

# Sustainable Communities Program

*Achieving Results in Greater Boston*

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# Sustainable Communities Program

## *Achieving Results in Greater Boston*

In the summer of 2014, MAPC and the Metro Boston Consortium for Sustainable Communities wrapped up work on our \$4 million Regional Planning Grant from HUD. The Consortium included 170 organizations and municipalities and was governed by an elected and representative steering committee.

Thanks to the grant, MAPC and the Consortium advanced MetroFuture through local planning efforts, state and regional policy work, development of tools and data, and capacity building for local residents and leaders. We worked with dozens of municipalities and non-profits to advance smart growth and preservation in Greater Boston.

These activities substantially built on previous and ongoing work being done by MAPC and partners in the region. In turn, this work has achieved a wide variety of successes in changing local and state regulations that will result in better land use decisions, more appropriate development, environmental protection, and increased opportunity for all our region's residents.

Land use studies are resulting in mixed-use zoning districts in station areas and in suburban centers, opening the door for hundreds of new homes and jobs. New research and regional plans are serving as a blueprint for future development and preservation, including the Regional Housing Plan, the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and the State of Equity Policy Agenda.

Working together, we are creating a greater Boston region.

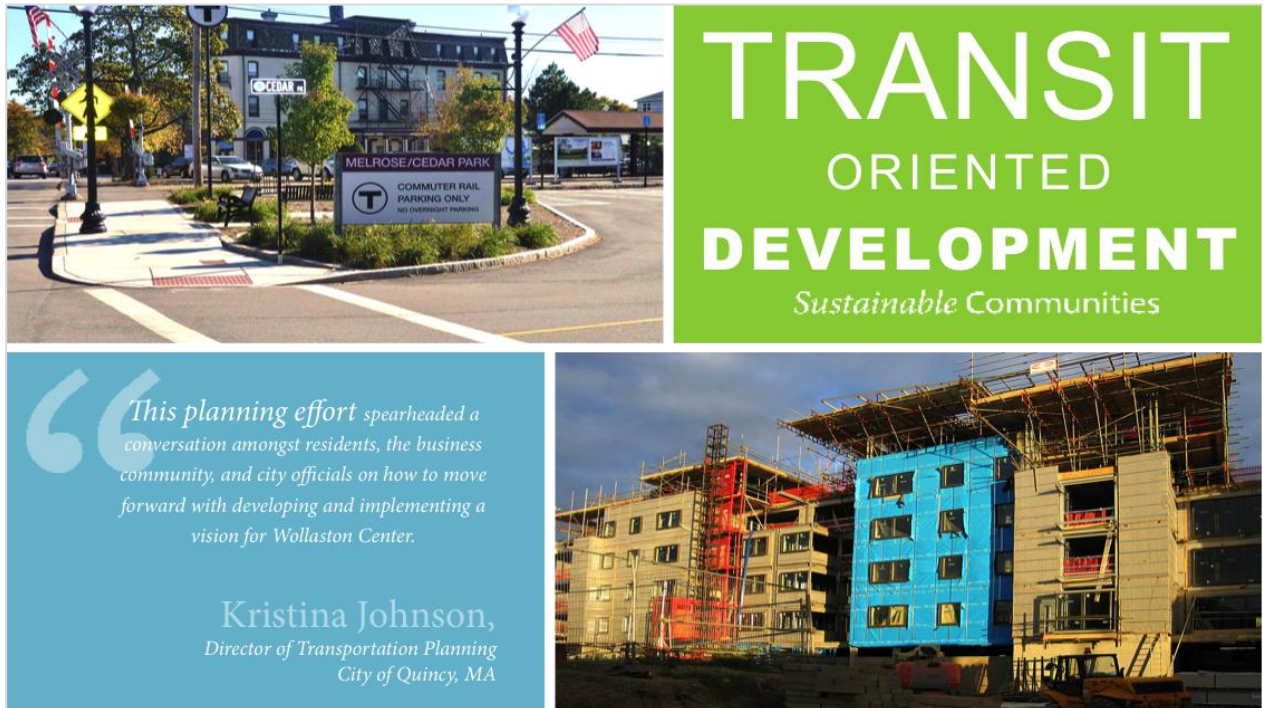
## By the Numbers

### Key statistics demonstrate the breadth and effect of the program

<p><b>170</b></p> <p>Consortium Member Organizations</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Local and State Policy and Legislative Changes</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Corridor Plans</p>
<p><b>171,000</b></p> <p>Population in Corridor Planning Studies</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Land Use Studies</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Tools Created to Measure Development Impact</p>
<p><b>24,906</b></p> <p>Acres Identified as Priority Development Areas (PDAs)</p>	<p><b>135,104</b></p> <p>Additional Population and Employment Projected in PDAs</p>	<p><b>435,000</b></p> <p>New Housing Units Needed by 2040</p>
<p><b>362</b></p> <p>Public Planning Meetings</p>	<p><b>10,000</b></p> <p>Participants in Public Planning Meetings</p>	<p><b>52</b></p> <p>Training and Education Sessions</p>
<p><b>2,525</b></p> <p>Attendees at Training and Education Sessions</p>	<p><b>142</b></p> <p>Planned Miles in Bike/ Pedestrian Infrastructure</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Miles of Bike Lanes Created</p>

## Key Accomplishments by Topic Area

### TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT — STATION AREA AND CORRIDOR PLANNING



**Through Sustainable Communities, MAPC and its partners were able to advance the state of the art in transit-oriented development (TOD) planning in Metropolitan Boston.** From estimating the amount of additional development capacity in TOD sites to working with municipalities to change local zoning, many transit-served sites are now willing and able to accommodate more mixed-use development. New development is being permitted, the Commonwealth has made critical infrastructure investments, and zoning changes have been locally adopted.

