

Executive Director's Report
Mid-September 2020 through Mid-December 2020
Submitted to the Executive Committee
December 16, 2020

Arts & Culture

Public Art, Public Memory Discussion Series



Working in partnership with the New England Foundation for the Arts and Design Studio for Social Intervention, MAPC developed "Public Art, Public Memory," a three-part online discussion series that explored the role that planners, artists, and government staff can play in cultivating more just and inclusive public spaces through public art and collective memory.

Participants heard from diverse panels of artists and educators working in throughout New England and exploring how we might reconsider public art and commemoration through a lens of racial justice. Native American artists considered how monuments and memorials shape our understanding of place—and what we choose to forget. Black artists, designers, and educators considered how arts-based and community-centered processes can help us imagine what to do with monuments that no longer reflect our shared history and values. Finally, a two-part workshop delivered by Monument Lab addressed how planners and arts administrators can shape more inclusive and expansive monuments in their communities.

Find recordings of each event plus a compilation of resources shared by guest speakers and event participants at <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/public-art-public-memory/>, or view the whole series here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJNLux_ZPcK4KBB5qGEMf8eJR34ehTY

Lynnstallation Creative Placemaking and Public Art

After vetting 46 submissions to the Lynnstallation Call for Art – developed as part of the Lynn Creative Placemaking Project – the Downtown Lynn Cultural District determined 6 applicants

met the minimum requirements for concept development grant agreements. These applicants represent diverse styles and geographies and demonstrated extensive experience in arts-based community engagement. In October, after a reference check on the six candidates, all were recommended for approval by the Lynn Public Art Commission, and grant agreements were issued to the artist teams. Due to the current surge in COVID-19 cases in Lynn, the final deadline for concept submission will be announced in January after the city completes a site review and provides a final response questions the artists posed during the process.

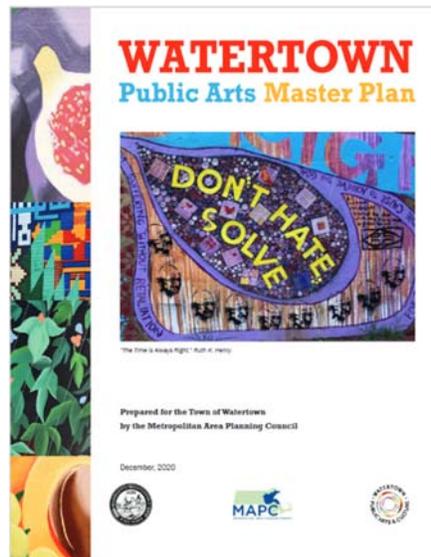
Somerville Arts Space Risk Assessment

The Arts & Culture Department is providing Technical Assistance to the City of Somerville to develop of an assessment of risk to art spaces. The team seeks to answer three research questions to: 1. how to identify the criteria and indicators that can reliably identify the risk of redevelopment or repurposing of existing art spaces; 2. whether an artist's income, race, or tenure in their career affects their access to existing art spaces; and 3. what municipal programs or policies can support the resiliency of art spaces that are facing displacement?

In November, the team conducted meetings with the Somerville Task Force, a group of local artists and arts space experts who will guide the assessment and will continue meeting after it is complete to implement its recommendations. Learn more about the project at <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/somerville-art-space-risk-assessment-study/>

Watertown Public Arts Master Plan

The Department is wrapping up work on its first-ever Public Arts Master Plan, after 1 ½ years of work with the Department of Community Development and Planning and the Watertown Public Arts Master Plan (PAMP) Advisory Committee. On December 2, MAPC facilitated the second to last meeting of the Committee. Members endorsed the Plan document as final and ready for presentation to the Watertown Town Council in early 2021 and dove into a discussion of scenarios for staffing and funding Year One implementation of the plan. Learn more about the project here: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/watertownpublicartmasterplan/>



Clean Energy

Municipal Net Zero Playbook: Zero Emission Mobility

For the past two years, MAPC has been developing a playbook with a suite of resources for cities and towns to support municipal staff, community groups, and volunteers in advancing net zero actions in their communities. In November, MAPC released the first chapter of the [Municipal Net Zero Playbook](#) focused on sector-specific actions for greenhouse gas (GHG)

emissions reductions. The chapter centers on [Zero Emission Mobility](#), recognizing that transportation emissions have become the largest sector of GHG emissions in the Commonwealth. The recommended actions examine ways a city or town can encourage biking, walking, and use of public transportation; develop zero emission vehicle infrastructure; encourage adoption of zero emission vehicles; and lead by example within the municipal fleet.

This is the first of four chapters currently under development for the Playbook. It joins the [Framework for Action](#) and [Framework for Equity](#) released earlier this year. Chapters on Net Zero Buildings, Clean Energy Supply, and Climate-Smart Zoning and Permitting are planned for release this winter. This work was made possible by a Planning Assistance Grant from EOEEA, the Barr Foundation, and match funding from Arlington, Melrose, Natick, and MAPC.

Marblehead Climate Vision Adopted

On November 18, the Marblehead Board of Selectmen adopted a Climate Vision, which outlines climate mitigation strategies developed with community input through a survey and a virtual visioning session hosted in June. The Vision commits the town to achieving net zero emissions by 2040, 10 years before Massachusetts' statewide target. The Marblehead Climate Vision lays out several high-level strategies to achieve that goal, including electrifying buildings and transportation, expanding biking and walking infrastructure, and fixing gas leaks. MAPC will continue to work with the town and the Marblehead Municipal Light Department to develop a Net Zero Climate Action Plan.

Net Zero Building Code Info Session and Advocacy

On November 4, MAPC hosted a Net Zero E-Z Stretch Code Info Session for municipal stakeholders as part of our continuing Codes for Climate series. Meredith Elbaum of Built Environment Plus and Jacob Knowles of BR+A Consulting Engineers walked the audience through the integral components of the Massachusetts Energy-Zero (E-Z) Code, which is a code proposal developed by the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) in association with Ms. Elbaum and Mr. Knowles, MAPC, building experts and practitioners, and other project partners. The code seeks to address the need for a flexible and comprehensive stretch code to pursue the Commonwealth's GHG emissions reduction goals for new commercial buildings through deep energy efficiency and electrification in addition to renewables.

The Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) held its semiannual public hearing on November 10. MAPC and its partners encouraged municipal stakeholders to attend and comment at the hearing in favor of a strong net zero stretch code to promote deep energy efficiency, electrification, and renewables. MAPC's webinar slides, webinar recording, and guidance for submitting written comments to the BBRS on this topic can be located on our [Building Codes for Climate webpage](#).

Know Your Gas System Workshop

On November 19, MAPC and the Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET) hosted a virtual workshop with municipal staff, first responders, gas companies, and the public about gas leak classification, repair prioritization, and the safety implications of gas leaks. The workshop highlighted the results of HEET's research into the repair success rate of utilities and the evolution of non-hazardous leaks into hazardous leaks. National Grid and Eversource, the

state's two largest gas companies, then shared information about how municipal staff, first responders, and the public can safely respond to gas leaks identified in their communities.

Climate Resilient Land Use and Zoning Workshop

As part of a state Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant-funded project, MAPC has been working with Winthrop to develop climate resilient zoning recommendations. This November, we hosted a virtual workshop series for the Metro Mayors Climate Preparedness Taskforce to share best practices and advance replicability throughout the region. The first session, held on November 10, was entitled, "Climate Resilient Zoning in Practice: Best and Emerging Practices," and shared innovative practices, such as flood-resilient overlay districts, a Resilient Quotient, and Green Scores. The second session, "Climate Resilient Land Use: A Primer for Local Governments," took place on November 23. The session introduced concepts on how to integrate climate resilience into land use planning, shared innovative practices, and presented on concrete examples of local ordinances and bylaws across Massachusetts that can address drought, heat, inland flooding, and coastal flooding.

