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Lilia Cabral, Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator
88 Broadway, Taunton, MA 02780
Phone: (508) 824-1367
Fax: (508) 823-1803
Email: lcabral@srpedd.org
www.srpedd.org
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Boston, MA 02109
617-994-6000
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Introduction

In June 2012, Congress passed a new funding and authorization bill to govern federal surface transportation spending. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) provides needed funds and represents a milestone for the U.S. economy:

- The first multi-year transportation authorization enacted since 2005;
- Funds surface transportation programs at over $105 billion for fiscal years (FY) 2013 and 2014;
- Transforms the framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country’s vital transportation infrastructure.


MAP-21 requires that “the projects selected by the recipient are included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” in order to be eligible for funding under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities funding program (Section 5310).

Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) programs previously authorized under the SAFETEA-LU authorization bill have been repealed in MAP-21. However, both JARC and NF program elements have been consolidated into other funding sections. Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) now includes New Freedom program funding elements and Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307) now includes Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funding program elements.

The goal of the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities funding program (http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/MAP-21_Fact_Sheet_-_Enhanced_Mobility_of_Seniors_and_Individuals_with_Disabilities.pdf) is to improve mobility for older adults and people with disabilities by providing capital projects planned, designed, and implemented to meet their needs. This program was established in 1975, prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. With the authorization of MAP-21, which repealed and consolidated the New Freedom funding program into the 5310 program, operating funds can now be awarded.

In Massachusetts, the Mobility Access Program (MAP) is used to provide capital funds for accessible vehicles, computers, and communication equipment in a competitive selection process to eligible recipients.
This Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan covers the Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (SMMPO) planning area of 27 communities. The Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, known as SRPEDD, is the staff to the SMMPO.

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Public Participation
The identification of service gaps, like this coordinated plan, is an ongoing process. Communication and input has been received from:

- Regional Coordinating Councils
  - Representatives from: State agencies, MassRides, Independent Living Centers, Inter-Church Council, Councils on Aging, Agencies on Aging, Career Centers, city/town human service departments, etc.
- Members of Human Service Coalitions and human service agencies
- Councils on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging, and elder service providers
- Chambers of Commerce, Economic and Community Development Agencies
- Workforce Development Boards, Local Department of Transitional Assistance offices, Career Centers
- Nonprofit organizations
- GATRA Human Service Transportation Area Advisory Council
- Educational institutions including UMass Dartmouth and Bristol Community College
- Transportation Providers
- Veterans organizations
The needs outlined here have been identified through a variety of input including formal and informal meetings, transit user and resident surveys and ongoing communication with agencies and advocates who work with various population groups, including but not limited to:

- Public Transit Needs & Perceptions in the City of New Bedford, Urban Initiative, UMASS Dartmouth
- Feedback from New Bedford TDP Civic Engagement: 6 Community Meetings, 80+ Attendees
- Fall River Housing Authority Surveys, November 2012
- Joblinks surveys, July 2012 (251 customers, 49 staff)
- Comments from SRTA Fare Equity Analysis, April and May 2012
- Fall River and New Bedford Focus Groups, February 2012
- Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) Comprehensive Service Assessment Public Meetings
- Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) Regional Transit Plan Public Meetings
- GATRA and SRTA Consumer Advisory Committees
- Community surveys, onboard surveys, housing authority surveys
- Unmet Transportation Needs Survey, February 2014
- GATRA’s Ride Match search data, date range 1/31/14 – 6/23/14
- SRTA CSA Passenger Survey, February 2014

A public meeting was held on October 1, 2014 from 4:00 – 6:00PM at the SRPEDD office in Taunton. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the purpose of the plan and elicit feedback about unmet needs in the region. The same presentation was given at both Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) meetings in the SMMPO region. A second public meeting was held on November 6, 2014, also at the SRPEDD office in Taunton, in order to release the plan for a 30+ day comment period and answer questions about the update to the plan. Draft copies of the plan will be made available at additional RCC meetings during the comment period.

