

Executive Director's Report February 12, 2018

Submitted to the Executive Committee by Marc Draisen, Executive Director

Smart Growth Planning

Transportation

Fare Choices: A Survey of Ride-Hailing Passengers in Metro Boston

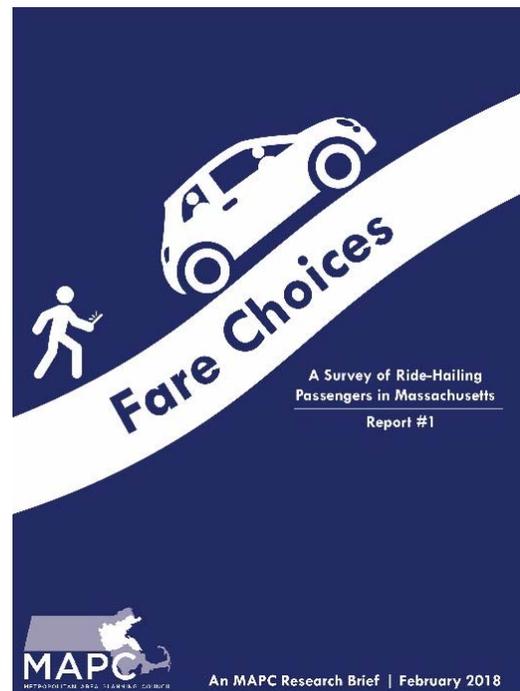
Early last week, MAPC released a report entitled *Fare Choices: A Survey of Ride-hailing Passengers in Metro Boston*, which provides unique insight into the characteristics of residents and visitors who are using ride-hailing services, the types of trips they are making, and the impact that these services may be having on the region's transportation system.

Our data, which was collected through an in-vehicle survey of nearly 1,000 ride-hailing passengers during October and November of last year, confirms many common assumptions about who uses these services: most survey respondents are young, don't have a car, and use ride hailing on a weekly basis. Most people travel by themselves, and the highest frequency of trips is in the evening hours. Riders are also willing to pay a fairly substantial premium for these services: most trips cost more than \$10, and one in five costs \$20.

Some of our findings also raised important concerns regarding traffic and transit congestion. When asked how they would have traveled if ride hailing weren't an option, 42% said they would have taken transit, and 12% would have walked or biked. These findings, consistent with those of other studies on the topic, confirm that the expansion of ride hailing is leading to more cars on the road. We estimate that 15% of all ride hailing trips are adding cars to the region's roadways during the morning or afternoon rush hours.

Not only does this "transit substitution" affect congestion, but it also affects MBTA revenue. After accounting for transit pass availability and substitution options, we estimate that each ride hailing trip represents 35 cents of lost revenue for the MBTA, far exceeding the 20 cent per-ride surcharge assessed by the Commonwealth.

Overall, our findings demonstrate that ride hailing is quickly becoming an important and valuable option for the region's residents. However, we may not be fully prepared to manage the negative impacts of these services. Certainly, more work is needed to make transit a more competitive option for riders. We also need more data on how these systems are being used, and where, and should



begin exploring pricing and fee structures that will promote shared rides while adequately recouping each trip's impact on the transportation system.

This report is the first product of MAPC's initiative to understand this growing industry and to plan for its sustainable future. I'd like to thank Alison Felix, Steve Gehrke, Tim Reardon, and Eric Bourassa for all their excellent work conceiving and managing the project, collecting and analyzing the data, publishing the report on an accelerated timeline. I would also like to thank the Barr Foundation for their support.

The report is available at: www.mapc.org/farechoices

No Cost Bike Share RFP

In November, MAPC issued an RFP for a no cost bike share system across 16 municipalities in the region. Proposals were due in December, and the past several weeks have been spent reviewing the bids, conducting vendor interviews, calling references, and deliberating which vendors would be able to provide the best system for the participating communities. In the end, the evaluation committee selected two bidders as the apparent awarded vendors. The next couple of months will be spent contracting with the vendors, developing a regional MOU between MAPC and the 16 communities, and working with the participating communities as well as their abutters (including the Hubway communities) to prepare for a successful system launch.

A special congratulations to Kasia Hart and Marjorie Weinberger for spearheading this effort, and a big thank you to all of the members of the Evaluation Committee and the Committee of Experts.