MAPC led the planning for five station area and corridor plans, and we supported our municipal and Community Development Corporation (CDC) partners in four additional plans. Our work included corridor planning along the Orange Line and Fairmount Corridor and planning in advance of the Green Line Extension in Somerville and Medford. The station plans focused on sites in Beverly, Boston, Malden, and Melrose. We took an inclusive and holistic approach to these projects, working with a wide variety of stakeholders through intensive public processes that resulted in consensus support for the plans' recommendations. We looked at opportunities for job creation, market and affordable housing production, and "last-mile" connections for all modes of transportation. All the plans were started with demographic and market analyses, which ensured that recommendations would be grounded in reality and respond to site-specific conditions. Visualizations of potential development were also a key feature of our work. Seeing graphics helped participants intuitively grasp the "look and feel" of a revitalized station area.

Two CDCs in Boston developed mixed-use TOD plans. In the ethnically diverse Fields Corner Neighborhood in Boston, Viet-AID is developing a 35-unit, 100% affordable mixed-use project close to a brand new Fairmount Line rail station. Viet-AID has secured \$6 million in financing and plans to break ground this

year. The project also has resulted in a re-invigorated neighborhood organization: The Fields Corner Civic Association held elections in September 2014 and will provide guidance to Boston's boards and agencies on the redevelopment and revitalization of the neighborhood. On the other side of the city, the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation is planning the last phase of the Jackson Square TOD project. The final phase includes 150 new units (60 affordable), retail space, and a new plaza that will serve as a neighborhood gathering place.

Two communities north of Boston have also seen progress on their TOD plans: Melrose and Malden. Melrose recently passed TOD zoning and received \$1 million in state infrastructure funding to make improvements around one of their commuter rail stations. In Malden, Harvard Graduate School of Design students worked with local volunteers to engage over 1,000 residents and workers about improvements they'd like to see in Malden's downtown. The resulting plan to redevelop city hall and reconnect its commercial corridor to the Orange Line MBTA station has received \$3 million in state funding. That funding is paving the way for up to 500 new downtown residential units.

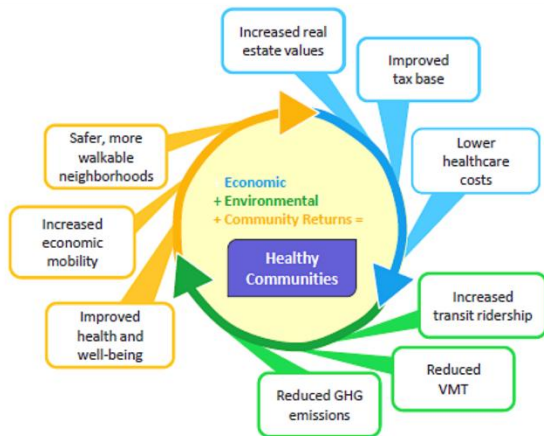
**PLAN  
DOWNTOWN  
MALDEN**

*Sustainable Communities*

*“ We received lots of feedback to help guide us in our decisions to renovate the Square and were able to develop a transformational plan of attack. **Kevin Duffy** Strategy and Business Development Officer City of Malden ”*

- Revitalize businesses
- Enhance cultural + arts resources
- Make Malden more green
- Improve transportation

Even when a compelling TOD project is proposed for a station area, obtaining financing can be a challenge. The Consortium commissioned a TOD finance gap analysis to determine the types of financing impediments that TOD projects face. This led to the creation of two new TOD funds that will be available to communities in Massachusetts: LISC's Boston Accelerator Fund and CLF Ventures' Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund. The MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development awarded \$1 million in seed money to each fund in 2013.



