

**Executive Director's Report  
Mid-February through Mid-April 2021  
Submitted to the Executive Committee  
April 28, 2021**

***Clean Energy***

**MAPC Retrofits Streetlights to LEDs in 78 Municipalities through Statewide Grant Program**

MAPC's administration of DOER's statewide LED Streetlight Retrofit Grant Program concluded this month after assisting 78 municipalities to convert their streetlights. Since the program's launch in 2017, MAPC supported communities of all sizes with the conversion of 116,139 streetlights. These retrofits will reduce electricity usage by more than 35.1 million kilowatt hours, lower energy costs for municipalities by over \$5.4 million, and cut municipal greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by over 10,000 metric tons per year. The program provided grants for 30 percent of the cost of materials and installation associated with converting conventional high-pressure sodium (HPS) streetlights to light emitting diode (LED) technology, which is capable of cutting electricity usage by 50 to 70 percent. Seventeen municipalities were also able to install wireless controls to dim their streetlights, saving even more energy and carbon and setting them up to implement additional emerging smart-city technologies in the future. Learn more about our work on LED streetlight retrofits with communities [here](#).

Kudos to the Clean Energy team, and particularly Clean Energy Specialist II Cara Goodman, who oversaw implementation of the program and deserves much of the credit for its success.

**Metro Mayors Mark Five Years of Climate Action at a Virtual Celebration**



On March 19, the Metro Mayors Coalition (MMC) and MAPC hosted the virtual “Regional Climate Collaboration: a [Metro Mayors Celebration](#)” to celebrate five years of climate mitigation and resilience. Leaders from the 15 communities gathered for a roundtable discussion, highlighting past successes and discussing ways to craft a post-COVID recovery that is green, resilient, and just for all residents of the region.

Metro Mayors initially met in 2015, in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, to form the Climate Preparedness Taskforce to address vulnerabilities in the region's shared critical infrastructure and to support local climate preparedness and mitigation efforts. In 2016, the mayors and managers committed to becoming a net-zero region by 2050. Since that time, Task Force members have completed over 100 climate mitigation and adaptation actions, including preparing for intense heat, installing solar arrays, drafting local vulnerability plans, electrifying vehicles, converting streetlights to LEDs, adding renewables to the grid, and starting municipal compost programs.

## **Statewide Energy Efficiency Three-Year Plan Engagement**

On February 25, MAPC hosted the second in a series of engagement sessions with 33 municipal stakeholders to inform the 2022-2024 Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan, which will determine programs and budgets Mass Save for the next three years. MAPC has incorporated the input from municipal stakeholders into a comment letter outlining recommendations and priorities for the Plan: aligning Mass Save with climate and public health efforts, making energy efficiency programs more equitable, improving programs for municipalities, and improving partnerships and data sharing with municipalities and community partners.

## **Draft Clean Energy and Climate Plan**

On March 22, MAPC [submitted comments](#) on the state's Interim Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030, released by EOEEA on December 30, 2020. MAPC commended the Administration for making near-term commitments to decarbonize our homes and businesses, connect our communities to renewable and clean sources of energy, and accelerate the transition to carbon-free methods of mobility around the Commonwealth. We also indicated our disappointment with the lack of attention to smart growth and transit as mechanisms to reduce GHG, and we made a series of recommendations to strengthen the plan. Additional comments focused on recommendations to make equity and environmental justice more central to each strategy. We will continue to track finalization of this plan and advocate for implementation actions, such as the creation of a Commission on Clean Heat.

## ***Communications***

### **MetroCommon2050**

Communications staff edited the 19 detailed policy recommendations and helped to create a survey to gather input on the recommendations from the public. Communications and MetroCommon staff have also been working on strategies to encourage local policymakers to implement the plan's final recommendations.