Maynard Parking Study

Kasia Hart and Sarah Kurpiel Lee recently completed a downtown parking study for the Maynard. The study culminated with a presentation of key findings at the Maynard Board of Selectmen on January 30. Some of the main observations and recommendations include removing old and malfunctioning parking meters in the downtown, and directing more users to park in currently underutilized off-street parking lots by investing in lighting improvements and updating signage. The town is currently debating whether they would like to remove the parking meters in their downtown, and should they choose to do so, MAPC would be available to do some follow up data collection to assess the impact of parking meter removal on parking utilization and turnover.

Northern Strand Community Trail

Governor Baker's office last week announced \$1.5 million for design to complete the entire Northern Strand Trail between the Mystic River and the Swampscott Line. The Transportation Department and in particularly MAPC's LandLine Coalition has advocated and worked with our partners for many years to extend this trail. Completion of the trail goes one big step forward to a continuous shared use path between Boston and the New Hampshire border.

Special kudos to David Loutzenheiser on our staff, Kurt Gaertner at EOEEA, and that real trails nut in the Governor Office, named Barrera, I think!

Land Use

Duxbury Master Plan

MAPC is working with the Duxbury Planning Board and Master Plan Ambassadors on targeted stakeholder engagement for the Phase 1 Master Plan elements (Housing, Historic/Cultural Resources, and Open Space/Recreation). MAPC staff have created a series of one-pagers with the major findings about each element, draft recommendations, and questions for stakeholders to

answer that will help inform the elements and their recommendations. On February 2, Duxbury's Planning Director (on behalf of the Planning Board) sent out a call for input to town boards/committees, local institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. Over the next month, Master Plan Ambassadors will be following up with stakeholders to make sure that their feedback gets back to MAPC and into the plan. MAPC will be presenting drafts of the Phase 1 elements with recommendations to Planning Board on March 21.

Bellingham Economic Development Initiative

MAPC has been working with Bellingham to create an economic development action plan for the town. On January 18, MAPC hosted a public forum and visioning event at the Town Library. About 40 residents came to voice their opinions on growth and development for the town's three commercial districts through multiple exercises. In one, they used stickers to indicate where they might support development within the designated corridor. Another sought to determine which industry types would be welcomed, and which would not, while a third asked for participants to elaborate on the biggest opportunities and challenges in different areas in town.



Additionally, from October 23, 2017 to January 22, 2018, an economic development survey was conducted to create a shared economic development vision for Bellingham. Over 200 residents, business owners, and stakeholders completed the survey. Lastly, town staff and MAPC held business and developer roundtables on February 5. Both events created constructive and open dialogue among business community, land owners, and town officials. Along with the responses from the online survey and January's open house, the feedback from the business and developer events will be incorporated into the town economic development action plan, to be released in May.

Environment

Hazard Mitigation Plans

The local Hazard Mitigation teams in Acton and Norwood held their second teams meetings to evaluate past mitigation efforts. Both towns are also moving forward in planning for their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants, which will help to engage the public around climate adaptation issues.

MEPA Project Review

The projects listed below for the region were filed with the MEPA office and were ranked by MAPC for the level of review. The MAPC review categories are defined as follows:

- A Major regional project to be reviewed by the Officers and/or Executive Committee
- B Regional project to be reviewed by staff and approved by Executive Director
- C Local or regional project to be tracked by MAPC; no MEPA review needed

Summary of MEPA Projects reviewed and ranked by MAPC, December 2017/January 2018:

15783	Suffolk Downs Redevelopment*	Boston and Revere	ENF	A
11202	MassDot Snow and Ice Control	Statewide	FEIR	C
15278	I-90 Allston Interchange Project	Boston	DEIR	B
15610	115 Winthrop Square	Boston	DEIR	C
15796	The Preserve at Abbyville and Abbyville Commons	Norfolk	ENF	C
15797	Squantum Point Pier & Ferry Dock Improvements Project	Quincy	ENF	C
15788	Conveyance of Tenean St. Parcel to Sullivan McLaughlin Companies Inc.	Boston (Dorchester)	ENF	C
15793	Northeastern University MSC Seawater Intake Replacement	Nahant	ENF	C

*Please note that President Keith Bergman will be appointing a committee to assist the staff in its review of the Suffolk Downs DEIR and FEIR. Time did not permit the assembly of a committee for the ENF stage.