# Regional Transit-Oriented Development Goals and Finance

*Sustainable Communities*



In order to implement the TOD plans, upgrades and new resources are needed to improve the state of the transportation system. Extensive investment is needed to create a safe, reliable system that connects people to jobs, schools, and other opportunities. For years, our roads, bridges, and our public transit system have been chronically underfunded to the tune of over \$1 billion dollars annually. MAPC has worked, and continues to work, with a large and diverse coalition of activists, advocates, business and municipal officials to press for much-needed new funding. The legislature and governor approved the transportation finance reform that will deliver \$600 million in new funding annually. While short of goal, this new funding will provide sorely needed funds to reinvest in our transportation system and allow for strategic expansions.

Dr. Beverly Scott, CEO/GM of the MBTA, was a critical voice for new transportation investments.

## SUBURBAN REVITALIZATION — DOWNTOWN, VILLAGE CENTER, AND SPRAWL REPAIR

**Suburban centers in greater Boston offer many opportunities to redevelop underutilized parcels, introduce greater density and housing choice, and to create walkable, vibrant neighborhoods that can be accessed by multiple transportation options.** A number of projects explored alternative redevelopment options, created new zoning recommendations, and crafted site plans for repairing existing low-density, single-use sites.

*“We can do better  
at the interchange of I-495  
and MA Route 117 than  
big box retail and huge signs”  
Bolton Zoning Working Group*

**BOLTON**  
Mixed Use  
Village Overlay

**Outcome:** Village Mixed Use Overlay Zoning passed unanimously at Town Meeting on May 5

Two suburban communities explored the concept of “smart” sewerage. The absence of sewer service limits the potential for mixed-use, denser redevelopment, as septic systems require so much land. Many of our region’s communities without sewer also face restrictions on adding new restaurants or coffee shops, limiting small-scale

economic development opportunities. The Charles River Watershed Association worked with Sherborn and Dover to explore the feasibility of developing compact sewer service areas that could facilitate smart growth development in these specific areas. Further south, a private developer in Wrentham is now exploring the financing of a small-scale waste water treatment plant to support increased development.

Millis and Bolton have passed new mixed-use zoning that has the potential to breathe new life into vacant and underutilized parcels. In Bolton, the new district will allow approximately 100 housing units to be built in a compact, mixed-use district where previously only low-density, single-use commercial was permitted. In Millis, the new zoning encourages mixed-use projects, allows more uses by-right, and now has the capacity for 50 to 75 new housing units. To the west of Boston, sites along the major commercial corridor of Route 9 were examined for opportunities to introduce walkable, mixed-use designs. In the Framingham Tech Park project, the Town and the transportation management association have established a working group with area businesses to implement the plan’s recommendations. The recommendations will reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, increase ridesharing, walking, and biking, and expand access to a major employment center for disadvantaged populations.



## MASTER PLANNING AND VISIONING

Four communities worked with MAPC to develop neighborhood or municipal vision and action plans. With the support and guidance of the Sustainable Communities steering committee, we piloted new approaches to inclusive community engagement and planning. Through highly interactive meeting design, technologies such as the internet-based Community PlanIt, and an emphasis on reaching out to ALL members of a community, we worked with our partners to craft progressive and achievable plans.

