

Eileen J. Marum

Marion Planning Board

Report of the SRPEDD Board of Commissioners

May 23, 2018

**RE: Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District**

The Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Planning and economic Development District was held at Rachel's Lakeside in Dartmouth; a reorganization of Board of Commissioners was held:

Chair: Deborah Melino-Wender

Vice Chair Alan Slavin

Secretary Joan Marchitto

Treasurer Joseph Callahan

SRPEDD assisted with exciting progress for bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the region this year. The New Bedford Cove Walk and the Fall River Quequechan River Rail Trail were officially opened to the public and New Bedford became the first city in the region with bike share.

The Taunton River Trail had several advancements, including the development of the Taunton Pathways Committee to examine routing options for the trail, and the award of a \$250,000 Federal Land Access Program grant to design the multimodal path through Sweets Knoll State Park in Dighton. The project will also include a car-top canoe and kayak launch area.

The South Coast Bikeway Alliance launched a campaign to develop a feasibility study for routing between Fall River and New Bedford. The Wareham Minot Avenue/Narrows Road Separate Use Path project was officially recognized, and construction funds were allocated through the Transportation Improvement Program for FY2023. Design progress was made on the Mansfield/Norton Rail Trail Extension and the Marion Pathway Phase 1. Construction on the Mattapoissett Pathway Phase 1B begins this year.

During the 2017 season, SRPEDD collected traffic count data at 143 locations throughout the region to inform safety and congestion studies. Staff also conducted Turning Movement Counts at 68 signalized intersections and 23 unsignalized intersections. Collected data can be accessed online through MassDOT's Transportation Data Management System ([mhd.ms2soft.com](http://mhd.ms2soft.com)), SRPEDD's Traffic Count

page ([www.srpedd.org/traffic-count](http://www.srpedd.org/traffic-count)), and SRPEDD's Signalized Intersection Database ([www.srpedd.org/signalized-intersections](http://www.srpedd.org/signalized-intersections)).

The Commission was updated on the latest development of the draft Marine Technology Corridor proposal. New England is home to over 500 marine tech firms with a large portion of them located in, or within an hour's drive of the SouthCoast region.

The Green Communities Designation and Grant Program provides a roadmap along with financial and technical support to Massachusetts municipalities that (1) pledge to cut municipal energy use by an ambitious and achievable goal of 20 percent over five years and (2) meet specific additional eligibility criteria. The additional eligibility criteria include enabling zoning and permitting for renewable energy generation, manufacturing or research and development, purchasing higher efficiency vehicles to replace existing vehicles, and adopting more stringent building codes. SRPEDD has partnered with the Department of Energy Resources to assist communities in this process. The Green Communities Program is vital to ensuring a balanced approach to long-term energy use reduction and a sustainable Commonwealth.

Keynote speaker Mayor Jon Mitchell of New Bedford talked of the selection of Vineyard Wind to build Massachusetts first industrial-scale offshore wind project off the state's coast. The selection was made through a competitive process established by comprehensive energy legislation passed in 2016 and it marks an important milestone in New Bedford's long effort to cultivate the development of the offshore wind industry. The arrival of a 21st-century energy industry in the United States holds great promise for both the environment and New Bedford's port economy.

SRPEDD Annual Awards – May 23, 2018

Jennifer Francis was recognized as a leader on the Marion Planning Board, the Marion Energy Management Committee and as a proponent of sustainability and green energy, particularly, renewable energy sources like solar and wind.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen J. Marum

SRPEDD Board of Commissioners