Suffolk Downs Redevelopment

MAPC submitted a comment letter on the Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) for the Suffolk Downs Redevelopment in Boston and Revere. The EENF proposes to construct a mixed-use development of 16.5 million square feet at the former Suffolk Downs horse racing facility. Of the 161 acres that make up the project, approximately 109 are in Boston and 52 are in Revere. Full-build out of the site is anticipated to occur over a period of 15-20 years. A Phase 1 waiver has been requested which will allow the developer to proceed with the construction of two office buildings (520,000 square feet and 520 structured parking spaces) prior to completing the MEPA process for the entire project. Phase 1 is responsive to the Request for Proposals from Amazon for a second corporate headquarters.

Subsequently, the Secretary's Certificate granted the request for a Phase 1 Waiver and required the developer to submit a mandatory Environmental Impact Report (EIR). MAPC's comment letter is referenced throughout the Certificate and vast majority of our comments have been incorporated. Key comments included providing an on-site shuttle service and outlining a program that monitors mode share goals and a mitigation timeline. Additional comments addressed wetlands and climate adaptation, climate mitigation and building resilience, urban design, incorporating public transit and accommodating transit vehicles. Since this project is ranked as a major regional project (Category A), President Keith Bergman will be appointing a committee to assist MAPC staff in its review of future submissions as part of the MEPA review process. The letter is here: mapc.org/our-work/expertise/environment/mepa-review.

Neponset Stormwater Partnership

Martin Pillsbury helped to convene the first quarterly workshop of 2018, in partnership with the Neponset River Watershed Association, on January 25 in Canton. The workshop featured a presentation on the state's new Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, which provides technical assistance to communities to assess their climate vulnerabilities. Stormwater and flooding are major components of this program, which can be complementary to a community's MS4

Stormwater Permit activities. A presentation was also made by Norwood's Planning Director, as the only town in the Neponset watershed participating in the first year of the MVP program. MAPC is the service provider for Norwood's MVP project, which is being coordinated with the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. A second year grant round is expected to be announced this spring, and other Neponset towns were encouraged to take advantage of the grant program.

Arts & Culture

Arts & Culture Discussion Series Event Art and Green Infrastructure



On January 29, MAPC, in partnership with the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA), hosted EcoArtist Stacy Levy, a Pennsylvania-based environmental sculptor whose projects harness natural forces including rainwater, plants, and microbes to help create sculptural solutions for storm-water and water pollution issues. The event was attended by 60+ people. Demand for this event was so high that it inspired the Old Colony Planning Council to invite Stacy to offer a second presentation, which took place in Bridgewater later that afternoon!

This event was the second in a series of three discussions to bring together artists, arts administrators, and municipal and regional planners to explore how public art can address a range of planning goals and objectives related to community building, economic development, green infrastructure, and public health. The third discussion will take place on Monday, April 23, from 9:30 – 11:30 AM and the topic is *Art and Public Health*. To RSVP, please contact MAPC Artist-in-Residence Carolyn Lewenberg at clewenberg@mapc.org. Image credits: Stacy Levy.

Strategic Initiatives

Regional Plan Update

The external advisors met last month. Staff provided a presentation that highlighted approaches taken by some of our peer agencies in their recent blueprint plans. "Putting a face" on planning issues by using case studies and highlighting individual stories was an approach that the advisors were interested in MAPC embracing. There was an active and engaged discussion on a variety of topics, with a major theme being how to make the new plan useful for stakeholders. Questions included the extent of buy-in we should seek from elected municipal officials, the role of individuals in the recommendations section, and options for ensuring that the great data and analysis of the plan can remain relevant over time, and not just grow stale.

Staff, with support from some of the external advisors, are developing the draft two-year process design for the plan update. They are organized in five subcommittees looking at: the plan's organization and structure; the research agenda; communications and engagement strategy; scenario modeling; and local plans and priorities. Because there is so much inherent overlap and coordination between topics, the internal staff committee was organized to allow the subcommittees to meet with each other and with Marc and Rebecca to outline their scopes of work and to identify questions or concerns that require collaboration with other work streams. Some of this internal coordination will happen through the subcommittee leads working directly with one another. By early March, drafts of their proposed deliverables and timelines are due.