One of the most successful plans was the Salem Point Neighborhood Action Plan. The City of Salem and the North Shore Community Development Corporation collaborated with MAPC and the project included intensive work with residents of the ethnically diverse, low-income Point Neighborhood. The plan, which won an award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association, has already led to two follow-up projects and \$450,000 committed to implementing action items. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston awarded a Working Cities Challenge grant to implement recommendations, and MAPC is now developing strategies to revitalize

**SALEM POINT  
VISION + ACTION  
PLAN**

2013 - 2021

*Creating a Vision  
Strengthening a Community*

*"The Point Neighborhood has tremendous assets. The planning process presents a great opportunity for residents, business owners, and others to actively participate in creating a common vision to strengthen the neighborhood."*

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll  
City of Salem

The Point Neighborhood's commercial corridor. Similarly, the Downtown Lynn project brought together a diverse set of stakeholders and resulted in new downtown zoning that encourages mixed-use redevelopment. In Hingham, the Town has adopted the Master Plan goals developed through its Sustainable Communities project. This project included a unique regional approach to master planning, explored alternative redevelopment scenarios, and includes recommendations for introducing a greater diversity of housing types into this wealthier, suburban community.

## HOUSING CHOICE

Housing continues to be one of the major challenges in our region. Challenges are many and include insufficient production, lack of subsidized affordable units, insufficient diversity of housing types, discrimination in the real estate markets, and the high, overall cost of housing. Under Sustainable Communities, MAPC and partners developed a number of regional and local plans, created an educational toolkit on Fair Housing best practices, and advanced a number of changes to state laws and regulations. These projects are bringing new focus and attention to the various challenges we face regionally and within our municipalities.

One of the most significant findings comes from the Regional Housing Plan. In this plan, we developed housing demand projections for new housing units at the regional and municipal levels. These projections forecast expected demand for new units through 2030 and through 2040. We found that greater Boston will need to produce more than 300,000 new units (a majority of them multi-family) to meet the changing demographic and housing trends. Furthermore, if we want to realize stable economic growth, we will need

to build over 400,000 new units. This greater number of homes would allow our region to retain more of the workers that would otherwise decamp for more affordable cities throughout the country. This report has garnered a lot of press coverage and has led the Metro Mayors Coalition to prioritize strategies that will provide additional housing productions in major cities in eastern Massachusetts.

Sustainable Communities also allowed us to conduct research on, participate in the development of, and advocate for a number of new housing policies. We were able to shape and support changes to the Chapter 40R smart growth housing location criteria, the creation of the compact centers program, and a new law that reforms housing authorities and provides incentives for regionalizing housing services.

MAPC and its partners have also innovated new approaches and analysis aimed at ensuring that long-time residents are not priced out of neighborhoods experiencing gentrification. This work, known as “managing neighborhood change” or preventing displacement, was primarily focused in Somerville. We worked with the City of Somerville and the Somerville Community Corporation to understand the potential

## Managing Neighborhood Change

# SOMERVILLE

*Sustainable Communities*

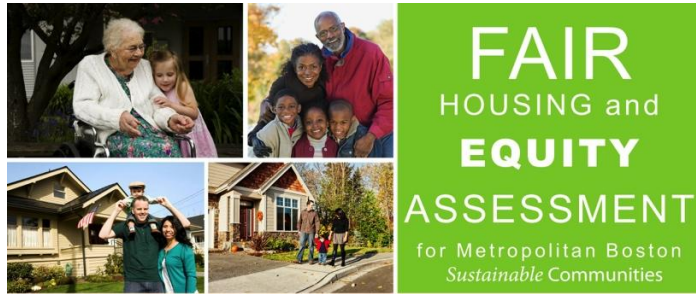
**MAPC WORKED WITH THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE, SOMERVILLE COMMUNITY CORPORATION, SOMERVILLE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY PARTNERSHIP, FRIENDS OF THE COMMUNITY PATH, AND OTHER PARTNERS** to catalyze and support development and preservation in transformational areas of the city, while helping to manage change and stabilize neighborhoods in ways that advance equity and long-term sustainability. The primary work focused on developing anti-displacement strategies for the city and its partners and drafting a community benefits/ metrics report to advance the community path.



impacts that the Green Line Extension may have on existing residents in the transit corridor. Already, years before the Green Line begins service, we hear about families that need to move to more affordable municipalities. We identified the biggest risks for displacement and where they are likely to occur, and found that rents could increase from 25% to 67% and cost-burden an additional 700 to 800 renters. Through community meetings, MAPC and partners developed strategies that can keep Somerville affordable. We also developed metrics that they can use to track the effectiveness of their policy interventions over time. The City is now putting the strategies into action by updating their Inclusionary Zoning ordinance and by acquiring land around station areas — property that will be home to new affordable housing developments. This work, along with examples from across the nation, has been incorporated into a toolkit that provides anti-displacement best practices and examples of other, local strategies that are working to prevent displacement.

