

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

The following members were in attendance:

Derek Shooster-----Representing Phillip Eng, Interim MassDOT Secretary and CEO, **Chair**
Shaun Handy-----Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Jay Pateakos-----Representing Shauna O’Connell, Mayor of Taunton
Daniel Aguiar-----Representing Paul Coogan, Mayor of Fall River
Josh Reinke-----Representing Michael Feck, Town of Mansfield
Sarah Hewins-----Town of Carver
Jennifer Vincent-----Town of Berkley
Andrew Romano-----Town of Fairhaven
Marie Clarner-----SRPEDD Commission Chair
Corey Hebert-----Representing Erik Rousseau, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority
Stacy Forte-----Representing Mary Ellen DeFrias, Greater Attleboro and Taunton
Regional Transit Authority

No Ex-Officio, non-voting members were in attendance

Anthony Jones -----Federal Highway Administration

The following were also in attendance:

Phillip Duarte-----City of Taunton
Katherine Nunes-----City of Taunton
Alan Slavin-----Damien’s Food Pantry/JTPG At-Large Commissioner/Wareham
Leah Pickett-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Diane Hayes-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Christina Mendoza-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Barbara Lachance-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Stephanie Gray-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Dana Hanson-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Kian Dana-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Joseph Rubino-----Stantec
Aleece D’Onofrio-----Stantec
Joshua Caldwell
Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD
Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte-Campos-SRPEDD

Dan Brogan-----SRPEDD
Noah Soutier-----SRPEDD
Jen Chaves-----SRPEDD
Jon Gray-----SRPEDD
Sean Hilton-----SRPEDD

Handouts:

SMMPO Agenda December 16, 2025
SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes November 18, 2025
FFY2026-2030 TIP Proposed Amendment 2
FFY2026-2030 TIP Proposed Amendment 3
SMMPO Critical Rural and Urban Freight Corridors Presentation

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

Chairman 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 Taunton-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
Town of Berkley-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes
GATRA-----Yes

2. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2025 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)

Chairman Shooster requested a motion to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2025, SMMPO meeting. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Jay Pateakos. Ms. Duarte-Campos then called the roll:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Taunton-----Yes

City of Fall River-----Yes
Town of Berkley-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Abstain
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes
GATRA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION.

3. Public Comments

Chairman Shooster invited members of the public to make comments. Dana Hanson from Congressman Auchincloss’s office briefly introduced herself, thanked the group for its collaboration over the past years, and announced upcoming staffing changes as she will be leaving her position as District Director. Stephanie Gray will be the new District Director, and Catarina Perreira and Kian Dana will also continue to support the Congressman’s region.

Taunton City Councilor Phillip Duarte provided comments on the proposed rescheduling and funding changes to the Taunton River Trail project in the FFY2026-2030 TIP. Mr. Duarte expressed surprise and frustration that a request to move the project from FY 2028 to FY 2030 was made without prior notice to the city or its project team, despite ongoing coordination and recent 25% project design submissions. He emphasized the risk of delays due to escalating costs and noted increased uncertainty caused by reduced funding placeholders and advanced construction assumptions. Katherine Nunes, Taunton’s Capital Project Director, echoed these concerns, highlighting the significant progress already made and the disruption that the proposed changes could cause. Both requested that the MPO table the item and allow time for further discussion with MassDOT before any vote to officially make the changes. Chairman Shooster acknowledged the comments and indicated that the issue would be discussed in more detail under the relevant agenda item.

4. Regional Transit Authorities Report – RTA Updates

Stacy Forte from GATRA stated that there are no current updates, and service is running as usual. Corey Hebert from SRTA announced that ridership continues to increase. He stated that SRTA recently partnered with RIPTA and received a grant to expand service on the 24 L, a service that is operated by RIPTA and comes into SRTA’s Fall River Terminal. SRTA was also awarded additional funding from MassDOT to continue service on the 9X intercity route. SRTA is wrapping up its CRTP with a consulting team, and the Plan should be completed in January. SRTA is continuing to develop its FY25 ridership report, which it hopes will become an annual report, and aims to complete it in January as well.

