

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO)
Tuesday April 19, 2011**

Held at Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
88 Broadway, Taunton, MA

Quorum was not met; minutes are for informational purposes only.

The following SMMPO Members were in attendance:

Jean Fox, Town of Freetown	
Carol Gill,	Representing Francis Gay, GATRA Administrator
Byron Holmes	Representing Mayor Flanagan, Fall River
Clinton Bench, MassDOT	Representing Jeffrey Mullan, Secretary of MassDOT, SMMPO Chair
Pamela Haznar, MassDOT	Representing Acting Administrator DePaola, MassDOT Highway

Ex-Officio Members in attendance:

Lee Azinheira, JTPG Chair/Town of Mansfield

The following were also present:

Trey Wadsworth, MassDOT Planning	Tim Kochan, MassDOT Highway Division District 5
Stephen C. Smith, SRPEDD	Jim Hadfield, SRPEDD
Paul Mission, SRPEDD	Linda Lally, SRPEDD
Lisa Estrela-Pedro, SRPEDD	Lilia Cabral, SRPEDD
Jacqueline Schmidt, SRPEDD	

Discussion of the State's Future Transportation Funding – Mr. Hadfield discussed the recently released financial numbers from the State. He explained that there is a 50% reduction in funds for the 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) vs. the 2007 RTP. Mr. Bench described the lengthy process the state goes through to predict future funds and distribute the funds. He explained that there is a level of uncertainty with the prediction of future funds at the federal level due to the status of the Transportation Authorization Bill in Congress. He explained that in years 2016-2020, the predicted level of funding is down 30%, in 2021-2025 funding is predicted to be down 9%, and in 2026-2030 there is an 11% reduction. Mr. Azinheira commented that due to inflation and the rising cost of materials, communities are not able to do as much with funding as in previous years.

Mr. Smith discussed a meeting with the regional planning agency (RPA) directors and Dave Mohler regarding the massive gap between available funding for the 2011 RTP and the needs of the regions. Questions were raised at this meeting regarding how to address these needs in the RTP while achieving fiscal constraint. Mr. Hadfield commented that such needs have been addressed in the past in the RTP, and that the challenge over the next few months will be determining which of many important projects will fit into the fiscal constraint of the 2011 RTP. He further explained that SRPEDD will be looking for input from the JTPG and from local communities as to which projects fit the region's priorities.

Discussion of Proposed Amendments to the FY11-14 TIP – Mr. Hadfield discussed the previously unallocated \$1.6 to \$1.7 million for FY2011 of the FY2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He explained that at the March 16, 2011 JTPG meeting, the JTPG voted to forward the Maintenance on sections of Route 44 in Taunton and Route 138 in Raynham to the MPO for inclusion on the TIP in FY 2011. Due to unforeseen increases in project costs, that project will no longer fit in FY2011. He described the following changes to the FY2011 TIP:

- Fairhaven Safety Improvements Route 6 at four intersections – cost increased by \$53,400
- New Bedford Mill Street –cost decreased by \$152,060
- Middleborough Nemasket River Stormwater – cost increase of \$7,000
- Middleborough Signalization of I-495 Ramps at Route 105 – Cost increase of \$1.1 million.
- New Bedford Multi-Modal Shore Side Electrification – Cost increase of \$133,027. This increase caused a shift of funding for the Middleborough Signalization of I-495 Ramps of \$133,027 from CMAQ to STP.

Ms. Haznar commented that MassDOT Highway Division (District 5) has just received the 75% design submission and is reviewing it now. She explained that while the 25% design cost estimate was “loose” and had missing items, she thinks the current estimate seems high and MassDOT will review it. Mr. Azinheira commented that the increase was by 50% and asked if there were any major changes. Ms. Haznar explained MassDOT is in the process of reviewing the submission, but that a detention basin was added and that there seem to be no major changes besides that. Mr. Kochan pointed out that 25% design submissions are very preliminary and therefore so are the cost estimates, and that it is recommended that a project not be placed on the TIP in the first year unless it is at 75% design. Mr. Hadfield agreed but explained that there are not a lot of projects available that are at 75% design.

Ms. Lally explained that SRTA has requested the following changes to the FY11-14 TIP:

- FFY 2011 Section 5307 – Addition of “Rehab Brayton Avenue Maintenance Facility (Drainage and Structural)” for \$40,000.
- FFY 2011 Section 5309 – Change “Purchase Two (2) Replacement Fixed Route Buses” to “Purchase One (1) Replacement Fixed Route Bus” for \$355,000 and “Five (5) Demand Response Vans – Earmark” for \$330,000
- FFY 2012 Section 5307 – Addition of “Fall River Terminal Construction” for \$2 million.
- Funding amount changes for FFY 2011-2014

Mr. Bench discussed an ongoing review of SRTA by MassDOT in an effort to provide constructive recommendations to improve service and transparency. He explained that SRTA is on an upward trajectory and that there will be a lot of work to do.

Ms. Haznar discussed a change to the Attleboro Tiffany Street project under Section 1C of FY2011. She explained that the design has been contracted for \$125,000, and that the portion of the earmark being used in FY2011 should be changed from \$844,240 to \$125,000 to reflect this change. Mr. Wadsworth explained that the earmark is specifically for planning and engineering, and that if the remaining funds were to be used for anything other than those purposes the wording of the earmark would need to be rewritten. It was determined that the Total Estimated Cost for the project should be shown as \$125,000 for FY2011.

Further discussion of the replacement of the Faunce Corner Road Bridge over I-195 in Dartmouth –

Mr. Hadfield discussed a previous commitment from the JTPG in which the group deemed the project significant enough to potentially devote one year’s target allocation to the project if the State agreed to fully fund the project. Currently the Wareham Route 6/28 project is programmed in FY2013 and FY2014 as an advance construction project. This project requires a tremendous amount of land takings that may not be completed in time for funding in FY2013. Mr. Hadfield discussed a suggestion that the JTPG could consider inserting the Faunce Corner Road Bridge Project in FY2013 in the amount of \$7.6 million, and move the Wareham Route 6/28 project to FY2014. He also discussed a meeting of the JTPG on March 16, 2011 at which the potential for this move was discussed at length. He explained that no decisions were made at this meeting and that it is still up for consideration and that the JTPG was interested in potentially allocating TIP funding towards the portion of the project that addresses roadway improvements separate from the bridge.

Wareham attended this meeting to discuss the town's commitment to the Route 6/28 project; however there are still concerns due to the right of way needs. He emphasized the difficulty to make a decision to devote an entire TIP target year to a project as there are many projects and not enough funding for all of them, and maintained that this project is regionally significant and a high priority for the region. He also discussed a previous meeting of the MPO at which MassDOT Planning had said that they would discuss the status of the bridge and the potential for using some of the SMMPO's TIP target towards the project.

Mr. Bench explained that due to a delayed meeting with the highway division, there is no further information available at this time; however this topic will be brought up at a future meeting and will be discussed with the SMMPO.

Ms. Haznar explained that she was asked to get a better estimate for the cost breakdown associated with the project and reported the following:

- Project Total - \$17.5 million
- Bridge Portion - \$10 million
- Road Improvements - \$7.5 million.

She emphasized that these estimates were from the 25% design phase and were preliminary estimates.

Other Business – Mr. Bench explained that Acting Administrator Frank Tramontozzi had recently resigned, and that the new Acting Administrator would be Frank DePaola. He further explained that MassDOT is actively recruiting for a new Administrator.

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting – May 17, 2011 at 1pm. The SMMPO will have a standing meeting the third Tuesday of every month at 1 pm.