

## Joint Transportation Planning Group

Minutes of meeting held on January 19, 2011 at SRPEDD, 88 Broadway, Taunton, MA

### In attendance were the following:

LeeAzinheira, Town of Mansfield  
Zeb Arruda, City of New Bedford  
Jonathan Henry, Town of Marion  
Sarah Raposa, Town of Westport  
Byron Holmes, City of Fall River  
Ron Dubuc, City of Attleboro  
Jamie Pisano, VHB  
Pamela Haznar, MassDOT  
Steve Smith, SRPEDD  
Paul Mission, SRPEDD  
Lisa Estrela-Pedro, SRPEDD  
Adam Recchia, SRPEDD  
Christopher Cardaci, SRPEDD

Charles Cristello, Town of Middleborough  
Manuel H. Silva, City of New Bedford  
Andrew Sousa, Town of Westport  
David Hickox, Town of Dartmouth  
John Clover, City of Attleboro  
Robert Patneau, GPI  
Michael Chong, FHWA-MA  
Tim Kochan, MassDOT District 5  
Jim Hadfield, SRPEDD  
Linda Lally, SRPEDD  
Lilia Cabral, SRPEDD  
Jennifer Chaves, SRPEDD  
Jacqueline Schmidt, SRPEDD

1. **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 2:08 pm by Chairman Lee Azinheira.
2. **Approval of the Minutes, December 8, 2010** - A motion was made to approve the minutes of the JTPG meeting held on December 8, 2010 as submitted. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY
3. **Discussion of pending TIP Amendments currently in the 30 day comment period** – Mr. Hadfield discussed pending Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments currently in the 30 day comment period. He explained that at the last Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMMPO) meeting the SMMPO voted to include the following projects on the FY2011 TIP:
  - Fall River Route 79 “Spaghetti Ramps” Project – Mr. Hadfield explained that the state had requested a change in funding categories for this \$170M project to \$100 million in ABP GANS and \$70M in ABP Non-Federal-Aid. MassDOT has assured that the \$70 million state match will be available.
  - Shore Side Electrification Project (SSEP) – Mr. Hadfield explained that the project had been included in the FY2010 TIP but the funding had been lost due to project readiness. He further explained that the proponent has met with MassDOT District 5 and supplied the necessary information. Ms. Haznar clarified that that the project is at 25% design and is now under review at headquarters.

Mr. Cristello asked what had changed from the last meeting with the project now ready to be placed on the TIP. Mr. Hadfield replied that District 5 is more comfortable with the progress of the project after review of the latest 25% design submittal. Mr. Cristello inquired as to Federal Highway’s (FHWA) position on the project. Mr. Chong replied that FHWA likes the project and that while there is a significant air quality benefit, they are unable to find a link between the project and a surface transportation benefit. He explained that FHWA is willing to work with SRPEDD and the project proponent to try to find a link such as a truck component, but as of right now it is likely that the project is ineligible. Mr. Cristello asked if there is a backup plan if this project is not ready for funding this year. Mr. Hadfield replied that the project would be removed from the TIP and the funding applied to another project. Mr. Cristello replied that while he liked the project, there should be a backup plan so that no funding would be lost from the

district if the project is not ready in time. Mr. Hadfield replied that there is \$1.2 million currently unallocated in FY 2011 and that potential projects that could be ready in this time frame would be discussed later in the meeting.

Ms. Haznar requested clarification as to whether fishing boats are surface transportation as far as FHWA is concerned. Mr. Chong replied that if something else is considered as part of the project such as a rail or truck connection, it could be. There were still many details that need to be flushed out with the project. Mr. Arruda discussed connectivity between the port and truck freight movement and the potential for providing accommodations for both modes as part of the project. Mr. Chong explained that if the trucks could be directly connected to the project and provide an air quality benefit the project would be more likely to be eligible. It was determined that a meeting would be arranged with the new Bedford Harbor Development Commission to further discuss this project and the potential for adding components to make the project eligible..

4. **Discussion and Vote on a TIP Administrative Adjustment requested by GATRA** – Mr. Hadfield explained that GATRA has requested the following line items transferred from Section 5307 FY2010 to Section 5307 FY2011 so that GATRA will be able to use grant funding for these items:

- Associated Capital Maintenance Items – \$150,000
- Purchase Coach Bus for Bloom - \$600,000
- Mid-Life Bus Rebuild - \$400,000

A motion was made to approve the transfer of line items as requested. The motion was seconded and approved UNANIMOUSLY.

