

# COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

SCOPE OF WORK  
for the  
SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

*To Support Civic Engagement and Smart Land Use in  
the South Coast Rail Corridor*

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1. **STAFF SOUTHEASTERN COMMUTER RAIL TASK FORCE** – The Task Force will serve as a principal public participation vehicle for planning the South Coast Rail. The membership will be expanded to incorporate official representation for all communities effected by the additional alternatives analysis, to include:
  - All eighteen communities currently represented on the Task Force;
  - The following additional communities: Attleboro, Bridgewater, Canton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Marion Middleborough, North Attleborough, Rehoboth, Rochester, Seekonk, Sharon, Stoughton and Wareham.
  - The eighteen organizations currently represented on the Task Force; and
  - Additional organizations representative of the expanded study area.

The Task Force **will** perform the following roles:

- Help coordinate information exchanges and decision-making on South Coast Rail-related issues between state agencies, consultants and the cities and towns of the region.
- Act as a sounding board for concepts and ideas proposed by state officials, members of the public, and other stakeholders.
- Provide a forum to develop regional consensus on aspects of the project.
- Serve as a vehicle for education of citizens and local officials on the rail project and the impacts associated with it.

The Task Force **will not** advocate on behalf of one alternative over another.

## TASKS

- a) Expand the membership of the Task Force to cover the three proposed rail routes.
- b) Organize regular Task Force meetings on a 6-12 times/year schedule; maintain membership, Excel mailing lists, minutes, etc.
- c) Under the auspices of the Commuter Rail Task Force, SRPEDD will organize up to 18 civic engagement events per year in addition to the Task Force meetings described in task 1b. These meetings will include discussion of alternative routes, environmental review, growth impacts, and mitigation measures. The events could take the form of special forums, community TV appearances, meetings with regional and local organizations, etc.
- d) Develop maps, presentations and other educational materials to assist the cities and towns of the region as needed.
- e) Continue maintaining the Task Force web site (<http://www.srpedd.org/nbfrindex.html>) to supplement the state's South Coast rail website.

2. **PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND CORRIDOR PLAN EFFORTS** SRPEDD will provide technical support to EOTPW, EOHEd, the MBTA, and project consultants to insure that previously completed work is incorporated into the alternatives analysis, environmental review, and corridor plan efforts and that new consultant work accurately reflects regional and local conditions. To date, technical work that has been completed by the three relevant regional planning agencies for the Task Force includes:

- analysis of the growth impacts of the Old Colony line;
- buildout analysis for the cities and towns in the study area;
- projections of population and economic growth;
- evaluation of TOD potential at each proposed (plus several additional) station site;
- Priority Development Area and Priority Protection Area designations in four communities; and
- TOD bylaws for Taunton and generic bylaw recommendations for other communities.

**TASKS:**

- a) Meet as needed with state consultants and recommend to consultant teams which pieces of work should be used and/or updated for the environmental review and corridor plan, and provide relevant studies and background information to EOTPW, EOHEd, the MBTA, and the state consultants.
- b) Review state agency and state consultant work. Review draft work products from environmental review process and corridor plan development to insure that they accurately reflect local conditions.

3. **READY THE REGION FOR CORRIDOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.**  
In coordination with EOTPW, EOHEd and their consultants, SRPEDD will work with eighteen (18) SRPEDD cities and towns. The focus of this task will be on the South Coast communities that would potentially experience the greatest amount of growth due to the reintroduction of passenger rail service. These communities include: Attleboro, Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, New Bedford, Norton, Raynham, Somerset, Swansea, Taunton and Westport. The objective of this task is to work with cities and towns to develop support for implementing the land use changes that will be recommended in the corridor plan.

**TASKS:**

- a) **Identify Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Protection Areas (PPAs) for eighteen cities and towns in the corridor plan study area.** This task involves consulting with local officials and Task Force members to identify growth areas (PDAs) suitable for higher density development and expedited permitting. Site identifications will be useful planning tools regardless of which route is chosen, and can be used to provide the larger planning and vision context for selecting station sites for South Coast Rail. Priority protection area (PPA) identification will include areas for preservation and restoration of high value habitat. These areas should be identified for future consideration as mitigation areas or as offsets to higher density development proposed in the priority development areas. SRPEDD will assist MassGIS and the consultant in developing GIS-based modeling tools that can be used by state and local agencies and community groups for conservation and development analysis and scenario assessment.
- b) **Analyze and recommend potential station and layover sites.** Work to identify the universe of potential station sites for the corridor plan consultant team and the environmental review consultant team to analyze. SRPEDD will also provide a local and regional review of proposed station locations. On the local level, SRPEDD will conduct peer review of traffic reports and site plans.

On the regional level, SRPEDD will review station locations in a larger context including circulation, open space, economic development and environmental concerns. SRPEDD will build on its previous work to identify sites for future train stations and layover sites and make recommendations about how to assemble sites for purchase so that the state has the option to purchase sites to minimize the risk that speculative development precludes sites from use.

- c) **Assess feasibility of launching a Transfer of Development Rights pilot.** In conjunction with the corridor plan state consultant, SRPEDD will work with cities and towns to assess level of interest in establishing municipal and/or inter-municipal transfer of development rights program, and make recommendations on how to structure and implement such a program.
- d) **Provide technical assistance to cities and towns:** The level of planning that has been completed in the cities and towns of the region in preparation for the commuter rail varies widely. Some communities have been working with the Task Force or on their own and are well along in preparing for development associated with this project, while others have done no planning at all. The regional planning agencies have longstanding relationships with these communities that will be essential in developing local strategies to include a customized set of tools appropriate for each community. SRPEDD will work with the region's cities and towns to plan, develop, and adopt zoning changes that support compact development near stations, preserve critical natural resources, and prevent sprawl development. This activity will include preparing draft zoning amendments, holding workshops to engage planners, local elected officials, community-based organizations, local businesses, and the public in generating zoning solutions. In conjunction with the RPA role in permit streamlining, SRPEDD will work to have priority development areas designated under Chapter 43D or comparable local designation to insure permit streamlining processes are in place. SRPEDD will also identify opportunities to leverage existing state programs to accomplish these land use objectives, including but not limited to Transit-Oriented Development, Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay Districts, and Chapter 40B smart growth locations. This task may involve delivering trainings to municipal officials and staff, creating or updating tools, and educating key boards and the public to increase the likelihood of implementation.

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