

**Executive Director's Report
Mid-June through Mid-September 2020
Submitted to the Executive Committee
by Executive Director Marc Draisen
September 16, 2020**

Arts and Culture

Spatial Justice Discussion Series

Working in partnership with the Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) and New England Foundation for the Arts, the Arts & Culture department developed “Whose Public? Planning and Placemaking for Welcoming Public Spaces,” a three-part online discussion series that explored the role that planners, artists, and government staff can play in shaping just, joyful, and inclusive public spaces.



Participants heard from a diverse group of artists, activists, planners, and community leaders who are leading the way in spatial justice both here in Greater Boston and across the country. This framework, developed by DS4SI, considers how the built and designed environment reflects broader systems and patterns of social injustice and proposes strategies and tools to make public space more welcoming for all. Guest speakers shared their perspectives on spatial justice in the context of our nation’s ongoing reckoning with systemic racism, and offered examples of spatial justice in practice from their experiences as librarians, cultural policymakers, artists, architects, planners, activists, and educators.

View recordings of each event plus a compilation of resources shared by guest speakers and event participants at mapc.org/resource-library/spatial-justice-discussion-series.

Arts and Culture Indicators Project

On July 1, MAPC kicked off an arts and culture indicators project with municipal partners from Arlington, Beverly, Franklin, and Boston. The project aims to establish a baseline of arts and culture economy and programming in the region to document and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on artists, arts organizations, and the local creative economy. Working with municipal partners, MAPC staff will build out local and regional approaches to COVID-19 recovery within the arts and culture sector.

Regional Immigrant-Owned Small Business Storytelling

On August 2020, the Economic Development and Arts and Culture teams, with support from Community Engagement and the Communications Department, launched a regional project to share stories of resilient immigrant entrepreneurs in the MAPC region. MAPC contracted with artist Daphne Xu (www.daphne-xu.com) to document the stories of three Asian-American entrepreneurs in Quincy. The filmmaker has successfully navigated social-distancing guidelines and remotely recorded three interviews in addition to incorporating self-recorded footage from business owners.



These interviews will be compiled into a documentary film that touches on the services and networks that have provided support to these business owners during Covid-19, the current and future support these entrepreneurs need from local and state government, and the value of working in Quincy, MA. In combination with data analysis and surveys of immigrant-owned business clusters across the region, these stories will help guide frameworks for policy advocacy at the regional and municipal levels.

“Small Steps: Dances of Resilience” Premiere

“Small Steps: Dances of Resilience” premiered as a full-length documentary on September 9, 2020 with additional screenings held on September 10 and 11 and a virtual Meet the Dancers Zoom forum following the final screening. Conceived as “Small Steps on Climate Change,” the project was originally a dance and embodied movement performance intended to inspire Metro Boston to view climate change as an opportunity to create stronger, healthier, and more vibrant communities. Developed by Artist-in-Residence Hortense Gerardo and Senior Environmental Planner Darci Schofield, the project commissioned movement artists to choreograph and perform a series of works in different styles on tiny stages, which would serve as a visual metaphor for human resilience in the face of limited resources. After COVID-19 canceled in-person performances, the team reconceived Small Steps as a demonstration of resilience against climate change, inequity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The film is being considered by multiple international film festivals.

Clean Energy

COVID-Safe Cooling Strategies

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it very difficult to keep vulnerable populations cool during the recent summer heat. As a result, The Barr Foundation funded MAPC and the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) to help some of the hardest hit cities and community-based organizations to develop and implement cooling strategies. Thus far grants have been made to Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Lawrence, Lynn, and Revere.

Municipalities use the funding for a range of programs, such as distributing personal cooling gear, purchasing air conditioning for vulnerable populations, providing utility bill relief, deploying equipment at cooling centers, and installing hydration stations. MAPC has also provided communications support and sample flyers to communities on COVID-safe cooling, translated into five languages. MAPC is advocating for policy improvements, from expanded utility assistance for those impacted by COVID to enhanced access to weatherization services. MAPC’s [Extreme Heat Resources page](#) has more information, as does MAPC’s August 21 blog post on “How to Stay Safe During Extreme Heat In the Time of COVID.”

Equity Working Group at the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council

On July 21, the statewide Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) launched a new working group focused on equity. MAPC Clean Energy Director and EEAC Councilor representing Commonwealth cities and towns, Cammy Peterson, is serving on the Equity Working Group as Co-Chair. The working group will strive to develop just and equitable solutions that center on the communities underserved by existing energy efficiency programs, namely renters, moderate-income customers, customers with limited English language proficiency, and small businesses. The working group will be meeting throughout the fall and into 2021 to inform the development of the statewide 2022-2024 Energy Efficiency Plan while also working to enhance equity within current Mass Save programming.

Data Services

COVID-19 Housing Gap Analysis

Data Services has continued to monitor COVID-related unemployment and associated need for housing assistance, with multiple updates and other products produced in the last three months. In late August, we published updated estimates of unemployment and housing need by municipality, using “continuous claims” data from the state. At the request of Attorney General Healey’s office, Data Services Director Tim Reardon prepared an affidavit about eviction risk and the public health benefits of the state’s eviction moratorium; this affidavit was submitted by the AGO’s office as evidence in their defense of the eviction moratorium against legal challenges in both state and federal courts. In late August, Massachusetts Justice Wilson issued a decision denying the plaintiff’s request for a preliminary injunction, relying in part on the arguments made in MAPC’s affidavit. For the latest data and findings about unemployment and housing assistance need, visit the [COVID-19 Housing Gap](#) page on our website.

The Diversity Deficit: Municipal Employees in Metro Boston

On July 14, MAPC released [The Diversity Deficit: Municipal Employees in Metro Boston](#), a report highlighting the lack of racial, gender, and age diversity in Metro Boston’s municipal workforce. The report was released with a webinar featuring the lead analyst of the report, Dr. Seleeke Flingai, and a panel of regional and national experts in municipal government and racial equity, including Gordon Goodwin, Director of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity; Brandy H. M. Brooks, Director of Strategy & Development of One Square World; and Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager of Arlington. The panel was moderated by Dr. Yvonne Spicer, Mayor of Framingham. More than 150 participants joined the webinar and contributed to the timely and important discussion. The report was featured in a [Globe article](#) that brought in the perspectives of additional municipal leaders who have been working to increase the diversity of their own municipal staff.

