Lifecycle Management
 - Regulations mention compliance and enforcement, but there is still no requirement for financial assurance mechanisms (surety bonds, escrow accounts) to guarantee environmentally responsible decommissioning of solar and battery projects.
 - SRPEDD strongly urges mandatory decommissioning plans with updated cost estimates and secured funding.
- 8. Community Benefits Plans (CBPs) and Agreements (CBAs)
 - Draft CBP Standards are a strong step, but current rules do not:
 - i. Require CBPs/CBAs as a condition of permit approval;
 - ii. Ensure enforceability and accountability at the state level (EFSB currently declines enforcement of CBAs);
 - iii. Provide metrics or oversight mechanisms to ensure delivery of promised benefits.
 - SRPEDD recommends CBPs be required in all projects of regional impact, with independent monitoring and reporting.
- 9. Transportation and Co-Location Infrastructure
 - Energy siting rules still do not integrate opportunities to co-locate with transportation corridors (e.g., MassDOT ROWs, rail, MassTrails) to reduce land conversion impacts.
 - Coordinating with the Massachusetts 2050 Transportation Plan and regional MPOs would advance decarbonization while minimizing ecological harm.

New Requests (additional concerns identified by SRPEDD):

1. Human Considerations in Wind Development
 - Regulations must account for human impacts in wind turbine siting. Clear standards should establish where turbines can and cannot be installed to avoid community impacts.
2. Time Concerns



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- The proposed March 1 deadline for promulgating procedural regulations is not feasible. Municipalities, developers, and regional agencies will not have sufficient time to adjust planning, staffing, and regulatory frameworks. A more realistic timeline is essential to ensure thoughtful implementation, adequate training, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

3. Forested Land Protections

- It remains unclear whether, between the SMART program changes and the site suitability analysis, forested lands will receive sufficient protection from development such as solar projects. SRPEDD strongly recommends that the site suitability framework place very high value on forested lands to ensure that renewable energy development is prioritized on lower-value, disturbed lands first. Forested lands are critical carbon sinks, biodiversity reserves, and essential to climate resilience, and they should be safeguarded accordingly.

4. Distribution System Expansion and Local Burdens

- The Plymouth Study Group and related distribution studies within the SRPEDD region demonstrate that the Commonwealth has already approved significant distribution expansion to accommodate hundreds of MW of new solar projects. These upgrades reduce interconnection costs and will naturally attract additional projects, creating intense pressures on municipal permitting boards. As currently structured, the regulations do not provide towns with the resources or tools needed to effectively review the influx of large-scale solar and battery storage projects.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

- Explicitly incorporate local/regional plans and municipal input into site suitability scoring.
- Recognize coastal hazards, drinking water resource, forested lands, and agricultural soils as high-sensitivity exclusions.
- Require cumulative impact assessments for all projects, not just Burdened Areas, with thresholds to prevent disproportionate burdens.
- Establish mandatory financial assurance for decommissioning.
- Make CBPs/CBAs enforceable and integral to permitting decisions, with compensation directed to impacted towns.
- Include human-centered siting requirements for wind energy.
- Revise the March 1 timeline to allow for effective implementation.

We commend the Commonwealth's progress in building a more equitable and environmentally sound siting process and we stand ready to support continued refinement to ensure that clean energy development aligns with climate resilience, natural resource protection, and community priorities.

Respectfully submitted,

Danica Belknap

AGENDA ITEM: Technical Assistance Report, # 7.a.

| Community | Project Name | Status | Department | Project Leads | Funding |
|-----------|---|-----------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Acushnet | Master Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Grant King, Lizeth Gonzalez | CPG, DLTA, MA |
| Acushnet | Open Space and Recreation Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental, Comprehensive | Sara Singh, Joe Monet | CPA |
| Acushnet | Water Resource Management Plan | Ongoing | Environmental | Sara Singh | EEA |
| Acushnet | Main St at South Main St and Crompton St Traffic Analysis | Ongoing | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira | MassDOT |
| Berkley | Section 3A Bylaw | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez and Chris Welch | One Stop, DLTA |
| Berkley | Economic Development Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez and Chris Welch | One Stop, DLTA |
| Carver | Economic Development Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez and Chris Welch | One Stop, DLTA |
| Carver | Housing Production Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral, Taylor Perez | DLTA |
| Carver | Open Space and Recreation Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Michelle Tinger | local |
| Carver | South Main St at Tremont St Traffic Signal Warrants | Ongoing | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira | |
| Dartmouth | Housing Production Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Rob Cabral | DLTA, Town |
| Dighton | Housing Production Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Rob Cabral | CCC, DLTA |
| Fairhaven | Open Space and Recreation Plan | Ongoing | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | DLTA |
| Fairhaven | Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) Update | Ongoing | Environmental, Comprehensive | Joe Monet, Sara Singh | FEMA |
| Fairhaven | MVP 2.0 | Completed | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | local |

