

Town of Somerset
Town of Swansea

Also in Attendance:

Mary Ellen DeFrias.....GATRA
Raissah Kouame.....MassDOT
Barbara Lachance.....MassDOT
Miranda Briseno.....MassDOT
Bonnie Roalsen.....Safe Routes to School Liaison
Kathy Holton.....City of Taunton
Patrick Dello Russo.....City of Taunton
Gail Roderigues.....South Coast Bikeway Alliance
Lisa Estrela-Pedro.....SRPEDD
Jackie Jones.....SRPEDD
Andrea Duarte.....SRPEDD
Jon Gray.....SRPEDD
Jennifer Chaves.....SRPEDD
Lisa Sherman.....CDM Smith
Sid Kashi.....GPI
Steve Findlen.....Howard Stein Hudson

Handouts:

JTPG Meeting Agenda for September 13, 2023
DRAFT August 9, 2023 JTPG Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Vice-Chair Alan Slavin called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. Ms. Estrela-Pedro 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:

Alan Slavin, Vice-Chair.....Town of Wareham
John Woods.....Town of Carver
Tim Barber.....Town of Dartmouth
Thomas Ferry.....Town of Dighton
Joshua Crabb.....Town of Fairhaven
Daniel Aguiar.....City of Fall River
Victoria Alfaro.....Town of Freetown

Leeann Bradley.....Town of Middleborough
Justin Chicca.....City of New Bedford
Dennis Morton.....Town of Plainville
Ed Buckley.....Town of Raynham
Nancy Durfee.....Town of Rochester
David Cabral..... Town of Seekonk
James HartnettTown of Westport
Michael Burris.....Town of Westport, Alternate

2. Approval of Minutes – August 9, 2023 (Materials Attached & roll call vote needed)

Vice-Chair Slavin called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2023 meeting. Robert Burgmann made the motion and Vice-Chair Slavin seconded the motion. Ms. Duarte then called the roll:

Town of Carver.....Yes
Town of Dartmouth..... Abstain
Town of Dighton.....Yes
Town of Fairhaven..... Yes
City of Fall River.....Yes
Town of Freetown.....Yes
Town of Middleborough..... Yes
City of New Bedford.....Yes
Town of Plainville..... No response
Town of Raynham.....Abstain
Town of Seekonk.....Yes
Town of Wareham.....Yes
Town of Westport.....Abstain

THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE ABSTENTIONS.

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

There were no comments offered.

4. Safe Routes to School Grant Program Presentation by MassDOT

Ms. Lisa Estrela-Pedro announced that that there were two Safe Routes to School representatives present today, Miranda Briseno and Bonnie Roalsen. Ms. Briseno introduced herself, Federal Programs Coordinator in the Office of Transportation Planning at MassDOT. She stated that Safe Routes to School (SRTS) she manages and provided an overview of the two SRTS programs currently accepting grant applications. The Signs and Lines program is meant for quick build projects that are completed within the state fiscal year in which they were awarded, and five projects are selected per year. The

reimbursement amount for this grant was increased from \$6,000 to \$10,000 to account for varying costs and inflation. The Infrastructure grant program is meant for more intensive project development and often takes project several years to get to construction phase. Up to ten projects are selected for Infrastructure grants each year and funding for this grant varies from \$300,000 to \$2 million per project. Ms. Briseno discussed project scope and eligibility criteria, the reimbursement process, timeline, applicant eligibility criteria, and examples of eligible projects for both SRTS grant programs. She emphasized that Signs and Lines grants are not meant to fund just one item such as a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon and that the grant is meant to maximize the use of the funds in conjunction with optimizing arrival/dismissal procedures. There is no match required for these grants. Projects must address improvements for both walking and bicycling in school zones. Ms. Briseno asked if there were questions about the grants. Daniel Aguiar asked if a municipality would be disqualified from applying if they already have a SRTS-funded project in process to which Ms. Briseno answered that it is taken into consideration but the municipality is still welcome to submit an application for a different school in its district. Ms Aguiar also asked whether vocational technical schools are eligible for SRTS funding to which Ms. Briseno responded yes that as long as the school receives public funding, then it is eligible to apply for the grants. Ms. Briseno's presentation slides were distributed to the JTPG email list following the meeting and contained additional resources and contact information.

5. Draft Regional Transportation Plan Discussion ([Link](#))

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that a public meeting was held for the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and 2024 Regional Bicycle Plan (RBP) yesterday. A majority of the comment provided at this meeting was about the Regional Bicycle Plan. Jackie Jones then announced that if members had not attended one of the presentations about the RTP, to review the Plan on the SRPEDD website and that the comment period would be open until September 19th. Ms. Jones discussed comments that were received from MassDOT about the Regional Transportation Plan. This included formatting adjustments, adding additional greenhouse gas analysis for projects in outer years, adding more information about the MPO structure, add a project scoring table and list of acronyms, and referencing the SMMPO's public participation program. Ms. Jones asked if members had any questions or comments about the Plan and there were no responses.

6. Draft Regional Bicycle Plan Presentation Discussion ([Link](#))

Jon Gray announced that various public comments were received for the 2024 Regional Bicycle Plan, including those received during the hour-long public meeting for the RTP and RBP. Mr. Gray discussed the major takeaways from the comment period, which included incorporating bike routes identified in communities' open space and recreation plans and Complete Streets prioritization plans as additional route recommendations in the RBP. Staff will be adding these into the recommendations in the RBP. A suggestion was made for SRPEDD to create a bikeway planning and funding guide for local advocates to better understand programs, policies and regulations related to bikeway planning. There was a general comment about shifting the thinking in Southeastern Massachusetts about bikes as a strictly recreational vehicle to more of a viable commuter option. There were comments related to creating

better ways to visualize commuter data and identify potential commuter trips in the region that could be more easily made by bike. There was a concern about MBTA commuter rail trains, particularly through the Attleboro and Mansfield stations, not allowing bikes during peak hours for those wanting to bike to commuter rail stations and in Boston. A comment was made to advance lightweight demonstration projects that are low cost, easy to quickly implement and can better inform decision makers on the viability of different types of roadway improvements. Many local advocates voiced comments about getting buy-in from local officials on bikeway safety, reducing speed limits, and general planning for bicycle transportation.

7. Other Business

Ms. Estrela-Pedro announced that MassDOT is expanding the Vulnerable Road Users Program, and that there is additional funding for Vulnerable Road Users signage. Information about additional funding and applications was sent to the group by Ms. Duarte earlier in the week. She stated that SRPEDD is hiring for several positions in the Transportation, Environmental, and Homeland Security departments, and job descriptions can be found on the SRPEDD website. She encouraged the group to share these job postings with their networks.

8. Date and Time for Next Meeting

Date and Time for next meeting is October 11, 2023, at 2:00 PM as a hybrid meeting, in which attendees can join at the SRPEDD office in Taunton or via Zoom.

9. Adjourn

The Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn which was made by Nancy Durfee and seconded by Victoria Alfaro. Hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 2:22 PM.