5. FFY2026-2030 TIP Proposed Amendment #2 – Transit (GATRA & SRTA) Amendment (Materials Attached, Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse)

Mr. Dan Brogan reminded the group that FFY2026-2030 TIP Proposed Amendment #2 includes the Wareham maintenance facility, which is expected to be completed within the next year. Another component involves the purchase of several vans from SRTA, which has been deferred to federal fiscal year 2027 due to changes in how funding is allocated, specifically a shift from RTA capital funds to toll credits. The remaining components of the amendment concern the Fall River maintenance facility, where timelines have changed largely because of challenges in securing land that is environmentally suitable for both the surrounding community and SRTA. Mr. Brogan asked if there were any questions and asked the SMMPO for a vote to endorse Amendment #2.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on TIP Amendment #2 and seeing none asked for a motion to endorse the Amendment as presented. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Jennifer Vincent. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
 MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
 City of Taunton-----Yes
 City of Fall River-----Yes
 Town of Mansfield-----Yes
 Town of Carver-----No response
 Town of Berkley-----Yes
 Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
 SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
 SRTA-----Yes
 GATRA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 6. FFY2026-2030 TIP Proposed Amendment #3:**
 - 1) 606527 New Bedford – Bridge Replacement, N-06-020, I-195 (EB&WB), Ramp C&F over ST 18, County Street, State Street, Mass Coastal Railroad, Purchase Street, Weld Street, Includes improvements to N-06-021, N-06-022, F-01-088 – Cost Decrease**
 - 2) S13384 Taunton – Danforth Street Bridge Reconstruction Project – Federal Earmark for Design – add into FY2026**
 - 3) Transit – GATRA – 011969 Wareham - Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority – East Maintenance Facility – Increase in RTACAP funds in FY2026**
 - 4) 610802 Somerset – Stormwater Improvements along Route 103 – Addition of project in FY2026 (Statewide)**
 - 5) 613359 Freetown – Freetown Elementary School (SRTS) move from FY2027 to FY2029**

6) 606089 Freetown – Bridge Replacement, F-09-010, N. Main Street over ST 24 move from FY2027 to FY2028 and Cost Increase

7) 611980 Somerset – Intersection Improvements at Route 6 and Lees River Ave – move from FY2028 to FY2029

8) 613094 Taunton – Taunton River Trail Construction – move from FY2028 to FY2030, cost to utilize advance construction funding tool over two years (2030-2031) (Materials Attached, Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to a 21-day Public Comment Period)

Jackie Jones began the discussion of proposed large changes included in FFY2026-30 TIP Amendment 3 by stating that the changes are driven by the state’s annual “STIP maintenance” process, which adjusts project schedules, costs, and readiness before formal TIP development. TIP Amendment 3 proposes the following changes:

- For **New Bedford’s Bridge Replacement I-195 (EB&WB), Ramp C&F over ST 18, County Street, State Street, Mass Coastal Railroad, Purchase Street, Weld Street (Project 606527)**, a project cost decrease of \$73 million due to less funds needed to complete the project than originally anticipated. This will free up funds for other statewide transportation projects.
- **Taunton’s Danforth Street Bridge Reconstruction (Project S13384)** will be added to the FFY 2026 construction year due to the receipt of a federal earmark of \$1,250,000 that will fund project design.
- **Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority’s East Maintenance Facility (Project 011969)** was included in last month’s TIP Amendment #2 to remove a source of match funding, and this amendment programs an increase in RTACAP matching funds in FY2026 of approximately \$4.6 million for the project.
- **Freetown Elementary School’s Safe Routes to School Improvements (Project 613359)** is being moved from the FY2027 construction year to the FY2029 construction year due to delays in design readiness.
- **Freetown’s Bridge Replacement at North Main Street over Route 24 (Project 606089)** is being moved from the FY2027 construction year to the FY2028 construction year due to delays in design readiness and a cost increase of approximately \$23 million.
- **Somerset’s Intersection Improvements at Route 6 and Lees River Ave (Project 611980)** is being moved from the FY2028 construction year to the FY2029 construction year to allow for more time for public engagement.
- **Somerset’s Stormwater Improvements along Route 103 (Project 610802)** has been added to the FY2026 construction year due to available funds and project design readiness.
- **Taunton’ Taunton River Trail project** has increased in cost significantly since it was programmed in the last TIP, now totaling a proposed \$18 million, leading to a shift from the FY2028 to FY2030 construction year to maintain fiscal constraint on the State TIP. Program managers are requesting more time to assess project cost changes.

