

**Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
Joint Transportation Planning Group (JTPG) Meeting.**

DRAFT Minutes for the JTPG Meeting

**Held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 2:00 PM as a Hybrid Meeting
via Zoom and at SRPEDD Office, 88 Broadway, Taunton, MA
in Accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.**

The following members and alternates were in attendance:

Stephanie Crampton, Chair.....City of New Bedford
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Michael Mullen.....Town of Dighton
Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Victoria D’Antoni.....Town of Freetown, alternate
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
Josh Reinke.....Town of Mansfield
Kevin Dumas.....Town of Mansfield, alternate
Norman Hills.....Town of Marion
Leanne Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
David Cabral.....Town of Seekonk
Fred Cornaglia.....City of Taunton
Alan Slavin.....Town of Wareham
James Hartnett.....Town of Westport

The following members/alternates were NOT in attendance:

Town of Acushnet
City of Attleboro
Town of Berkley
Town of Carver
Town of Mattapoisett
Town of North Attleborough
Town of Norton
Town of Plainville
Town of Raynham
Town of Rehoboth
Town of Rochester
Town of Somerset
Town of Swansea
At-Large, City of Fall River

At-Large, City of Taunton

Also in Attendance:

Raissah Kouame.....MassDOT
Barbara Lachance.....MassDOT
Joshua Crabb.....Town of Fairhaven
Jim Howland.....City of Taunton
Kathy Holton.....City of Taunton
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD
Lilia Cabral-Bernard.....SRPEDD
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD
Jennifer Chaves.....SRPEDD
Sean Hilton.....SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte.....SRPEDD
Mark Gershman.....BETA Group
Lisa Sherman.....CDM Smith
Phil Viveiros.....McMahon & Associates

Handouts:

JTPG Meeting Agenda for May 10, 2023
DRAFT April 12, 2023, JTPG Meeting Minutes
RTP CHST Library Listening Sessions Flyer
10th Annual Bike Summit Flyer

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Chair Stephanie Crampton called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Ms. Duarte asked all JTPG members to unmute themselves so she could call the complete roll call of JTPG members, with the following being present at the time of the roll call:

Stephanie Crampton, Chair.....City of New Bedford
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Michael Mullen.....Town of Dighton
Dan Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Victoria D’Antoni.....Town of Freetown, alternate
Franklin Moniz.....Town of Lakeville
Josh Reinke.....Town of Mansfield
Kevin Dumas.....Town of Mansfield, alternate
Norman Hills.....Town of Marion

Leanne Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
David Cabral..... Town of Seekonk
Fred Cornaglia.....City of Taunton
Alan Slavin.....Town of Wareham
James Hartnett.....Town of Westport

2. Approval of Minutes – April 12, 2023 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)

Chair Stephanie Crampton called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting. Victoria D’Antoni made the motion and James Hartnett seconded the motion. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

City of New Bedford.....Yes
Town of Dartmouth.....Yes
Town of Dighton.....Yes
City of Fall River.....Yes
Town of Freetown, alternate.....Yes
Town of Lakeville.....Yes
Town of Mansfield.....Yes
Town of Mansfield, alternate.....Yes
Town of Marion.....Yes
Town of Middleborough.....Abstain
Town of Seekonk.....Abstain
City of Taunton.....Yes
Town of Wareham.....Yes
Town of WestportYes

THE MOTION WAS PASSED WITH TWO ABSTENTIONS.

3. Public Comments – Opportunity for the Public to address the JTPG

Leanne Bradley stated that during the last SRPEDD meeting there was a discussion about the shortage of GATRA bus drivers and a comment was made by the Undersecretary of MassDOT that the state is exploring making changes to requirements for receiving a CDL license. She asked for clarification about which requirements would be revised, stating her concern for safety. Lisa Estrela-Pedro responded that SRPEDD would check in with the regional transit authorities about this and relay the updates to Ms. Bradley.

4. Draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Presentation

Jennifer Chaves presented an overview of the draft 2023 Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan to the group, which is available on the SRPEDD [website](#). The CHST Plan identifies current transportation providers and services in the SRPEDD region, and includes transportation options that are listed in GATRA's Ride Match regional directory of private/public/non-profit transportation services. The Plan identifies unmet transportation needs and service gaps for seniors, people with disabilities and people with low incomes. It defines some potential strategies to address the unmet needs which are used as evaluation criteria for organizations/RTAs/municipalities applying for federal 5310 funding, and it identifies priorities for the funding of grant proposals in the SRPEDD region.