Communications

COVID Response Communications

The Communications team played a crucial role in disseminating COVID-19 resources and information: sharing state resources and reopening updates on social media and [the MAPC website](#); blogging about the [Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition's role in COVID response](#); and planning and advertising [webinars](#) on COVID testing methods, shared streets opportunities, and housing protections. Communications staff also worked closely with Government Affairs to collect signatures for, design, and publicize a letter to Government Baker from mayors and public health leaders calling for [emergency funding for local health departments](#), and a letter from mayors to the state's federal delegation calling for flexibility in when to [spend CARES Act funding](#).

Webpage Copy and Design

The Communications team helped write, edit, and design webpages for several new projects and reports, including:

- [Arts Indicators for an Equitable Recovery](#)
- [The Digital Divide](#)
- [Melrose Housing Production Plan](#)
- [Somerville Art Space Risk Assessment Study](#)
- [October Update: The COVID-19 Layoff Housing Gap](#)

Blogs and Social Media

From October 1 to December 11, the Communications team published 14 blog posts, which received 1,202 pageviews. In the same time period, the @MAPCMetroBoston twitter account tweeted 190 times, received 211,000 impressions, 482 link clicks, 227 retweets, 448 likes, and 109 new followers. On Facebook, MAPC gained 23 followers and posted 28 times, averaging three reactions and one share per post. On LinkedIn, MAPC gained 68 followers, 4.175 impressions, and 196 reactions.

Data Services

COVID-19 Housing Gap Analysis

MAPC has continued to monitor COVID-related unemployment and associated need for housing assistance, with multiple updates and other activities conducted in the last three months. In early October, we published an update to our ongoing research which estimated that 45,000 renters could be at risk of eviction following the expiration of the state's eviction moratorium. The report has been cited by many journalists, advocates, and opinion writers since its publication.

The work also attracted the attention of the Baker Administration, which reached out for technical assistance in designing the Eviction Diversion Initiative. Data Services also assisted DHCD with the creation of a funding allocation formula for a new COVID-relief grant program targeted to community foundations and scored the applications as a service to DHCD.

In early December, the Data Services team convened a group of housing researchers representing more than ten organizations to share information about research underway and policy needs, in order to craft a coordinated research agenda on the topic of evictions. For the latest data and findings about unemployment and housing assistance need, visit the [COVID-19 Housing Gap](#) page on our website.

Zoning Atlas

MAPC has completed a first iteration of the Regional Zoning Atlas and will be releasing it at a December 17 webinar. Almost a decade in the making, the atlas is the first comprehensive regional zoning map produced since 1999 and the first to include overlay districts and information about multifamily permitting policies. Even more importantly, it is being published as a dynamic online resource that will improve over time as municipal staff and other contributors refine the data and provide updates. We hope the Atlas will be a resource to municipal staff seeking to coordinate zoning across boundaries, advocates pushing for more housing, and policy makers looking to see what communities are creating pathways for housing the region so desperately needs. In the coming months, MAPC will release research products that explore the Zoning Atlas to uncover new insight about multifamily zoning, commercial development capacity, and land use regulations around transit stations.

I want to provide special kudos to the great team of professionals in Data Services who made this mammoth project possible, especially Lily Perkins-High, Jessie Partridge, Ryan Kelly, Annabelle Thomas Taylor, Guy Hydrick, and Matt Zagaja, as well as former staffers Rob Goodspeed (now at the University of Michigan), Susan Brunton (now at the Hancock Natural Resource Group), and of course, our former Data Services Director Holly St. Clair (now at Sasaki). With this release, we have now captured six of the ten "Most Wanted" datasets identified in MetroFuture!

Visualizing SNAP-Ed (Phase III)

SNAP-Ed is a federally funded program that provides nutrition workshops and information about healthy food choices, food resource management, physical activity, and food safety to individuals and families using or eligible for SNAP. In Massachusetts, the program is administered by the UMass Extension Service in partnership with many implementing

agencies. In September, Analytical Services concluded the third phase of Visualizing SNAP-Ed, which focused on improving the database of nutrition education programs throughout state. Our primary goals for the update were to streamline data entry, improve data consistency, increase data access, and ease program mapping. To do this, MAPC held focus groups with staff from the four SNAP-Ed Implementing Agencies conducting nutrition education programs about their reporting processes and familiarized ourselves with state and federal reporting requirements.

New England Aquarium Community Partners for Resilience Maps (Year III)

In September, Analytical Services published a pair of web-based mapping tools that allow educators and students to explore climate science in their communities. We developed these maps for the Community Partners for Resilience (CPR) program, a three-year project led by the New England Aquarium (NEAq) and MAPC, and funded by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), that focuses on the design of learning activities, youth-focused climate resilience toolkits, and facilitation of student-led projects. The web-based tools were informed by extensive consultation with educators who had participated in CPR. MAPC organized a series of focus groups to identify critical teaching objectives, learn about prior experiences with similar tools, and prioritize features for an online mapping tool. After synthesizing the focus group findings, MAPC prepared a mock-up of the map interfaces for review by NEAq and incorporated feedback in the final design.

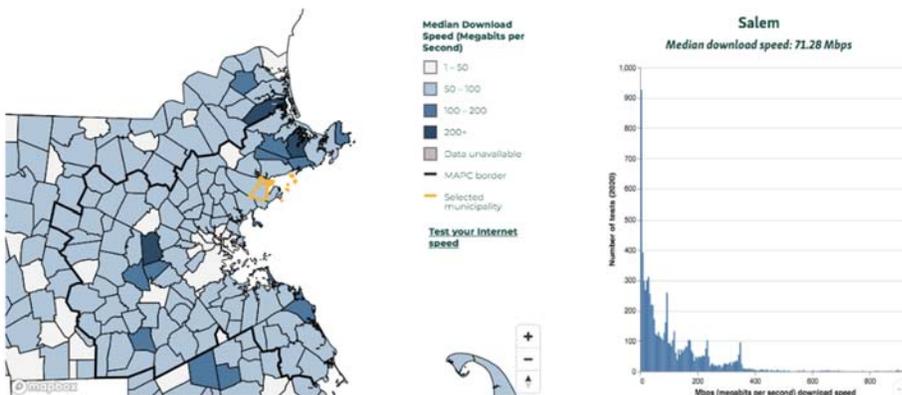
Contemplating the Future of Remote Work in a Post-COVID World

The Data Services Research Group has kicked off a multi-phase research project to assess the key factors in the future of commuting and remote work in our region and across Massachusetts. Many other regional and metropolitan planning organizations are also trying to understand and predict the medium- and long-term changes that COVID-19 will have on transportation systems, commuting patterns, and the commercial real estate market. In coordination with NARC and AMPO, we organized a convening of technical staff from MPOs and COGs from across the U.S. for December 16. A Modelers Working Group will review current methods and data sources and discuss the key metrics and questions that must be answered to understand the regional implications of future trends in remote work. A joint convening of technical staff and interested Executive Directors is planned for early 2021. Additional phases of the research project will include scenario development, modeling, and forecasting of remote work trends in the MAPC region, and will inform MAPC's response to external policy proposals as well as our own recommendations in MetroCommon.

Monthly Data Visualizations – Year-end Recap

December's data visualization "The Need for Speed" rounded out our monthly calendar visualization for 2020. This map focused on the speed of internet access available across the state. Using data available from M-Lab, one of the organizations that provides "test my internet speed" services, MAPC mapped the median download speed for each municipality in the Commonwealth. We also charted, by city or town, the distribution of internet connections that perform at various rates of download speeds.