Significant discussion ensued on the Taunton River Trail project, whose cost had risen substantially due to design changes requiring full bridge replacements and utility relocations, as well as general escalation. The Chairman clarified that MassDOT staff seek to be forthcoming in advance of February TIP readiness days with MPO partners to communicate that if projects are either not on track, can be advanced sooner, or have massive cost changes earlier. They aim to communicate this earlier and be transparent with MPO boards, staff and other stakeholders for these projects so that they can plan ahead and not necessarily wait to reflect it in the next five-year TIP for 2027 to 2031 as it is developed.

The Chairman and MassDOT District 5 staff emphasized that the project remains a priority but cannot currently fit within a fiscally constrained program in its originally scheduled year with increased costs, prompting a recommendation to shift it later while costs are further evaluated. City of Taunton representatives Phillip Duarte and Katherine Nunes requested additional discussion about project cost and design changes before taking action to officially move it to the FY2030 construction year or releasing this action to a public comment period. Ultimately, the board moved to release Amendment #3 for a 21-day public comment period while tabling the Taunton River Trail item to allow further coordination and review between City, MassDOT, SRPEDD officials and the consultant team before taking action on it.

The Chair asked if there were any additional questions on TIP Amendment #3 and asked for a motion. Jay Pateakos made a motion to release the Amendment to a 21-day public comment period without item 8 Taunton River Trail Construction. The motion was seconded by Dan Aguiar. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----No
MassDOT Administrator-----Abstain
City of Taunton-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----No
Town of Carver-----Yes
Town of Berkley-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes
GATRA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION AND TWO NAYES.

7. 2025 SMMPO Public Participation Plan (Link, Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse)

Ms. Duarte-Campos reminded the group that at the October 21 meeting the MPO released an updated Public Participation Plan for a 45-day public comment period, the first update since 2022. She summarized key changes, including the addition of public engagement goals, principles, and evaluation metrics; updates to reflect federal and environmental justice policy changes; revised language on meeting notices and virtual meeting practices; and addition of visuals, infographics, glossaries, Title VI maps, and appendices to improve readability and usability. Ms. Duarte-Campos described the outreach conducted during the comment period, including presentations to the JTPG and SMMPO, SRPEDD website and social media postings, a press release to over 100 community partners, and a virtual public meeting on November 18th. One public comment was received from the Attleboro Kennedy Donovan Center regarding opportunities for expanding transportation options for families with disabled children who require car seats, to which staff are following up with community partners to provide answers to; the comment also highlighted a preference for email communication which Ms. Duarte-Campos stated is included throughout the Plan and was elevated to ensure frequent usage of this method. Ms. Duarte-Campos concluded by noting additional updates made during the public comment period, including addition of appendices with Zoom meeting instructions, offers of accommodations, and guidelines for designing public engagement activities. She asked if there were any questions to which none were made and asked the SMMPO for a vote to endorse the updated Public Participation Plan.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the SMMPO’s 2025 Public Participation Plan and seeing none asked for a motion to endorse it as presented. The motion was made by Marie Clarner and seconded by Jennifer Vincent. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

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

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. F2025 SMMPO Language Assistance Plan (Link, Roll Call Vote Needed to Adopt)

Jennifer Chaves explained that, similar to the Public Participation Plan, the SMMPO’s Language Assistance Plan (LAP) was recently updated, with the primary changes involving updated census data and the inclusion of language data by school district. She noted that language data will continue to be monitored as new information becomes available, and any changes affecting Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations will be incorporated into the Plan. The LAP was released for public comment through the same outreach channels as the PPP, but no comments were received. Ms. Chaves asked if there were any questions to which none were made and requested a vote from the SMMPO to adopt the updated LAP.