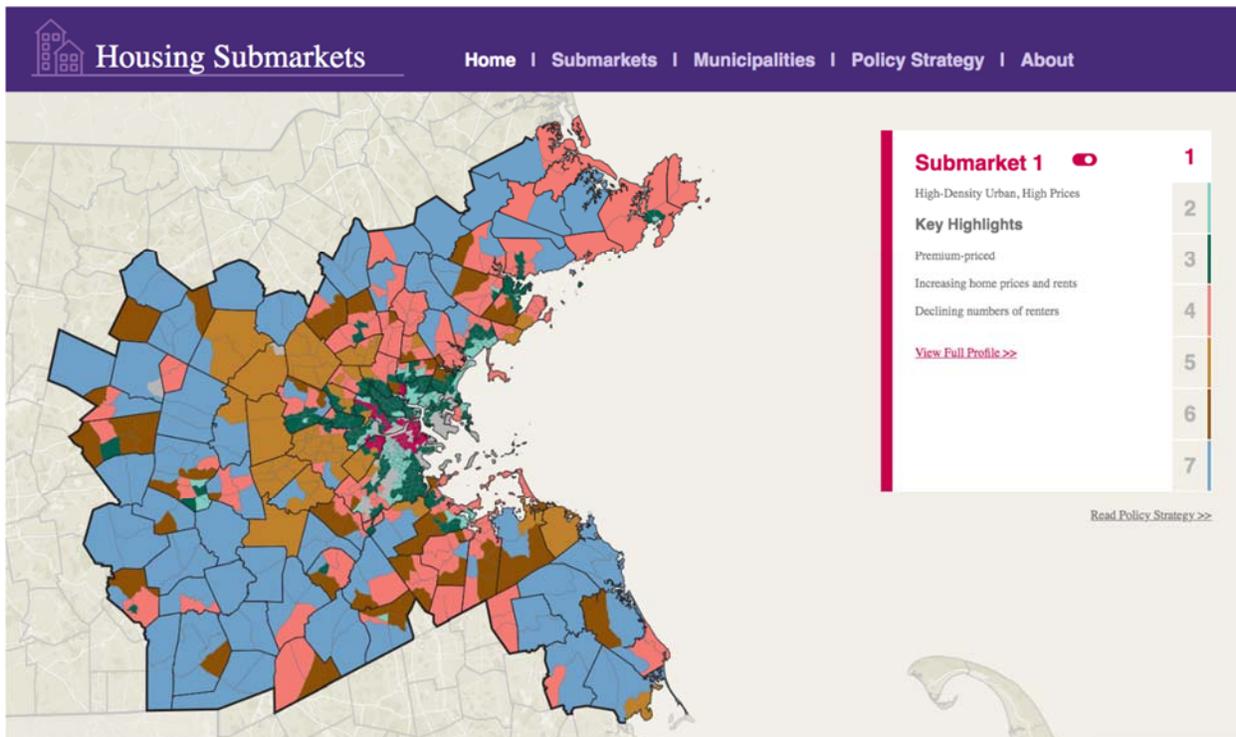
### **Equity**

Communications staff, working with other departments, designed a qualitative research project to gather information about how municipalities are working to achieve greater equity, what has worked, and what hasn't. The purpose of this research is not only to provide valuable information to cities and towns, but also to guide MAPC's technical assistance work in the field, especially since our main program in this area (REMAP) can only serve six communities – far fewer than the number of communities that are interested in advancing equity issues.

## Data Services

### Regional Housing Submarkets

On February 23, MAPC hosted a [web event](#) to release Housing Submarkets, Data Services' latest MetroCommon research product. About 100 participants joined to hear about the research and engage with a panel of experts, including Beyazmin Jimenez, Vice President of Abundant Housing, David Adetokunbo Williams, Policy Outreach Director at Opportunity Insights, and Jonathan Burch, Principal Planner at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Housing submarkets are collections of areas, some next to each other, some far apart, that share similar housing stock and housing market characteristics. Through a statistical classification method called “latent profile analysis,” this research identifies seven different housing submarkets in the MAPC region. Neighborhoods in each submarket share common housing needs and challenges, regardless of geographic location, and the submarkets can help MAPC and our partners identify the right strategies for the right places to improve the housing conditions throughout Greater Boston. The Housing Submarkets website, [housing-submarkets.mapc.org](https://housing-submarkets.mapc.org), takes users through each of the seven submarkets, highlighting the housing characteristics that define each one, along with additional statistics about the socioeconomic, educational, and other conditions within each submarket. We present a matrix of policy strategies that suggest the most critical strategies for each submarkets. Users can explore the submarket mix within their own municipalities and learn about the strategies that make the most sense for that mix.