Zoning and Housing Reform

The Governor's Housing Choice bill (H. 4075) was heard by the Housing Committee on January 30. MAPC and our allies testified in support of the legislation with the direct ask that these ideas be included in a much more comprehensive and balanced bill. MARPA, the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA), the APA-MA Chapter, and the Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors are just some of our allies that provided either in-person or written testimony to this effect.

On February 7, the Housing Committee reported out H. 4075 with modest changes. They incorporated some of our recommendations, but did not include adding Inclusionary Zoning as one of the best practices or add smart growth location criteria to the "catch-all" provision. Another addition the committee made was including a provision for reducing the special permit vote for mixed-use and multi-family zoning amendments that include 10% affordable housing and are located in smart-growth locations.

The Great Neighborhoods bills received extensions from the Municipalities Committee with a new reporting deadline of March 7. On February 1, the Great Neighborhoods campaign held a "day of action" that generated nearly 1,000 emails and calls to legislators. The message reinforced the call for a comprehensive and balanced bill. And we are continuing to meet with legislators, nearing our goal of meeting with half of the members of the House.

Community Engagement

Conflict Resolution Talk Shop

On January 29, the Carolina Prieto from the community engagement team facilitated a Community Engagement Talk Shop entitled "Conflict Resolution in Our Work." The one hour workshop covered conflict, negotiation principles, and tips while providing staff an opportunity to engage with colleagues on issues they experience in their work. Sixteen staff participated in the lunchtime workshop. The team is looking forward to expanding opportunities for staff to engage in this topic throughout the year.

Subregions

MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC)

MWRC's Democracy Project kicked off in Ashland this month with a discussion at our regular Board Meeting among elected officials and professional staff from eight municipalities. Led by Mark Fine, MAPC's Director of Municipal Collaboration, and MAPC Municipal Services Specialist Laurie

Zivkovich, the discussion centered, as will the project, around who does and doesn't participate in local government, and best practices for widening participation.

In the meantime, on the MetroWest LandLine front, kickoff meetings have now been held in each of the eight municipalities. Many of the gatherings – very focused working sessions – were cross municipal, and several involved DCR.

Next, MAPC Senior Transportation Planner David Loutzenheiser will develop action plans for each of the seven priority trail gaps, and we will return to the communities for feedback.

North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC)

NSPC met February 8 in Stoneham. At this meeting, NSPC discussed arts and culture activity and planning around the subregion with other planners, residents, and workers involved with arts and culture in the area. The meeting included presentations by Jenn Erickson and Melissa DeFriesse from the Greater Boston Stage Company. Melissa's talk focused on the challenges and opportunities of operating an arts and culture organization in the subregion while Jenn's presentation focused on cultural planning in general and opportunities for funding and collaboration in the future. The meeting also set aside time for discussion about arts and culture and civic life as well as opportunities for informal networking.

At NSPC's next meeting, the Council will hear from Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director. Chris will talk about the state's Housing Choice program and answer any questions municipalities have about the application process. This meeting will be on March 8 in Winchester.

North Shore Task Force (NSTF)

In January, the NSTF met in Danvers and decided to focus on housing and transportation issues as core issues for the subregion for the upcoming year. On February 15, Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director, will outline Housing Choice and how communities can participate.

SouthWest Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP)

The SWAP Legislative Breakfast took place on February 2 at the Thayer Homestead in Medway. Lizzi Weyant provided an update on MAPC's legislative priorities, and subsequently Representatives David Linsky, Chris Murray, and Jeffrey Roy all shared their legislative priorities for the upcoming session. Following the panel discussion, the legislators took questions from SWAP subregional members in the audience. Some of the key issues addressed at the breakfast included housing and zoning reform, transportation finance, charter schools, and the state budget. Thank you to all who were able to attend!





The next SWAP meeting will be on Tuesday, February 13 from 9:30 - 11:00 AM at Millis Town Hall, Room 229. Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director at DHCD, will speak about the new Housing Choice Initiative, highlighting elements of the program that may be of interest to SWAP communities.