Maps of the SMMPO region’s population statistics related to populations of older adults, people with disabilities, poverty and unemployment are enclosed in the appendix.

The goal of this Coordinated Plan is to inform proposed projects so that they address one or more of the region’s transportation service gaps. This Plan is part of an ongoing communication process between SRPEDD, existing transit users, and agencies who work with and advocate for various populations in the SRPEDD region.
This Coordinated Plan has four parts:

1) Inventory of existing transportation resources and services in the SMMPO region;
2) Identification of service gaps and regional needs;
3) Criteria for evaluation of proposals; and,
4) Priorities for funding proposals

Existing Transportation Resources and Services

Provider Inventory Resources
The GATRA hosts and maintains a one-click mobility management website called Ride Match (www.massridematch.org). Ride Match is a regional directory of transportation options (private, public, and non-profit) for older adults, people with disabilities or anyone needing to travel in Southeastern Massachusetts and beyond. GATRA also contracts with transportation vendors and provides brokerage service in Southeastern Massachusetts for consumers of the Department of Medical Assistance (for Medicaid recipients), Department of Developmental Disabilities (for DDS and Day Habilitation Program clients) and Department of Public Health (for children receiving Early Intervention services). A map of local bus routes, commuter bus stops and commuter rail in the SRPEDD region is included in the Appendix.
The MassMobility initiative is administered from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Human Service Transportation Office. It is an initiative to increase mobility for older adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, low-income commuters, and others who lack transportation access in Massachusetts. The new MassMobility online interactive map (http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/eohhs_hst/hst.html) can help individuals find contact information for organizations in their city or town that can help them arrange a ride or connect with local transportation services.

Existing Transportation Options

Greater Attleboro-Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
GATRA provides year-round accessible public bus service which consists of a fixed route system in Taunton/Attleboro that extends into Raynham, Norton, Mansfield, Plainville, North Attleboro, and Seekonk. They also have fixed route systems in Franklin, Wareham, and in Plymouth where service extends into Kingston, Duxbury, Marshfield, and Pembroke.

GATRA offers ADA paratransit service to persons with disabilities within a ¾ mile of a fixed route as well as community-wide dial-a-ride service for older adults in all 28 GATRA communities. Limited long distance medical transportation is available in certain towns. A Boston Hospital Bus service is available from the greater South Shore Hospital area. This service is available to seniors and persons with disabilities in the towns of Duxbury, Hanover, Marshfield, Kingston, Pembroke, North Plymouth, and Scituate. GATRA also operates the human service transportation brokerage for Southeastern Massachusetts available to select MassHealth recipients.

Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA)
SRTA provides fixed route bus service in the cities of New Bedford and Fall River that extends out into the towns of Fairhaven, Dartmouth, Westport, Somerset, and Swansea.

ADA paratransit service is available in all ten SRTA communities for persons with disabilities. As a result of coordination between SRTA and the COAs in the region, SRTA now offers a Boston Hospital Shuttle that runs between New Bedford (one day a week)/Fall River (one day a week) and Boston. The service is primarily for older adults, persons with disabilities, and veterans.
Councils on Aging (COAs)
Most COAs in the GATRA region have a contract with GATRA to provide ADA and/or Dial-a-Ride service for persons with disabilities and older adults with GATRA vans. Some COAs also have their own vans and provide local group trips to grocery stores and recreational activities.

In the SRTA area, COAs provide transportation to older adults in their cities/towns.

Commuter Bus
Bloom Bus Lines, Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company, Peter Pan Bus Company and DATTCO offer commuter bus service in the SRPEDD region.

Bloom Bus Lines provides service between Taunton, Brockton, and Boston.

Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company provides service between Plymouth, Taunton, Somerset, and Providence.

Peter Pan Bus Company provides service between Bourne, New Bedford, Fall River, and Providence as well as Bourne, Wareham, and Boston.

DATTCO provides service between Fairhaven, New Bedford, Taunton, and Boston.