Regional Land Use Allocation Model

In September the Research team completed a 14-month effort to stand up a new regional land use allocation model with UrbanSim, Inc. This model projects where future households and jobs will locate across the region and how changes in zoning, transportation access, and preserved open space can impact the region’s future land use patterns. While additional work is needed to test the model and continue improvements over time, the conclusion of this first phase of model development is a major milestone. There is also a companion model that covers the other 12 RPA regions in Massachusetts. MAPC will use these models going forward to create land use projections for efforts such as MetroCommon and (working with MassDOT, CTPS, and our RPA colleagues) the state’s next cohort of Long Range Transportation Plans.

Racial Disparities in the Proximity to Vehicle Air Pollution

In May, MAPC published a [research brief](#) on “Racial Disparities in the Proximity to Vehicle Air Pollution in the MAPC Region.” This report identified locations with the highest levels of

ultrafine particulate emissions from road vehicles, exposure to which is known to contribute to health impacts such as pulmonary and cardiovascular disease. The report showed that the communities in close proximity to high levels of pollution are disproportionately home to residents of color, with roughly half of MAPC's Black and Latino residents living in these high pollution areas, compared to less than a third of white residents.

Recommendations in the report for mitigating the health impacts of vehicle air pollution, and eliminating the persistent racial inequities in exposures, include retrofitting building air-exchange systems, expanding affordable housing development in low-pollution neighborhoods, reducing local heavy truck traffic and idling, and pushing for broad, systemic changes in the transportation system, including vehicle electrification. The data supporting this analysis were made available through an interactive mapping and download tool embedded in the report. Media coverage included articles by [WBUR](#) and [Smart Cities Dive](#) and an interview on Boston Neighborhood Network.

Digital Municipal Collaboration (DMC)

Seven vendors responded to the RFI issued by the Digital, Municipal Collaboration, and Legal teams in June, seeking information about "Accessible Solutions for Standardizing Invoicing & Contracting." The responses demonstrated a range of approaches to meeting the software needs of MAPC and our municipalities, ranging from all-inclusive services to contracted services and specialized vendors. The DMC team is now reviewing options and identifying preferred solutions for MAPC's needs. We are currently soliciting municipalities interested in partnering on a grant to the Community Compact IT Grant program, with a focus on permitting software, procurement software, or municipal broadband.

Equity in Scenario Planning Grant

In May, Data Services was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy for research to help advance equity in the field of scenario planning. The funded project will examine current practices for forecasting race and ethnicity at the municipal/sub-municipal level. We will then test out how different approaches might change the results of Disparate Burden/Disparate Impact analyses conducted for regional transportation plans and investments.

MassHousing Homeownership Research

This month, MassHousing awarded Data Services a \$20,000 contract to prepare a baseline analysis for the Commonwealth Builder program, which provides subsidies for middle-income homeownership in Gateway Cities and certain qualifying Census Tracts in other communities. MAPC will study home sales across the state, assess the number and distribution of home sales accessible to middle-income households, and estimate the potential market for moderately-priced homeownership in various contexts and submarkets. This work will both support MassHousing's efforts and produce important information for MAPC's local housing work.

Environment

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)

MAPC completed work on our first-ever two-community MVP project for Bellingham and Franklin. The joint public workshop was held last November, and follow-up Public Listening Sessions were held in each town this spring. The final MVP report was submitted to the two towns in June. This project also includes preparation of updated Hazard Mitigation Plans for both towns, as noted below.

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)

Arlington and Gloucester adopted their HMP Updates, and FEMA has issued formal letters of plan approval to both communities. Remote final presentations before Select Boards were held in Cohasset, Needham, and Norwell and final plans were submitted to MEMA.

In July and August MAPC conducted remote public meetings for the HMP's for Bellingham and Franklin, following which both draft plans were completed and submitted to MEMA. On June 9, MAPC kicked off a new HMP project for Topsfield by meeting with the Town Administrator and Fire Chief. On July 15 MAPC held the first-ever remote Local Hazard Mitigation Team meeting with nine Topsfield officials. With the assistance of GIS and Planning Analyst Caitlin Spence, who developed an innovative approach to replace in-person meetings, local data such as Critical Infrastructure sites were gathered using the GoogleMyMaps platform. This project is a combined MVP/HMP, which will be the town's first such plan. With this project, 99 MAPC communities will now have HMPs, and MAPC has prepared plans for 89 of them!

Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant

MAPC is working with the Barr Foundation to accelerate climate resilience in the region by helping municipalities to advance strategies that protect people, places, and communities from the impacts of climate change. The intent is to fund policy and infrastructure projects that drive long-term transformations. The program will provide 1-year grants from \$15,000 to \$55,000 for programs and capacity building, and 2-year grants from \$55,000 to \$150,000 for construction and capital improvement. All MAPC municipalities are eligible to apply. Regional collaboration and partnerships are encouraged. On July 15, MAPC issued an Invitation for Proposals, and hosted a Zoom information session on July 22. All proposals were received by August 31, and MAPC is currently reviewing the submittals and preparing to select proposals for funding. Funding decisions will be announced in October.

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 recently reviewed and ranked by MAPC:

MEPA #	Project	Community	MEPA Status	MAPC Ranking
6266	887 Woburn	WILMINGTON	ENF	C
16267	Quincy Bus Maintenance Facility	QUINCY	ENF	C
16268	Duxbury Beach Nature-Based Storm-Damage Protection Project	DUXBURY	ENF	C
16247	The Pinnacle at Central Wharf	BOSTON	ENF	B
16250	244-284 A Street	BOSTON	ENF	C
16253	Improvements to Pope John Paul II Park Playground	BOSTON	ENF	C
16255	Revetment Extension and Rehabilitation	SCITUATE	ENF	C
16257	150 Salem Turnpike	SAUGUS	ENF	C
16259	Clarendon Hill Apartments Redevelopment	SOMERVILLE	ENF	C
16260	BMT Culvert Segment Replacement	CHELSEA, EVERETT	ENF	C
16263	The Residences at 16, 18, and 20R Franklin Street	SALEM	ENF	C
16252	Waterfront Access and Flood Protection Design	SWAMPSCOTT	ENF	C
16254	Cummings Center Flood Mitigation	BEVERLY	ENF	C
6245	Gallops Island Remediation and Restoration Project	BOSTON	ENF	C
16222	Seasonal Ramp and Float	MANCHESTER BY THE SEA	ENF	C
16226	Becker Pond Dam Removal	MOUNT WASHINGTON	ENF	C
161	2 Harbor Street	BOSTON	Final EIF	C
757	Northland	NEWTON	Draft EIR	C
16063	401 Congress Street	BOSTON	Final EIR	C
16168	Logan Express Framingham Garage Expansion	FRAMINGHAM	Single EIR	C