The CHST Plan was developed with input from human services and community organizations and agencies, transit providers, and the public. SRPEDD's CHST public engagement process included ongoing collection of information since the last plan was released in 2018, meetings and agency surveys with varying involvement from 50 organizations and agencies who were willing to participate, an unmet transportation needs public survey, 4 public meetings in May to present the draft CHST Plan and gather feedback, and a meeting to present the draft CHST plan to the group of 50 stakeholders. Ride Match and GATRA and SRTA's 2021 comprehensive service assessments also helped identify service gaps and regional needs.

The 25 respondents to the agency survey identified medical and employment-related trips as the types of trips with the highest unmet need, and Taunton, Dighton, Fairhaven, and Mattapoisett as the communities with the highest unmet need. Respondents to the agency survey, largely representing Taunton, New Bedford, and North Attleborough and majority of whom were seniors and/or low-income, stated that they needed to travel beyond their RTA area and their city/town but had difficulty doing so; the areas they reported having the most difficulty getting to were Boston, Fall River, Providence, and Taunton. 42% stated that they missed work or were unable to get/accept a job due to a lack of transportation; 23% stated that they missed a doctor appointment to due to lack of transportation.

The overall unmet need for alternative transportation modes continues to increase. As Southeastern MA populations continue to age, the need for transportation services to and from medical appointments, especially longer distance, is rapidly increasing. Survey respondents reported having trouble getting to hospitals and medical facilities in Brockton, Boston, Taunton, Cape Cod, Fall River, Foxboro, Providence. Some municipalities have no options for long-distance medical transportation (programs that have volunteer drivers for medical appointments reported having major driver shortages, and some towns had drivers but no ADA accessible vehicles). There are large gaps in transit service to jobs in suburban areas, especially large industrial parks (such as those in Taunton and New Bedford). The lack of connections between cities and towns is a major barrier for riders. There's an urgent need for better connections between RTAs, between gateway cities, and between transportation providers. Some connections identified as need in surveys/meetings were: Fall River to Taunton; Taunton to Brockton; Fall River to Brockton, Taunton to Providence, Fall River to Providence, and several others. There is also an unmet need for expanded transit service in early morning and evening hours during the week and Saturday/Sunday and for more frequent service across all types of transportation trips.

Travel training and education about existing services continues to be important, and an area for improvement and increased coordination. Many people aren't aware about transportation services they qualify for from their healthcare plan for medical appointments or how to navigate them. Some were not aware about how GATRA's bus flagging system works and didn't know they could flag the bus down to get on/off where there are no stops. Some town officials were not aware that certain transit services exist in their municipalities or about general needs for transit/alternative transportation services among residents.

Ms. Chaves stated that the next steps were that the draft CHST Plan will be presented to the SMMPO the following week where it will vote on releasing the draft to a 21-day comment period. SRPEDD will continue to hold public and stakeholder meetings relating to CHST-identified issues and the draft will be updated with comment received. SRPEDD aims to release the final 2023 CHST Plan in July. Ms. Chaves offered to send hard copies of the plan to members upon request.

5. Draft FFY24-28 TIP Discussion & Update

Jackie Jones provided recent updates on the FFY2024-2028 TIP and a summary of TIP project lists discussed at previous JTPG meetings. Ms. Jones stated that the TIP is often thought of as a collection of project lists, but she wanted to ensure members were aware of all the other pieces that go into this document. In addition to the project lists it also has an equity analysis that looks at how projects and funding are distributed throughout the region to different populations. There is a greenhouse gas emission analysis which evaluates projects' impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. The TIP also discusses project evaluation criteria, information on project development, and an analysis of how the projects connect to previous planning that SRPEDD and other agencies have done. There's a description of projects' funding categories, financial plans, and information on the processes that the SMMPO body and SRPEDD engage in. The full document is on the SRPEDD website. Ms. Jones encouraged the group to read through and see everything that goes into the TIP.

Ms. Jones provided a summary of the project lists for each year and recent updates since the last meeting. The draft FFY24-28 TIP was released to the public at the last SMMPO meeting in April. During the public comment period, SRPEDD received six letters of support related to programming the Taunton River Trail Project. SRPEDD held a public meeting for the TIP on May 4 but did not receive any comments there.

Many projects that were originally programmed in FFY2024 were moved to FFY2025 due to delays in readiness. The two remaining 2024 projects are the Taunton corridor improvements and related work on Broadway through 138 and the Wareham corridor improvements on Route 6. There is a large remaining balance of 14 million in FFY2024. SRPEDD is expecting the projects that are currently programmed will increase in costs and eat up some of that surplus. SRRPED is also working MassDOT and the regional transit authorities to identify projects that will utilize this remaining balance and will amend the project list accordingly when the FFY2024-28 TIP becomes active in the next federal fiscal year which starts in October 2023. Ms. Jones reiterated that readiness is key and the faster municipalities get projects ready, the better chances they will have in moving up on the TIP. There is a

balance of \$320,000 in FFY2026, that will also very likely get eaten up by cost increases. FFY2027 is very similar to the current FFY2023-27 TIP, Attleboro Route 123 corridor improvements were added to this year. In FFY2027, there is a remaining balance of \$2,843,000; not many proposed projects are less than that amount, particularly as costs increase each year, but SRPEDD is hopeful to have smaller projects in the future.