Most Massachusetts communities have an average download speed of 50–100 megabits per second (mbps), but some average less than 30mbps – close to the threshold of what's considered acceptable service by the federal government. Following publication of the map, MAPC has been in touch with M-Lab, internet service providers, and municipalities to discuss how the analysis could help plan for improved internet access.



The December map brings to a close our first year of the new digital format for monthly data visualizations. MAPC could not have picked a better year to shift from an annual print calendar to a monthly online publication. Being digital in 2020 allowed us to contribute timely data visualizations as the world shifted around us. From COVID to the Census and Digital Divide, our monthly visualizations explored unique, of-the-moment datasets and made them accessible on the DataCommon, which has had over 67,700 page views since January, a 64% increase over last year. The monthly data visualizations saw a total of 14,700 page views this year, an average of 1,200 per month. The most popular item was March’s MassBuilds visualization, with over 3,000 views. The blog posts about the visualizations had a combined 600 views over the course of the year.

Explore all the 2020 visualizations and calendar maps from prior years at <https://datacommon.mapc.org/gallery>. Got an idea for a visualization we should do in 2021? Provide your ideas at <https://airtable.com/shrikiAkAbYakBlqW>.

New Staff

Data Services welcomed new Research Analyst Aseem Deodhar to the Research Team on November 30. Aseem has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Pune in India and a Master of Science in Urban Informatics from Northeastern University. He brings to the team strong technical skills, an enthusiasm for regional planning research, and a commitment to working towards a more just and equitable Greater Boston.

Environment

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)

MAPC began work on a new MVP project for Carlisle this fall. The project also includes preparation of an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Darci Schofield held the first meeting of the local core team on November 18, assisted by Caitlin Spence to collect mapped data such as Critical Facilities remotely using a Google MyMaps platform.

For the Saugus MVP/HMP project, the town has decided to hold its MVP Listening Session remotely after having it delayed due to COVID-19 over the summer. Courtney Lewis prepared an online presentation which was posted to the project’s page on the MAPC web site.

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)

FEMA has approved the HMPs for Bellingham, Cohasset, and Norwell. Salem’s final plan was adopted by the City Council on December 3, and the plans for Franklin and Needham have received FEMA’s Approval Pending Adoption and will soon be adopted by their Chief Elected Officials. This is the final step before receiving formal approval of the plans by FEMA, which will maintain these communities’ eligibility for FEMA grants for five years.

The Topsfield HMP/MVP project made further progress, holding the first public meeting hosted by the Select Board on October 19, following which the Core Team held their second meeting on November 4. The team reviewed the town’s existing mitigation measures in preparation for developing mitigation recommendations for the plan.

Wayland’s HMP has been completed and the town held its public meeting with the Board of Selectmen on October 19, after which the draft plan was submitted to MEMA. Woburn has asked MAPC to prepare their next HMP update,

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. MAPC has reviewed the grant applications received in October and has selected 11 proposals for funding totaling \$700,000 in the FY2021 grant cycle. The grantees include Beverly, Cambridge, Canton, Chelsea, Framingham, Natick Somerville, Wenham, Winchester, Woburn, and a collaboration between the Malden Riverworks Steering Committee, the Mystic River Watershed Association, and MIT Department of Urban Studies & Planning and Center for Environmental Health.

Special congratulations to Darci Schofield for creating and implementing this program across two grant cycles. Sadly, Darci is leaving MAPC to join the National Park and Recreation Association, where she will lead their national park equity initiative, a great opportunity for Darci and an important goal for our country’s national parks. We thank Darci for her many contributions to MAPC and wish her well!

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
16277	Dorchester Bay City	BOSTON	ENF	B
16289	Gateway Center	SOMERVILLE	ENF	C
16292	Mildred C. Hailey Phase One	BOSTON	ENF	C
16293	Wells 3 & 4 Water Treatment Plant	MEDFIELD	ENF	C

16294	Bridge Replacement	WOBURN	ENF	C
16286	Lawler Lane	STOUGHTON	ENF	C
16287	Cohasset Boat Ramp Reconstruction	COHASSET	ENF	C
16283	Beach & Dune Nourishment	DUXBURY, MARSHFIELD	ENF	C
16286	Lawler Lane	STOUGHTON	ENF	C
16287	Boat Ramp Reconstruction	COHASSET	ENF	C
16280	Central Street Sidewalk Improvements	NORTH READING	ENF	C
16281	J.F. Moran Maintenance Dredging	BOSTON	ENF	C
16282	Winter Hill	SOMERVILLE	ENF	C
16247	The Pinnacle at Central Wharf	BOSTON	ENF	B
16270	1690 Revere Beach Parkway	CHELSEA, EVERETT	ENF	C
16272	1234 Soldiers Field Road	BOSTON	ENF	C
16275	Park Street Sewer Expansion	STOUGHTON	ENF	C
16195	Boynton Yards	SOMERVILLE	DEIR	B
15208	Norwood Airport Taxiway C Realignment and Runway Safety	NORWOOD	NPF	C
15313	Central Square Development	FRANKLIN	NPC	C

MAPC submitted three MEPA comment letters during this reporting period:

The Pinnacle at Central Wharf

The Pinnacle at Central Wharf in Boston proposes the construction of a single tower of approximately 865,000 square feet along with improvements to the Harborwalk and the public realm. The proposed development program will comprise residential, office, and publicly accessible amenity space. A total of 1,100 parking spaces are proposed in an underground garage and the project is anticipated to generate approximately 3,800 daily vehicle trips. MAPC's key comments addressing the ENF included advancing a shared parking program, a TDM program, as well as a mode share and monitoring program. These recommendations were subsequently echoed in the Secretary's Certificate.

Boynton Yards

This project, located approximately a quarter mile walking distance of the planned MBTA Union Station in Somerville, is a mixed-use development that includes four buildings containing approximately 1,365,000 square feet. A total of 1,050 parking spaces are proposed and approximately 6,700 daily vehicle trips are forecasted. MAPC's comment letter addressing the DEIR outlined concerns pertaining to the proposed parking program. The letter outlined recommendations for the Proponent to attain a higher transit mode share and a reduced number of parking spaces.

Dorchester Bay City

Dorchester Bay City is a proposed mixed-use redevelopment totaling approximately 5.9 million square feet of building program across two parcels. Full build-out of the site is anticipated to occur over a period of 10-15 years. At full build-out, the project is projected to generate an estimated 16,700 daily vehicle trips and include approximately 2,650 parking spaces. Coordination with proximate roadway projects, access to JFK/UMass Station, advancing a parking program, implementing a robust TDM program, and developing a mode share and

monitoring program were the key comments MAPC identified in the comment letter addressing the ENF.

All comment letters are on MAPC's MEPA comment letter website here: <https://www.mapc.org/ourwork/expertise/environment/mepa-review/>

Government Affairs

Legislative and Budget Priorities

As the end of the legislative session finally draws near, many of MAPC's top legislative priorities remain in conference negotiations. The Legislature recently sent a Police Reform Bill to the Governor, which the Governor has returned with amendments, but the Transportation Bond Bill, the Climate Bill, and the Economic Development Bill remain in closed-door negotiations. We continue to weigh in with conferees to urge them to act with deliberate speed on these important pieces of legislation, not least because they offer an avenue for critical aid to municipalities and small businesses hurt by the pandemic.

MAPC issued a statement urging Governor Baker to sign the Police Reform Bill. The statement can be viewed <https://www.mapc.org/news/police-reform-bill-is-first-step-of-many-to-address-police-violence/>. We are currently reviewing the Governor's recommended amendments and will be advising the Legislature of our perspective.