A number of communities developed Housing Production Plans. These plans provide a roadmap for localities to stimulate the creation of housing, with an emphasis on affordable unit creation. Two plans have been locally adopted and municipalities are updating their regulations. For example, Watertown has updated their Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw and is now permitting a major new residential development on Arsenal Street. Using housing and demographic data that we compiled for the Regional Housing Plan, we created the website *Housing MA*. *Housing MA* is a one-stop source for data that municipalities need for creating Housing Production Plans. It is so integrated that it can automatically generate a simple and approvable housing needs assessment for any community.

Sustainable Communities also enabled a significant amount of work on Fair Housing, which was undertaken by MAPC, the Fair Housing Caucus, and Consortium members. We developed the regional Fair Housing and Equity Assessment, as well as one of the nation’s first Regional Analyses of Impediments in conjunction



with the South Shore HOME Consortium. These plans contain discrete actions that will reduce the segregation and discrimination facing protected classes. In addition, the Fair Housing Toolkit was launched including a curriculum for municipal officials and developers on fair housing laws and best practices. Two trainings have been provided

statewide and we are working with partners to plan more trainings throughout greater Boston.

**ENERGY, AIR, WILDLIFE, AND WATER**

Pioneering plans, three toolkits, and even an unexpected legislative victory capped work addressing environmental issues. We ventured into new territory when creating the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the MAGIC Comprehensive Agriculture Planning Program. These plans have helped establish new partnerships, identified critical next steps for municipalities and state agencies, and are leading to local regulatory changes and new, follow-on projects, including a statewide Food Systems Plan. We worked with Littleton to pass agricultural zoning that is providing additional flexibility and support for farmland owners. The intent is to provide more stability and prosperity to the farm sector. Consortium member the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) developed the Sustainable Agriculture Toolkit, which provides best practices and recommendations that will enable municipalities to protect and support agriculture in their communities.

The graphic is titled 'MYSTIC Green Infrastructure Project Sustainable Communities'. It includes several components:
 

- Purpose:** The City of Chelsea, Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), Charles River Watershed Association, and Chelsea Collaborative partnered to develop recommendations, conceptual designs, and community support for environmental improvements in a neighborhood in Chelsea, a densely developed and highly impervious Metro Boston community.
- Outcomes:**
  - Identification of opportunities to incorporate low impact development (LID) stormwater treatment systems at six sites
  - Conceptual designs and modeled environmental improvements for all sites
  - Multiple sites submitted for grant funding
- Existing Conditions Analysis:** Includes maps and photos of the project area.
- Community Involvement:** Includes photos of community meetings and a sign that says 'Nuestro Ciudad, Nuestro Proyecto'.
- Opportunities Analysis:** Includes a map of Mill Creek and photos of the project area.

One of the central components of the Climate Adaptation Strategy is the vulnerability analysis for populations at particular risk. This analysis helps to prioritize steps that must be taken to protect those most likely to be affected from potentially severe impacts from storm events and other disasters. In a related project in Chelsea, a dense and lower-income city, our partners worked with residents and the City to design urban green infrastructure projects for six sites. These Low Impact Development designs will provide multiple co-benefits including neighborhood greening, micro-climate moderation, stormwater treatment, and climate resilience. Grants are being pursued to fund construction of the green infrastructure projects.



The Municipal Clean Energy Toolkit provides 38 “recipes” with step-by-step instructions for implementing renewable energy and energy efficiency strategies for residential, commercial, and municipal sectors. The toolkit guides stakeholders through the planning and implementation process, using best practices, case studies and model documentation tailored to small cities and towns. The toolkit content draws from MAPC’s local energy planning and technical assistance experience, and showcases success stories from across the country.

One of the strategies included in the toolkit is LED streetlight retrofits. Recently, Arlington worked with Siemens to replace the town’s streetlights through a joint procurement that MAPC structured and managed. They replaced 3,000 streetlights, saving 703,000 Kilowatt-hours, \$105,000 in annual energy costs, and \$40,000 in annual maintenance costs. The payback to Arlington taxpayers will take just under five years.