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|---------------|--|-----------|-------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Fall River | Regional Water Supply Analysis | Completed | Environmental | Lauren Lunetta | EOEEA MVP |
| Fall River | Mother's Brook Sewer Upgrades (D&E, Permitting) Project Administration | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | EDA |
| Fall River | Open Space and Recreation Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Lauren Lunetta | local |
| Lakeville | Planning Board Rules and Regulations | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez | One Stop |
| Lakeville | Clark Shores Long Pond PRB Permitting & Design | Pending | Environmental | Karen Pettinelli | TNC |
| Mansfield | Open Space and Recreation Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Lauren Lunetta | DLTA |
| Mansfield | Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | FEMA |
| Mansfield | Green Communities Competitive Grant Management | New | Environmental | Karen Pettinelli | DOER |
| Mattapoissett | Open Space and Recreation Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Michelle Tinger/Cece Lagomarsino | DLTA / Local |
| Middleborough | ASHE Response Tool Kit | Ongoing | Homeland Security | Kevin Ham | Local |
| Middleborough | Master Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Grant King | One Stop, DLTA |
| Middleborough | Historic/General Use District Bylaw Amendments | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Grant King, Robert Cabral | MassDOT, SCR |
| New Bedford | North Terminal Extension Phase II and Pier Fendering Project | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Jeff Walker, Lizeth Gonzalez, Grant King | EDA |
| New Bedford | AHA Civic Engagement | New | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | Local, DLTA, MA |
| New Bedford | Marine Commerce Terminal | Pending | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | EDA |
| Norton | Section 3A Technical Assistance Phase 2 | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Rob Cabral | MHP, Barr Foundation, DLTA |
| Norton | Green Communities Designation Grant Assistance | Ongoing | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | DOER |
| Norton | Route 123 Speed Study | Completed | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira | MassDOT |

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|-----------------|--|-----------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Norton | Housing Production Plan (Tier 3, Phase 1) | Pending | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez | DLTA |
| Plympton | Section 3A Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Rob Cabral | MHP, Barr Foundation |
| Raynham | Section 3A Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez, Robert Cabral | MHP, Barr Foundation |
| Regional | SRPEDD Regional Resilience Plan (SRRP) | Implementation | Comprehensive, Environmental, Transportation | Danica Belknap, Lizeth Gonzalez, Grant King | DLTA |
| Regional | Regional Outdoor Recreation Inventory | Ongoing | Environmental | Cece Lagomarsino | MOOR |
| Regional | Assawompset Ponds Water Quality Assessment, Snake River Culvert Evaluation and Nemasket River restoration | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Karen Pettinelli | DER, TNC |
| Regional | Assawompset Ponds Long Pond PRB Feasibility Study | completed | Environmental | Karen Pettinelli | DER |
| Regional | Taunton River Stewardship Council Website Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Environmental | Karen Porter | TRSC |
| Regional | DLTA and DLTA-A | Ongoing | Comprehensive, Environmental, Transportation | Jeff Walker, Grant King, Danica Belknap, Lisa Estrela-Pedro | DLTA-A |
| Regional | MassTech Municipal Digital Equity Planning | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Maria Jones, Amber Davis | MassTech/MBI |
| Regional | Rural Community Section 3A Compliance Efforts | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral, Taylor Perez | EOHLC |
| Regional | Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) Asset Mapping and Digital Equity Planning Enrollment | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Maria Jones, Amber Davis | MassTech/MBI |
| Regional | Assawompset Ponds Groundwater Hydrologic & Hydraulic Study | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Michelle Tinger | DER |

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|----------|---|---------|----------------|---|---------------|
| Regional | Assawompset Ponds Sedimentation, Invasive Removal, and Snipatuit Evaluation | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Michelle Tinger | ARPA |
| Regional | Rural Policy Advisory Council | Ongoing | Environmental | Karen Pettinelli, Danica Belknap | |
| Regional | Arts and Culture Community Development Initiative | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | DLTA |
| Regional | Justice, Equity, and Community Development (JECD) Initiative | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez | DLTA |
| Regional | South Coast Administrators Committee | Ongoing | Administrative | Jeff Walker | SRPEDD |
| Regional | Mass. Assn. of Regional Planning Commissions (MARPA) | Ongoing | Administrative | Jeff Walker | RPAs |
| Regional | Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap, Lizeth Gonzalez | EPA |
| Regional | Greater New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District Land Alternatives and Reuse Study | New | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral, Lizeth Gonzalez, Grant King | DLTA, Local |
| Regional | Regional ADU Bylaw Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral, Taylor Perez, Grant King | DLTA |
| Regional | Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN) facilitation | Ongoing | Environmental | Sara Singh | |
| Regional | Taunton River Stewardship Plan Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Sara Singh | TRSC |
| Regional | Taunton River Pocket Map Update | Ongoing | Environmental | Karen Porter | TRSC |
| Regional | Buzzards Bay Water Quality Planning & Regional NPS Coordinator Program | Pending | Environmental | Michelle Tinger | MassDEP |
| Regional | Rural COA Partnership | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Amber Davis | AgeSpan, EOEA |