Shortly after Thanksgiving, the Legislature passed the FY21 budget, and the Governor has signed it after vetoing certain sections and spending. DLTA was level-funded at \$3 million and Shannon funding saw a slight increase to \$11.3 million. We also saw a \$10 million investment for local departments of public health and increases in funding for housing and rental assistance programs.

As the FY21 budget process draws to a close, we are starting to look ahead to the FY22 budget. We anticipate that FY22 will be an even more difficult funding year, and we have already started urging our Congressional delegation to pass a significant COVID relief package with funding available for states and municipalities.

I want to congratulate the entire Government Affairs Team (Director Lizzi Weyant as well as Diego Huevo, Leah Robins, and Kasia Hart) for their superlative work during the FY21 budget debate, and during this most unusual and demanding legislative session.

COVID 19 Coordination

The Government Affairs team continues to coordinate calls and resources for mayors and managers in the MAPC region and beyond. Throughout the fall, we helped cities and towns think about how they could safely reopen their businesses and restaurants, and we continued to hear from experts about how we could put testing and tracing infrastructure in place to create a safer reopening.

We continued to urge Congress to extend the deadline for CARES Act expenditures, and we worked with the Baker Administration to clarify for municipalities that they can use CARES

dollars to support COVID-19 testing, even under our procurement rules. We continue (thus far without success) to convince the Administration to allow municipalities to use CARES dollars for small business assistance.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 cases have continued to rise steadily since early November, and we have been increasingly calling on the Administration to roll back their reopening plan and limit opportunities for people to engage in activities while they are inside and mask-less. In recent weeks, we have been calling on the Administration and Legislature to work together to fund small business support, and we have identified a list of possible financing and funding mechanisms to make that happen.

Governor Baker rolled the state back to Phase 3.1 earlier this month, and Mayor Walsh rolled the City of Boston back to Phase 2.2 earlier this week. He was joined by Newton, Brockton, Lynn, Somerville, Arlington, and Winthrop. We expect more communities to follow suit. We hope Governor Baker will respond to this trend among communities and take additional steps to protect all Commonwealth residents during the current surge in infections, deaths, and hospitalizations.

Proposed MBTA Service Cuts

The MBTA announced their “Forging Ahead” plan this fall, which proposed significant service cuts and adjustments in order to close the MBTA’s budget gap. Working with our advocacy allies and municipal leaders, MAPC weighed in with the Fiscal and Management Control Board to urge them not to make the proposed cuts. We worked with the MBTA Advisory Board to get a better sense of the size of the MBTA’s budget deficit and urged our federal partners to provide additional aid to transit. As transit agencies across the country face steep ridership declines, support for significant transit investment builds. Many of our communities expressed concern that if the MBTA proceeded with the cuts, the service might never come back. This was particularly troubling to those communities who made zoning changes to allow for the development of more housing and jobs near transit. Earlier this week, the FMCB voted 3-2 to adopt a trimmed down package of service reductions.

Land Use

Master Plans

Wrentham

With a draft of the Community Vision (see below) and introduction chapter complete, the visioning phase of the Master Plan process is coming to a close. Now, we are turning attention to the Housing and Economic Development chapters with a more in-depth existing conditions analysis and community engagement. Although the town-wide survey at the start of the planning process had a high level of participation, the survey results under-represented people of color, renters, and low-income residents. Therefore, we are conducting focus groups with each of these demographics, as well as local businesses, to engage and amplify the perspectives of people who are too often overlooked in planning. We are thrilled that invitations to participate in focus groups—even during this difficult holiday season—have been met with generous interest and support.

Vision Statement

Wrentham is a charming town, proud of its Downtown and open spaces and a great place to raise a family. More than 1,000 of us have come together through a public process to set a vision for the future.

By 2030, we aspire to:

- *Continue to cultivate a community-oriented and welcoming culture for all, regardless of race, religion, or age*
- *Protect more farmland and open space for cultural heritage, scenic beauty, habitat, and water quality*
- *Become more walkable and bikeable with sidewalks and trails*
- *Strengthen the Downtown with more 'Mom and Pop' shops, small businesses, homes, and places to gather*
- *Maintain the rural landscape by promoting sustainable land use patterns and shifting away from sprawl development*
- *Encourage diversity with a mix of housing options affordable to young adults, families, households with lower-incomes, and seniors*
- *Ensure fiscal responsibility while maintaining high-quality infrastructure and services*
- *To effectively pursue and strike a balance between these goals, we encourage transparent governance, strong civic engagement, and volunteerism.*

Saugus Master Plan

MAPC and Saugus completed the second part of the visioning process for the town's master plan, a virtual open house. More than 700 residents responded to the survey, providing input on all elements of the plan. MAPC is currently synthesizing this data and beginning to develop goals and strategies. A second forum focused on economic development and land use will take place this winter.

Dedham Master Plan

The Town of Dedham hosted a Community Open House on the evening of December 7, hosted and facilitated by MAPC. The open house, the first in a series of three events, presented an opportunity for community conversation around two master plan topics, economic development and transportation. Over 125 attendees participated in the event, which involved a minute-by-minute choreography of three presentations, Zoom polls, small breakout groups, and raffle drawings. The conversations provided feedback on initial draft goals for the two topics and confirmed the overall direction of the recommendations. Open house events on other Master Plan topics will occur in January and March.

Rockland Master Plan 2030

MAPC completed a final draft of the Rockland Master Plan 2030, which was reviewed by the Town Administrator and Advisory Committee. The draft will be presented to a joint Planning Board and Board of Selectmen meeting on December 15 for final comments and adoption.

Corridor Plans

Maynard-Acton Powder Mill Road Corridor Plan

MAPC is working with Acton and Maynard on a Corridor Plan for Powder Mill Road (Rte. 62), a 1.5 mile stretch of road that runs from the west end of Acton to Maynard's downtown area. The plan will address safety and accessibility for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians; revisions to the zoning bylaws for both towns to enhance economic development activities and housing opportunities; streetscape improvements designed to create a better sense of place; and improved access to the Assabet River. The construction of new multi-family housing, the location of the Beijing Royal School at the old Stratus campus, and the clean-up of a 21E site present opportunities to create a new vision for the corridor. On December 3, MAPC presented a virtual public meeting, and online open house that will close on December 17. It was well-attended (85 people including Sen. Jamie Eldridge and Reps. Kate Hogan and Tami Gouveia).

Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRP)

Norwell OSRP

A working draft of the Norwell OSRP was presented to the public in mid-November and reviewed at a public virtual forum with 56 people in attendance, including Select Board and Planning Board members. At the virtual public forum, most of the time was spent in small groups with participants workshopping the action items for each of the OSRP's goals. Based on the first virtual public forum of the planning process, a new goal has been added focused on creating a safe and convenient walking and biking network.

Zoning

Rockland Gateway Mixed-Use Overlay District

Rockland hired MAPC to conduct a peer review of a proposed Gateway Mixed-Use Overlay District proposed by AW Perry for a 116-acre parcel that is currently zoned for commercial and industrial uses. MAPC prepared a zoning diagnostic that includes several recommendations for improvements to the draft bylaw. MAPC will continue to work with the town and AW Perry to finalize the bylaw in advance of Town Meeting in May 2021.

Rockport Zoning Bylaw Update

Rockport awarded a \$48,000 contract to MAPC to undertake a review of the Rockport Zoning Bylaw. MAPC will prepare a zoning diagnostic with recommendations to update the bylaw to make it more user-friendly, modernize its provisions, and ensure it is consistent with statutory and case law. The review of the bylaw is underway and will be discussed at a Planning Board meeting in mid-December.

