Draft Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, 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
Christopher McDermott---Representing Cathleen DeSimone, Mayor of Attleboro
Dan 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
Mallory Aronstein----------Town of Mansfield
Sarah Hewins----------Town of Carver
Matthew Chabot----------Town of Berkley
Marie Clarner----------SRPEDD Commissioner Chair (joined late)
Mary Ellen DeFrias---------Greater Attleboro and Taunton Regional Transit Authority
Kelsey Beauregard----------Representing Erik Rousseau, Southeastern Regional Transit Authority

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

Rhonda Motley----------Federal Highway Administration

The following were also in attendance:

Alan Slavin----------JTPG At Large Commissioner / Greater New Bedford
Luisa Paiewonsky---------- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Christina Mendoza--------Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Barbara Lachance----------Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Diana Hayes---------- Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Stephanie Gray----------Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Olivia James----------Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Nicole Rodgers----------Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Bryan Zimolka----------Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Jennifer Francis----------Member of the Public
Hector Shaffer----------Member of the Public
Lisa Estrela-Pedro--------SRPEDD
Jackie Jones----------SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte-Campos—SRPEDD
Sean Hilton----------SRPEDD
Noah Soutier----------SRPEDD

Jen Chaves----------SRPEDD
Luis deOliveira----------SRPEDD

Handouts:
SMMPO Agenda October 20, 2026
SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes September 15, 2026
FFY2027-2031 TIP Amendment 1
Proposed FFY2027 Amendment 1

AGENDA:

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

Chairman Shooster 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 Attleboro----------Yes
City of Fall River----------Yes
City of New Bedford----------Yes
City of Taunton----------Yes
Town of Carver----------Yes
SRTA----------Yes
GATRA----------Yes

2. **Approval of Minutes – September 15, 2026 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)**

Chairman Shooster asked if there were any proposed changes and requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 15, 2026, SMMPO meeting. The motion was made by Dan Aguiar and seconded by Sarah Hewins. 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 Berkley----------Yes
Town of Carver----------Yes

Town of Mansfield----------Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair----------Yes
SRTA----------Yes
GATRA----------Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **Proposed FFY2027-2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #1 (Materials Attached, Vote Needed to Release to a Public Comment Period)**
    a. **612058 – RAYNHAM-TAUNTON-NORTON RESURFACING AND RELATED WORK ON I-495: Change description to include Bridgewater, update of project cost from $16,583,368 to $13,809,022**
    b. **607979 – MARION – SHARED USE PATH CONSTRUCTION (PHASE 1), FROM THE MARION-MATTAPOISETT T.L. TO POINT ROAD: Remove project from FFY2027 (it was advertised in FFY2026)**
    c. **613386 – MANSFIELD- NORTON- INTERSTATE PAVEMENT PRESERVATION AND RELATED WORK ON I-495: Change in project cost from $24,472,000 to $18,700,381**

Jackie Jones explained that Amendment #1 to the FY2027–2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes a change in project description to include Bridgewater and updated cost for a Raynham, Taunton, Norton resurfacing project. It also includes a Mansfield-Norton Interstate pavement preservation project cost reduction from $24 million to $18 million. She stated it also includes the removal of the Marion shared use path project from FY2027 because it had already advanced to bidding in FY2026. Removing the project from FY2027 frees up funding for other projects. Ms. Jones requested approval to release the proposed amendment for a 21-day public review and comment period, with final endorsement anticipated in November.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on proposed FFY27-31 TIP Amendment 1 and seeing none asked for a motion and second to release it to a 21-day public comment period. The motion was made by Mallory Aronstein 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 Attleboro----------Yes
City of Fall River----------Yes
City of New Bedford----------Yes

City of Taunton----------Yes
Town of Berkley----------Yes
Town of Carver----------Yes
Town of Mansfield----------Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair----------Yes
SRTA----------Yes
GATRA----------Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. **Proposed FFY2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment #1 (Materials Attached, Vote Needed to Release to 21-day Comment Period)**

Ms. Estrela-Pedro stated that Amendment #1 to the Federal Fiscal Year 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) includes funding adjustments and programming to allow additional time to complete the region's Age-Friendly Mobility Plan. The first proposed change involves a 7.26% funding increase to the Environmental Coordination task, reflecting an additional $13,000 in de-obligated funding awarded for the purchase of air quality and noise monitoring equipment, along with a $0.47 adjustment to align with the contract. The second proposed change involves extending work on the Age-Friendly Mobility Plan, which is currently in draft form due to staffing changes and the need for additional coordination with regional transit authorities; she stated that feedback from the transit authorities was received and is being incorporated into the plan. To support completion, Ms. Estrela Pedro proposed adding plan finalization to the Active Transportation task category and products list and transferring $15,000 from the Support of the 3C Process task to the Active Transportation task without affecting existing work. She asked the body for a vote to release Amendment #1 for a 21-day public comment period.

