

DRAFT Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting Held on **Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 1:00 PM**
Held Remotely via Zoom due to the Covid-19 State of Emergency in Massachusetts

The following were in attendance:

Steve Woelfel	Representing Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and CEO, MassDOT Chair
Pamela Haznar	Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Jamie Ponte	Representing Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford
Bill Roth	Representing Shaunna O'Connell, Mayor of Taunton
Shawn McDonald	Town of Dartmouth
Julie Boyce	Town of North Attleborough
Nancy Durfee	Town of Somerset
Leilani Dalpe	Town of Middleborough
Alan Slavin	SRPEDD Commission Chair
Shayne Trimbell	Representing Erik Rousseau, Administrator SRTA
Mark Sousa	Administrator GATRA

The following were also present:

Paul Mission, SRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro, SRPEDD
Lilia Cabral-Bernard, SRPEDD
Jackie Jones, SRPEDD
Jennifer Chaves, SRPEDD
Cassie Ostrander, FHWA
Andrew Reovan, FHWA
Ben Muller, MassDOT
Barbara Lachance, MassDOT
Lee Azinheira, Town of Attleboro
Eileen Gunn, Fuss & O'Neill
Lloyd Mendes, Member of the Public

Handouts:

FFY2020 UPWP Proposed Amendments
SMMPO Meeting Draft Minutes June 16, 2020

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

Chairman Woelfel welcomed attendees to the SMMPO meeting. Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of North Attleborough	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

2. Public Comments - Opportunity for the public to address the SMMPO-

Chairman Woelfel invited members of the public to make any comments. None were presented.

3. Approval of Minutes – June 16, 2020 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed)

Chairman Woelfel requested a motion to approve the minutes from the SMMPO meeting from September 15, 2020. The motion was made and seconded. Ms. Lilia Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of North Attleborough	Abstain
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED with one ABSTENTION

4. SMMPO Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) Report – Opportunity for RTAs to address the SMMPO

Mark Sousa informed the group that GATRA was awarded a grant for non-emergency medical transportation and they will start negotiations in 3 regions, within the current GATRA service area, as well as the Cape and Islands. GATRA will act as the broker for a 5-year to 15-year contract, and may have to open up another call center, as well as work with vendors down on the cape to.

GATRA is continuing to provide service with ridership and calls creeping up. GATRA started a new micro transit pilot program with National Express, which is in the Tri-County area, as well as one in South Plymouth using a discretionary grant from the state.

Shayne Trimbell updated for SRTA, stating that not much has changed since we last met, and ridership continues to grow. SRTA is still at about 60% of normal ridership. The most relevant information is that SRTA has put five new buses into service replacing older vehicles in the fleet. These are 2020 models for fixed route service. On the demand-response side, the most interesting development has been the arrival of low-floor demand-response vans. These are vans designed to carry passengers with mobility devices, with the floor only 8 to 12 inches off the curb.

5. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) –

- a. Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 UPWP Amendment for Route 103 Corridor Study **(Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to release for public comment)**

Mr. Paul Mission informed the group of a proposed amendment to the task 3.2 Management Systems to add the Route 103 corridor study, an Access Management study for the town of Somerset. Staff will look at the Route 103 corridor from the interchange with Lee's River in an easterly direction to Brayton Point Road. There are driveways and other curb cuts that are haphazard in terms of their layout. The town is looking for an evaluation, to identify safety concerns as well as to come up with recommendations for improvements. This also includes public outreach to get us support as well as input from the general public and the town on perceived and/or actual problems on this roadway. Extensive transportation data will be collected, including the utilization of a study that was completed by Vanasse, Hangen, Brustlin back in 2019, which included a number of traffic counts as well as explored at some alternatives for the interchange. Staff will provide an assessment of the existing traffic conditions taking into consideration the pandemic as well as forecasted future traffic conditions.

For the traffic counts, staff may have to use some growth rates and our professional judgment in terms of what the traffic might look like years down the road. The total cost

of the study is approximately \$50,000, which is included in the management systems budget.

There were no questions posed to Mr. Mission. Mr. Woelfel announced that they needed a motion to release the amendment for a 21-day public comment period.

A motion was made and seconded and Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of North Attleborough	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

b. Discussion on proposed FFY 2021 UPWP Adjustment for GATRA Contract (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote needed to approve)

Mr. Paul Mission informed the group that agenda item 5b is an administrative adjustment to the Unified Planning Work Program for fiscal year 2021. This entails the complete removal of a task from the UPWP, which is the data maintenance National Transit Database (NTD) reporting associated with GATRA and their 5307 contract. \$34,000 allocated for the NTD data collection and reporting will be removed due to the current suspension of NTD reporting by Federal Transit Administration. The money will be repurposed for other transit needs within GATRA.