Littleton Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

The Littleton TDR bylaw project has continued with additional discussions with the Planning Board on the details of the bylaw, and most recently with meetings with members of the Littleton Agricultural Commission. Alternative proposals from the Ag Commission include concepts of time-limited farmland restrictions (to ensure future flexibility of farm operations),

which would be less expensive to purchase than permanent retirement of development rights on the farms. The project is also becoming more complex with the potential proposal for a 40R District near the train station, within the area which was to be a receiving area for the TDR. MAPC is therefore also in discussions with DHCD staff to determine if there is a way that the 40R and TDR programs may be able to interact and meet the goals of both programs.

E-TOD Planning and Zoning

MAPC has made substantial progress working in several communities to advance zoning appropriate for these areas. In Ashland, MAPC has met with the Planning Board three times over the past few months, presenting draft zoning and further refinements for its downtown, in advance of spring town meeting. Scituate has confirmed it will bring draft zoning for the North Scituate station area developed by MAPC to spring town meeting. A final meeting of stakeholders occurred in early December, and a public workshop hosted by the Planning Board is scheduled for January. Finally, progress also continues to develop zoning for the area around Thoreau Depot station in Concord. MAPC has met twice with Planning Board over the last three months, with a final meeting scheduled for February. The town is planning on bringing the zoning to town meeting in fall 2021.

Housing

Housing Lynn Housing Production Plan (HPP)

MAPC has been working with Lynn on an HPP since fall 2019. On October 29, MAPC launched an online open house to gain community input on draft recommendations. Nearly 80 Lynners participated. Between 68% and 87% of them rated each action important or very important. Analysis of the financial feasibility of different inclusionary zoning scenarios is also complete, following market research and engagement with developers. The City is considering each of these scenarios, and is discussing next steps to pursue development of an inclusionary zoning policy. In December, MAPC shared a draft plan with the city and steering committee. To ensure the plan is accessible to a broad readership, MAPC also drafted a shorter and more graphic document, which will also be translated to Spanish. After input is incorporated, the documents will be posted for public comment.

Foxborough HPP

MAPC and Foxborough recently published a draft HPP and circulated it for public comment. The draft includes seven priority actions to increase affordability, diversify the housing stock, and meet the community's housing needs. In December, highlights from the plan, including the plan's goals and priority strategies, were presented to Foxborough's Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. The plan will be updated in response to public comments and work toward adoption will continue in the new year.

Melrose HPP

The Melrose HPP kicked off this fall. At the start of this effort, the planning team assembled an advisory committee of residents and housing experts to steer the process. The plan also launched its first engagement campaign, which is focused on existing conditions in Melrose's housing and the community's goals for the plan. The campaign included a webinar with more than 60 participants and a self-paced online open house with more than 70 participants at the time of this writing.

SWAP-TRIC Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO)

MAPC is working with SWAP and TRIC to conduct research on establishing an RHSO, which would leverage participating towns' individual resources to monitor their affordable housing stock and creatively manage local funding and programs. The first phase of work kicked off this fall, with a focus on best practices of RHSO formation and functioning. MAPC conducted several focus groups with both subregions to raise awareness of the benefits of RHSOs, their need, and potential cost structuring. Interviews are underway with staff of existing RHSOs and their municipal partners. The second phase will start in the new year by identifying participating towns within the subregions that are able to commit to funding a new RHSO.

Economic Development

Support for Business Districts and Commercial Corridors

The Economic Development team is building the capacity of local communities to respond to the needs of local businesses through a variety of targeted initiatives. Economic Development Planner II Jenn Kaplan hosted a design charette for the MAGIC subregion focusing on ways to activate underutilized downtown parcels to facilitate outdoor dining and vending. The team also worked with the Transportation Department on the Shared Streets 2.0 program (see more in the Transportation section) and assisted with the development of webinars hosted by the Mass Downtown Initiative on ways to encourage downtown activity during the winter months. In addition, the team assisted several communities with the application to the Local Rapid Recovery Planning grant program released by DHCD in December. The LRRP program will fund 5-month recovery planning initiatives for business districts and other commercial corridors throughout the state.

Essex Economic Development Plan

Raul Gonzalez, Senior Planner on the Economic Development team, completed a plan to help Essex to strengthen their business community, heavily dependent on seasonal tourism. Throughout the planning process, MAPC engaged small and mid-sized businesses as well as residents to determine the appropriate supports the town can offer, as well as additional priority businesses to add to complement the existing business mix. Given that the plan was developed as COVID-19 emerged, several recommendations were included regarding key small business supports needed for recovery,

Franklin Market Study

Raul Gonzalez also finalized a market study for a new business innovation district in Franklin. The study incorporated the input of residents, artists, businesses, and students and staff from Dean College. The three focus areas of the study were Downtown Franklin, the Mixed Business Innovation District, and the Crossing, as well as the Franklin Cultural District. Eleven recommendations were created that build upon the strengths of Franklin's history, its arts and culture community, active boards and committees, its relationship to Dean College, and its distinctive neighborhood businesses.

Regional Immigrant-Owned Small Business Storytelling

The Economic Development and Arts & Culture teams are finalizing the first phase of this project. Over the past several months, the team gathered data through analysis of traditional datasets, surveys distributed in multiple languages, and video interviews with business

owners in Quincy. The result is a vivid picture of the conditions experienced by Asian-American entrepreneurs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be shared via a website and three documentary videos in January. Jenn Kaplan will develop municipal and state policy recommendations based on the data, which will be presented to the partners and made public.

MassWorks Application Review

Betsy Cowan Neptune led the review of 27 MassWorks applications, with assistance from Mark Racicot, Alex Koppelman, and David Loutzenheiser. The team evaluated the alignment of the applications to MetroFuture and provided a numerical and written evaluation of each application to EOHED. Several projects demonstrated thoughtful alignment with MetroFuture and the team was pleased to see those projects awarded funding in November. The full list of awards can be found [here](#).

Racial Equity Municipal Action Plan (REMAP)

Raul Gonzalez led the successful launch of the REMAP program on November 17. Through a collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the Government Alliance for Race and Equity, and MAPC, municipalities in the region were offered the opportunity to participate in a year-long training program to create municipal action plans to advance racial equity. Twenty-two communities applied for the program, of which six were selected—Bedford, Framingham, Lynn, Natick, Revere and Stoughton. The six municipal teams participated in the November 17 orientation and will be receiving monthly training and individualized support over the next year. Carolina Prieto, Rachel Marx and Ben Faust are providing key support to the project.

State Grants Received for Land Use Planning Projects

The Land Use Department and our partnering municipalities have been notified of awards of planning grants from EOEEA to undertake the following activities:

- Manchester-by-the-Sea 40R Bylaw preparation
- Maynard Housing Production Plan
- Lincoln Station Area Zoning
- Hull Housing Production Plan
- Salem Zoning for Bridge Street Mixed Use District
- Beverly Accessory Dwelling Unit study and ordinance preparation

MAPC worked with the municipalities to prepare the grant applications and will be working on these projects over the upcoming year. (Note: The Clean Energy Department also received a major award from this program, which will be described in the next Executive Director's Report!)

Municipal Collaboration

Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC)

During the month of October, HMCC staff held a series of workshops to address stress management among healthcare workers. Subject matter experts from Lowell General Hospital

and a licensed clinical psychiatrist offered techniques and best practices to mitigate stress during these difficult times. In November, staff facilitated a series of meetings to discuss best practices and lessons learned during the first COVID-19 surge this past spring.

In addition, in order to plan for and respond to COVID-19 and its impact on hospital capacity, MDPH has established a regional hospital planning process, facilitated by the HMCC. The HMCC organizes and facilitates regular meetings among hospitals in the region. These meetings help to identify and analyze communication regarding capacity challenges that may impact hospitals' abilities to meet the health needs of the population on an equitable basis.