The Chair asked if there were any other questions on the 2025 Language Assistance Plan and seeing none asked for a motion to adopt the plan as presented. The motion was made by Jennifer Vincent and seconded by Josh Reinke. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

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

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Critical Rural and Urban Freight Corridor Proposed Considerations (Materials Attached, Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)

Lisa Estrela-Pedro presented an overview of the process to propose additional critical urban and rural freight corridors in the region, developed in response to a MassDOT request to support regional freight planning. Using existing freight planning data and traffic counts, staff identified approximately 17.4 miles of urban freight corridors and 7.16 miles of rural freight corridors, with classifications based on U.S. Census urbanized area boundaries. Selection of additional freight corridors for consideration focused on roadways with high truck volumes, connections to industrial parks and major highways, and locations where truck travel times are constrained. She gave an overview of the timeline for the initiative and shared a list of

proposed roadway segments for freight corridor designation. The proposed corridors were selected between August and November, sent to MassDOT for review, were presented to the Joint Transportation Planning Group at last week’s meeting, and are now being brought to the MPO for release to a minimum 21-day public comment period, with a vote on designation approval anticipated in January, and state and federal certification in March 2026. Approved designations would ultimately make projects on these corridors eligible for national highway freight funding.

Sean Hilton displayed a map showing proposed corridors, high truck volume locations, and industrial areas. He addressed questions about rural designations in Carver from Sarah Hewins and the focus on highway—not rail—freight movement. Mr. Hilton committed to providing clearer maps showing both existing and newly proposed corridors once the map is made publicly available and stated that there will be multiple opportunities for public review and comment on the proposed additional corridors before they are officially designated, including a public meeting and at the January JTPG meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any other questions on the proposed freight corridor considerations and seeing none asked for a motion to release the proposed list to a 21-day public comment period as presented. The motion was made by Andrew Romano and seconded by Dan Aguiar. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

- MassDOT Chair-----Yes
- MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
- City of Taunton-----Yes
- City of Fall River-----Yes
- Town of Mansfield-----Yes
- Town of Carver-----Abstain
- Town of Berkley-----Yes
- Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
- SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
- SRTA-----Yes
- GATRA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION.

10. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro highlighted multiple MassDOT grant opportunities, including the Complete Streets Funding Program, Shared Streets and Spaces, and two newer programs—Community Culverts and the Unpaved Roads Program—with applications due January 9. She also noted that

the federal FY 2026 BUILD program (formerly RAISE), has applications due February 24, 2026, and encouraged communities needing assistance to contact staff, who can help connect them with MassDOT resources. Additionally, MassDOT announced a speed feedback signage program offering free, pole-mounted signs, with requests to be submitted via an online survey and informational webinars scheduled for January 21 and 22, 2026. Ms. Estrela-Pedro also announced upcoming design public hearings, including a Cape Cod Bridges meeting that evening at Mass Maritime Academy and an Attleboro public hearing for the South Avenue/Route 123 project the following evening December 17th. She noted that while upcoming MPO meetings are currently planned as virtual, federal partners have requested at least one in-person meeting, so a future SMMPO meeting may shift to a hybrid format.

11. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on January 20, 2026, at 1:00 pm, with more information to come about whether it will be held virtually or hybrid with an in-person option.

12. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Jay Pateakos made the motion and Jennifer Vincent seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:04 PM.