Another looming challenge concerns our water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure. A blue-ribbon commission found that the state faces a \$20 billion backlog of investment needed to maintain our aging water and wastewater systems. As a member of the working group that included business, environmental, and municipal officials, MAPC developed educational materials and generated press coverage on this hidden crisis. With high-level legislative support, a bill was drafted to begin addressing these issues and was actually passed within the year, happily surprising many supporters. Among many changes, it includes a down payment of \$50 million in increased borrowing authority for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Stormwater represents an entire other growing crisis, with a steep economic and ecological invoice coming due. The stormwater utility toolkit provides municipalities with a how-to guide to set up local enterprise funds that will pay for stormwater infrastructure. Two communities in the Neponset River Watershed are now exploring their options for establishing a stormwater utility.

## DIALOGUE & CAPACITY BUILDING

Throughout the life of the grant, the 170 Consortium members worked together in formal and informal ways to build skills, grow partnerships, share best practices, and cultivate new leaders. This took place as integral parts of the discrete projects, but also occurred in cross-cutting trainings, Consortium meetings, and even in MAPC Council meetings. When scoping projects, the Steering Committee consistently looked for opportunities to ensure that all residents could participate in planning projects. They also directed project managers to find ways to pass on the learning and best practices acquired along the way. Toolkits, innovative meeting design and outreach, and new planning tools and data are just some of the ways best practices will be replicated and will live on past the discrete projects’ end dates. A major emphasis at Consortium meetings was making the space for peer-to-peer learning and the exchange of best practices. We presented new research and Consortium members shared their knowledge through break-out groups, lightning presentations, and topical caucus discussions.

**OUTREACH and PLANNING**  
in Quincy's Asian Communities

*Sustainable Communities*

A civic engagement and outreach strategy will help the city to identify local leaders, build capacity to effectively engage in the planning process, and ensure that the Asian American voice is included in development activities.

**Living**  
What's unique in NoQuWo

**Playing**

Certain projects, in particular, focused on building skills and capacity in traditionally disadvantaged communities. The Immigrant Learning Center and MassINC worked with immigrant entrepreneurs in Lynn to build relationships with local officials, lenders, and other training providers. Downtown restaurants partnered with the City as sponsors of the City's concert series, looking to attract new patrons and capture entertainment dollars. MassINC produced a report outlining how municipalities can better understand and respond to needs of immigrant entrepreneurs in their communities. In Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) worked with youth leaders to develop

a food justice curriculum, to map vacant lands that could be turned into community gardens, and to build two raised-bed gardens for neighborhood food production. Further south in Quincy, the City, MAPC, and the Asian Community Development Corporation assessed needs in the city's Asian community, built residents' capacity to effectively engage in local planning processes, and established the Asian American Civic Engagement Task Force. This work has led to TOD planning and development around the Wollaston MBTA station.

A similar leadership development program was created by a number of Consortium partners. The Institute on Leadership in Equity and Development (ILEAD) is a training program on equitable development that educates potential and existing leaders in communities traditionally underserved by planning. The interactive sessions and activities equip people with the tools needed to become powerful advocates within their community. Trainings were held in Dorchester, Lynn, Quincy, Roxbury, and Somerville — training 155 participants on how to effectively shape development that will impact their neighborhoods. Fundraising is underway to support additional trainings.

**ILEAD**  
Institute on  
Leadership in  
Equity &  
Development

*Sustainable Communities*

*"It was fun! I learned a lot, met people in my neighborhood and feel like I know more about planning in my community."*