## **VisionEval**

MAPC has joined the FHWA Transportation Pooled Fund Study known as “Collaborative Development of New Strategic Planning Models.” The study, comprising MPOs and DOTs from across the U.S., continues developing the VisionEval strategic planning model and related tools. Senior Land Use and Transportation Analyst Conor Gately presented to the group on the recent MAPC research brief that utilized VisionEval to evaluate the impacts of future land use and transportation pricing policies on vehicle miles traveled in the region. MAPC is one of the first regional planning agencies to stand-up the full VisionEval model, and feedback from other agencies and users was very positive. As a member of the Pooled Fund, MAPC will now have access to expanded technical assistance, as well as influence on the development of new features in the model, through an ongoing participation in the Technical Advisory Group.

## **How to “Server” You Better**

The IT team has made a major upgrade to the agency’s technology infrastructure with the purchase and installation of four new physical servers and switches. This was an important improvement for the agency as the youngest of current host servers is over seven years old. Those servers were not designed to run the operating systems and software that we relying on today and it was critical to update the hardware that is driving our environment. This also gives us more flexibility and options as we continually move more services and products to the cloud. This improvement is also part of our efforts to ensure Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity in the case of a major event/disaster at the offices of MAPC.

## **Data Requests**

Over the past two months, Data Services answered and catalogued 33 data requests. About half of these requests were initiated by MAPC staff and the other half were initiated directly by stakeholders representing governments, academic or research institutions, and other organizations. The most-requested information type for this period was housing data, which included data on recent sales of triple-deckers in Uphams Corner, data on average household size by municipality, and data on the mobility of low-income households relative to non-low income households.

## ***Environment***

### **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)**

MAPC facilitated two MVP Workshops remotely via Zoom, on March 27 in Carlisle and April 14 in Topsfield. While these workshops are normally an all-day in-person event, we modified and streamlined the agendas to a half-day online event and added some pre- and post-workshop activities to accommodate the shorter meeting time. Both sessions were well attended, with 34 in Carlisle and 30 in Topsfield, as good or better than the usual in person turnout for towns this size. Both workshops resulted in thoughtful suggestions from participants for local actions to address climate impacts and increase town resilience. The actions focus on infrastructure, social, and environmental impacts of climate change. MAPC is also preparing FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plans for both towns, and the MVP actions will inform the recommendations of those plans.

## **Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)**

MAPC held a Public Listening Session for the Saugus combined HMP and MVP project with the Planning Board on March 18. Participants provided comments on mitigation measures that had been identified in the Town's MVP workshop.

MAPC facilitated a meeting of the Carlisle Local Team on March 16 and the Topsfield Local Team on April 8. Both teams are in the process of reviewing mitigation measures for their plans and preparing for their workshops

Lynn, Nahant, and Somerville have all selected MAPC to prepare their HMP Updates. Wayland's HMP was adopted by the Board of Selectmen, and the town has received its formal letter of plan approval from FEMA. MAPC facilitated meetings of the Local Hazard Mitigation teams for Weymouth on March 9, Woburn on March 16 and April 22, and Milton on March 3 and April 7.

## **Climate Convenings**

Members of MAPC's South Shore Climate Network gathered on April 1 to share information and plans for the upcoming EAA MVP Action grants, CZM Coastal Resilience grants, and the FEMA BRIC grants.

## **Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant**

Project selection is underway for the third round of grants under the ACR program, funded by the Barr Foundation. Awards will be one year in duration, and up to \$50,000 per awardee.

MAPC facilitated the second workshop for the Resilience Community of Practice (RCOP) on April 2, bringing together the grantees working on projects funded by the second round of ACR grants that began last year.

MAPC also kicked off the Speaker Series program, which is available free of charge to the public and occurs every other month. The Speaker Series features experts and practitioners from across the county who focus on advancing climate resilience work. The first event of the Series took place on March 25, with Dr. Linda Shi, assistant professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, as guest speaker. In this webinar, Dr. Shi discussed her research on the vulnerability of municipal budgets in Greater Boston to climate change and how to approach development in ways that promote equity, resilience, and fiscal responsibility. About 126 participants attended; the recording video of the session also received almost 200 views.