South Shore Coalition (SSC)

SSC met on January 18 for a presentation and discussion about technical assistance opportunities available in the MAPC region. Ralph Willmer from MAPC, Amanda Chisholm from MassDevelopment, and Mark Abbott from the Boston Region MPO each presented about the opportunities available through their respective agencies and answered questions. At the beginning of the meeting, SSC reviewed and discussed the draft of the 2018 Work Plan and the tentative schedule of meetings/events for the year. During this conversation, members discussed their interest in working on a subregion-wide project this year. Subregional Coordinator Emma Schnur is currently surveying members on the topic areas that most interest them.

Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC)

In January, TRIC met to discuss local historic preservation planning. Chris Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs at the Massachusetts Historical Commission, provided an overview of what local historic preservation looks like in municipalities across the Commonwealth. Skelly reviewed preservation techniques such as demolition delay bylaws and what the state and national Registers of Historic Places mean for municipal buildings. The meeting was well attended by TRIC members and members of historic commissions and societies from across the subregion.

As 2018 commences, there is no shortage of activities going on in the subregion. TRIC is preparing for housing workshops hosted by the Mass Housing Partnership and an upcoming legislative breakfast in March.

We are pleased to welcome Municipal Services Specialist Laurie Zivkovich as the new subregional coordinator. Thanks to Christine Howe, who is taking on several new responsibilities at MAPC. We know Laurie will do a great job.

Clean Energy

SolSmart Resources Workshop

On January 23, MAPC held a SolSmart Resources Brown Bag to share lessons learned and resources gained from participation in the SolSmart program. Last spring, MAPC hosted a SolSmart advisor who worked with seven of our communities to achieve designation through the program funded by the US Department of Energy. Participants at the Brown Bag learned about strategies to reduce solar soft costs through solar zoning language, a permitting checklist, and participating in community outreach programs such as Solarize. We will be hosting a similar workshop this spring for any communities that were unable to attend this event. (By the way, that SolSmart advisor was Nicole Sanches, who is now a member of our Clean Energy staff.)

Solar Hot Water Webinar

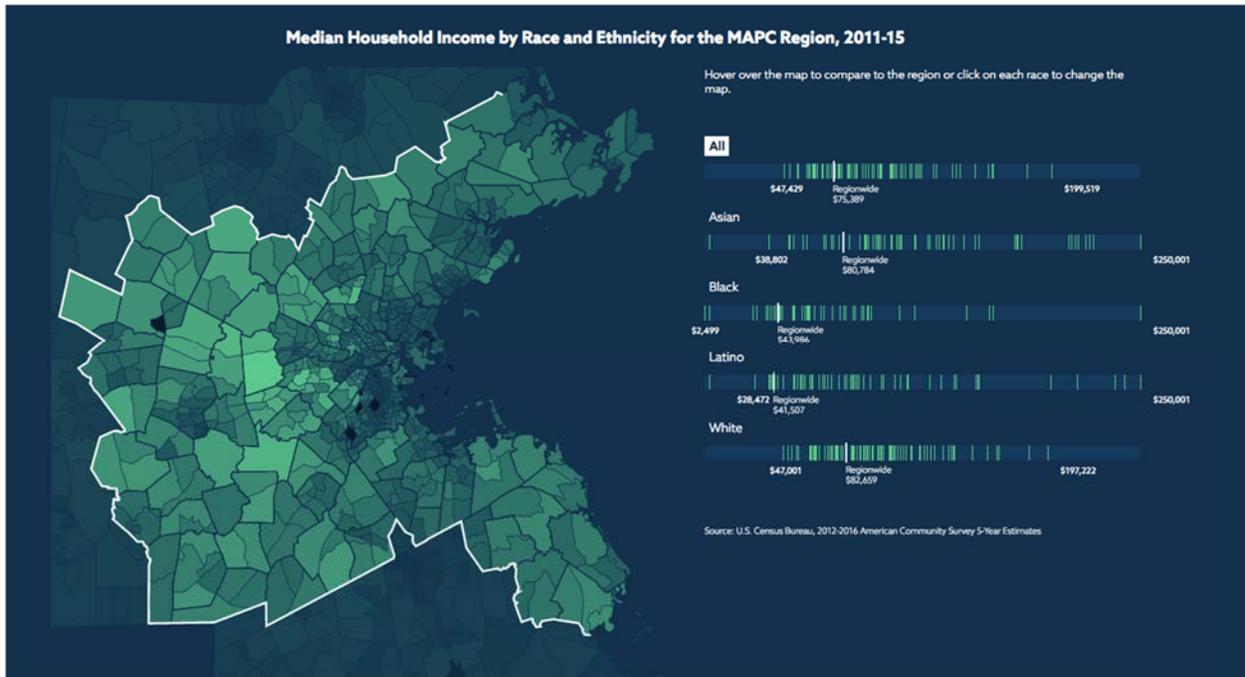
MAPC has been working with Meister Consultants Group, Inc. on a municipal solar thermal procurement pilot as part of MassCEC's Solar Thermal Challenge. On January 18, we held a webinar to introduce communities to our pilot procurement program and to highlight the residential pilot that the Hampshire Council of Governments is running simultaneously. A recording of the webinar was made for our communities to reference.