ILEAD Participant

## Cross-Cutting Themes and Learning

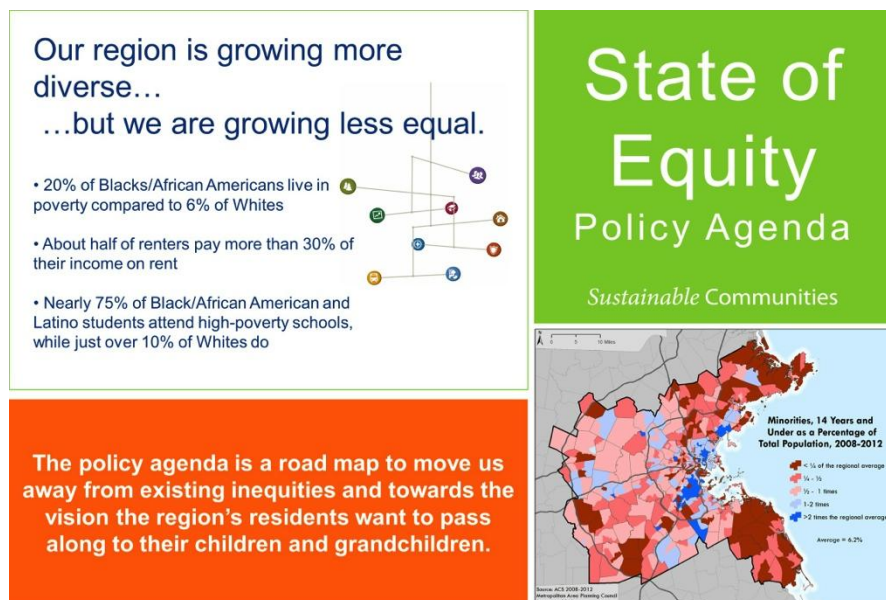
A number of common themes defined and shaped the work under Sustainable Communities, and now live on in ongoing MAPC and partner work. Advancing regional equity has become a more central focus of MAPC's approach. We weave equity goals into our projects and in our project selection criteria, and work in partnership with other organizations to advance equity through advocacy and new regional initiatives. Effective and inclusive engagement is central to our project work, as is using rigorous data analysis to inform policy and planning recommendations. Finally, the partnerships and relationships established and strengthened under Sustainable Communities are perhaps the key factor in realizing the goals of MetroFuture. All of our partners are committed to advancing equity and sustainability and our efforts, together and independently, are going to determine how successful we will be.

### ADVANCING EQUITY

Many of our Consortium partners have been working on advancing social equity for decades. MAPC has historically focused on discrete elements of the equity agenda, on items such as affordable housing and advocating for transportation or other investments that benefit all residents. In addition, MAPC has been working for years on improving the inclusivity of its engagement and its own internal equity practices. The Sustainable Communities

grant, however, enabled a much more focused and deliberate emphasis on equity — both in issue content and planning approaches. The grant brought diverse organizations together to learn from one another, and to expand the breadth and reach of equity-focused organizations. Creating a more equitable region was a major goal that underscored the entire body of work from Sustainable Communities.

While developing projects, we looked for opportunities to advance equity. During scoping of the competitively selected projects and while evaluating the participation rates and outcomes of projects, equity was a key factor and measure. Early in the grant, we released the State of Equity Indicators Report, which documented a set of indicators that revealed the extent of inequality in our region. At the end of the grant, Angela Glover Blackwell, from PolicyLink, joined us for the release the State of Equity Policy Agenda, a roadmap for correcting the deficiencies laid bare in the Indicators Report. In between, we developed regional plans, site-specific district plans, toolkits, and policy recommendations to create a more welcoming, just, and fair region. With partners, we worked to expand access to opportunity in higher opportunity areas while also focusing on creating jobs and mixed-income, multi-family developments in transit-rich, lower opportunity areas. And, as previously mentioned, we have become more adept at understanding and responding to issues of displacement and inequitable development.



In many ways, this focus on equity is also transforming MAPC. Our governing board endorsed the State of Equity Policy Agenda, which includes recommended actions on a range of issues that have not historically been in MAPC’s wheelhouse (e.g., income inequality and youth jobs). We now include sections on equity and engagement in our scoping documents and project products. And we are evaluating our projects on their outcomes, including the extent to which equity goals were advanced. As we move forward, we intend to continue working with our allies on these issues — through policy and legislative work, as well as through place-based project work.

## INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

Inclusive community engagement was a hallmark of the Sustainable Communities program. When developing projects, a lot of thought was given to determining how to engage groups that are traditionally under-represented in planning processes. Similarly, we piloted new, creative meeting design formats in order to better capture residents’ desires, provide education about the topic, and create plans that reflect and respond to issues that were surfaced. For most planning projects, project managers reported that 30% to 50% of budgets were devoted to public process, outreach, and engagement. Our steering committee always stressed the importance of reaching all stakeholders, especially people of color, low-income residents, small business owners, and people with disabilities. Through the leadership of MAPC’s community engagement specialists and from our partners, we were able to design innovative and effective approaches for engaging many more of our diverse stakeholders.



Some of the innovative approaches and best practices included open houses, hybrid meeting designs, and meeting with groups at their standing meeting locations and times. We used music, food, and spoken word to bring people together. We went to community events like the Everett Farmers Market to get people involved. We used interpreters, translated documents, and provided childcare when needed.

In addition to new approaches, we were able to use new technologies to engage participants. Keypad polling was an effective way of soliciting opinions and desires of meeting participants in real time. We also used Community PlanIt, an online game, to explore planning challenges and to identify neighborhood goals. This was used with success with the Asian youth population in the Wollaston neighborhood in Quincy.