Shannon Community Safety Initiative

On November 9, Municipal Collaboration submitted the application for the FY2021 Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr., Community Safety Initiative on behalf of the Metro Mayors Coalition site. The application includes funding for both law enforcement partners (\$224,000) and community programs (\$299,000) in eight communities: Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop. The FY21 application continues to emphasize programs and initiatives aimed at improving youth mental health in the region, in addition to funding for youth employment, the arts, and recreational activities.

Over the past several months, Municipal Collaboration staff worked with stakeholders in Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop to develop plans for Shannon funding that was originally allocated to a shared youth mental health counselor. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak disrupted plans for the shared counselor, so each of the three communities received a portion of the original budget for new or existing programs that support youth mental health. In **Chelsea**, funds were used to offer a "Transformative Citizenship" training to police officers working within the Community Services Division (CSD). The six-week course was provided by MIT's Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values, and participating officers were taught how to practice empathy and ethics-based leadership. The officers then applied those lessons during additional Youth/Police Initiative (YPI) sessions. YPI sessions consist of at-risk youth engaging in weekly discussion sessions with police officers, sharing a meal and stories of their upbringings. **Revere** expanded its existing Open Gym program that provides youth access to the high school's athletic facilities on Friday and Saturday evenings. The additional funding was used to expand hours of operation to meet demand and also enabled school-based guidance counselors to work with youth before, during, and after recreational activities. **Winthrop** dedicated its portion of the funding to additional staff time for two members of its Mental Health Team—one police officer and one social worker. Winthrop Police Department has been at the forefront of understanding the intersection of mental health and policing, and as a result created the Community Law Enforcement Assisted Recovery (CLEAR) program in 2014. Members of the mental health team are tasked with finding, connecting, and supporting children, adolescents, and families in the community.

Statewide Fiduciary

EOPSS has once again selected MAPC as the Statewide Fiduciary Agent for the FFY 2020 State Homeland Security Program grant funding totaling \$5.4 million. Under this contract, MAPC will provide management and administrative services to the Central, Northeast,

Southeast, and Western Homeland Security Planning Regions and their associated advisory councils. We will continue to partner with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments in this work.

Funding will be focused on enhancing preparedness and response capabilities in the following areas: cybersecurity, protection of soft targets and crowded places, information and intelligence sharing, and emerging threats such as transnational criminal organizations, weapons of mass destruction, and unmanned aerial systems.

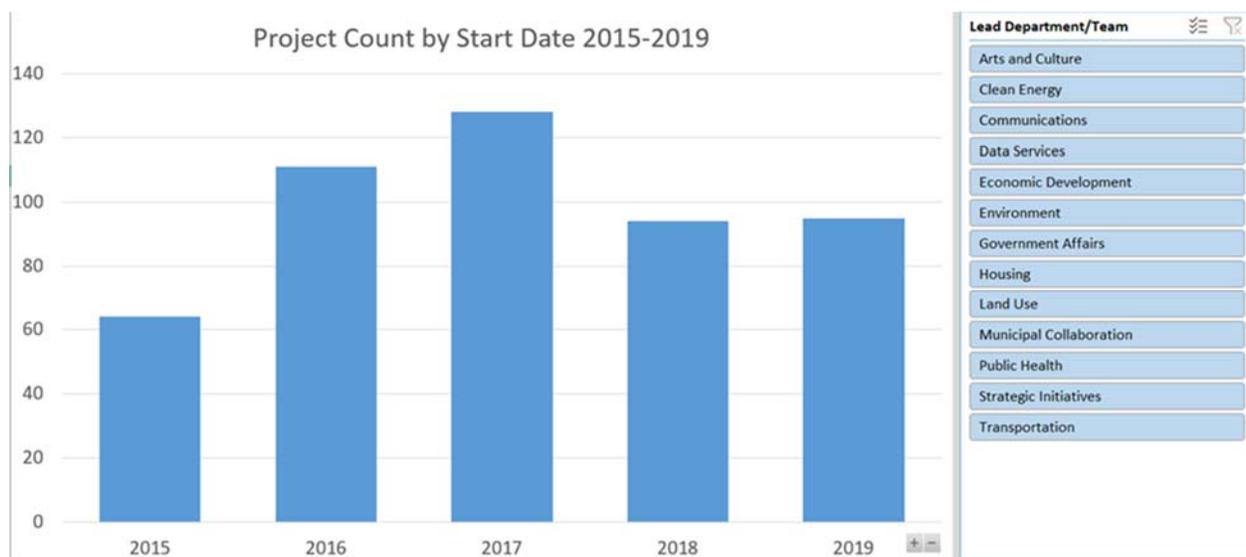
NERAC

In November, NERAC approved funds to create a Medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Cache to be stored at the Beverly Cache Site and to be run by Region III EMS. NERAC, along with HMCC Region 3, will purchase medial PPE to stock the cache for use by the region’s emergency medical services, fire services, law enforcement personnel, and other disciplines. The PPE will include masks, eye protection, gowns, and other body substance isolation attire. This cache will ensure that fresh PPE is available to first responders during emergencies.

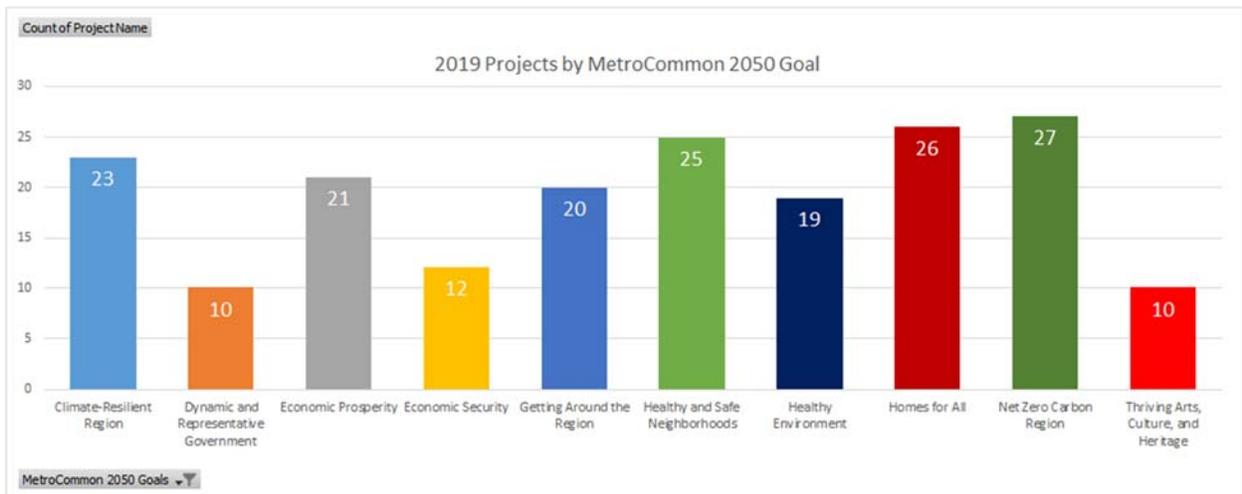
Strategic Initiatives

2019 Project Inventory

Having successfully transitioned to a more user-friendly database to track projects, we used the new system to complete the 2019 Project Inventory. The Project Inventory details what kind of projects we did, where, and with who. Due to a very busy Executive Committee agenda, we won’t be presenting the results from the project inventory until early 2021. However, we will share some data from the analysis that we found informative.



One of the exciting features that we added to this Project Inventory is the ability to filter data by department. This allows departments to analyze the data in more meaningful ways.



Anticipating the transition from MetroFuture to MetroCommon, we retroactively assigned projects MetroCommon 2050 goals. We attribute the variation among goals largely to the relative size of the departments that address them. However, an additional takeaway is that departments are frequently expanding their traditional activities into climate resiliency, health and safety, and clean energy. Also, more and more MAPC projects address multiple goals.

