



Metropolitan Area Planning Council SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee Annual Report 2017

Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Hopkinton, Medway, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, Sherborn, Wrentham

The SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) includes the towns of Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Hopkinton, Medway, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, Sherborn, and Wrentham. SWAP is a subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and a regional advocate on transportation, the environment, energy, open space, affordable housing, economic and community development, and legislative issues.

SWAP Highlights and Updates

At the SWAP meeting in September, Jen Burke of Hopkinton was elected as SWAP co-chair, following Bryan Taberner’s one-year term. Kasia Hart, MAPC Transportation Policy Associate, took on the Subregional Coordinator role in March.

SWAP Meetings

SWAP held eight regular meetings and two special events in 2017. Highlighted meeting topics included the following:

- Arts and Culture Planning
- Community Engagement Strategies
- Middle-Income Housing
- Creative Placemaking
- SWAP Housing Opportunities and Challenges
- Federal Transportation Funding: Discussion of UPWP, LRTP, and TIP
- GIS Resources at Town Hall
- Local Economic Development Planning

Month	Description
January	SWAP invited staff Jenn Erickson to present on MAPC arts and culture planning initiative. Communities were interested in incorporating the arts into public facilities and spaces, such as well-designed stormwater catch basins and pop-up parks.
February	SWAP and the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC) held a joint forum titled “Hazy Days: Planning for Recreational Marijuana” in Ashland. More details are available below.
March	The SWAP legislative breakfast was held on March 31 at the Thayer Homestead in Medway. Nearly 30 people attended, including Senator Karen Spilka, Representative Shawn Dooley, Representative Brian Murray, and Representative Jeff Roy. Following an update from Senator Spilka on the Senate FY2018 budget, MAPC moderated a panel discussion around each legislator’s priorities, and facilitated a question and answer session with the SWAP members.



April	On April 11, SWAP met in Norfolk. Emily Torres-Cullinane, MAPC Community Engagement Manager, provided an overview of community engagement resources and strategies, and facilitated a discussion on how to overcome common community engagement challenges.
May	SWAP's May 9 meeting in Milford featured a presentation from Deb Morse and Meaghan McCarthy from MassHousing on the organization's Workforce Housing Initiative. This work supports the creation of housing for those whose incomes are too high to qualify for subsidized housing, but are still priced out of market rents.
June	SWAP's June 13 meeting was held in Sherborn, and focused on creative placemaking. Annis Sengupta, Regional Arts and Culture Planner, provided an overview of the new division at MAPC and discussed the range of assistance available to communities interested in pursuing more arts and culture work. Next, Chris Kuschel, Senior Regional Planner, presented on a temporary street improvement project in Maynard that was completed last year and provided a means of piloting elements of Complete Streets. Finally, Amanda Maher of MassDevelopment discussed a host of funding opportunities available to communities to support creative placemaking efforts, including the agency's Commonwealth Places initiative. Per the subregion's bylaws, SWAP did not meet in July or August.
September	<p>SWAP held the first meeting of the 2017-2018 program year on Tuesday, September 12 in Bellingham. The committee voted to approve Jen Burke of Hopkinton as incoming SWAP co-chair and voted to approve a new workplan for the 2017-2018 program year.</p> <p>The main topic on the agenda was a group discussion around the subregion's housing opportunities and challenges. This conversation was facilitated by Marlene McCollem, MAPC Chief Housing Planner, as well as Laura Shufelt and Carsten Snow of Mass Housing Partnership. Each municipality shared successful strategies their community has implemented around housing as well as challenges faced. This will continue to be an ongoing discussion within SWAP as the subregion plans for how they may address some of the topics raised in the future.</p>
October	SWAP met on October 10 to discuss federal transportation funding opportunities via the MPO. Lourenço Dantas and Jen Rowe of CTPS facilitated a discussion around the LRTP and UPWP, providing background information and clarifying details on both programs. The group also spent some time generating project ideas and flagging items that may be noted in the SWAP transportation needs assessment. There was also some discussion of the TIP and further conversations will take place with each municipality's TIP contacts.
November	Susan Brunton, MAPC Geodatabase Administrator, facilitated a discussion to learn more about the current GIS resources available to SWAP communities. This included a discussion of what kinds of software is utilized, what purposes GIS is generally used for, and whether a consultant supports any GIS work in the town. This conversation will be used to inform some best practices and recommendations for enhancing use of GIS in the subregion. Susan wrapped up by showcasing some GIS-based tools available through MAPC, include the Local Access tool and Trailmap.
December	In December, SWAP discussed economic development planning opportunities with Raul Gonzalez, MAPC Economic Development Planner. Raul reviewed current economic development work happening in SWAP, and presented on TA opportunities available through MAPC. There was also a roundtable discussion of current economic development work happening in SWAP communities.



Special Events

SWAP held two special event in 2017.

Hazy Days: Planning for Recreational Marijuana: The purpose of the forum was to discuss ways in which communities can proactively plan while regulatory details around recreational marijuana are still being determined. The forum included an overview of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act and a review of local control options. Next, Mark Racicot, MAPC Land Use Director, moderated a panel discussion with Jeff Bagg, CMRPC Principal Planner, Greg Miao, MAPC Municipal Services Specialist, and Barry Keppard, MAPC Public Health Director.

Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) workshop: In October, CPTC trainer Adam Costa from Mead, Talerman & Costa, LLC facilitated the training on Site Plan Review. The fifteen participants included planners, and planning and zoning board members.

MAPC Planning Projects

In 2017, MAPC provided technical assistance to SWAP communities in the following projects:

- SWAP/TRIC Tiny Houses Project (Medway, Medfield, Foxborough, Sherborn, Stoughton)
- Bellingham Economic Development Initiative
- Norfolk Economic Development Initiative
- Sherborn Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Wrentham Town Center Zoning District Project
- Sherborn Town Center Housing Study (cont.)