Government Affairs

Legislative and Budget Priorities

Several of MAPC's legislative priorities have been included in the various bills that are currently in conference. These include the Transportation Bond Bill, the Climate Bill, and the Economic Development Bill. As often happens at the end of the legislative session, these larger, comprehensive bills are the vehicle to pass our many separate priorities. We are weighing in with conferees and individual legislators to ensure that we have the best chance of passing priorities that are at the top of our legislative agenda, including Regional Ballot Initiatives, Housing Choices, the Climate Roadmap bill, and various funding mechanisms.

The Legislature has not yet passed a full FY21 budget, and our current interim budget is set to expire at the end of October. At the same time, the Legislature has not passed an FY20 closeout budget, and must do so by the end of October. The FY20 budget is currently facing a \$700M gap, and the projected FY21 budget gap is between \$4-6B. We are continuing to advocate for funding for DLTA in the FY21 budget, as we remain concerned about anticipated deep budget cuts that will be necessary to level fund local aid programs.

Addressing Police Violence

Shortly after the murder of George Floyd, Mayors and Managers in the MAPC region asked MAPC to convene a group to work on a pledge to stem police violence against people of color. Over the course of several weeks, staff in the Government Affairs and Municipal Collaboration Departments worked together to craft a pledge that focused on principles, state level policy priorities, and a menu of local options that cities and towns can adopt. So far, 22 municipal leaders from across the Commonwealth have signed onto the pledge, which also helped to shape MAPC's approach to the police reform legislation that is currently before a 6-member conference committee. We are working hard to ensure that the bill that makes it out of conference is in fact a significant step forward, but more work will undoubtedly be necessary throughout the upcoming legislative session. Allowing municipalities to opt out of civil service without legislative approval and addressing critical issues regarding arbitration will be high on our agenda in the 2021-22 session.

COVID 19 Coordination

The Government Affairs team continues to coordinate calls and resources for mayors and managers in the MAPC region and beyond. We continued our conversations with the Lieutenant Governor throughout the summer, focusing our advocacy on funding for cities and towns, contact tracing, school reopening, and publicly announced metrics about the virus. In advance of school reopening, mayors and managers urged the Administration to allow schools to pursue both hybrid and remote options, and they encouraged the DPH to shed more light on cases per district. We have also offered suggestions around metrics that other regions and states are using to make decisions about reopening. Mayors and managers continue to push the Administration to make our contact tracing program more robust and meaningful, especially as case counts continue to rise.

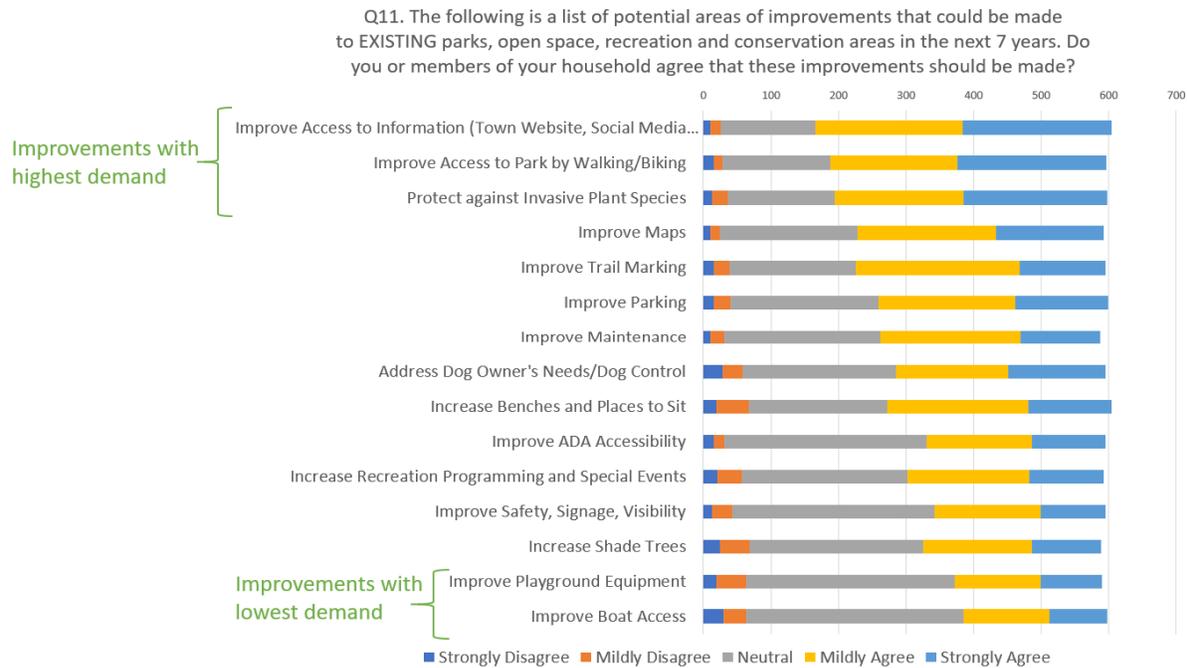
Land Use

Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRP)