The webinar will be available on MAPC's YouTube page. In the meantime, it can be accessed at <https://mapcevents.webex.com/mapcevents/lsr.php?RCID=ae345b38b667c2fa0d367ccfc8d230a0>.

Data Services

Interactive Data Visualization and User-Friendly Site for Draft State of Equity Policy Agenda

The goal of this project was to showcase the Policy Agenda in an engaging, actionable manner. The site features the agenda's content in a well-designed, easy to consume interactive format, which provides visual cues to the agenda's hierarchy. Along with the long-form content, Digital Services created an interactive indicators page that allows the user to visualize key data discussed throughout the document. This page features custom map and chart visualizations using D3, a cutting edge web visualization library. The user is able to load different regional datasets into the visualization layout to illustrate the state of equity in the region across different racial populations and across all municipalities in the region. By using an interactive, visual method to display this information, it allows anybody to consume the data without being an expert in data analysis. This is an exciting project for our agency, as we stay up to date with emergent technology practices and communicate complex information through well built, consumer-grade tools such as this website. Congratulations to Eric Youngberg, Frontend Developer, DeeDee Kim, Graduate Data Visualization Intern, and Alicia Rouault, Digital Services Manager, for their contribution to this project. (For more information about the Agenda, see pp. 12-13 of this report or go to <http://equityagenda.mapc.org/>.)

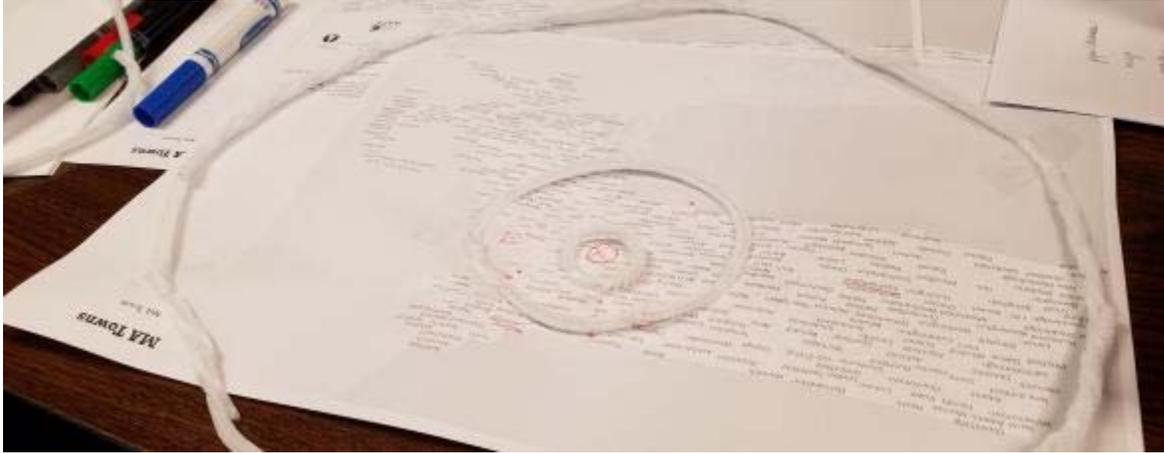


Web Server Improvements and Cost Savings

The Digital Services group has been working with IT to improve the reliability and security of our web servers over the past month. We inventoried our applications and measured what resources they require. Then we developed a plan to take the resources we do not need offline. As a result we identified a few thousand dollars a year in potential savings. We also are formalizing processes that will improve the reliability and security of our applications to the public and make it easier for us to resolve problems with applications in the future.