5. **Discussion of a potential use for \$1.2 million balance in TIP Target for FY2011** – Mr. Hadfield discussed potential uses for \$1.2 million of unallocated Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for FY2011 of the TIP. Mr. Hadfield emphasized that the projects must be ready for advertising by September 2011 to utilize this funding. The following projects were discussed:

- **Maintenance on sections of Taunton-Raynham Resurfacing & related work on Rte 44 and Rte 138. Route 44 and Route 138** – Ms. Haznar discussed a maintenance project that has been advanced through the design process and is within the available dollar amount. The project limits are approximately 0.6 miles of Route 44 from Arlington Street to Route 104 in Taunton and approximately 0.6 miles of Route 138 from Jackson Street in Taunton to the proposed Walmart Location in Raynham. The section of Route 44 flooded in the spring of 2010 and is really bad shape. The project is at the Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) stage and would involve cold planing, sidewalk reconstruction, wheelchair ramps, minor drainage improvements, and replacement of traffic loop signals. Mr. Hadfield asked if the part of the project addressing Route 44 in Taunton would address the flooding and congestion problems. Ms. Haznar replied that the project was to hold the road together for now and that a future project will address the flooding and congestion problems. Mr. Hadfield discussed serious safety and bottleneck conditions present at the Route 44 and Longmeadow intersection and inquired if signal timings would be looked at for the Route 44 and Arlington and the Route 44 and Route 104 intersections as part of this project as those intersections could be affecting the congestion problem. Ms. Haznar replied that the signal timings could be looked into, but that there was no geometry improvements proposed for this project. Mr. Cristello asked if the project was currently programmed. Ms. Haznar replied that the project was not currently programmed and has been on the maintenance list for years.

- Dartmouth Tucker Road Relocation/Improvements to the Faunce Corner Road/Route 6 Intersection** – Mr. Hadfield explained that the total cost for this project was \$7 million and that there was potential for the project to be phased and questioned the possibility that it could be partially funded in FY2011. Mr. Hickox explained that it was a rather large project that evolved from a 2007 study of the location by SRPEDD. The project had a number of components including the relocation of Tucker Road, which would require numerous acquisitions, and other components which include adding another travel lane northbound on Faunce Corner Road from the intersection with Route 6 and signal modifications at the intersection of Route 6, Old Westport Road, and Faunce Corner Road. The problem the Town has is that UMass Dartmouth traffic wreaks havoc on the intersection of Old Westport Road, Faunce Corner Road and Route 6. The town is considering phasing the project in which the first phase would involve the Faunce Corner Road, Route 6 and Old Westport Road improvements including the addition of the northbound lane on Faunce Corner Road from the intersection, signal modifications to the intersection and to cold plane and resurface Faunce Corner Road between Route 6 and the Interstate 195 ramps. The second phase of the project would be the relocation of Tucker Road. In order to qualify for this funding, Phase 1 of the project would need to be ready for advertising by September 2011. The town has created an aggressive schedule for this project that would require a large amount of support from MassDOT. Ms. Haznar explained that the larger project has been approved and has a MassDOT project ID and that the project would need a separate project ID number from the original project. Mr. Hadfield asked about the likelihood this project would be ready in time. Ms. Haznar replied that it would be extremely difficult to get this project ready in time as it would not receive MassDOT Project Review Committee approval before May. Mr. Hadfield discussed a meeting planned for the following week to discuss this project and suggested that if Mr. Hickox had enough information on the project readiness that splitting the project up could be taken into consideration.
- New Bedford** - Mr. Arruda discussed five projects that New Bedford has recently submitted to District 5. He explained that the projects were relatively simple, but would require a large commitment from MassDOT to be ready for advertising by September 2011. He further explained that the projects had no right of way or environmental components and were all small intersection projects that could possibly be CMAQ eligible. Mr. Hadfield replied that the process for getting projects approved was cumbersome and that even “simple” projects take time to get through the system. Mr. Azinheira inquired if the projects have been assigned project numbers by MassDOT. Ms. Haznar replied that the projects were at the Project Needs Form (PNF) stage were not submitted in time for the next Project Review Committee and therefore could not be approved until the following meeting in May. She further explained that the Project Review Committee approval is needed before the design can begin on the project and that to get a project through the process could take years.
- TIP Projects in later years** – Mr. Cristello asked if any projects already programmed in the TIP were in more advanced design stages and could be moved up to FY2011. He emphasized the need to be realistic about programming projects that can be ready in time. Mr. Kochan discussed TIP criteria that suggested that a project not be placed on first year of the TIP until it was at least at the 75% design stage. Ms. Haznar replied that the Mansfield Route 106 project and the Fall River Plymouth Avenue project were too much money to fill the gap and even if they could be broken up into phases, the projects wouldn’t be approved through the project review committee until May, making it extremely difficult to be advertised by September 2010.
- Dartmouth Faunce Corner Road Bridge Project** – Mr. Hadfield discussed a previous commitment from the JTPG found in the 2007 Regional Transportation Plan 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 suggested 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. No input has been received from Wareham on this change. Mr. Henry discussed the significance of the project due to the existing high volume of traffic on the corridor and the potential for expansion in the future. Ms. Haznar inquired if a study had been done as to the impact of the development on this corridor and if there was any potential mitigation from this development. Mr. Hickox replied that the town has a plan to require mitigation from future developments, specifically any expansion to the various medical facilities. Ms. Haznar explained that the Wareham Route 6/28 project and the Dartmouth Faunce Corner Road Bridge project were both at the 25% design stage. She further explained that the MassDOT ROW division thinks the Wareham Route 6/28 project will be ready for funding in FY2013 as the project requires a 72 foot width and there is already a 70 foot right of way and therefore the project will require mostly small strip takings and a couple large takings. The funds for these land takings would be set aside from state funds. Mr. Azinheira suggested that the Dartmouth Faunce Corner Road Bridge project be considered a backup plan for FY 2013 if the Wareham Route 6/28 project is behind schedule. Ms. Haznar suggested that the Raynham Route 44/Route 24/Orchard Street project be considered as a backup plan as this project is also a priority and MassDOT is currently seeking other funds for the Dartmouth Faunce Corner Road Bridge Project.