Identification of Service Gaps and Regional Needs

Unmet Transportation Needs Survey
In February 2014, GATRA, SRTA, SRPEDD, and BAT (Brockton Area Transit Authority) conducted a survey to obtain and record unmet transportation needs in Southeastern Massachusetts. The survey was sent to 169 stakeholders across the region that represent human service agencies and non-profit organizations. The survey was completed by 73 stakeholders. Full results of the survey can be found here: http://www.gatra.org/wp-content/uploads/Unmet-Transportation-Needs-Survey_0214_Revised.pdf.

The survey identified the top ten towns in Southeastern Massachusetts with the highest unmet transportation needs (in order or priority) as: Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, Fairhaven, Berkley, Swansea, Westport, Dighton, Somerset, and Wareham.

When asked if there are destinations in Southeastern Massachusetts that people could not reach because of the lack of transportation, 53 of the 64 people who responded to the question answered yes. Respondents identified the following destinations/needs that could not be reached because of a lack of transportation:
• GATRA/SRTA connection
• Boston Hospitals
• Travel between Taunton and Brockton (for access to courts, hospitals, and Massasoit Community College)
• Travel between Taunton and Fall River (for access to courts, hospitals, and Bristol Community College)
• Bridgewater State University
• Later service for 2nd and 3rd shift workers in the industrial parks
• Wrentham Outlets and Patriot Place in Foxborough for employment
• New Bedford seafood processing plants
• Veterans Hospitals

Survey Trends
• The overall need for transportation is increasing
• There is a need for expanded night and weekend hours
• Transit routes in different regions need to link up
• In some areas there is a lack of long distance medical transportation
• More direct routes between cities in Southeastern Massachusetts (i.e. Attleboro to Fall River or New Bedford; Taunton to Brockton)
• More designated bus stops along routes (i.e. Swansea Motor Inn that is presently acting as a homeless Shelter; stops near mobile home parks)
• Improve paratransit/demand response (Curb-to-curb) transportation

Service Gaps and Regional Needs that have been Identified in the SRPEDD Region

Extended Service Hours
Transit hours of operation are not adequate to address the primary types of employment in the area. The need for evening and weekend service has been repeatedly expressed by communities and individuals throughout the region and is considered to be a top priority transit need. Many jobs filled by low-income individuals are in retail, manufacturing, warehousing, and services. Companies in the manufacturing and medical service sectors often have second and third shifts. The fact that bus service ends so early in the day has also limited the number of high school students that seek internships after school through school-to-work programs.
Suburban Jobs
Employment in the region is rapidly growing outside of existing transit service areas, which are primarily in the four cities (New Bedford, Fall River, Taunton and Attleboro). New development—primarily medical, warehousing and retail—continues to occur in suburban towns that have limited or no transit service. Access to this development and the employment it creates cannot be served efficiently by traditional fixed route service. This suburban sprawl strains existing transit route systems and much of this development is unserved or underserved by transit.

Large Industrial Parks
Most business parks in the region receive some level of transit service, but it is inadequate for many workers. Parks are usually located on the outskirts of the city and cover tens or hundreds of acres. Roadways are not designed for transit service and there are no sidewalks for pedestrians. Providing better service to these locations is a challenge to the existing transit systems.

Geographical Service Connections
Many gaps exist in the transit system within SRPEDD, as well as from SRPEDD to other regions and across the Rhode Island state line. Connections are needed to bridge the transit gaps between urban areas to cover the entire SRPEDD area and beyond, whether it is connecting SRTA with GATRA, GATRA with BAT, GATRA and SRTA with RIPTA or connecting local bus service to commuter bus or rail. Gaps exist for both fixed route and paratransit services. Where there is no fixed route service, paratransit services are usually limited to areas within each town. Providing connections to other transit services would help to expand mobility and access for persons with disabilities, for people seeking employment and for others.

- Connecting cities/towns in Southeastern Massachusetts is needed. New service and/or additional service is needed for travel between:
  - Taunton and Fall River
  - Taunton and Brockton
  - Wareham and New Bedford
  - New Bedford and Taunton

Infrequent Transit Service
Where fixed route service exists in the GATRA service area, it is usually at a one-hour frequency, which is inadequate for most people, especially those making work trips. The current fixed route SRTA service also operates at one-hour headways on certain routes outside of the urban
centers of Fall River and New Bedford.