When NTD resumes, it will be put back in but we don't foresee this happening during this planning work program. This is an adjustment and does not need to be put out for a 21-day public comment period.

There were no questions posed to Mr. Mission, so Mr. Woelfel proceeded to ask for a motion. A motion was made and seconded and Ms. Cabral-Bernard called the roll:

MassDOT Chair	Yes
MassDOT Administrator	Yes
City of New Bedford	Yes
City of Taunton	Yes
Town of North Attleborough	Yes
Town of Dartmouth	Yes
Town of Somerset	Yes
Town of Middleborough	Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair	Yes
SRTA	Yes
GATRA	Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

At this point, Ms. Julie Boyce posed a question to Mr. Mark Sousa regarding GATRA service for the city of Attleboro.

Mr. Sousa responded that GATRA hasn't really cut back service in that region, and there was still micro transit service that has actually increased with some nights and weekends. There's also the new pilot program, and they are actually continuing to see a little bit of an increase in ridership overall, including the area of Attleboro.

6. MassDOT Proposed Calendar Year 2022 Performance Measure Congestion Targets
 - Discussion on targets for Congestion (Non-SOV and Emissions)

Ben Muller of MassDOT introduced himself for the new board members as the liaison between The SMMPO and MassDOT. He informed the group that he would be talking about emissions related to air quality performance targets. MassDOT has been able to revisit their targets and determine whether we are on track to meet them. MassDOT identified two targets that require assessment: single occupancy vehicles (SOV) and emissions reduction.

Mr. Muller displayed a graphic showing the targets set two years ago and new data. The first target is the percentage of non-single occupancy vehicle travel in the Boston urbanized area, Non-SOV data has increased more than MassDOT had expected. In light of this, MassDOT has changed the target from 35.1% to 35.8% non-SOV for the Boston urbanized area. This appears to be a minor difference, but because it's covering such a large area with so many people, about 12,000 people more than was expected, a pretty significant number. The data show an increase in public transit ridership and other behaviors which contribute to the target including carpooling, public transit, walking and bicycling, as well as taxis and motorcycles, rideshare, and telecommuting importantly.

Obviously, the pandemic has thrown some question marks into the telecommuting figure and there is no way to know what that will look like in a few years, but they're confident that it's going to be higher than their initial projection.

The other target that is being revised is the emissions reductions target considers the emissions caused by CMAQ funded projects in areas that qualify as non-attainment in the commonwealth. There are no non-attainment areas in the southeast region, so there wouldn't be any change for this region.

7. **Other Business-**

The Chairman mentioned that the new Federal Highway liaison was present and would like to discuss the Federal Certification Review process.

Mr. Andrew Reovan then introduced himself as the Federal Highway liaison and said he'd be working with the MPO on the federal certification review along with his colleague Cassie Ostrander. He continued by saying it's been four years since the MPO year was certified and the process was coming up, and they were looking at the week of January 25.

Paul Mission added that the normal meeting schedules would be followed for the JTPG meeting, which is on January 13 and for the MPO on January 19. There will be time reserved for the federal certification process and discussion at these meetings. The actual meetings with Federal Highway & Federal Transit, with members of the MPO, as well as the general public, will take place the week of January 25. Staff is hoping that both RTA's, GATRA and SRTA, will be able to attend either with the administrators or with a designee to talk about the relationship between the MPO and the RTAs for the Federal Transit side. Staff also welcome participants from MassDOT, as well as from other MPOs to participate.

Mr. Mission also informed the group that back on September 26, our former Transportation Planning Manager and Highway Director, James Hadfield had passed away.

Mr. Woelfel then informed the group that the Moving Together Conference is happening this year on November 17th, 18th, and 19th. Mr. Mission added that SRPEDD staff member Jackie Jones was part of a panel at the conference.

Shawn McDonald informed the group that the Town of Dartmouth voted to send a letter to SRPEDD regarding The Route 6 study in Westport, to include Dartmouth Route 6 to Cross Road to the study.

8. **Place and Time for Next Meeting**

November 17, 2020 was announced as the next meeting date.

9. **Adjourn**

Mr. Woelfel asked for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made and seconded. He asked for all in favor to say aye. All ayes were recorded. Mr. Woelfel asked for any opposed or any abstentions. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 1:43.