Ms. Jones explained that the current project list for FFY2028 looked slightly different than it did at the April JTPG meeting and the one before that, when the JTPG voted on a list of projects for FFY2028 that included Swansea Route 118 corridor improvements, Dartmouth Cross Road improvements, and New Bedford County Street improvements. The JTPG voted for the slate of projects in scenario #3 and this vote was recommended to the SMMPO. At the April SMMPO meeting, however, a motion was made to replace scenario #3 with scenario #2, and the SMMPO moved forward with the slate of projects in scenario #2. Ms. Jones stated that, while it has happened before, this is an unusual scenario as the SMMPO usually takes the recommendation of the JTPG. Ms. Jones apologized to the body that it happened this way and explained that SRPEDD will hold some more discussions with members of both bodies to clarify their roles moving forward. SRPEDD is planning to hold a TIP development workshop in the fall that will provide more information on how to develop projects, how to get them on the TIP, and everything that goes into the TIP process.

The FFY2028 TIP project list now includes the Wareham shared-use path which was moved out from FFY2025, the Taunton River Trail, and the New Bedford corridor improvements on Tarkiln Hill Road and Ashley Boulevard. The project lists for GATRA include renovating the Attleboro commuter rail station, vehicle purchases, renovations, and a solar project. The SRTA project lists include acquiring vehicles, replacing old equipment, and renovation and rehabilitation of SRTA facilities. Ms. Jones stated that the FFY2024-28 TIP is currently out for public comment and will face a vote for approval by the SMMPO the following week. She told JTPG members that they could provide comment right now or by email to jjones@srpedd.org.

Josh Reinke asked Ms. Jones to confirm that the change in funding sources for the Mansfield Route 106 project did not show up on Ms. Jones' list of projects because it is a statewide project to which she answered yes.

6. Draft FFY24 UPWP Presentation (Roll Call Vote Needed to Recommend to SMMPO for Release to a Minimum 21-day Public Comment Period)

Ms. Estrela-Pedro gave the group a brief overview of the draft FFY2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) document that SRPEDD staff developed and is asking the body to recommend to the SMMPO for release to a 21-day public comment period. Ms. Estrela-Pedro told the group that the draft FFY2024 UPWP is available for download on the SRPEDD [website](#) and the link would be emailed following the meeting. The UPWP is required for the SMMPO to administer Federal Highway and FTA planning funds. It is updated annually and will commence on October 1 2023, and will go through September 30, 2024. It includes a scope of work for what the SRPEDD Transportation staff will be working on in the coming

year. It also includes detailed deliverables, who is going to perform the work, the timeframe for completing the work, and the cost. The UPWP is built on guidance from the BIL which builds upon the FAST ACT and MAP 21 in strengthening our highways, supporting MassDOT's safety agenda, promoting alternative modes of transportation, improving healthy sustainable transportation, creating jobs, and supporting our economic growth as well as addressing climate change and promoting equity for all modes of transportation. The funding for the FFY2024 UPWP is approximately \$1.7 million.

There are three elements to the UPWP. There are tasks with higher funds which SRPEDD staff spends more time on, for example, the 3C tasks, data management and GIS, as well as management systems and environmental coordination. In Element 1, management support of the planning process, the 3C item includes technical assistance to the SMMPO, JTPG, SRPEDD Commission, and SRPEDD communities. It also includes reviews of MEPA documents, and staff training and support. Under the public participation task, SRPEDD staff conducts outreach and support for the JTPG and the SMMPO, in addition to providing updates on transportation issues via social media and other outlets. Under the Environmental Justice task, SRPEDD conducts annual Title VI reporting, maintains the geographic database on EJ and Title VI populations, conducts the equity analysis for the TIP. Under the UPWP task this task, SRPEDD staff develops its work program on an annual basis and reviews tasks frequently to ensure deliverables are being produced. Under the TIP task, staff develops the Transportation Improvement Program. Some additional items that SRPEDD is including in the UPWP this year under the TIP task include creating a TIP workshop that will be held in person and updating SRPEDD's TIP evaluation criteria. In the past, SRPEDD convened a body of stakeholders to help update criteria and will plan to do this again.