## **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
16350	Parcels O and P - Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park	Boston	ENF	C
16354	Proposed Convenience Store and Gas Station	Wrentham	ENF	C
16355	Metropolitan Water Tunnel Program	Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Dedham, Needham, Newton, Waltham, Watertown, Wellesley, Weston	ENF	C
16356	On The Dot	Boston	ENF	C
16358	Puddingstone	Brookline	ENF	C
16362	Andrew Square to Dewar Street Reliability Project	Boston	ENF	C
22	Atlantic Avenue Reconstruction	Hull	ENF	C
16336	6 Gull Cove Lane	Rockport	ENF	C
16337	300 Summit Drive	Burlington	ENF	C
16341	Cohasset Harbor Marina Bulkhead Project	Cohasset	ENF	C
16343	Boynton Gateway	Somerville	ENF	C
16347	Bridge Replacement, W-043-017, over MBTA	Woburn	ENF	C
16349	22 Whittin Avenue	Revere	ENF	C
336	6 Gull Cove Lane	Rockport	ENF	C
16337	300 Summit Drive	Burlington	ENF	C
16341	Cohasset Harbor Marina Bulkhead Project	Cohasset	ENF	C
5233	Founders Park	Needham	EIR	C
16033	Great Marsh Integrated Restoration Project	Essex, Ipswich, Newbury	EIR	C
16266	887 Woburn	Wilmington	EIR	C

MAPC submitted a comment letter on the Draft MEPA Interim Protocol for Climate Adaptation and Resiliency. MAPC supports the proposed protocol, and suggested several ways to strengthen it, including additional assessment criteria to understand more fully whether a project is located in an urban heat island; more specific data on tree cover; documentation of

the methodology used to investigate the site's flooding history; and an assessment of potential impacts to Environmental Justice (EJ) populations.

## **Government Affairs**

### **Roadmap Climate Bill**

On March 26, Governor Charlie Baker signed “Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy.” This is the culmination of years of efforts by climate advocates, including MAPC, and will help Massachusetts stay at the forefront of US climate policy. We are most excited about the following provisions:

- The legislation codifies the target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and raises the target for emissions reductions by 2030 from 45% to 50%.
- Requires DOER to establish a new opt-in net zero stretch building code, including performance standards and definitions.
- The bill defines Environmental Justice populations in statute.

The bill also includes provisions on a net zero roadmap, renewable energy access, job creation, gas safety, and more. Read [our press statement](#) on the newly enacted legislation, and [our summary blog post](#) for details on what is in the bill.

### **FY22 Budget**

The House released their version of the budget on Wednesday, April 14, right on schedule for a “normal” budget year. All of MAPC’s priorities fared very well, with Shannon receiving \$11.3 million and DLTA receiving \$3 million. Both of these represent level-funding from the FY21 budget. While we initially anticipated that the FY22 budget would create significant spending cuts, that has not been the case. The Senate will release their budget in mid-May, and we have every reason to expect that the final budget will be passed close to the end of FY21.

### **Community Safety Day**

On April 6, MAPC held our annual Community Safety Day in the (virtual) State House. We had historic turnout for the event, with over 20 legislators present and a total of 117 guests on the Zoom line! Representative Adrian Madaro emceed and we had the opportunity to hear from youth about how the Shannon program affected their lives. In addition to the Representative, we heard from Senator Joseph Boncore, our Senate Shannon sponsor, Mayor Brian Arrigo of Revere, Senator Adam Hinds, and others. We even had a video from Patriot Captain Devin McCourty. You can [watch the whole event here](#). Special thanks to Diego Huevo and Austin Murray who made the success of the event possible with their careful planning.

## Land Use

### Zoning

#### Lynn

MAPC completed a rezoning study in West Lynn for a corridor along the Lynn Northern Strand and the Community Path of Lynn linear parks. The Northern Strand forms part of the MAPC's interconnected regional greenway efforts, and the rezoning project focused on the two former rail rights-of-way that are currently being improved as linear parks.