**Mobility Training and Education about Existing Services**
Surveys and interviews indicate that more people would access existing transit services if they were trained how to do so. Training for people of all ages with disabilities, would provide increased independence for these individuals into the future. GATRA has started a travel training program and hired a dedicated travel trainer. The program has received interest from across the region but education about the program and transportation options are needed.

Throughout the SRPEDD region there is a consistent need for education and information about existing services. There is also a need to communicate information to non-English speaking, or illiterate populations.

**Child Care Transportation**
Even if transit is paid for, it is difficult for parents who do not have a car to arrange to drop off children on their way to work and pick them up on the way home. Coordinating child care and employment transportation is an obstacle for many people trying to transition from welfare to work. Locating child care at transit centers or at employment centers is one option.

**Additional Unmet Needs**
- Long distance medical transportation.
- Older, disabled elders who are frail and who need extra assistance for all trips.

**Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals**
Proposals to address the above service gaps should have affirmative answers to the following questions in order to receive consideration for funding.

1. Does the proposal address gaps in current service provisions as defined in the local coordinated plan?
2. Can the proposal be achieved with the given technical capacity of the project sponsor?
3. Does the proposal serve a population and geographic area of need?
4. Does the proposal outline the operating, capital, and administrative costs?
5. Does the proposal outline the source of matching funds?

6. Does the proposal make use of available resources and leverage resources to the extent possible?

**Examples of Potential Projects**

The following service options are just some possible ideas to receive funding under the 5310 program.

- Expansion of paratransit service beyond the ½ mile required by the ADA
- Expansion of current hours of operation for ADA paratransit services that are beyond those provided on the fixed route services
- Implementation of same day service
- Enhancement of the level of service by providing escorts or assisting riders to or through the door of their destination
- Flex route or new feeder service for access to commuter bus or rail, beyond ADA requirements
- Taxi reimbursement for (accessible) taxis
- Operation of one-stop traveler call centers
- Purchase of accessible taxis
- Purchase of ITS or other computer or hardware systems
- Voucher program to be used to provide work trips from a human service or transportation provider or mileage reimbursement for a volunteer driver that cannot otherwise be met due to lack of availability of options
- Travel training
- Supporting new mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies
- Start up of a new volunteer driver program or enhancements to increase the capacity of existing volunteer driver programs

**Priorities for Funding of Proposals**

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation has stated that its priorities for funding will be directed to:

1. Focus on funding operations over capital; and
2. Provide connections to other transit services.
SRPEDD’s priorities for funding have been determined through the public input process. Three service gaps were clearly and consistently identified by stakeholders. In order, the top three priorities are:

- Extended service hours (evenings and weekends)
- Connections between transit areas and different types of services, and
- Long distance medical transportation.

All eligible proposals will be considered for funding.

**Eligibility**

Eligible Recipients for funding include: private non-profits; state and local government authorities or tribes; and operators of public transportation services, including private providers of public services. Recipients will be responsible for complying with all Federal Transit Administration requirements.

**Funding**

Successful proposals may be funded for up to three years. Funded projects will be programmed in the SMMPO Transportation Improvement Program.

These programs require a 50% match of net operating costs; a 20% match is required for capital projects. The matching fund requirement is to encourage coordination with other human service programs. Sources for the match may include other federal funding, as long as it is not federal Department of Transportation funding. Match sources could include the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) from the Department of Health and Human Services, Welfare to Work (WtW) and Workforce Investment Act from the Department of Labor, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), local appropriations, private donations, human service contract revenue, and documentable non-cash contributions of volunteer services or in-kind contributions.
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Map of SRPEDD Communities
Map of SRPEDD Transportation Options
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Map of Total Population with a Disability by Census Tract
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Map of Percent Population 60+ by Census Tract
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