

Draft Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 1:00 PM - Held remotely via Zoom.

The following members were in attendance:

Steve Woelfel-----Representing Phillip Eng, Interim MassDOT Secretary and CEO, ***Chair***
Richard Bilski-----Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Christopher McDermott---Representing Cathleen DeSimone, Mayor of Attleboro
Dan Aguiar-----Representing Paul Coogan, Mayor of Fall River
Jamie Ponte-----Representing Jon Mitche, Mayor of New Bedford
Mallory Aronstein-----Representing Michael Feck, Town of Mansfield
Richard Trapilo-----Town of Fairhaven
Sarah Hewins-----Town of Carver
Matthew Chabot-----Representing Jen Vincent, Town of Berkley
John Lebert-----Representing Erik Rousseau, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority

The following Ex-Officio, non-voting members were in attendance:

Rhonda Motley, Federal Highway Administration
Victoria Alfaro, JTPG Chair

The following were also in attendance:

Alan Slavin-----SRPEDD At Large Commissioner, Wareham
Shaun Handy-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Bonnie Roalsen-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School
Christina Mendoza-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Barbara Lachance-----Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Stephanie Gray-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Albert Araujo-----Member of the Public
Aaron Stewart-----Member of the Public
Taylor Johansen-----Prime AE
Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD
Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte-Campos---SRPEDD
Daniel Brogan-----SRPEDD
Sean Hilton-----SRPEDD
Noah Soutier-----SRPEDD
Jen Chaves-----SRPEDD

Handouts:

SMMPO Agenda August 18, 2026

SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes June 16, 2026

FFY2026-2030 TIP Administrative Modification #1

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

Chairman Woelfel called the SMMPO meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Ms. Andrea Duarte-Campos 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 Fall River-----Yes
City of Taunton-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Berkley-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes

2. Approval of Minutes – June 16, 2026 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)

Chairman Woelfel asked if there were any proposed changes and requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2026, 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-----Abstain
City of Attleboro-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Carver-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Abstain
SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS.

3. Public Comments

Chairman Woelfel invited members of the public to make comments, and none were provided.

4. Regional Transit Authorities Report – RTA Updates

Corey Hebert stated that SRTA recently completed FY2026 with record ridership, reaching approximately 1.4 million trips, the highest level in the agency’s history and the first time ridership has surpassed 1 million. Demand-response services also experienced significant growth, with nearly 141,000 trips. Overall, the agency continues to see strong increases in both fixed-route and demand-response ridership and has begun FY2027 focused on building on this momentum and having another productive year.

5. Update on FFY2026-2030 Amendment #7 (Materials Attached, No Vote Needed)

Jackie Jones explained that at the previous MPO meeting in June, the board conditionally approved Amendment #7 to the 2026–2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), contingent on receiving no negative public comments. She stated that the amendment added funding from statewide sources to an earmarked project for the Raynham Bridge replacement to address a funding gap needed to complete the project. No comments were received during the public comment period, and a public meeting held on June 29 had no attendance. She stated that as a result, the amendment has officially passed and is now part of the record, so no vote is required at the current meeting.

6. FFY2026-2030 TIP Administrative Modification #2 (Materials Attached, No Vote Needed)

- a. **RTD0010676 – GATRA Miscellaneous Support Equipment – Change to match amount**
- b. **T00102 – GATRA Associated Capital Items Bus – Change to match amount**
- c. **GATRA011969 GATRA East Maintenance Facility – Change to match amount**

Jackie Jones stated that Administrative Modification #2 involves minor changes that fall below the threshold requiring a formal board vote, generally less than 10%. The modification consists of small adjustments to match amounts for three GATRA projects funded through statewide sources: miscellaneous support equipment, the East Maintenance Facility, and associated capital items. She stated that because the dollar amount changes are minimal and do not meet the threshold for a formal amendment or adjustment, the changes are being provided for informational purposes and will be reflected in the most current version of the TIP.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the 2026-2030 TIP Administrative Modification #2 and seeing none asked for a motion and second to endorse it. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Sarah Hewins. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes

MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Attleboro-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Carver-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Congestion Management Plan (Link, Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)

Sean Hilton of SRPEDD explained that the congestion management update focuses on the development of the region's Congestion Management Plan, which is expected to be released for a 21-day public comment period following board approval. The plan addresses regional congestion objectives, management strategies, projects, and actions to reduce congestion, with additional information on transit reliability, signalized intersections, and pedestrian and bicycle activity. He explained that the Plan analysis relies heavily on RITIS data, along with traffic counts and newly collected pedestrian and bicycle data from Eco-Counters.