In Element 2, regional data collection, modeling and analysis activities, SRPEDD will continue to maintain all of its data, including land use, crash, and park and ride lots data. Under the modeling tasks, SRPEDD staff will continue to update its model which will be used to assist with corridor studies, providing traffic growth rates that are often requested by consultants. SRPEDD will continue the traffic counting program. Under pavement management, SRPEDD will continue to serve federal aid-eligible roads which is done on a three-year rotating basis. Under performance measures, SRPEDD will continue to monitor regional and statewide targets. Under the Community Technical Assistance task, SRPEDD will continue to take requests as they come in from SRPEDD communities and will complete them based on the availability of our SRPEDD staff. Usually SRPEDD has been able to meet all of the requests.

Element 3, the activities and studies element, is the meat of the UPWP. Under the management systems task, SRPEDD Transportation staff usually assist SRPEDD's Comprehensive department in doing traffic analysis for some of its studies. This year, SRPEDD will be conducting a corridor study of Route 28 through Middleborough, Rochester, and Wareham. Under the bicycle and pedestrian planning task, SRPEDD staff will be updating the Regional Pedestrian Plan and will be launching a bicycle parking program similar to what SRPEDD has done in the past, where communities will have the opportunity to purchase bike racks. Under the ITS task, SRPEDD staff will continue its efforts with coordination with other stakeholders as well. In the environmental coordination and climate change resilience, SRPEDD's

environmental department will convert what was previously SRPEDD’s GRIP inventory into a database to assist in project development and implementation. Under mobility management and regional transit support, SRPEDD is looking to revive what some may have known in the past as SERCCOT, the Southeast Regional Coordinating Council on Transportation, to help inform stakeholders about transit needs in the region and address these needs. SRPEDD is aiming to have the SMMPO release the draft FFY2024 UPWP for a minimum 21 day comment period on May 16. Ms. Estrela-Pedro told the group to email herself or anyone else in the transportation department at any time with questions or comments about the document. SRPEDD will be hosting a public meeting for the draft FFY2024 UPWP and draft 2023 CHST Plan and will get the information out as well. SRPEDD is aiming to have the UPWP document endorsed on June 20 at the June SMMPO meeting.

Hearing no questions, the Chair asked for a motion to release the draft FFY2024 UPWP to a 21-day comment period. Leanne Bradley made the motion and Fred Cornaglia seconded. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

- City of New Bedford.....Yes
- Town of Dartmouth.....Yes
- Town of Dighton.....Yes
- City of Fall River.....Yes
- Town of Freetown, alternate.....Yes
- Town of Lakeville.....Yes
- Town of Mansfield.....Yes
- Town of Mansfield, alternate.....Yes
- Town of Marion.....Yes
- Town of Middleborough.....Yes
- Town of Seekonk.....Yes
- City of Taunton.....Yes
- Town of Wareham.....Yes
- Town of WestportYes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Other Business

Ms. Duarte reminded JTPG members to submit JTPG (re)appointment forms by May 15th. The annual elections for the JTPG will happen at the June JTPG meeting and Ms. Duarte encouraged members to plan on attending the June meeting if they would like to be part of that process. Ms. Duarte informed the group that MassDOT together with SRPEDD will be hosting a public meeting via Zoom on May 31 at 6:00 PM to discuss MassDOT’s 5-Year Capital Investment Plan (CIP), it is an opportunity to learn about how MassDOT is spending its funds and voice any concerns. The registration [link](#) was sent following the

meeting. Ms. Duarte reminded the group that SRPEDD Transportation staff will be holding community listening sessions in May where residents and community members can drop by to voice their transportation needs, concerns, and priority areas for funding as part of SRPEDD's process for updating the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The remaining open houses will be held on the following dates at these locations:

New Bedford Public Library (Main Branch), May 11th, 4-7pm

Fall River Public Library, May 17th, 4:30-7:30pm

Taunton Public Library, May 23rd, 4-7pm

Ms. Estrela-Pedro encouraged JTPG members to attend SRPEDD's annual dinner on May 24th at Loon Pond Lodge in Lakeville and stated the registration link would be emailed to JTPG members following the meeting.

Lilia Cabral-Bernard announced to the group that this is her last JTPG meeting as she will be retiring in June. She thanked members for their hard work and attendance at JTPG meetings. JTPG members congratulated and thanked Ms. Cabral-Bernard

Joshua Crabb announced that Paul Foley resigned from his position as Planning Director in Fairhaven effective April 29th, is no longer at the Town, and that Mr. Crabb is now filling in for him.

8. Date and Time for Next Meeting

Date and Time for next meeting is June 14, 2023, at 2:00 PM

9. Adjourn

The Chair asked members to state all in favor to adjourn. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 3:38 PM.