

Draft Minutes of the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) Meeting on Tuesday, July 18, 2023 at 1:00 PM - Held remotely via Zoom.

The following members were in attendance:

Stephen Woelfel-----Representing Gina Fiandaca, MassDOT Secretary and CEO, *Chair*
Richard Bilski-----Representing Jonathan Gulliver, MassDOT Highway Div. Administrator
Daniel Aguiar-----Representing Paul Coogan, Mayor of Fall River
Jamie Ponte-----Representing Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford
Robert Espindola-----Town of Fairhaven
Kevin Dumas-----Representing Diana Bren, Town of Mansfield
Jacob Vaught-----Town of Somerset
Marie Clarner-----SRPEDD Commission Chair
MaryEllen DeFrias ----- GATRA Administrator
Shayne Trimbell-----Representing SRTA Administrator Erik Rousseau

The following were also in attendance:

Dana Hanson-----Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Jenna Massoud----- Office of Congressman Auchincloss
Sarah Hewins-----Town of Carver
Chris Desprez-----Town of Plainville
Alan Slavin-----Town of Wareham
Tricia Wurts-----Town of Wareham
Joshua Barber-----FHWA
Raissah Kouame-----MassDOT
Derek Krevat-----MassDOT
Derek Shooster-----MassDOT
Barbara Lachance-----MassDOT
Lisa Estrela-Pedro-----SRPEDD
Jackie Jones-----SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte-----SRPEDD
Jennifer Chaves-----SRPEDD
Sean Hilton-----SRPEDD
Luis de Oliveira-----SRPEDD
Jon Gray-----SRPEDD
Jeremy Marino

Handouts:

- SMMPO Agenda July 18, 2023
- SMMPO Draft Meeting Minutes June 20, 2023
- FFY2023-2027 TIP Proposed Amendment #4
- FFY2023-2027 TIP Proposed Adjustment #4 – Highway
- FFY2023-2027 TIP Proposed Adjustment #4 – Transit
- FFY2023-2027 TIP Proposed Amendment #5

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-

Chairman Stephen Woelfel called the SMMPO meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Ms. Andrea Duarte asked all MPO members and designees to please unmute themselves so she could call the roll for attendance. She then 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 New Bedford-----Yes
- Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
- Town of Mansfield-----Yes
- Town of Somerset-----Yes
- SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
- GATRA-----Yes
- SRTA-----Yes

2. Approval of Minutes – June 20, 2023 (Materials Attached and Roll Call Vote Needed)

Chairman Woelfel requested a motion to approve the minutes from the SMMPO meeting from June 20, 2023. The motion was made by Daniel Aguiar and seconded by Shayne Trimbell. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

- MassDOT Chair-----Yes
- MassDOT Administrator-----Abstain
- City of Fall River-----Yes
- City of New Bedford-----Yes
- Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
- Town of Mansfield-----Yes
- Town of Somerset-----Yes
- SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes

GATRA-----Yes

SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED WITH ONE ABSTENTION.

3. Public Comments

Chairman Woelfel invited members of the public to make comments. There were no comments presented. Lisa Estrela-Pedro announced that there are two new SMMPO members starting in August, Alan Slavin from Wareham and Sara Hewins from the Town of Carver. Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that the SMMPO is also losing two members, Bob Espindola from Fairhaven and Mark German from Middleborough, and thanked them for their participation and time on the SMMPO.

4. Regional Transit Authorities Report – RTA Updates

Mary Ellen DeFrias announced that GATRA is in the process of launching quarterly public meetings to better communicate with and receive feedback from communities and riders to facilitate a more proactive approach to how the agency operates. GATRA is partnering with Councils on Aging across the service area to help with this outreach effort. The first public meeting will be on July 27th. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology was installed in GATRA vehicles over the past few months and staff and drivers are working out issues to get it running smoothly. GATRA recently completed a land purchase in Wareham and will begin building a new maintenance facility replacing the current lease it has in Plymouth.

Shayne Trimbell announced that SRTA recently finished its triennial review with an onsite review in mid-June and a close out meeting in the last week of June. SRTA received a clean review with no findings, for the first time in over a decade; it is extraordinarily rare for these reviews to be without findings. Mr. Trimbell also announced that SRTA will be implementing a substantial number of services changes in Fall River at the end of August and is working on a series of service changes for New Bedford that will likely be implemented in December. He is currently working on the service change proposals and there will a public meeting in early September.

5. FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Amendment #4 (Highway & Transit, Materials Attached - Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse)

Ms. Estrela-Pedro explained all the highway and transit changes on the FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Amendment #4, which was released to a 21-day comment period following the June SMMPO meeting. It includes an earmark for the Fall River Route 79 project, as well as a cost increase for an Attleborough bridge, as well as transit cost changes and grants awarded through the community transit grant program. All of these were listed in the handout released with the agenda and discussed at the last meeting. A public meeting was held on July 12 and there were no comments at that meeting or otherwise. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked the body to endorse this amendment.

The Chair asked if there were questions, and seeing none, asked for a motion and second to endorse TIP Amendment #4. The motion was made by Bob Espindola and seconded by Mary Ellen DeFrias. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Somerset-----Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
GATRA-----Yes
SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Adjustment #4 (Highway & Transit, Materials Attached - Roll Call Vote Needed to Endorse)

Ms. Estrela-Pedro explained the items on FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Adjustment #4 which were listed in the handout provided with the agenda. As it is an adjustment, it does not require a 21-day comment period. It included a funding category change for a median cable barrier installation in Attleboro and North Attleborough and several cost increases for transit vehicle maintenance, facility and system modernization, and vehicle replacements. Ms. Estrela-Pedro asked the body to endorse the adjustment.

The Chair asked if there were questions, and seeing none, asked for a motion and second to endorse TIP Amendment #4. The motion was made by Daniel Aguiar and seconded by Mary Ellen DeFrias. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

MassDOT Chair-----Yes
MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
City of Fall River-----Yes
City of New Bedford-----Yes
Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
Town of Mansfield-----Yes
Town of Somerset-----Yes
SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
GATRA-----Yes

SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Amendment #5 (Transit, Materials Forthcoming - Roll Call Vote Needed to Release to Comment Period)

Ms. Estrela-Pedro explained all the SRTA transit changes on the FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Amendment #5 and asked the body to release the amendment to a 21-day public comment period. It includes changes in operating costs, with receipt of \$11.7 million in state contract assistance funding, removal of system modernization with RTPA CAP and 5307 projects, and addition of fare collection upgrades. All of these were listed in the handout released with the agenda.

The Chair asked if there were questions, and seeing none, asked for a motion to release FFY23-27 TIP Proposed Amendment #5 to a public comment period. The motion was made by Bob Espindola and seconded by Jacob Vaught. The Chair asked Ms. Duarte to read the roll as follows:

- MassDOT Chair-----Yes
- MassDOT Administrator-----Yes
- City of Fall River-----Yes
- City of New Bedford-----Yes
- Town of Fairhaven-----Yes
- Town of Mansfield-----Yes
- Town of Somerset-----Yes
- SRPEDD Commission Chair-----Yes
- GATRA-----Yes
- SRTA-----Yes

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Regional Transportation Plan Updates

Jackie Jones gave a presentation about the topics areas of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. SRPEDD staff have been working on this planning document for the past year. The draft RTP will be presented to the SMMPO to release for a public comment period in August. The RTP thoroughly details and assesses the transportation needs of SRPEDD’s 27 communities and identifies areas for improvements including roads, bridges, travel patterns, public transit, airports, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, freight, congestion management,

and safety. The RTP will also include a needs assessment of zero emission vehicle infrastructure and alternative transportation needs relating to multifamily housing development. The RTP's purpose is to help identify improvements across these areas of transportation. Ms. Jones discussed the national goals and planning factors that drive the RTP and other transportation planning efforts in addition to the RTP's robust public engagement process. Ms. Jones informed the group that the presentation slides would be sent to the group following the meeting and any questions about the RTP could be emailed to her at jjones@srpedd.org.

9. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that this year's MassDOT Moving Together conference will be held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. The Massachusetts Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting will be held on July 26, 1- 3 PM at Mattapoissett Fire Station. She announced that the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program has released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with up to \$3.16 billion available for planning and construction projects that reconnect communities that have been cut off from economic development opportunities due to previous transportation infrastructure projects. The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday, September 28, 2023.

10. Date and Time for Next Meeting

The Chair announced that the next SMMPO meeting will be on August 15, 2023, at 1:00 pm, held virtually. He urged all members to attend the August SMMPO meeting as the SMMPO will need a quorum to release the Regional Transportation Plan to a public comment period.

11. Adjourn

The Chair asked for a motion and second to adjourn. Daniel Aguiar made the motion and Marie Clarner seconded. The Chair asked that all in favor say aye. All ayes were heard. The Chair thanked everyone, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:36 PM.