Norwell OSRP

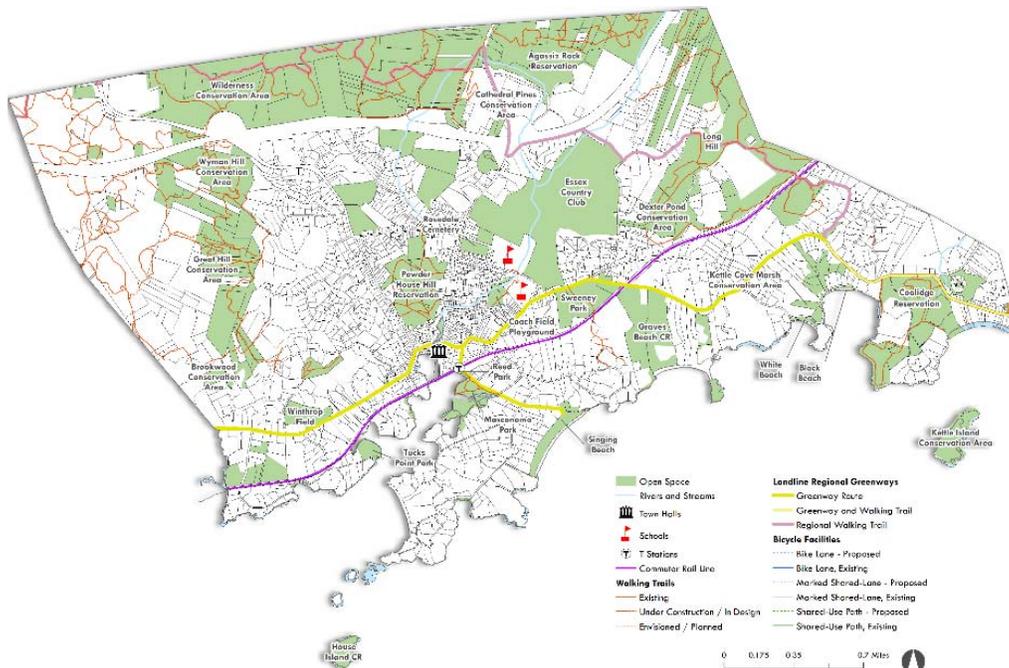
We mourn the loss of Nancy Hemingway, Norwell's Conservation Agent, who passed away on September 2. The Conservation Commission is dedicating a new wildflower field to her memory. Please visit her obituary here: www.wilsonfhllc.com/obituary/Nancy-Hemingway-Ryder. In honor of Nancy, the Town is proceeding with the OSRP update, building upon the findings collected from an impressive 691 responses to the town-wide survey.

This slide summarizes the findings from one of the survey questions, demonstrating the desire for improved access to parks by walking and biking, among other improvements:



Manchester-by-the-Sea OSRP

In July, MAPC and Manchester-by-the-Sea kicked off a planning process to update the town's OSRP. MAPC hosted a virtual meeting and open house on August 26 that introduced residents to the planning process, shared collected data, and offered attendees the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on plan goals and priorities.



North Reading, Hamilton & Hull OSRPs

The North Reading OSRP received final approval; the town is eligible to apply for Division of Conservation Services grants through 2027. Similarly, the Hamilton OSRP as well as the Hull OSRP were conditionally approved by DCS.

Master Plans

Wrentham

More than 1,000 people responded to the town-wide survey for the Wrentham Master Plan, reflecting widespread support for making Wrentham more walkable and bikeable and for protecting open space. The full survey results will be presented at a virtual public forum at the end of September, along with a draft Vision statement for participants to review and discuss in virtual breakout rooms. Already more than 80 people have registered.

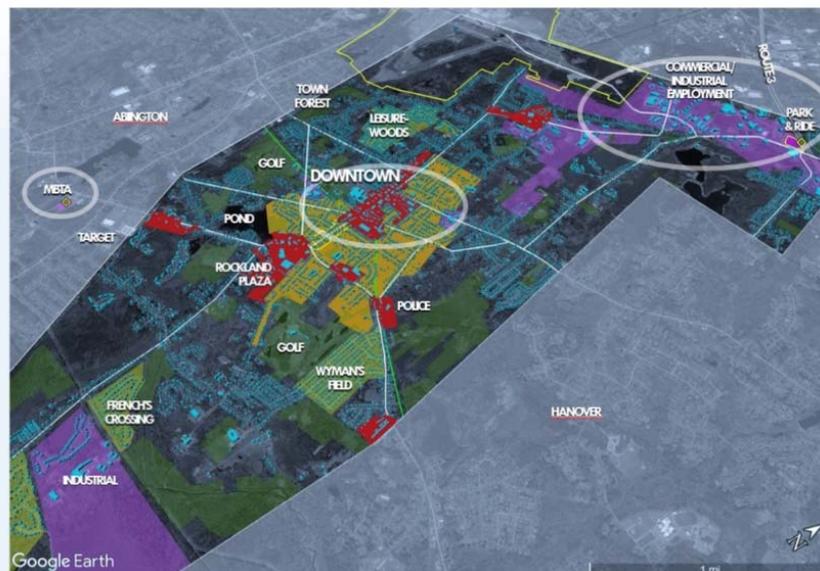
Winthrop 2030 Actionable Visioning

The team held an online visioning public forum in late May paired with a subsequent 6-week visually-illustrated community survey with 378 responses. The advisory committee has met twice to prepare for the second visioning forum in October, and to vet the community survey questions that will follow it.

Rockland Master Plan 2030

The team held a virtual third public workshop on the last set of master planning topics that was also paired with a 7-week community online survey with 181 responses. The advisory committee held a fourth meeting to discuss the results and to prepare for next steps. MAPC is currently drafting the master plan report for fall review and completion in early winter.

TOWN OVERVIEW



Saugus Master Plan

MAPC hosted its first visioning forum for Saugus United 2035, the town's first update to its master plan in decades. MAPC provided an overview of the process and introduced the elements of the plan. The community can now provide input to inform the vision via an online "virtual open house." The process is expected to take roughly two years to complete.

Zoning

Littleton Transfer of Development Rights

Over the summer, MAPC staff completed a residual land value analysis to determine the market viability of a TDR program. Staff presented the results of a community survey regarding the most important features to preserve, and where development density should be increased. Staff also drafted the TDR bylaw and presented it for Planning Board review; and put together an information packet for distribution to town boards and committees. The next step will be a series of meetings at which the Planning Board and MAPC will present the TDR materials to the boards and the public.

Lynnfield Open Space and Residential Design (OSRD) and Tree Protection Bylaw

The Planning Board has voted to present the proposed OSRD bylaw and the Tree Protection Bylaw to Town Meeting. MAPC helped to produce one-pagers to help explain the benefits and impacts of both bylaws, as shown below.

