

2017-2018 Legislative Priorities

An Act relative to regional transportation ballot initiatives

Representative Chris Walsh (H.1640)

Senator Eric Lesser (S.1551)

This bill would enable a municipality, or a group of municipalities as a district, to raise additional local money for transportation projects or operations via ballot initiatives. A supplement to other transportation revenue, these funds would give voters a more direct role in the process and allow locally-raised money to be spent only on specific projects in that municipality or district. These initiatives have high rates of passage (70-80%) and can be used to fund both capital and operations.

An Act relative to transportation infrastructure value capture

Representative William Straus (H.1893)

MAPC will continue to work with Rep. William Strauss (D-Mattapoisett), House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation, to refine and pass legislation codifying a process of capturing increased value along transportation corridors for transit, roadway, and TOD development.

An Act building for the future of the Commonwealth

Representative Stephen Kulik & Representative Sarah Peake (H.2420)

An Act promoting housing and sustainable development

Senator Harriette Chandler (S.81)

This legislation would modernize the Commonwealth's zoning statutes for the first time in 40 years, in order to provide benefits to all municipalities and the people who live and work in our region. It would define key terms of modern zoning practice, so that rules are clear and practices are consistent across municipalities. The bill would equip cities and towns with the tools they need to shape their futures in accordance with smart growth principles, while providing more certainty to landowners and developers. The bill also includes elements to safeguard the environment and to encourage the creation of new homes in appropriate locations in order to meet current and future demand.

An Act authorizing resiliency measures under commercial property assessed clean energy

Representative Mark Cusack (H.2687)

Senator Joseph Boncore (S.1825)

This legislation would allow property owners to finance microgrids and other resiliency measures under the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy statute that passed last legislative session. Microgrids have been utilized in several other states to increase reliability and ensure buildings remain powered during grid outages and are an important resiliency measure that can help to ensure a cleaner-energy future.

An Act to sustain community preservation revenue

Representative Stephen Kulik & Representative Kevin Honan (H.3662)

Senator Cynthia Creem (S.1504)

The state's CPA trust fund matching rate has fallen to 20.6%, according to announcement from Department of Revenue (DOR). The rate is likely to fall even more dramatically with the addition of Boston, Springfield, Pittsfield, and eight other municipalities that recently adopted the CPA. In response, this legislation calls on DOR to calculate the fee that would be needed so that all CPA communities would receive at least a 50% first round distribution, and authorizes the Registry of Deeds to charge this new fee.

An Act providing for disposition of surplus state real property based on smart growth land use principles

Representative Jeffrey Sanchez (H.1710)

This bill would reform the surplus land disposition process by streamlining the practice, empowering local communities and key stakeholders, generating revenue for the Commonwealth, and promoting smart growth principles. The legislation will help to improve the surplus land disposition process, and we intend to work closely with the Administration to complement the Governor's successful "Open for Business" program.

An Act relative to the transparency of municipal energy data

Representative Paul Brodeur (H.3386)

Senator Jason Lewis (S.1858)

This bill would require utility companies to share residential and commercial energy use data with municipalities, under regulations to be developed by the Department of Public Utilities. Access to this vital data would allow cities and towns to plan for and implement energy efficiency strategies and solutions in a more effective manner and help cities and towns examine ways to reduce their energy consumption.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

(Line Item 1599-0026)

DLTA funds are distributed among the state's 13 Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) to provide cities and towns with technical assistance to help move municipalities forward in the Commonwealth's key initiatives, including regional collaboration, promoting economic development, best practices in zoning, and protecting the environment. This funding is essential to assist cities and towns in regionalizing service as diverse as public health, fire safety, emergency dispatch, special education, emergency medical services, and disaster planning. Year after year, DLTA project requests have exceeded available funding. This year MAPC received requests for double the amount of funds available. Additionally, the EPA is issuing new permitting requirements for MS4 permits, and this will put additional pressure on our DLTA budget as municipalities request technical assistance with this issue. DLTA has been funded at \$2.8 million for the last four budgets beginning in FY2014. This year, we are requesting that DLTA be level-funded at \$2.8 million to allow the RPAs to continue to provide the wide range of services that our member municipalities require, and to support the Community Compact program.

Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative (Shannon Grant)

(Line Item 8100-0111)

Since 2006, the Commonwealth has used this innovative grant program to fund regional strategies to combat youth violence, gang violence, and substance abuse through regional, multi-disciplinary efforts. By regional we mean that groups of municipalities work together on anti-violence strategies, and by multi-disciplinary we mean that all departments in law enforcement and prevention work together to achieve a common goal. It is this emphasis on a regional, multi-disciplinary approach that sets Shannon Grants apart from other efforts to fund local law enforcement or prevention programs. From a high of \$13 million, the program was reduced to \$4.5 million during the recession. After steadily increasing to \$8.25 million, the program was only funded at \$6 million last year. We are requesting an increase to \$10 million in FY2018.