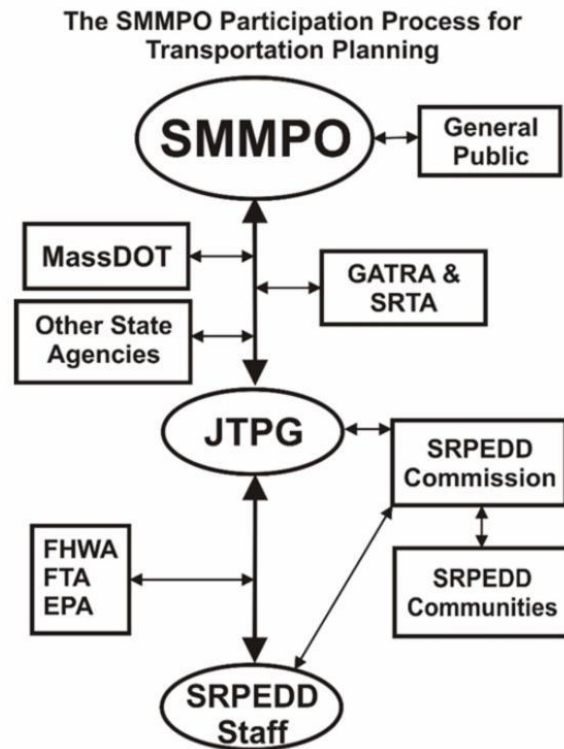


The SMMPO

How the Regional Transportation Planning Process Works

The process that enables the initiation and implementation of transportation improvements for southeastern Massachusetts can be complicated and sometimes difficult to navigate. To begin, there are three key groups essential to the planning process for transportation improvements in our region; the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO), the Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG), and the SRPEDD Commission. The members of these committees include representatives from local communities, as well as officials from federal, state and regional agencies which are depicted in the accompanying graphic.



The SMMPO, established in 1976 for southeastern Massachusetts, is responsible for programming federally mandated transportation planning and improvements.

At that time, the Governor's office authorized that the boundaries of each MPO in Massachusetts follow the boundaries of the regional planning agencies. There are 13 MPOs in Massachusetts and 385 in the United States.

In 1997 representation on the SMMPO expanded to 13 board members including the Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation, MassDOT Highway Administrator, Chairman of the SRPEDD Commission, the Administrators for Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) and the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), the Mayors from the region's four cities, and four selectmen elected to the board by the SRPEDD Commission. SRPEDD is the support staff to the SMMPO.

The SMMPO's role in the transportation planning process is to oversee and vote on actions and documents regulating the expenditures of transportation funds within the SMMPO (SRPEDD) region including:

- The long range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - A regional assessment of the transportation system with financially constrained recommendations for improvement,
- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - The comprehensive 5-year list of transportation construction projects, and
- The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - The annual scope of transportation work and studies to be completed by the SRPEDD Staff.

The SRPEDD Commission governs SRPEDD, the regional planning agency serving southeastern Massachusetts, and is comprised of local officials and citizens representing the 27 member communities. SRPEDD provides planning for the region's land use, transportation, economy and environment. The Commission is responsible for overseeing the agency's planning efforts.

The JTPG is the advisory group to the SMMPO and the SRPEDD Commission to foster public participation in the transportation planning process. It consists of representatives from member communities, public agencies, transportation providers, and residents concerned with the transportation planning process. The objective of the JTPG is to:

- provide a forum for resolving transportation issues and controversies,
- provide technical support to the SMMPO and SRPEDD Commission, and
- oversee the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, the TIP and UPWP.

The SRPEDD staff provides technical assistance and guidance on transportation issues in support of the JTPG, the SMMPO and the SRPEDD Commission. Under contract with MassDOT, SRTA, and GATRA, SRPEDD staff prepares technical reports and analysis for local communities through the JTPG and SRPEDD Commission which are then discussed with MassDOT, SRTA, GATRA and other state agencies for review. Eventually the process develops a project for programming for federal funds for improvement through the SMMPO.