We’ve found that even in places and with partners where we felt the engagement was not as robust or successful as we hoped, the efforts were not wasted and are starting to show results now in subsequent projects. Some of the more innovative approaches were not immediately embraced by certain planning agencies and community organizations. It took time and consistent positive experiences for the value to be seen and eventually embraced. We are being asked now by planning agencies and CDCs to help them design effective engagement strategies. As illustration of these positive developments, a recent community meeting had great representation by the Haitian community, due to a particularly great local contact we made during a Sustainable Communities project.

## DATA-DRIVEN PLANNING AND ADVOCACY

The success that the planning and advocacy projects enjoyed is due in part to the strong data analysis that undergirds this work. MAPC has a cutting-edge data services department that played a major role in many of the Sustainable Communities projects. The indicators work helped policy makers, residents, academics, and others to better understand the existing conditions and trends in our region. The indicators led to policy development and recommendations on a variety of issue areas, notably the State of Equity Policy Agenda. Over time, we'll be able to assess whether actions taken are "bending the trends" or if other approaches and interventions are necessary to achieving the goals of MetroFuture.

Demographic and housing projections were developed for the entire region, and then broken down to the municipal level. These projections are now being used in developing our Long Range Transportation Plan and are integral to the Regional Housing Plan's recommendations. In a region characterized by anemic housing production, high costs of housing, and a lack of multi-family homes, this research has helped quantify the scope of the problem and uncover policy actions to reverse the negative trends. The analysis connects the dots between reaching our economic development goals as being intrinsically dependent on addressing our housing shortage. This analysis has been widely picked up by news media and will directly fuel our allies and our continued advocacy to kick start construction of multifamily units (affordable and market rate) across the region.

Within discrete planning projects, new data-driven approaches were also employed. A significant example is the scenario modeling practice that expanded under Sustainable Communities. Modeling different land use scenarios helped participants and local officials evaluate the impacts of different development options. By providing quantifiable details, we were able to explore various scenarios' likely effects on such topics as economic development, tax revenues, and environmental impacts.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The entire Metro Boston Consortium was predicated on collaboration and building aligned networks. All of our discrete projects include new or existing collaborations, and Sustainable Communities has enabled us to work with new partners and sectors more than before. Examples include agricultural interests in the MAGIC subregion and CDCs in Dorchester. Working with community partners has improved the reach and effectiveness of many of our projects. We found that it was important to build resources into project budgets that enabled our community partners to actively engage throughout a project. We also found that projects that included partnerships with municipalities and local, community organizations resulted in strong, consensus plans, with the best prospects for implementation. Each partner brought their perspective, expertise, and constituents into the processes and, in many cases, greater understanding and stronger relationships and end products resulted. We look forward to maintaining these invaluable partnerships in order to continue to the work we have begun.





## MOVING FORWARD

We've been able to accomplish so much through this grant — from on-the-ground implementation to building and strengthening relationships with community partners and coalitions. These activities substantially built on previous and ongoing work being done by MAPC and partners in the region. In turn, projects supported by the grant achieved very real results in the field, and they have also generated great new models and relationships. We are committed to building on this elevated level of work, maintaining our momentum, relationships, and capacity to affect even greater change.

MAPC is committed to maintaining this current high level of work in a number of ways. Many Sustainable Communities projects are or will continue through to subsequent phases with the benefit of other funding, including District Local Technical Assistance and municipal assessment funds that were expanded for this purpose in 2014 by the State Legislature and MAPC member municipalities. Foundation partners also are committing resources with a particular focus on collaboration with community and non-profit partners. We will be aligning all of our resources behind the priorities of our newly-updated strategic plan that reinforces the goals and approach of the Sustainable Communities program, including a strong commitment to advancing equity, inclusive engagement, planning for new housing in transit-served locations, expanding economic development and opportunity, and building more resilient communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards. And we will be strengthening the ways that new leaders, whether they emerged through the Consortium's work or in subsequent activities, can be involved in MAPC's decision making structures.

We have made significant progress to implement MetroFuture, particularly with the help of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, but there is much that is left to do. Along with our partners, we will continue to our work to achieve the MetroFuture vision of a more sustainable and equitable region.

Note: The graphics in this report are excerpts from project posters created by MAPC project managers or the partners with whom they worked.



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