Discussion ensued regarding the difficulty of getting a project through the MassDOT review process. Mr. Azinheira commented that it is difficult to get a project designed that is not already placed on the TIP as review priority is based on placement on the TIP. Ms. Haznar emphasized the need for communities to get projects initiated in case there are similar funding situations in the future and that despite perception, District 5 does review projects as soon as they can.

Mr. Hadfield requested that communities take a look at projects placed on the future element on the TIP and discuss the status of the projects with SRPEDD. Staff is updating the list to provide a more realistic list of projects. Mr. Arruda commented that the New Bedford Ashley Boulevard project has a recent cost estimate of \$3.5 million. Mr. Cristello commented that a project status column would be helpful to track the status of the project. Ms. Estrela-Pedro replied that the comment section on the current future element could be updated to include this information. Discussion ensued regarding the lack of significance assigned to projects placed on the future element of the TIP and that the projects seem to go nowhere. Ms. Haznar explained that everything on the future element that has submission has been reviewed.

6. **Discussion of Roadway Projects listed in the Draft Regional Transportation Plan** – Mr. Mission gave a presentation on projects currently listed in SRPEDD’s 2011 Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). He announced that the draft version of the TPlan is very close to being released for public review and comment. This presentation covered the following potential projects:

- Route 44 Widening from Route 24 to Route 58, including replacement of the Middleborough Rotary – This project may be too large to be completed as one project; therefore SRPEDD is looking at recommending the project be split into phases. The first phase would address the Middleborough Rotary, and then if necessary revisit widening Route 44. Interim improvements for the Rotary are being looked at as well such as better pavement markings and signage.
- Fall River Route 79 Boulevard Project – This project involves changing the current divided highway into an at-grade boulevard providing better access to the water front and provide for economic development. This project is considered regionally significant project and is being re-examined in conjunction with an adjacent project, the Rehabilitation of the Route 79 Western Expressway in Fall River.