He stated that overall, the region continues to perform well on key reliability measures. In 2025, 36 interstate roadway segments, totaling about 25 miles, exceeded the truck travel-time reliability threshold, while only six roadways, totaling approximately four miles, exceeded the general travel-time reliability threshold. For non-interstate state routes, about 41.4 miles across 135 segments may warrant further review, although many of the shorter segments likely reflect intersection-related issues. The plan also identifies the region's top 25 bottlenecks, with major congestion occurring along I-495 and I-95 and at locations affected by ongoing construction. Moving forward, staff will continue analyzing congestion data, prioritize projects that reduce congestion through TIP scoring, and provide additional data for public review. He asked the board for a vote to release the draft plan to comment period.

The Chair asked if there were any more questions on the Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Congestion Management Plan and seeing none asked for a motion and second to release it to a 21-day public comment period. The motion was made by Jamie Ponte and seconded by Mallory Aronstein. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes

City of Attleboro-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Carver-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**8. Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan-
(Link, Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to 21-day Public Comment Period)**

Noah Soutier of SRPEDD explained that the Food Access and Security and Transportation (FAST) Plan, developed between October 2024 and September 2026, examines the connection between food insecurity, transportation, health, and socioeconomic conditions in the MPO region. The plan identifies transportation gaps that can make it difficult for residents—particularly those without access to a private vehicle—to reach grocery stores, farms, food pantries, and other essential resources. It highlights existing assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC, and Massachusetts’ Healthy Incentives Program, while noting that public transportation does not consistently connect residents with local farms and food producers. The project also produced several tools, including a Critical Destinations Food Access Map, a Food Access Scoring Matrix, and a Transit Access to Food Assistance Services (TAFA) map, to help identify areas with greater food-access vulnerabilities and connect residents with available resources.

Mr. Soutier stated that public engagement through the Healthy Living survey generated 435 responses from all 27 communities, with respondents identifying sidewalks, safer intersections, expanded public transportation, and improved transit frequency and reliability as key priorities. The plan ultimately presents eight recommendations and 31 action items focused on improving transportation equity, expanding mobility options beyond private vehicles, treating food insecurity as a public health issue, educating communities about available resources, supporting local farmland and food economies, expanding food-access organizations, and strengthening regional partnerships. He stated that following board approval, the plan is expected to be released for public comment. He provided opportunities for questions.

Sarah Hewins asked how residents who are unfamiliar with the MPO or do not use the internet can learn about and access the food and transportation resources developed through the plan.

Soutier responded that outreach has included visits to GATRA and SRTA bus terminals, where residents were informed about available resources, and that both online and physical copies of the maps and materials will be distributed throughout the region. Ms. Hewins emphasized the importance of reaching seniors and residents in communities with limited transit access, suggesting senior centers, libraries, healthcare centers, and even social media as additional distribution points. Soutier noted that outreach to all 27 Councils on Aging was completed during development of the Age Friendly Mobility Plan and confirmed that community partners would be used as trusted locations for distributing printed materials and information.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on the Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Food Access and Security in Transportation Plan and seeing none asked for a motion and second to release it to 21-day public comment period. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Mallory Aronstein. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte-Campos to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Attleboro-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Carver-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced several upcoming events and public hearings. The 2026 MassDOT Moving Together Conference will be held on October 27 at the Sheraton Boston, with early registration currently available. Several virtual design public hearings are also scheduled, including New Bedford intersection improvements at Mount Pleasant Street and Nash Road on August 25, New Bedford bicycle and pedestrian accessibility improvements from Route 6 to MacArthur Drive on September 10, and preservation work for the Plain Street Bridge over the Taunton River on September 29. She stated that the SMMPO new member appointment process was also completed, with Mansfield being reelected and Rick Trapilo of Fairhaven joining as a new member. Mr. Trapilo introduced himself, noting his recent election to the Select Board and his previous work with SRPEDD's Environmental Commission and Planning Board, and expressed his interest in working with the committee.

10. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on September 15, 2026, at 1:00 pm, held virtually on Zoom.

11. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Mallory Aronstein made the motion and Jamie Ponte seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:38 PM.