The study proposed a zoning overlay district covering several underutilized properties along and near the linear parks in order to encourage redevelopment to fulfill community development goals. The overarching objective was to activate the linear parks as multimodal bike and pedestrian resources connecting Saugus, West Lynn, and downtown Lynn, as well as to encourage socioeconomic activity on future redeveloped sites. The recommendations included wayfinding signage, bike infrastructure, community gardens, public art, and nighttime safety lighting. Community input was obtained at the Lynn City Summit, neighborhood focus groups, and through a 7-week long, multilingual community survey in the Khmer, Laotian, Haitian Creole, and Spanish languages, which generated 341 responses.

The [report](#) and [presentation](#) were well received at the Lynn Planning Board meeting on March 16, and can be viewed [here](#) at minute 22.



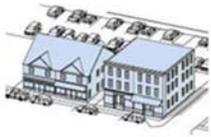
#### Rockland

A public hearing was held for a mixed-use zoning district MAPC assisted in developing. The Planning Board voted unanimously to support the zoning article at the upcoming Town Meeting. The zoning will allow for mixed-use development in an existing, underutilized industrial area. At least 15% of residential units are required to be affordable (80% AMI%) with a density bonus provided for providing 20% affordable units.

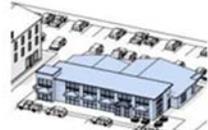
## Scituate

Town Meeting adopted mixed-use zoning for the area around the North Scituate station. The zoning uses a form-based code approach to the 40-acre area, comprising two sub-districts. The commercial core sub-district allows mixed-use development by right and the outer district allows mixed-use, as well as multifamily, cottage clusters, and townhomes by right. See examples below:

### **Allowable building types**



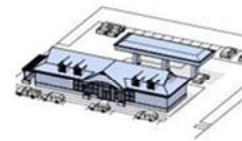
**Cottage Cluster**  
Small homes sited close together, typically around shared open space



**Single Family Attached**  
Townhomes and rowhouses



**Multi-Family**  
Multiple residences in a building. Requires a special permit



**Gas Backwards**  
A gas station with a site design more appropriate for a village, with pumps behind the building

## Littleton TDR and 40R

Over the past year, MAPC has worked with the Littleton Planning Board to undertake a study of the feasibility of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to preserve farmland and forests by transferring the development rights to a Receiving Area near the Littleton Train Station. MAPC prepared TDR informational materials for public and board presentations, undertook financial modeling to determine transfer ratios and a possible cash-based-TDR program, and coordinated with the Agricultural Commission and the MA Farm Bureau to address concerns. The solution presented to the town includes provisions for permanent conservation restrictions in the Sending Areas, as well as 15-to-30-year covenants on some properties to meet financial needs raised by farm operators.

The town has put the TDR bylaw on hold while it pursues a proposed 40R Smart Growth Overlay District on approximately 50 acres near the Littleton Train Station. MAPC is currently assisting the town in final reviews of the draft bylaw language, as well as completion of the mapping and 40R application to DHCD. The town hopes to bring the 40R bylaw to town meeting in June 2021.

## Acton-Maynard Powder Mill Road Corridor Plan

MAPC has been working with Acton and Maynard on a corridor plan for a 1.5 mile stretch of Powder Mill Road (Route 62) since late 2019. The plan will address economic development and housing opportunities along the corridor; infrastructure upgrades; streetscape and safety improvements; and enhanced access to the Assabet River. MAPC organized the second public forum on April 8, with 80 attendees. We were encouraged by the positive feedback we

received regarding proposed recommendations including zoning changes to create a cohesive land use strategy for the corridor in both towns (likely to take the form of an overlay district for the study area), as well as the suggestions for design enhancements along the corridor. The final plan will be completed by June 30.