Lynn Northern Strand Overlay Rezoning

The team is finalizing its rezoning analysis of seven opportunity sub-areas adjacent to or near Lynn's segment of the Northern Strand bike/pedestrian path and linear park. The goal is to promote the active use of the park, which is currently being physically improved, and to encourage bike and pedestrian foot traffic between the Northern Strand and the sub-areas, once they have been redeveloped with mixed-uses. Wayfinding signage will also be recommended to promote awareness and use.

We employed a multilingual and visually illustrated seven-week survey, bringing in a total of 341 responses.

Protecting Lynnfield's Trees
Tree Protection Bylaw

Lynnfield's trees are part of what defines us as a town, and they also provide marked environmental and health benefits. Our trees are important enough to deserve a deliberate plan to protect them.

The goal of the Tree Protection bylaw is to maintain the tree canopy of Lynnfield. The bylaw restricts people from cutting down trees along the perimeter of lots, unless new trees are planted or a payment is made to the Lynnfield Tree Replacement Fund.

» **Which trees would be protected?**
Any tree that is at least six inches in diameter and that is at the perimeter of a property in a defined buffer zone called a "tree yard." The exact tree yard for a property is defined in the bylaw and based on zoning district. The bylaw would apply to every property in town, including residential, commercial, and industrial properties, including undeveloped land that is being subdivided. There are exemptions for smaller lots.

» **How would the bylaw protect trees?**
The bylaw would require a Tree Permit for the removal of any protected tree. It would also require a Tree Permit for work that could harm a protected tree, such as building an addition to a house. The Tree Permit would ensure that if trees are cut down, adequate new replacement trees would be planted or a payment made to the Lynnfield Tree Replacement Fund. It would also ensure that when there's a construction project, trees that are not removed would be kept from harm during the work.

» **What are the benefits of the bylaw?**
This bylaw balances the community's desire to protect trees with property owners' ability to build and improve their land. In short, everyone benefits from enhanced property values, reduced energy use and costs, cleaner air and water, and beautiful neighborhoods.

Tree Yard (dimensions based on zoning district)

Unprotected tree: Not located within Tree Yard

Protected Tree: Located within Tree Yard and greater than 6 inches in diameter

Unprotected tree: Under 6 inches in diameter

Continued on next page...
September 2020

Concord Thoreau Depot Vision and Zoning (E-TOD)

MAPC is working with Concord to revitalize the area around one of its commuter rail stations. We have completed the first phase of the project, developing a vision and recommendations. For the second phase, MAPC is developing a mixed-use zoning bylaw and design guidelines. MAPC recently presented a first draft of the bylaw to the Planning Board. MAPC and the town will refine the bylaw, preparing for fall 2021 Town Meeting.

Ashland Downtown Zoning (E-TOD)

MAPC is working to update zoning for Ashland's downtown. In lieu of an in-person forum, MAPC developed an online survey, which received more than 300 responses. MAPC then presented the results of the survey to the Planning Board with recommendations for proceeding. MAPC returns to present more detailed recommendations in late September. The zoning is being prepared for spring 2021.

Housing

This summer, the Housing Team worked to understand and respond to the pandemic, continue local planning processes, and launch new planning processes. Highlights of recent work include:

Arlington Fair Housing Plan

Throughout the spring and summer, MAPC staff conducted targeted engagement with protected classes and those that serve them, including interviews with 15 service providers and 2 resident focus groups. This work uncovered powerful information that has advanced our understanding of the barriers faced by protected classes seeking housing in town that meets their needs. The findings from the engagement, along with those from the quantitative analysis that MAPC conducted earlier this year, are currently being incorporated into an assessment of barriers to fair housing and tools to advance fair housing in Arlington.

Housing Lynn

MAPC has been working with the City of Lynn on a Housing Production Plan since fall 2019. After delays due to COVID-19 and transitioning the public process to a digital approach, the project made great strides this summer and fall. In June, MAPC hosted an online open house to gain input on a housing vision and strategies to address unmet housing need. Later that month, MAPC facilitated a development panel discussion with Andrew DeFranza, Executive Director of Harborlight Community Partners; Chrystal Kornegay, Executive Director of MassHousing; and Mathieu Zahler, Principal at MPZ Development. Panelists discussed how development can meet local needs and the importance of mixed-income and affordable housing in Lynn. In September, we presented the Steering Committee with suggestions to establish a framework of residential development site types and corresponding housing types, including examples of specific parcels, and draft recommendations. On September 23, MAPC will host an online forum to gain input regarding the site and housing types.

Manchester-by-the-Sea 40R

In August, MAPC and Manchester-by-the-Sea kicked off a planning process for a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District in the Limited Commercial District. MAPC will work with the recently established project working group to develop zoning and design guidelines that will result in new mixed-use and mixed-income development and more diverse housing options in town. The first public event, a virtual visioning session to establish goals for the district, will be held on September 24. The zoning will be considered at the spring 2021 Town Meeting.

Foxborough Housing Production Plan

For the past year, MAPC has been working with Foxborough staff and residents to develop a Housing Production Plan. In June, MAPC hosted a virtual open house to share and receive feedback on potential strategies to address housing challenges. It was open for three weeks and, thanks to the town's active promotion on social media and cable news, was viewed by nearly 250 people. MAPC is now drafting the HPP, which will include six priority strategies that speak directly to housing needs that have been articulated by residents over the past year across multiple points of engagement. A draft HPP will be shared publicly later this fall.

Maynard Housing Production Plan

MAPC has begun work with Maynard to update its 2015 HPP, also by MAPC, with a focus on understanding barriers to full implementation and new strategies to create a variety of affordable housing options. The HPP will also assist Maynard to respond to the housing impacts of COVID-19. An advisory committee to steward the planning process has been established and initial analysis of housing need and demand is underway.

Ashland Housing Production Plan and Inclusionary Zoning

MAPC is working with Ashland to update its last HPP, drafted by MAPC and locally adopted in 2016. Additionally, MAPC will draft inclusionary zoning for the town to facilitate greater affordable housing production. With the assistance of MAPC, the town has secured a Community Compact Grant to supplement MAPC's DLTA funding, allowing for this robust planning and zoning effort.