The Chair asked if there were any questions on proposed FFY27 UPWP Amendment #1 and seeing none asked for a motion and second to release it to a 21-day public comment period. The motion was made by Mallory Aronstein 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
City of Taunton----------Yes

Town of Berkley----------Yes
Town of Carver----------Yes
Town of Mansfield----------Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair----------Yes
SRTA----------Yes
GATRA----------Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Cape Cod Bridges Presentation – Luisa Paiewonsky, MassDOT

Luisa Paiewonsky of MassDOT provided a presentation on the Cape Cod Bridges Project, focusing primarily on the Sagamore Bridge replacement project, which is advancing through its final procurement phase. She explained that the project aims to replace the aging Sagamore and Bourne Bridges, improve traffic operations, enhance safety, and provide better bicycle and pedestrian connections across the Cape Cod Canal. The Sagamore Bridge replacement is fully funded through a combination of federal grants, a $350 million contribution from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and $700 million in state funding. However, funding for the Bourne Bridge replacement remains uncertain, with a $1.1 billion federal grant application awaiting a decision. Ms. Paiewonsky stated that environmental approvals and permits have been secured for both bridges, while property acquisitions and other preconstruction activities are ongoing. She showed images of the new Sagamore Bridge features including twin spans, wider travel lanes, improved interchanges, auxiliary merging lanes, and dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Ms. Paiewonsky stated that the project will also reconstruct surrounding interchanges to improve traffic flow and better separate local and regional traffic. During construction, MassDOT plans to maintain two travel lanes in each direction, closely monitor traffic conditions, and coordinate with the town of Bourne to minimize disruptions. Three qualified design-build teams have been shortlisted, and a request for proposals was issued on September 24. She stated that technical and price proposals are expected in May 2027, followed by a public price opening in July and a targeted notice to proceed by December 2027, with efforts underway to accelerate that schedule. She emphasized MassDOT’s commitment to public engagement, transparency, and coordination with local and regional stakeholders throughout the project. She highlighted design features intended to preserve the bridges' significance to Cape Cod's identity, including modern arch structures, accessible waterfront pathways, and lighting designed to minimize impacts on surrounding communities and wildlife. Discussion ensured about existing bridge materials, including granite blocks and historic plaques, which may be preserved or recycled as part of the replacement process.

6. **Federal Funding Overview and Discussion – Derek Shooster, MassDOT**

Chair Shooster provided a presentation on federal funding availability for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including the implications of the expiration of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the current federal continuing resolution. He explained that Massachusetts previously received approximately $850–$875 million annually in federal formula funding under the BIL, with approximately $32–$33 million allocated annually for regionally prioritized projects in Southeastern Massachusetts. Mr. Shooster's presentation outlined five federal funding programs that support bicycle and pedestrian improvements: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP).

He explained that although the BIL expired on September 30, 2026, a continuing resolution maintains funding for core formula programs through December 11, 2026, allowing most bicycle and pedestrian investments to continue. However, funding for non-core programs, particularly the Bridge Formula Program, remains uncertain, and MassDOT is exploring alternative funding opportunities for affected projects. Mr. Shooster explained that previously obligated federal funding remains available, and unobligated balances from core formula programs can generally be carried forward for up to three years. Discretionary grant opportunities also remain available unless otherwise specified by federal agencies. He emphasized that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure funding is not currently at significant risk, and that MassDOT remains committed to expanding bicycle and pedestrian networks, improving safety for vulnerable road users, implementing Complete Streets designs, and identifying additional federal and state funding opportunities.

7. **Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Report – RTA Updates**

Mary Ellen DeFrias reported progress on the opening of GATRA's new Wareham facility, with service operations underway and maintenance activities gradually transitioning to the new location. She stated that ridership remains strong on the Gateway Link connecting Brockton, Taunton, and Fall River, while overall ridership remains consistent. GATRA continues to evaluate service improvements and potential extensions. Kelsey Beauregard introduced herself as SRTA's new Transit Planning Manager and reported continued ridership growth with no other major updates.

8. **Fall River Pleasant Street Corridor Study Update**

Sean Hilton and Luis de Oliveira provided an update on the Fall River Pleasant Street Corridor Study, which covers approximately 1.5 miles between Troy Street and Eastern Avenue. The study's existing conditions analysis includes traffic operations, transit usage, bicycle and

pedestrian conditions, safety, land use, and demographics. Mr. Hilton explained that traffic volumes are highest between 13th Street and Quarry Street, exceeding 16,000 vehicles daily, while the Eastern Avenue intersection experiences significant delays. A review of 770 crashes identified several high-risk intersections, with approximately 22% of crashes resulting in injuries. Mr. De Oliveira stated that public engagement conducted between March and August included community events, public meetings, business outreach, and online engagement, generating 209 survey responses and 107 public comments. Major concerns voiced included poor pavement and sidewalk conditions, pedestrian safety, difficult turning movements, speeding, and traffic congestion. Respondents also expressed interest in additional dining, shopping, and grocery options. He explained that staff are finalizing the existing conditions analysis and initial study draft before developing recommendations informed by technical findings and public feedback. Mr. Aguiar acknowledged the team's work and expressed support for advancing solutions to the corridor's identified challenges.

9. Public Comments - Opportunity for the Public to Address the SMMPO

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

10. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced funding opportunities and upcoming events, including the Community Transit Grant Program application deadline of October 30 and the opening of the Safe Routes to School Bike Rack Grant on October 30. These opportunities had also been shared with the Joint Transportation Planning Group to notify municipal DPW staff and planners. Additionally, a virtual design public hearing for the New Bedford Interstate 195/Route 18 Interchange Rehabilitation Project is on November 5 at 6:00 PM.

11. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on November 17, 2026, at 1:00 pm, held virtually on Zoom.

12. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Dan Aguiar made the motion and Sarah Hewins seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 PM.