### Beverly Accessory Dwelling Unit Tool and Ordinance

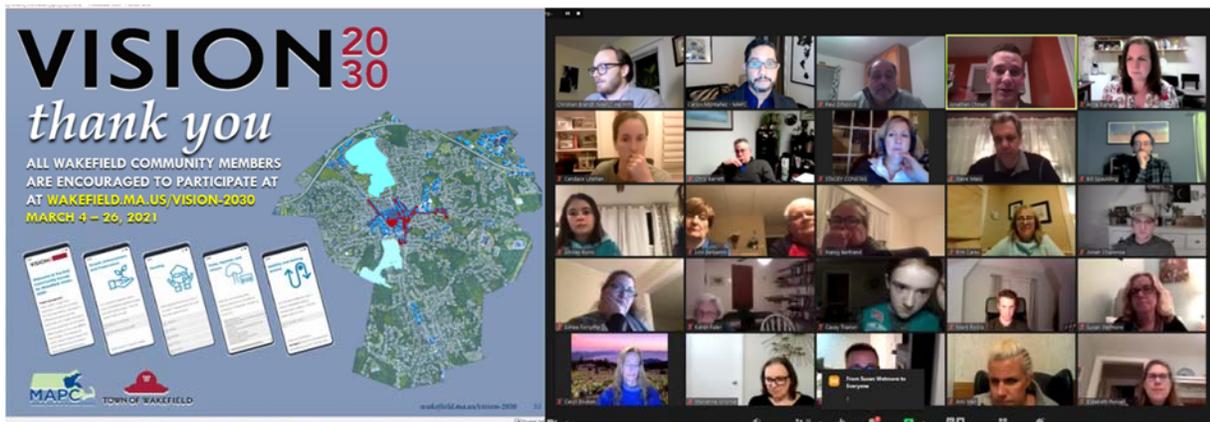
A new project on accessory dwelling units (ADU) has commenced with the City of Beverly. The project includes three components: robust community engagement, a digital decision-support tool to estimate the potential impacts of different potential ADU ordinances, and a draft ADU ordinance for adoption. An early article from The Salem News demonstrates the interest and value of the project beyond Beverly alone:

[https://www.salemnews.com/news/local\\_news/regional-planners-guiding-accessory-unit-changes/article\\_73f8c617-558b-59cb-85a7-38ce095ca8d7.html](https://www.salemnews.com/news/local_news/regional-planners-guiding-accessory-unit-changes/article_73f8c617-558b-59cb-85a7-38ce095ca8d7.html)

## Master Plans

### Wakefield Vision 2030

MAPC held a first public open house for the Wakefield Vision 2030 process on March 4, with approximately 95 virtual attendees. Wakefield Vision 2030 is an aspirational community “visioning-for-planning” process to gather ideas on how to shape the town’s future in terms of areas for growth, preservation and enhancement; as well as to establish common ground ideas and shared values for future decision making. The visioning process covers 12 topics from housing and open space to expanding the cultural landscape. A 15-member advisory committee has met, and vetted questions for the first of three community surveys. Each public workshop event covers four different topics and is paired with its own set of survey questions after each workshop. In addition to other methods, outreach has included paid Facebook-for-Business advertisements to ensure screen time on people’s devices and computers. The presentation slides and meeting recording can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.



### Saugus

MAPC facilitated a second public forum for the Saugus Master Plan, focusing on economic development, transportation, and community facilities. The virtual forum had approximately 50 participants, who discussed the various topics in breakout rooms. The MAPC team will now

synthesize the community input to draft goals and strategies. The team will also begin planning a third public forum, covering housing and other topics.

### Wrentham

Wrentham residents are currently responding to a town-wide, online survey on the Master Plan Vision, Housing and Economic Development goals, and potential strategies. The goals were drafted by the Master Plan Steering Committee based on the key themes of MAPC's existing conditions research, including in-depth data analysis, as well as focus groups with businesses, seniors, people of color who live in Wrentham, and residents of Affordable Housing. The key themes from the existing conditions research and draft goals were presented to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, as well as at a public virtual forum.

## **Open Space and Recreation Plans (OSRP)**

### Norwell

The Norwell OSRP was submitted to the MA Department of Conservation Services (DCS) and received Conditional Approval. In the next few weeks, the MAPC staff and the OSRP Steering Committee will work to address comments from DCS and the public, as well as to present the plan and collect support letters from the many Boards and Committees that have been involved in the planning process and will be critical to implementation.

### Walpole

The Walpole OSRP was submitted to DCS and received Conditional Approval. In the next few weeks, the MAPC staff and the Walpole OSRP Core Team will work to address comments from DCS and finalize the plan. Among the recommendations, the town is interested in building on recent rail trail success by supporting the Metacomet Greenway with a potential connection from Walpole, through Norfolk, Wrentham, North Attleboro, and eventually meeting up with the Blackstone Bikeway in Central Falls, RI.