Melrose Housing Production Plan

MAPC is working with Melrose on a new HPP. The city secured a Community Compact Grant to support this work and supplement MAPC's DLTA funding, allowing for a more robust community-driven planning process than is typical of HPPs. With input from Mayor Brodeur, an advisory committee has been established and will meet for the first time in October.

COVID-19 Financial Security Impacts

MAPC's Housing and Economic Development teams have been working with Data Services this past summer to develop different recovery scenarios following the pandemic. Five scenarios have been established, along with potential rates of unemployment, those most impacted, and housing needs for each. Housing and Economic Development have now begun work to develop policy response proposals for each scenario, with a focus on supporting households facing post-pandemic housing insecurity and promoting a strong economic recovery.

Economic Development

The Economic Development team continues to advance regional recovery strategies while supporting municipal staff and other regional stakeholders in the face of COVID-related economic impacts. Highlights of recent work include:

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Over the past 10 months, the Economic Development team has worked with an external advisory committee to create the CEDS, a plan to advance economic recovery in the region over the next five years. The team will present a final draft to that body on September 22. If the committee recommends that the Executive Committee adopt the CEDS, the final version will be presented at the October Executive Committee meeting. [Ed. Note: The CEDS will be presented to the Executive Committee in November.]

Immigrant Entrepreneur Storytelling Project

Through her work on the Quincy Small Business Plan, Economic Development Planner Jenn Kaplan noted the many challenges facing Asian-American entrepreneurs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In collaboration with the Arts & Culture and Community Engagement teams, she created a regional project to highlight their stories that launched in August. Additional detail on the project can be found in the Arts & Culture update.

Assistance for 23 Communities to secure \$4.95M in Microenterprise Grants

Betsy Cowan Neptune, Chief of Economic Development, facilitated the successful award of \$4.95 million in CDBG funds for the provision of grants to small businesses with 5 employees or fewer. The grant spans 23 participating communities, with Ashland serving as the lead applicant. The project has contracted with the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation to provide the grants directly to the businesses.

Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC) Strategic Plan

MAPC was selected to develop a strategic plan for DBEDC over the next 6-8 months. MAPC's proposal built on two previous projects in the neighborhood focused on arts and culture and equitable development. The project will be managed by Josh Eichen, Senior Planner, with collaboration from several other departments.

Municipal Collaboration

HMCC Update

MAPC staff continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the team's work on behalf of the Region 3 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC). Requests for Testing Supplies and PPE have slowed down considerably, but the team is still fielding Duty Officer pages and aiding stakeholders. The team is currently working on two different workshops that address needs within the region. The first workshop will run as a series during October. The focus of the workshops will address stress among healthcare workers related to their response to COVID-19. The second series of workshops is being planned to run in November. These workshops will address the need to work and collaborate regionally to address COVID-19 moving forward.

Support for COVID High-Risk Communities

Staff from the Municipal Collaboration and Public Health Departments, with input from seven cities and towns designated as high-risk for the continued spread of COVID-19, developed a policy memo detailing areas where the Commonwealth could provide additional support to high-risk communities. The mayors and managers of Chelsea, Revere, Saugus, Everett, Lynn, Winthrop, and Salem sent the memo to Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders, calling for:

- additional support to enable better contact tracing and aid to individuals quarantining or isolating due to COVID exposure or positivity;
- additional staffing, such as public health nurses and community health workers, especially those who speak Spanish;
- the expansion and maintenance of COVID testing capacity;
- promotion of health-protecting behaviors, such as physical distancing and face covering, through better communications and messaging, especially in Spanish and other languages; and
- direct outreach to residents via community-based organizations and other trusted parties.

After the memo was submitted, the Governor and Secretary Sudders announced support for several of these proposals and are working closely now with officials from high-risk communities to implement them. We are working to ensure attention to recommendations not yet adopted, plus adequate funding to achieve progress in each of the seven communities, and others in the MAPC region that might be designated as high-risk in the future.

MAPC is also serving as fiscal agent for a regional Spanish-language communications campaign targeted to high-risk communities and including Boston's Public Health Commission and its work in East Boston. Ads will run in Spanish-language print and broadcast outlets over the next month to build support for continuing to follow COVID-safe behaviors.

Shannon Community Safety Initiative

On August 10, MAPC met with stakeholders in Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop to discuss the development of programs to address youth mental health during the last four months of 2020 via funding from the FY20 Shannon Grant. Originally, MAPC used relationships from the development of the North Suffolk Health Needs Assessment to secure Shannon funding for a shared youth mental health counselor. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, public health priorities shifted, and the mental health counselor program was not implemented as planned. Instead, it was decided that each of the three communities will split the \$50,050 originally allocated to the initiative. The City of Chelsea will offer a “Transformative Citizenship” course from MIT’s Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values for officers within the Community Services Division. The course will train officers in empathy and ethics-based leadership in order to have more meaningful conversations and interactions with the city’s youth. In Revere, an existing “Open Gym” recreation program will be expanded by several hours each week, with school guidance counselors present to work with youth. Winthrop will fund additional hours for two members of its Mental Health Team—one social worker and one police officer—who are responsible for performing outreach and supporting adolescents and families in the community.

Drop-In Sessions

The Municipal Collaboration team held several “drop-in sessions” via Zoom in August that were open to all MAPC staff to discuss the department’s programs, including work with the public safety community across the Commonwealth. These sessions provided an opportunity for staff to learn more about the work of the department, and to share their perspectives, especially in regard to MAPC’s work with Police Departments in Greater Boston and throughout the state. This was an informative experience for all involved. The dialogue that took place at these sessions has helped to inform the team’s analysis of their work as MAPC strives to increase the focus on equity issues in public safety programs.

NERAC

The Northeast Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council (NERAC) partnered with the MassCyberCenter to bring two Cyber Incident Plan workshops to the state in August and September. These workshops provided municipalities with tools to improve their cybersecurity resiliency, understand their current cybersecurity posture, and protect municipal infrastructure against cyber threats. During these workshops, municipalities developed Cyber Incident Response Plans to prepare for, detect, respond to, and recover from a cyber security incident.