Mel King Institute Data 101 Workshop

In January Manisha Bewtra, Sarah Philbrick and Jessie Partridge Guerrero held a Data 101 training workshop through the Mel King Institute’s training program. This day-long data storytelling workshop held in Framingham helped participants build data and information literacy, mapping, and data visualization skills. The morning session of the workshop outlined the typical kinds of stories that can be found in data and provided participants opportunities to practice finding stories in several different kinds of data—with paper and craft materials, no technology. In the afternoon, participants brought the concepts they had explored in the morning hands-on session and learned how to use technology to help visualize data to tell their data stories.



General Land Area Minimum Guidelines

In January, DHCD adopted new guidelines for calculating the General Land Area Minimum, also known as “1.5%,” a process by which municipalities can assert safe harbor under MGL Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit statute. MAPC worked with DHCD, the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, and other partners to develop these guidelines. The new guidelines require use of MassGIS Level 3 Assessors Parcels and use of GIS to conduct the calculation, which will make review less burdensome and more objective.

By establishing clear guidelines and a specific process for the determination of this controversial benchmark, communities that do qualify will be able to complete the calculation in a clear and transparent manner, while the vast majority that do not qualify will be able to understand the rationale behind that reality.

Municipal Collaboration

Statewide Homeland Security Fiduciary

Two members of MAPC’s Homeland Security Division have recently become certified public purchasing officials in the Commonwealth. Tim Moore has received the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) designation and Christine Howe has earned the Associate MCPPO designation. Both Tim and Christine attended classes offered by the Office of the Inspector General covering public contracting and design and construction laws. After successfully completing these courses and passing multiple exams they were awarded these designations, which also reflect additional educational and experience requirements that public purchasing officials must possess. In addition, Tim has been nominated by the New England Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) for APWA’s Emergency Manager of the Year Award. A winner will be selected this spring and we will do all we can to support Tim’s well-earned nomination!

Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC)

At the beginning of February, NERAC submitted their FFY2018 Regional Plan to EOPSS. This plan outlines how the Northeast Homeland Security Region will invest approximately \$1.1 million of federal homeland security funding to improve emergency preparedness in Essex and Middlesex counties. The projects detailed in the plan include equipment purchases to provide first responders

with the necessary tools to protect residents and themselves, trainings to develop critical first responder skills, and exercises to improve regional coordination. While there are a number of ongoing programs such as active threat training, the buildout of communications infrastructure, and expansion of NERAC's Regional Cache Program that will be receiving funding during this grant cycle, there are several new initiatives as well. These new projects are headlined by the provision of bleeding control kits to all 600 public schools in the region to empower non-medical personnel to provide immediate lifesaving care to victims of active threat events, and the purchase of portable vehicle barricades that can be used to wall off areas with high pedestrian traffic and prevent vehicles from being used as weapons against civilians, which has been an emerging threat in the United States and across the world.

As NERAC has done during the past several years, a significant portion of their budget was also allocated to support MAPC staff and ensure that two FTE's can be dedicated to this program. MAPC separately receives an allocation of funding from EOPSS to support the work of the Council, however it covers less than one FTE at this time. NERAC demonstrated the value they place on MAPC's work by supplementing that allocation with an additional \$180,000 of funding for staff.

Metro Mayors Shannon Grant Community Safety Initiative

On February 5, representatives from the Metro Mayors Community Safety Initiative (CSI) attended the FY2018 Shannon Grant Award Announcement at the State House. Governor Charlie Baker, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, and Secretary of Public Safety and Security Daniel Bennett were joined by Shannon youth, prevention program managers, and law enforcement to announce the 2018 Shannon Grant awards. Over \$5 million was awarded to 15 sites across the Commonwealth, including \$307,162 for the Metro Mayors CSI. In its 12th year, the MMC Shannon Grant CSI continues to foster collaboration between law enforcement and prevention partners to provide at-risk youth, ages 10-24, with employment, recreation, and community engagement opportunities that prevent violence and gang involvement. Through relationship building and the implementation of proven prevention strategies, 18 partnering groups across 8 Metro Mayors Communities serve thousands of youth every year through Shannon Grant funding. Continued support and increased funding for the Shannon Grant CSI is vital to the success of these programs and similar efforts across the Commonwealth.