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|------------------------------|--|----------|----------------|---|---------------|
| Regional - MassDOT | Regional Evacuation Route Study | In DRAFT | Transportation | Kevin Ham, Sean Hilton | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Southcoast Bikeway Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Transportation | Jon Gray | MassDOT, DLTA |
| Regional - MassDOT | Pavement Management - Fed. Aid Road Network Data Collection & Analysis | Ongoing | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Taunton River Trail Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Transportation | Jon Gray | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) | Ongoing | Transportation | Lisa Estrela-Pedro, Andrea Duarte, Jackie Jones | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) | Ongoing | Transportation | Lisa Estrela-Pedro, Andrea Duarte | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | SMMPO Public Participation Plan Update | In DRAFT | Transportation | Andrea Duarte | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Food Access & Security in Transportation Plan | Ongoing | Transportation | Noah Soutier, Jon Gray | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Parking Lot Utilization Plan | Ongoing | Transportation | Jon Gray | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | FFY26-30 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Management | Ongoing | Transportation | Jackie Jones, Lisa Estrela-Pedro | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Transit Coordination | Ongoing | Transportation | Dan Brogan | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Traffic Counting and Turning Movement Counts | Ongoing | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira, Sisar Botelho | MassDOT |
| Regional - Green Communities | Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA): Annual Reports, Competitive Grant Applications, Regional Technical Consultant and Energy Leadership Exchange | New | Environmental | All Enviro Staff; Danica DOER Contract Management | DOER |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Regional - MassDOT | South East Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation (SERCCOT) | Ongoing | Transportation | Dan Brogan | MassDOT |
| Regional - MassDOT | Age Friendly Mobility Plan | Ongoing | Transportation | Andrea Duarte, Amber Davis | MassDOT |
| Regional - Providence- Warwick MSA | Climate Pollution Reduction Grant | Ongoing | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | EPA |
| Regional - SNEP Network | SNEP Network Provider | Ongoing | Environmental | Danica Belknap | USM/EPA |
| Regional - SRAC | Homeland Security Program and Project Management | Ongoing | Comprehensive, Homeland Security | Kevin Ham, Grant King | MAPC |
| Regional - SRAC | Homeland Security Program and Project Management | Ongoing | Comprehensive, Homeland Security | Kevin Ham, Grant King | MAPC, EOPSS |
| Regional & Dighton, Middleborough | Open Space Residential Design Regional Study | Ongoing | Environmental | Michelle Tinger, Karen Pettinelli | EOEEA |
| Rehoboth | Green Communities Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Environmental | Audrey Matthews, Lauren Lunetta | DOER |
| Seekonk | Housing Production Plan (Tier 2, Phase 1) | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez | DLTA |
| Somerset | Slade's Ferry Zoning and Design Guidelines and Implementation | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Grant King, Lizeth Gonzalez, Rob Cabral, Maria Jones | Local, DLTA |
| Somerset | Route 103 Neighborhood Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral | EOHLC |
| Somerset | Riverwalk and Overlook Concept Design | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral | TRSC |
| Somerset, Swansea | Wastewater District Assistance | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | EDA |
| Swansea | Route 103 Corridor Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral | EOHLC |
| Swansea | Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and Housing Production Plan | Completed | Comprehensive, Environmental | Robert Cabral, Taylor Perez, Danica Belknap | DLTA, Urban Agenda, local, MA |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|-------------------|---|------------------|
| Swansea | Municipal Digital Equity Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Maria Jones, Kaitlin Whalen | MBI |
| Swansea | Compton's Corner Stormwater Management Planning | Completed | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | CZM |
| Swansea | MVP 2.0 Technical Assistance | Pending | Environmental | Audrey Matthews | MVP |
| Taunton | ASHE Training Exercise | Ongoing | Homeland Security | Kevin Ham | DLTA, local |
| Taunton | Lights On Festival Direct Economic Impacts | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Rob Cabral, Lizeth Gonzalez, Grant King | local |
| Taunton | Section 3A Technical Assistance | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez, Rob Cabral | EOHLC, local |
| Taunton | MSIP V- Business Park | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez | EDA |
| Taunton | Hart Street at Poole Street and Bristol Plymouth High School northern entrance | Ongoing | Transportation | Luis de Oliveira | MassDOT |
| Westport | Route 6 Neighborhood Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Lizeth Gonzalez and Robert Cabral | One Stop |
| Westport | Open Space and Recreation Plan | Ongoing | Environmental | Karen Pettinelli | DLTA |
| Westport | MVP 2.0 Technical Assistance | Completed | Environmental | Danica Belknap | Local, MVP |
| Westport | Housing Production Plan (Tier 1, Phase 1) | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Taylor Perez | DLTA, local |
| Westport and Wood Hole Group | Beach Management Plan | Ongoing | Comprehensive | Kevin Ham | Woods Hole Group |
| Wrentham | MVP 2.0 Technical Assistance | Pending | Environmental | Lauren Lunetta | MVP |