NERAC is also collaborating with the three other Homeland Security Advisory Councils to host a series of virtual events and trainings to raise cybersecurity awareness, develop municipal cyber resiliency, and provide municipalities and first responder disciplines with resources to address cyber incidents and attacks. These virtual trainings will take place throughout October for Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Strategic Initiatives

New and Improved Project Database

Strategic Initiatives transitioned the organization from a database platform that was unpopular and unwieldy to a newer, more nimble platform, Hubspot. We use this database to track various project data points, including what projects we are doing and where we are doing them. We are excited to include in the transition new norms and procedures around documenting our work and the results of our work so we can learn and improve more quickly than in the past.

MetroCommon 2050 Update

MetroCommon 2050 is wrapping up the “Challenges and Opportunities” phase (Phase 2) after a summer full of virtual Action Area workshops, talking to leaders from around the region about the critical challenges we'll face and opportunities we can seize as we work toward our ten MetroCommon 2050 goals. The MetroCommon team hosted ten such workshops in June, July, and August, averaging 20 attendees per workshop. Additionally, we held a similar set of workshops with Union Capital Boston, with whom we have contracted to enhance public engagement in under-represented parts of Boston. Their members reside primarily in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and East Boston.

Some of the biggest messages we heard are:

- Public processes and hiring need to be more inclusive, diverse, and intentional about getting representation to the table who fully reflects the diversity of our region.
- Transportation and land use decisions will need to account for the post-COVID reality, and we need to ensure that low-income neighborhoods and communities of color have rapid, safe, and reliable transportation, especially for frontline workers.
- The region needs more affordable housing, at a range of prices/rents. We need to minimize displacement near new housing and transit-oriented development.
- Our existing home rule and government structures mean that many cities and towns find it difficult to collaborate and are under-staffed, making it difficult to address longer term, regional challenges.

In addition to the Action Area workshops:

- MAPC hosted a virtual public event to launch the “Diversity Deficit” report, mentioned in the Data Services section above.
- Our scenario planning team has our land use model up and running, which we will use to quantify the impacts of different policy and land use decisions.
- The first six sets of policy recommendations are under internal review and will be publicly vetted beginning later this fall.

- The Integrated Communications team has drafted a 12-month calendar for MetroCommon engagement between now and the launch phase of the plan, including a mix of targeted focus groups for under-represented populations, virtual breakfasts with municipal officials and staff, and other leaders and stakeholders to test our MetroCommon policy recommendations.
- Recognizing the severe uncertainties we are facing due to multiple crises in the past year, we will also hold several regional workshops to determine how the eventual outcome of these uncertainties might impact our MetroCommon goals, how we can be best prepared, and how we might want to adjust our policy recommendations.

Community Engagement

To support municipalities considering a virtual Representative Town Meeting in the fall, MAPC hosted a webinar in August sharing how two municipalities, Lexington and Stoughton, successfully held their Spring Representative Town Meetings and how they are preparing for the fall. Visit our YouTube channel for a recording of the webinar: youtube.com/watch?v=r18kRPWNhbc.



[Webinar: Virtual Town Meetings - YouTube](https://youtube.com/watch?v=r18kRPWNhbc)

Is your municipality considering a virtual Town Meeting this fall? In this webinar, we showcase how two municipalities, Lexington and Stoughton, leaned into successfully going virtual. Representatives from both municipalities will share how they conducted their spring Representative Town Meetings, how they kept technology from being a barrier, the tools they used, the lessons they learned, and how they're preparing for the fall.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:
 Jim Malloy, Lexington Town Manager
 Sean Dugan, Lexington Public Information Officer
 Robin Gilman, Stoughton Town Manager
 Trish Strappone, Stoughton Director of Information Technology

Is your municipality considering a virtual Town Meeting this fall? In this webinar, we showcase how two municipalities, Lexington and Stoughton, leaned into ... www.youtube.com

Subregions

TRIC received a \$20,000 grant from the Blue Hills CHNA 20 group to advance efforts to expand participation in TRIC activities among non-planners within municipal government as well as community-based organizations and residents of the TRIC region. Through this grant, MAPC will develop a “Champion Citizens Training Workshop Series” to provide resources and technical assistance to individuals in the TRIC region who are interested in becoming engaged in civic affairs, either through volunteer, elected, or advocacy activities. MAPC will work to identify individuals who will add to racial diversity where BIPOC populations are under-represented in municipal activities (boards, commissions, etc.) and white individuals who are interested in advancing efforts to address structural racism in less diverse communities.

Subregional groups mostly took the summer off. Coordinators spent the past few months work planning, running elections, orienting new leadership, and connecting with their members individually to build relationships and to discuss COVID-related needs. Subregional meetings have resumed this month.

Public Health

Metro North Public Health Calls – COVID-19 Coordination and Shared Responses

MAPC has continued to help facilitate weekly calls among Metro North public health, hospitals and community organizations as part of responding to COVID-19. The calls serve as a space for peer sharing and problem-solving, information sharing across community and clinical agencies, and exploring new topics and areas for collaboration. Recent topics have included food insecurity and emergency food responses, issues and actions related to shelters for people experiencing homelessness, and changes in community testing for COVID-19. The group calls, which were initiated by the Cambridge Health Alliance in March 2020, are expected to continue in October.

Healthy Neighborhood Equity Fund (HNEF) Health Impact Assessment (HIA) – Literature Review Update

The Public Health team, in collaboration with the Conservation Law Foundation and Healthy Neighborhood Study, has updated the literature review from the 2013 HNEF HIA. Focused on the impacts of Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD), the HNEF HIA had 12 pathways that linked ETOD to potential changes in health behaviors, exposures, and outcomes. The updated review includes six of the original pathways and added on three new pathways: Climate Change, Ownership of Change, and Moving to Opportunity. The document will serve as a reference for a second HNEF HIA as well as public health and planning work at MAPC. The original HIA can be found [here](#).

MetroWest Public Health Shared Services

MAPC's Municipal Collaboration and Public Health teams continue to work with Framingham, Holliston, Hudson, and Ashland on a shared Public Health Nurse. The shared service is intended to meet required local public health standards, such as disease reporting and tracking as well as expanding their capacity to engage in public health promotion and communications. The municipalities are now working on an Intermunicipal Agreement that will establish the shared position among the municipalities. Work is also underway to affirm the position's scope of services and dedicated funding for the position.

