



REGIONAL REVIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

January 2006

WE ARE TURNING 50!

On June 8, 1956, eight intrepid communities were recognized as the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Planning District by the Massachusetts Department of Commerce as a group of communities "effective for planning purposes." With this declaration by the state, regional planning was born in Massachusetts.

The original eight communities were: Dartmouth, Dighton, Fall River, Mansfield, Norton, Seekonk, Somerset, and Swansea. The original eight grew to a total of 24 communities when, in 1968, the SMRPD evolved into SRPEDD with the passage of new legislation.

Please plan to join us on Thursday, June 8, 2006 (50 years to the day) while we celebrate our birthday at White's on the Watuppa in Westport. George Hovorka is chairing the 50th Anniversary Committee which is planning a great evening. Look for your invitation in the mail.

Contact: Steve Smith or
Nancy Bumbaugh

TAUNTON RIVER CAMPAIGN

Due to the generosity of the Sheehan Family Foundation, ten organizations within the Taunton River Watershed have been funded to undertake a campaign to protect and enhance this magnificent resource.

SRPEDD is partners in the campaign with the Nature Conservancy, the Environmental League of Massachusetts, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Mass Audubon, Save The Bay, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, Trust for Public Land, The Trustees of Reservations, and the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Mass.

SRPEDD's role is to act as a "circuit rider" to provide technical assistance to watershed communities focusing on municipal actions such as zoning, open space planning, and adoption of the Community Preservation Act.

This work follows the Taunton River Wild and Scenic River Study sponsored by SRPEDD and released in 2005. Last spring, eight

ABOUT THE TAUNTON RIVER

- The watershed area is 562 square miles, the 2nd largest in Mass.
- There are 221 lakes and ponds and 173 canoeable river miles in the watershed.
- It is the most ecologically diverse waterbody in the state.
- The watershed contains more than 360 plant species within the river's floodplain wetlands, over 154 species of birds and 29 species of native fish.

For more information, go to www.tauntonriver.org or www.savethetaunton.org.

town meetings and two city councils from communities along the river unanimously endorsed this study and agreed to the designation of the river by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a "wild and scenic" river.

The campaign has hired Susan Speers as Coordinator and is also sponsoring a mini-grant program for watershed initiatives.

Contact: Bill Napolitano or Marijoan Bull

GROWING SMART IN 2006

Seven communities in the region will be working with SRPEDD in 2006 to develop local smart growth bylaws and programs.

Working in conjunction with SRPEDD, the communities of Berkley, Carver, Fairhaven, Freetown, Rochester, Taunton and Wareham were awarded Smart Growth Technical Assistance grants from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Work tasks include items such as cluster zoning by-laws, right to farm bylaws, village/historic district zoning, community preservation act assistance and transit oriented development zoning. Implementation of recommendations will be sought in the spring and fall of 2006.

Contact: Greg Guimond

RECENT TRAFFIC STUDIES

Four critical corridors/intersections have recently been studied by SRPEDD.

ROUTE 24/I-195 INTER-CHANGE, FALL RIVER:

Problem: Safety

Recommendations: Extend merge lanes for the eastbound on and off ramps to minimize conflict with high speed travel lanes.

COGGESHALL STREET, NEW BEDFORD:

Problem: Congestion and safety issues due to proposed future development.

Recommendations: Corridor widening and reconfiguration of I-195 ramps.

ROUTE 6 FAIRHAVEN:

Problem: High crash rate at intersections and driveways; and pedestrian safety issues.

Recommendations:

Intersection improvements, signal timing changes, pedestrian improvements.

KING'S HIGHWAY/



TARKILN HILL ROAD, NEW BEDFORD:

Problem: Congestion and safety.

Recommendations: Widen corridor to create separate left turn lanes at each intersection and signal timing adjustments.

Contact: Jim Hadfield