Communications

Our press team had two big pushes in January and February: the release of our study on Uber and Lyft, which got great coverage in The Boston Globe, on WBUR, WBZ and WGBH radio, and on national publication Streetsblog USA, in Commonwealth, WHDH TV Channel 5, and other outlets; and the release of our draft State of Equity Policy Agenda, which was less media-focused but still required lots of Communications support on the outreach and social media promotion side. Both were very successful releases and the team also lent support to several smaller projects, including ETOD in Rockport and Woburn, economic development in Norwell, the release of Shannon funds last week, and the Stoneham Housing Production Plan.



INTEGRATED CLIMATE SERVICES



AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR A CONSTELLATION OF ISSUES

Preparing for the MMA annual convention is usually a January focus, and this year was no different. Although, of course, the MAPC booth featured information about all of our services, our overall theme was the agency’s climate and clean energy work. Working with the Environmental Planning and Clean Energy teams, Communications developed an oversized brochure called “Integrated Climate”. The brochure’s language adheres to advice from social scientists about effective climate communications, and it explains the advantages to taking a holistic approach to climate work.

Special thanks go to our new Digital Communications Specialist Elise Harmon for her work helping to drive attendance to the State of Equity event and the upcoming Council Meeting, and for her work to create compelling social media content teasing our report releases to generate higher online

engagement and amplification. Her work blogging about the agency’s work and keeping our website updated every day has been critical to spreading the word about our work to key stakeholders, even when there isn’t a major print or broadcast media push.

Government Affairs

Housing Choice Bill

The Housing Committee held a hearing on January 30 for the Governor’s Housing Choice bill. At the request of Chairman Honan, we not only testified but also weighed in with suggested amendments to the legislation. For further information on the committee’s actions, see p. 6 of this report.

Draft State of Equity Policy Agenda

On February 7, released the draft State of Equity Policy Agenda in an event at the State House attended by over 100 people, including several people who served on the Advisory Committee that was instrumental in the creation of the document. Our speakers included Celina Barrios-Millner of Mayor Walsh’s Office of Immigrant Advancement, and Lisa Wong, Deputy Director at the Asian American Civic Association (and former Mayor of Fitchburg), as well as Lisa Malera, a parent advocate from Stand for Children.

The document – and its fabulous digital presentation (see p. 9 of this report) – represent a strong statement that MAPC intends to take its strategic priority on equity seriously, through policy actions designed to achieve a more balanced and equitable region. Many of the recommendations sit within MAPC’s areas of strength, and we are likely to play a leading role in their implementation; others represent areas for future research, or efforts that will be led by allied parties, with MAPC playing a supporting role. But they are all important to the future of Metro Boston.

The document is now out for public comment – and that includes members of the Executive Committee, which will be asked to review the document on March 21. You can locate the draft at <http://equityagenda.mapc.org/>. Special congratulations to Lizzi Weyant and Barry Keppard, the primary authors of the report.

Metro Mayors Coalition

The Metro Mayors held the first meeting of the Housing Task Force on January 25 in Somerville. All 14 communities were represented at the meeting, including several mayors and managers – plus the Town of Arlington, which was subsequently voted into the Metro Mayors Coalition just last week. The event featured an engaging presentation on housing supply and demand by Tim Reardon, after which Karina Milchman led a conversation about the project’s principles and upcoming research and policy work. Our colleagues from the Baker Administration, including MassHousing, which is helping to fund this project, joined us for the meeting.

Staffing Update

Ian Hill has joined the Digital Services Working Group as a Full Stack Web Developer. Ian will work on technology that impacts how the user engages with information (what things look and feel like) in the “front end,” *and* in the “back end,” where data and functionality run (the “engine of the car,” so to speak). Ian is a recent graduate from Olin College of Engineering, and he previously worked with government technology software companies including Quorum Analytics and Agora Townhall, which exist to increase the use of data in legislative affairs and to engage the public outside of a traditional town hall meeting. Ian also has experience working at large technology firms including IBM and Google, and spent the last year developing his own startup called Parlinet to help citizens understand and participate in their local government.