Region 3 COVID-19 Affiliate Funding and Technical Assistance

This past spring and summer, the Municipal Collaboration and Public Health teams assisted the DPH to distribute emergency funding to local health departments in the Region 3 emergency preparedness region. In addition, MAPC assisted with peer sharing and local responses to COVID-19. Heading into the fall, MAPC will continue in a technical assistance and coordinating role with these cities and towns. The team already convened peer calls among municipalities that share similar population and community characteristics. We expect to hold more such virtual convenings and bring the latest COVID-19 science and evidence-informed practices to support local public health departments in their critical work.



Walkability / Active Transport

Create a more walkable environment, increase access to destinations, and improve State of Place score



Safety from Traffic

Increase traffic by bringing more people into the area



Residential Energy Efficiency

Add energy efficient homes and assist with retrofits to improve weatherization, ventilation, and energy efficiency



Safety from Crime

Bring well-lit mixed-used developments and new commuters, residents, and employees to the area



Affordable Housing

Add new income-restricted affordable units



Green Space

Add new vegetation and site-specific tree plantings in public spaces and thoroughfares



Food Access

Increase the area's access to healthy affordable foods and local, fresh produce markets



Gentrification / Displacement

Use anti-displacement strategies and provide supports that increase housing stability



Social Cohesion

Add space for social interactions



Air Quality

Mitigate air pollution with the additional vehicular traffic



Economic Opportunity

Expand economic opportunity by creating new jobs in a transit-accessible location



Environmental Contamination

Remediate and mitigate environmental exposures to prevent future environmental exposures to residents, workers, and visitors



Climate Change

Use environmental design and community development programs to reduce exposure and increase adaptive capacity



Moving to Opportunity

Provide housing search and relocation assistance to families with limited incomes and assets



Ownership of Change

Build resident power in relation to neighborhood development

Communication Resource: Promoting Behavior Change to Protect Against COVID-19

COVID-19 public health communications have been widespread since March. However, most communications have focused on informing rather than on promoting behavioral changes that increase personal and community protections from COVID-19. The public health team developed [a one-pager to assist municipalities and community organizations with shaping communication materials](#) so that they bridge this divide. Using the recent expert guidance from the [Societal Experts Action Network](#), the one-pager lays out 10 communication strategies to encourage adoption of new behaviors. They highlight that making a behavior easy to start and rewarding to repeat, tying behaviors to existing habits, providing alternatives to unwanted behaviors, and providing specific descriptions of desired behaviors that increase the likelihood that protective behaviors will become habitual.



- Health communications can be made more persuasive to promote behavior change. ineffective communication efforts are not simply those unable to change beliefs of behaviors. Rather, they can also be counter productive by making people further dig in their heels by, knowingly performing the undesirable behavior.

1. Use Clear, Consistent, & Transparent Messaging

Messages that provide honest, authoritative information about effectiveness of protective measures, and that trust people to make appropriate decisions have been shown to be effective.

2. Avoid highlighting socially undesirable behaviors

Avoid showcasing accounts, images, or videos of undesirable behaviors, such as large crowds not maintain social distancing and not wearing face masks. It may suggest these behaviors are more frequent that they actually are. Instead,

Blue Hills Regional Coordinating Council – Action Plan

MAPC’s public health team, in coordination with the Transportation Department, and the [Blue Hills Community Health Network Area \(CHNA 20\)](#) developed the BHRCC Action Plan, which spotlights the root causes of inequities in the regional transportation network and presents actions that can lead to a more inclusive system and support well-being across the lifespan of each resident. The Action Plan was guided by resident voices and data. It identifies specific policy, practice, system, and environmental changes that promote transportation accessibility for residents, particularly those facing mobility, economic, and health challenges in their lives. The plan now moves to implementation, with the BHRCC identifying 2-4 pilot projects to occur over the next year.

Transportation

Urgent Taxi, Livery, and Hackney Partnerships Grant Program

MAPC's taxi grant program in response to COVID-19 has distributed \$440,583 in funding to 12 municipalities, RTA's, and Health and Human Services Transportation providers in order to partner with taxi, livery, and hackney companies to assist vulnerable populations to access essential services. In August, MassDevelopment approved another \$503,978 in order to fund 13 additional applications. The twenty-five grantees represent public agencies through the state and are working to address COVID-19 transportation challenges, such as a loss or reduction in shuttle service or public transit.

Special kudos to the Transportation, Economic Development, and Legal staffs, especially Eric Bourassa, Betsy Cowan Neptune, Josh Eichen, Marjorie Weinberg, Travis Pollack and Marah Holland, who developed and oversaw this program in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In September, MAPC will begin the Operational Subsidy Program to further engage taxi, livery, and hackney companies to provide key services. This grant program will award roughly \$4 million to public entities and eligible non-profits to provide transportation services to organizations and programs, which otherwise would not have transportation access. This program is expected to go live at the end of September and grants are expected to be disbursed this fall.

Shared Streets Initiatives

This summer, MAPC has been supporting MassDOT as they kicked off their Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program to assist municipalities across the state that have been impacted by COVID-19. The grants awarded range from \$5,000 to as large as \$300,000 and are intended for quick-launch/quick-build projects that implement or expand improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce. The Transportation team with support from the Economic Development, Legal, Municipal Collaboration, and Communications, have assisted communities in developing project ideas, and conducting necessary procurements.

In procurement support, MAPC led an effort to assist communities that have been experiencing challenges with procuring materials. To accomplish this, MAPC established a partnership with the Operational Services Division (OSD) to publish clear and comprehensive guides to materials through their platform. MAPC also hosted MassDOT and OSD for a webinar on June 30 that walked participants through how to utilize OSD's user guides for municipal procurement of materials. MAPC has also been working with OSD to explore options for volume purchasing of popular materials that would save communities both cost and time.

In project support, MAPC directly supported the towns of Natick and Wayland in their project application for the Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program. Led by Natick, the project will focus on extending bike lanes through both communities.

The MAPC team has also supported project documentation by creating an [online map](#) that indicates project locations and completion status.

The Administration recently doubled the amount of money going to the Shared Streets initiative to \$10 million. The program has awarded \$7.7 million to fund 91 projects in 78 municipalities across the Commonwealth, of which 59% are Environmental Justice communities. More information about the projects awarded by MassDOT can be found on the [program website](#).

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