MetroCommon2050 Update

MetroCommon2050 has wrapped up the “Challenges and Opportunities” phase and is now developing policy recommendations and scenario planning elements of the plan. Twenty policy chapters are under development, each of which falls under one of the five action areas. This fall, six drafts were reviewed internally by staff. Public engagement on the strategies has begun through the “driving forces strategy sessions,” but the bulk of the engagement will occur in the first months of the new year. Our first major session, scheduled for the last week in January, will bring municipal CEOs together to discuss dynamic and representative government. We have received a draft chapter on municipal and regional finance from our consultant, the Collins Center at UMass-Boston. They will wrap this work early in the new year. Through February and March, the rest of the policy chapters will be vetted with subject matter experts and through the mini-grant program that funds community partners to ensure under-represented populations have a voice in shaping plan recommendations.

Over the past month, the scenario planning work has been advancing. We have modeled a smart growth scenario versus a baseline scenario to estimate the impact that land use decisions have on greenhouse gas emissions. The preliminary findings clearly demonstrate that smart growth land use patterns are essential for reaching our state climate goals. The results will feed into the state’s Clean Energy and Climate Plan.

In November and early December, the concept of future uncertainties was introduced to the plan. Senior Research Analyst Sarah Philbrick and her team are exploring three groups of uncertainty that we are likely to confront over the next 30 years in: federal policy, demographic change and the impact on the housing market and economy, and transportation technology and demand. At the Fall Council meeting, the External Advisory Committee meeting, and at two public strategy session workshops, stakeholders learned about how we are incorporating

these uncertainties into the plan and how the policy recommendations may be to be altered to adapt to new future conditions.

We are also making good progress on the MetroCommon research agenda. On Thursday of this week, we are launching the Zoning Atlas, which has brought together the codes for MAPC communities into a publicly accessible database. (See p. 5 for further information on the atlas.) The next research release is scheduled for early February and is the launch of the housing submarket typologies. We have identified seven typologies using a range of data inputs that will help policy makers and practitioners target interventions more effectively.

Finally, we've made some changes in the project leadership due to Lizzie Grobbel's departure from MAPC. Eric Hove has picked up the project management mantle, with additional support from Sasha Parodi and Emily Torres-Cullinane.

Community Engagement

Stoughton Virtual Special Town Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, MAPC reached out to municipalities to see if they needed any technical support. MAPC's Community Engagement team has now helped Stoughton twice with virtual Town Meetings. Prior to Town Meeting sessions in September, CE staff helped Stoughton to review Zoom settings, build processes to support town representatives the day of the meeting, and reflect with town staff on how to conduct a secure and streamlined event using Zoom. Over 100 Town Meeting Members were able to take part over the course of four nights, voting on 24 warrant articles. SMAC TV (Stoughton Media Access Corporation) was able to broadcast and live stream the Town Meeting to ensure public access and participation.

Dedham Virtual Town Meeting

Dedham was able to conduct its first virtual Town Meeting with the support of MAPC. Over four months, the town and MAPC built out a strategy to move Town Meeting virtual due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Our Community Engagement team provided consultation to the Dedham team weekly around how best to support representatives engaging in virtual Town Meeting. Staff worked hand-in-hand with Moderator Dan Driscoll to train and on-board representatives who needed support and troubleshoot technical issues before and during Town Meeting. On the day of the virtual town meeting, we worked closely with Dedham TM members and staff to ensure a secure and robust participation through technical management and responding to the technical assistance hotline.

On November 30, the day of Town Meeting, over 250 participants completed their work on-line over a period of 5 hours, dispatching 30 articles. Closed captioning was made available for all participants and viewers from the public. Town Meeting was broadcast over Dedham TV and streamed online for members of the public to access and participate. In the middle of the public health emergency local democracy was able to move forward in Dedham, while new skills, processes and systems were built to support virtual decision making and participation.

Moderator Driscoll wrote to me afterwards, saying, "We were greatly aided in pulling this off by the expert work of your staff, led by Emily Torres- Cullinane, assisted by Iolando Spinola and Christian Brandt. They brought the experience of having worked with Stoughton, as well

as a deep understanding of how the Zoom platform works (and doesn't work) for what we had to do. We all thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from their participation. They got raves from the members who went through the training, which those of us who are elected especially appreciated.”

In addition to Emily, Christian, and Iolando, I want to acknowledge the work of Carolina Prieto and Sasha Parodi, also on the CE team. Great work in Stoughton and Dedham!

MACDC Virtual Facilitation

Beyond the efforts in Stoughton and Dedham, I want to acknowledge the work of the Community Engagement, Digital Services, Information Technology, and Municipal Collaboration teams in helping to design and support literally dozens of internal and external meetings, webinars on key topics related to the pandemic, peer exchanges, and public presentations. Their work has been exemplary, and MAPC could not make it through this difficult time without their cheerful and steadfast support.

Subregions

Throughout the fall, the Subregional Councils convened their members monthly and covered a variety of topics related to COVID response and recovery. All eight subregions led transportation-focused sessions with the MPO related to the UPWP and TIP.

South Shore Coalition (SSC) organized additional meetings in response to proposed MBTA cutbacks, often with the South Shore Chamber of Commerce. The group is now developing plans for a regional transportation vision to capitalize on the engagement around this topic. In addition, the first phase of the South Shore Site Readiness project was completed, in partnership with the Chamber and MassDevelopment. The project is analyzing six sites in five municipalities to determine the infrastructure solutions necessary to unlock development on those and other surrounding sites. The project will be completed in mid-2021.

The Inner Core Committee and the MetroWest Regional Collaborative hosted two successful Legislative Breakfasts. Legislators and members discussed a wide variety of topics, including the eviction and foreclosure moratorium, the FY21 state budget, resources for municipalities in COVID recovery, as well as updates to policies and statues around Town Meeting.

MAGIC welcomed a new Coordinator, Julie Curti, Senior Climate and Clean Energy Planner. Before departing in November, Lizzie Grobbel ran a Winter Placemaking Mini-Charette, with MAPC's Economic Development Planner, Jenn Kaplan, to consider two sites in the MAGIC region and create winter programming options to generate more local business traffic. A Winter Activation Design Guide was offered as a resource to cover regulatory/permitting requirements and upcoming funding opportunities (including the MassDOT Shared Winter Streets and Places grant).

SWAP held meetings focused on advancing trail infrastructure in the region and preparing for an upcoming Regional Housing Services Office with TRIC.

Deputy Director Rebecca Davis and Economic Development staff Josh Eichen and Raul Gonzalez met with Stoughton's Town Administrator, Robin Grimm, as part of annual visits to new municipal leaders in the Subregions.

The Subregional Coordinators have also been discussing ways to address the need to advance racial equity among their member communities. For example, Community Engagement Specialist Iolando Spinola led a session with coordinators on power mapping, an organizing tool to better understand the power dynamics in each subregion.

Public Health

Metro North COVID-19 Coordination

MAPC has continued to help facilitate weekly calls among Metro North public health, hospitals and community organizations as part of responding to the pandemic. Over the past months, the group has focused on issues related to communications and focus group findings among populations whose first language is not English, lack of capacity in shelters for those experiencing homelessness, testing and, most recently, vaccine distribution. Two key calls involved lead authors of two recent National Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine reviews: [Encouraging COVID-19 Protective Behaviors](#) and [Encouraging Cooperation with COVID-19 Contact Tracing](#). The group is now exploring coordination of communications related to current public health practices and participation in the upcoming vaccine distribution.

