

SERCCOT Meeting Minutes 07/29/2025

Howland-Green Public Library & Virtual, New Bedford

In-Person: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dan Brogan, SRPEDD- Andrea Duarte-Campos, SRPEDD- Sisar Botelho, SRPEDD- Erica Hogan, GATRA- Angela Constantino, GATRA- Kerri Victorio, GATRA- Amber Davis, SRPEDD	Virtual: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandy Aquino, SRTA• Noah Soutier, SRPEDD• Dick Shafer, Taunton• Alan Slavin, SMMPO/Wareham• Joshua Faherty, Wareham• Dr. Gloria Saddler, Fall River• Mary Rapoza, New Bedford
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Introduction & Transit Updates:

- Dan Brogan announced that the Gateway Link will launch on August 4th, and will be fare free to start. The Gateway Link service is a new bus route coordinated by GATRA, SRTA, and bat to connect the three Regional Transit Authority Terminals, Bristol Community College, Stonehill College, and the Brockton VA Hospital. The service will run hourly Mondays-Fridays with express service between Fall River and Brockton every two hours. Mr. Brogan praised Angie and the RTAs for working over a decade to make this service a reality.
- Mr. Brogan also shared that SRTA’s MicroConnector service, providing curb-to-station service between Fall River/New Bedford and the South Coast Rail MBTA stations has had a successful launch and is expanding the service region. SRTA Transit Director, Christina Mendoza highlighted that SRTA is considering more ways of expanding the service area in the future and is in the process of surveying and interviewing riders at the Fall River and New Bedford SRTA terminals.
- Mr. Brogan highlighted that the new South Coast Rail connecting Fall River, Freetown, New Bedford, and Taunton has seen fantastic ridership that has exceeded initial expectations by the MBTA. Mr. Brogan also shared that he had heard feedback from Fall River residents about concerns with noise pollution and quality of sleep.
- The June 6th Public Hearing in Fall River resulted in over 100 Fall River residents attending the MBTA-hosted meeting, and noise concerns, as well as a lack of fencing were the primary points raised by residents. Mr. Brogan shared a resource

for impacted residents, who can contact: scrnoise@mbta.com. Impacted residents are also eligible for grants for noise pollution mitigation up to \$30,000 and can contact the MBTA for more information.

Food Access & Safety in Transportation (FAST) Plan – Noah Soutier

- Noah Soutier introduced the Food Access & Safety in Transportation (FAST) Plan that SRPEDD is working on to address growing food insecurity in the region. This is a coordinated effort between the MPO, community organizations, food pantries, and municipalities to provide existing conditions on food access, and future plans to improve food access and security. Mr. Soutier highlighted that Massachusetts has one of the highest rates of SNAP recipients in the country, at ~16% of MA residents.

Age Friendly Plan

- Andrea Duarte and Amber Davis introduced the Age-Friendly Plan, which seeks to improve infrastructure, coordination, and funding opportunities to support older adults within Southeastern Massachusetts. Duarte and Davis highlighted that the SRPEDD region has some of the highest median ages in the Commonwealth, and has population projections for a “significant increase” in the share of residents ages 65+ in the next 25 years.
- Both Davis and Duarte asked SERCCOT members suggestions and initial thoughts on the age-friendly plan.
- Dr. Gloria Saddler offered support for the plan and shared that many older adults are socially isolated, in part due to a lack of infrastructure. Saddler suggested having neighborhood benches and resting areas for residents with limited mobility.
- Alan Slavin seconded this idea sharing that there are older adults who are mobile and could move around more in the neighborhood if there was more seating and rest areas.
- Duarte, Davis, and Brogan shared that it could be possible to have a community adopt-a-bench program to support more mobility in local neighborhoods.
- Christina Mendoza of SRTA shared that SRTA is working on a bus stop consolidation plan which includes specific efforts to install more bus shelters with seating throughout the SouthCoast.

Interactive Transit-Accessible Parkfinder Map:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/da6c6007f8844fd085724d51fc48f7cb>

- Dan Brogan shared a presentation and a demonstration of the new Interactive Transit Accessible Parkfinder Map (ITAP) that shows parks that are within a ¼ mi of a bus stop/bus route in Southeastern Massachusetts.
- This interactive map shows specific facilities and park amenities including: Public beaches; restrooms; ADA-friendly playgrounds; free summer lunch programs; splash pads; basketball/tennis courts; and athletic fields.
- Dr. Saddler shared support for this map and also suggested the idea of community gardens, with the recent addition of a Fall River Community Garden in Father Travassos Park.
- Mary Rapoza of New Bedford expressed support for this map and also suggested to include skateparks since New Bedford has a handful of skateparks that residents are unaware of. Dan thanked Saddler and Rapoza for their helpful suggestions.
- Mr. Brogan also highlighted on the interactive website that people can share suggestions/updates for the map with contacting: Transit@srpedd.org
 - Brogan stated this is a “living map,” and that he looks forward to further coordinating to develop a community-wide resource to access green spaces in the region.