- New Bedford King’s Highway – This project is the result of a study by SRPEDD on this corridor and a recommendation for the T-Plan would be to pursue the recommendations from the study. Mr. Arruda suggested that SRPEDD meet with the city of New Bedford to discuss the recommendations and possible implementation.
- Route 24 Widening from Interstate 495 south to Route 140 – This recommendation has been on the books for a while but no action has been taken.
- Route 24 Change the Status from State Route to Interstate Route – This was a recommendations from previous years, but after discussion between SRPEDD, the Boston MPO and OCPC, it was determined that the status change may not be necessary; however the ramps along Route 24 need to be brought up to design standards.
- Park and Ride Lots – SRPEDD recently finished a study of park and ride lots throughout the region and as a recommendation from this study and through discussion with MassDOT, lease agreements for existing parking lots to be used as park and ride lots will be recommended as part of the RTP.
- Future Congestion Problems Identified with Model – A list of projects completed or underway, planned, locations studied and needing study was distributed. SRPEDD is looking for input on locations needing study, please contact Paul Mission for more information by emailing [pmission@srpedd.org](mailto:pmission@srpedd.org), or by calling (508) 824-1367. The section of Route 44 from Arlington Street to Route 104 in Taunton was highlighted.
- Structurally Deficient Bridges – A list of currently structurally deficient and functionally obsolete bridges with statuses for the bridges was distributed. Highlighted bridges included:
  - Dartmouth – Faunce Corner Road Bridge over Interstate 195
  - Fall River – Western Expressway/Route 79 Rehabilitation Project. A Task Force meeting for this project will be held on January 26, 2011 at 8am at the Fall River Maritime Museum on Water Street and will be open to the public.

It was emphasized that a maintenance program is needed after the completion of the Accelerated Bridge Program to ensure the bridges are properly maintained and do not fall back into disrepair.

- GRRIP Projects – Mr. Mission introduced 6 locations with issues that should be turned into projects to address drainage problems highlighted by the Geographic Roadway Runoff Improvement Program. These projects include:
  - North Attleborough – The Ten Mile River from the Attleboro Town Line to the Plainville Town Line experiences extensive flooding problems due to silt and other debris buildup that prevents water from properly draining. This project is not currently under design but will be included in RTP.
  - Mansfield – The Wading River experiences extensive flooding due to undersized culverts in the Otis Street/Gilbert Street area which act like dams and prevent water from draining off road.
  - Norton – the Wading River also experiences extensive flooding due to undersized culverts in the Walker Street area which act like dams and prevent water from draining off road. These flooding problems impact not only the culvert, but road infrastructure as well.
  - Swansea – MassDOT working with the town to mitigate pollution in the Route 6 area from a developer. The developer will have to clean up the pollution before being allowed further access to the site.
  - Somerset – The area surrounding the Labor in Vain Brook has been studied in the past and some improvements have been made to the surrounding salt marshes; however there is one remaining component, a culvert under Route 138 that backs up and causes flooding during extreme storms.

- Taunton Morey Street Dam/Bridge at Lake Sabbatia – The dam and bridge have functional and structural issues which are being repaired as part of Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP) in addition to adding fish and eel ladders.
- A project that was developed as part of the GRRIP program is the Middleborough Nemasket River Stormwater Project which is programmed on the FY 2011 year of the TIP. The project should be advertised by fall 2011 and the construction is expected to be done by spring/early summer 2012.

7. **Discussion of studies revisions to the MPO Memorandum of Understanding** – Mr. Hadfield explained that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is the bylaws that the SMMPO operates by and that all the MPO's in the Commonwealth have one. The document outlines who is on the body, voting rules, signatories, etc. He further explained that changes were made to the MOU to account for the change of title from the Massachusetts Highway Department to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), to increase the number of members needing to be present for a vote from 4 to 7 and to remove text related to the Central Artery Project. The MOU has been sent out for review by all of the mayors, boards of selectmen and town managers and no comments have been received to date.

Mr. Cristello pointed out that this revision of the MOU takes out language related to the intent of MassDOT to continue the state's commitment to an annual statewide road and bridge program. He inquired if there will be a section added to replace the text. Mr. Hadfield replied that the amount is still being debated and will probably be included in a future revision. Ms. Haznar replied that they are not sure if the text will be replaced; however the state advertised \$1 billion in projects over the past year.

8. **Other Business** – Mr. Hadfield announced that if anyone was interested in attending the Plymouth County Transportation Breakfast that SRPEDD is considering acquiring a table on a first come first serve basis. The breakfast will be held at 7:45 am on February 14, 2011. Mr. Smith explained that Bristol county officials were welcome as well. If you are interested in attending please contact Mr. Hadfield by calling (508) 824-1367 or by emailing [jhadfield@srpedd.org](mailto:jhadfield@srpedd.org)

Ms. Cabral announced upcoming Transportation related meetings including public meetings on the Regional Transportation Plan.

Ms. Haznar discussed the need to change the description of the Fall River Route 79 Bridge/Ramps Rehabilitation Project from Rehabilitation to Replacement as the current preferred alternative involves the replacement of portions of the ramp system.

9. **Date, Time, and Place for Next Meeting** – February 16, 2011, 2 pm at SRPEDD

10. **Adjourn** – The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 pm by Chairman Azinheira.