### Hull

In February, DCS approved Hull's OSRP through June 2027. MAPC facilitated the OSRP process and drafted the plan, which was last updated 20 years ago. The OSRP offers strategies and actions to preserve and protect Hull's parks, open space, and beaches and improve existing playing fields and playgrounds.

## **Housing**

### Housing Lynn

MAPC has completed the Housing Lynn plan, which reflects nearly 100 public comments from more than 300 residents and fulfills all requirements of a Housing Production Plan (HPP) under MGL Chapter 40B. Housing Lynn establishes a vision for the city based on safe, affordable, and accessible housing that meets the needs of Lynn residents and increases the strength and vibrancy of neighborhoods. It envisions housing that enables everyone to thrive in a community that is inclusive to all. This vision developed through engagement at seven in-person and digital events facilitated by MAPC and countless focus groups and interviews over the course of nearly two years.

Final deliverables include the full plan, a robust executive summary in both English and Spanish, and a one-page plan overview in both languages. The plan has received formal endorsement from the 8-member Steering Committee, Lynn Housing and Neighborhood Development, and various local organizations advocating for housing. The plan will soon go before City Council and the Planning Board for local adoption, before being submitted to the MA Department of Housing and Community Development for approval.

Special congratulations to Chief of Housing & Neighborhood Development Karina Oliver-Milchman and her team for completion of a complex and challenging project.

#### Foxborough HPP

After holding office hours to answer questions from the community on the first draft of the Foxborough HPP, an updated draft reflects public comments and two opinion pieces in the town paper. This planning process began in September 2019 and included four community-wide discussions ranging from public forums to online open houses to a developer panel. It is expected to conclude this spring. The plan includes six priority strategies for Foxborough to implement over a five-year period, with a focus on rezoning, redevelopment, local capacity, and other best practices. The Town is now building support for the document prior to working with MAPC to seek local adoption.

#### Arlington Fair Housing Action Plan

MAPC, with consultation from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, has completed a draft of the Arlington Fair Housing Action Plan and submitted it to the town for final review. This document features a section on protected classes in town, fair housing barriers, local resources, and recommendations. The latter includes increasing awareness, enforcing fair housing laws, altering town governance structures and processes, reforming zoning, amending local policy, and changes in use of town resources. These recommendations reflect robust quantitative data analysis and collection of qualitative data through numerous focus groups and interviews. Once updated to reflect town feedback, municipal staff will hold a public comment period on the document.

Kudos to Senior Regional Housing & Land Use Planner Alexis Smith for leading this effort, which aims to expand MAPC's engagement in fair housing activities across our region.

#### SWAP-TRIC Shared Housing Services Office (SHSO)

The first phase of work to establish a new Shared Housing Services Office among select SWAP and TRIC municipalities is complete. This process, which entailed engagement with municipal stakeholders across both subregions, resulted in a research brief that examines existing SHSOs, their governance and structure, membership, staffing, services, and cost and funding mechanisms. The document includes recommendations for how to address each of these elements in a new SHSO. Now, a transitional process has begun to identify next steps for communities that commit to participate in the SHSO.

## **Economic Development**

### Regional Immigrant Entrepreneur Storytelling Project

On March 17, the MAPC team hosted a panel discussion with partners to mark the end of the first phase of the Regional Immigrant Entrepreneur Storytelling Project in Quincy. Draft policy recommendations for municipalities and state government to support Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs recovering from COVID-19 were presented and discussed among project partners. Senator John Keenan and Representative Tackey Chan attended the event in support of the project.

### EDA Information Session

On April 1, Raul Gonzalez hosted an information session on the various funding opportunities through the Economic Development Administration. As the EDA-designated Economic Development District, MAPC assists communities with grant applications for such funding. The session was attended by over 100 representatives of community colleges, CDCs, arts organizations, municipalities, and others. The recording can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Fz4guS5ytVo>.