Wastewater Surveillance for COVID-19 Webinar

Several MAPC departments collaborated on a webinar to raise awareness related to monitoring municipal wastewater for signals of COVID-19. Joined by speakers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the MA Water Resources Authority, and the cities of Gloucester and Cambridge, the webinar provided an overview of the current science, how MWRA is monitoring the virus across their system, and how municipalities are performing this work. A recording of the webinar is available [here](#) and please reach out to Public Health Director Barry Keppard at bkeppard@mapc.org if you would like more information.

Region 3 COVID-19 Affiliate Funding and Technical Assistance

The Municipal Collaboration and Public Health teams continued to assist the DPH with pandemic-related emergency funds distribution and coordination with local health departments in the Region 3 emergency preparedness region. The team already convened peer calls among cities and towns to share promising practices and strategies as well as challenges they are facing going into fall and winter. Specific calls were held to review data analysis and reporting practices among health departments and to share promising practices for communications with business and residents. More information is available here: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/covid-19-resources/> (see *Emergency Funding for Local Public Health Departments*).

BHRCC Needs Assessment and Action Plan – Social Advocacy Award

the Blue Hills Regional Coordinating Council (BHRCC) Assessment and Action Plan was awarded the Massachusetts APA Social Advocacy Award. MAPC's public health team played a key role in this collaborative project along with the Transportation Department, and the [Blue Hills Community Health Network Area \(CHNA 20\)](#). The award is bestowed annually to a program, project, group, or individual that advanced social justice, inclusion, and fairness for marginalized populations.

Transportation

Allston I-90 Multi-Modal Project

MAPC submitted extensive comments to MassDOT in advance of the Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) that will be completed by Summer 2021. Our comments focused on making improvements to both the Soldiers Field Road Hybrid and Modified At-Grade alternatives for the so-called “Throat” section of the project. MassDOT has postponed their decision to select a preferred alternative option for the \$1.5 billion project until after the DEIS is complete.

While we have focused our attention on the various throat alternatives, we have continued to draw attention to the concerns of MetroWest communities regarding the duration and impact of the project, and the need for expanded transit options during construction. We are also concerned that endless disputes over the Throat could encourage MassDOT to defer all the realignment options and temporarily fix the existing viaduct, foregoing the enormous benefits of redevelopment on parcels to the west in Allston.

Regional Trail and Greenway Project Advances

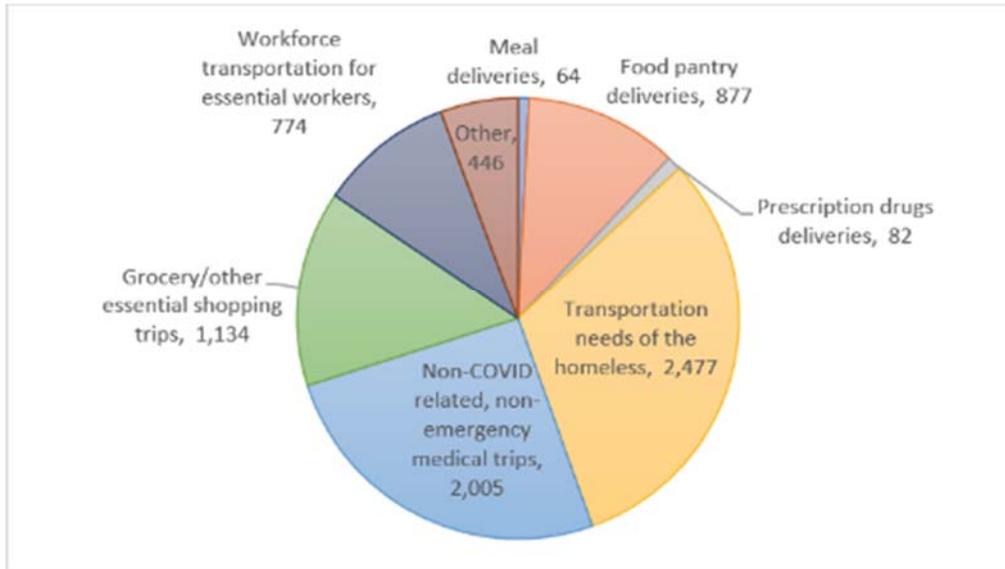
MAPC continues to help initiate and advance a number of trail and greenway projects throughout the region. Here are some recent updates:

- Spot Pond Brook Greenway – Malden River to Oak Grove station and beyond, Malden and Melrose. This project was initially scoped and named by MAPC. Malden has hired a consultant to conduct a feasibility study and conduct public engagement.
- Nashoba Valley LandLine Network – A growing regional collaboration spanning parts of both MAPC and Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is working to develop this LandLine network. Representatives from over 10 communities are holding frequent meetings to identify the elements of the network and develop projects to implement it.
- Warner Trail – Continued partnership with Canton, Westwood, DCR, and other partners to extend the trail to the Blue Hills with spurs to Ponkapoag Pond.
- Aqueduct Trail Network – Recent engagement with MWRA and affected municipalities to continue buildout and permitting of the 70-mile aqueduct trail network.
- Metacomet Greenway – This is a proposed rail trail corridor extending from Walpole to the Rhode Island border in Attleboro. MAPC staff has met with the communities on several occasions over the past year to help advise on how to move forward, begin the advocacy effort, and bring town officials and advocates together.

Urgent COVID Taxi, Livery, and Hackney Partnerships Grant Program

The Urgent Taxi Program awarded 25 grantees state-wide to partner with taxi, livery and hackney businesses. Most of their programs have started and are actively supporting vulnerable populations to access essential services. We are receiving bi-monthly reports about their programs, which have generated a lot of interest in this service. As of our most recent reports (September/October), approximately \$200,000 has been spent of the \$1 million we distributed. This money has gone to 40 taxi companies and allowed nearly 8,000 essential trips to happen, with about 300 individuals served weekly.

The pie chart below outlines the distribution of trips. The Boston Public Health Commission has used the funds heavily for homeless transportation, so as other communities constitute a larger percentage of the rides, the distribution may shift away from that function to other uses:



In November, MAPC launched the second round of funding and received approximately 60 applications. We expanded the eligible entities to include non-profits and eliminated the restrictions on populations served and types of trips. We are currently evaluating all eligible grant applications, and expect to make an announcement about awards in January. We hope to offer this grant opportunity approximately twice per year, depending on funding.

Shared Streets

In November, the MAPC team hosted a webinar in partnership with MassDOT to kick off the second round of shared streets programming, Shared Winter Streets and Spaces. Grants awarded will range from \$5,000 to \$500,000 to improve public streets and spaces with an eye toward the challenges that winter will bring. The webinar also included presentations from Quincy and West Stockbridge, which already hosted successful shared streets initiatives in the first iteration of the program. MAPC provided an information on best procurement practices and updated statewide contract and vendor guides. A recording of the webinar is available on-line here: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/shared-streets/>.

In the new year, MAPC will be hosting a peer exchange and panel event in partnership with MassDOT and the Solomon Foundation for communities across the Commonwealth to share lessons learned from implementation of the shared streets projects.

Ride-for-Hire Electrification Working Group

On behalf of EOEEA, MAPC is convening and facilitating a Ride-for-Hire Electrification Working Group. The purpose of the Working Group is to identify policies and prioritize near and long-term actions to increase the adoption of electric vehicles by both individual drivers and the ride-hailing companies. The electrification of the ride-for-hire sector is part of a broader effort

to support the use of less carbon-intensive forms of transportation in the Commonwealth. The Working Group comprises about 30 members including representation from Uber, Lyft, the taxi and livery industry, Department of Public Utilities, electric utilities, state agencies, advocacy groups, and municipalities. It will identify recommendations for implementation by the EOEAA this spring.