### Digital Access Plans

Over the past two months, MAPC launched digital access planning processes for the communities of Everett, Chelsea, and Revere. The plans were designed to address limited connectivity issues in these communities, inhibiting the ability of residents to participate in remote schooling and work, as well as other vital activities. Senior Planner Josh Eichen is leading an interdepartmental team comprising members of the Digital Services team and Community Engagement. In partnership with municipal leadership from each of the communities, the MAPC team will address issues related to slow internet speeds, as well as low levels of digital literacy, with the goal of implementing infrastructure and training solutions to allow every resident to access online resources effectively.

### Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP) Program

The Economic Development team, in partnership with other staff from the Land Use Department, have launched downtown revitalization plans in Braintree, Framingham, Hudson, Lynn, and Revere, with funding from DHCD's LRRP Program. Over the next five months, MAPC will work with each community to design plans to address immediate and long-term needs of small businesses in the post-COVID era, based on data analysis, comprehensive community engagement, and collaboration with the municipal stakeholders.

In addition, MAPC received funding to serve as subject matter experts in the LRRP program, and will be developing webinars and providing expertise to a range of communities on the topics of Transportation and Infrastructure Planning; Placemaking, Landscape Architecture, and Design; Cultural/Arts Needs Assessment; Land Use, Zoning, Policy and Regulations; and Small Business Technical Assistance.

## ***Municipal Collaboration***

### **Northeast Regional Homeland Security Council (NERAC)**

MAPC has assisted the NERAC in finalizing a draft budget and project list for inclusion in the FY2021 NERAC Plan. NERAC will receive \$1.5 million from EOPSS for the FY2021 grant cycle for preparedness projects within the NERAC region. The draft FY21 Plan includes projects relating to cybersecurity, interoperability, funding for the NERAC Cache Sites, and other preparedness equipment and trainings.

### **Shannon Grant**

The Metro Mayors Shannon Grant site was recently awarded an additional \$25,000 to assist partners in addressing COVID-19 related obstacles. Last year many partners successfully shifted to remote programs and made other significant changes to comply with state regulations and to provide youth with safe spaces to gather. Anticipating that similar changes will need to be implemented again this year, EOPSS provided the Metro Mayors Shannon site with an opportunity to apply for the additional funds.

The additional funding was awarded to the following partners:

- **CAPIC/Revere PAL (\$10,000)**  
The Revere Police Activities League (PAL) combines athletics with strong academic, career development, substance abuse prevention, civic responsibilities, guest lectures, field trips, and gang resistance components, diverting at-risk youth from known hot spots. This additional funding will be utilized to ensure that proper social distancing precautions can be maintained by adding staff to allow for smaller groups, renting gym space, hiring cleaning services, and purchasing air purifiers and PPE (masks and wipes) for program participants and staff.
- **Jordan Boys & Girls Club, Chelsea (\$5,000)**  
The Jordan Boys & Girls Club supports three teen cohorts: during school hours with a Remote Learning Center, an “afterschool” cohort with access to COVID-19 adjusted Club programs, and recreation-only programs (basketball and swimming). The Club will utilize the additional funding to purchase PPE for program participants and staff, and additional supplies that will reduce sharing between youth and thus reduce the chance of transmission of COVID-19.
- **Winthrop Police & Winthrop CASA (\$10,000)**  
Funds will be used for officer participation in a new "Beyond the Badge" podcast series, an idea generated by CASA youth. Given conversations regarding systemic racism and police brutality, there have been increased barriers between police and the public that are difficult to resolve without regular, in-person contact (made difficult and even impossible by COVID-19 restrictions). In the hopes of bridging this gap, CASA and the WPD will publish a weekly podcast between youth and police to explore what

community policing is, and how it can be an effective approach to bringing together police and residents to create a more culturally aware and inclusive community.

In addition, CASA has seen an increase in need for social-emotional supports and services for youth in Winthrop during the COVID-19 crisis. This funding would allow CASA to provide support for youth and connect them to additional resources and services if necessary.

## ***Strategic Initiatives***

### **MetroCommon2050 Update**

We have just wrapped up focus groups with subject matter experts to vet the draft policy recommendations and are continuing to meet with community partners and their constituents to gather input from residents who are likely to be most affected by the impacts of the recommendations.

MAPC held focus groups with Union Capital Boston (often drawing 150 individuals per event), Teen Empowerment, and the Commonwealth Seminar. Generally, the feedback has been very positive and supportive of the drafts. Some of the recommendations have been more controversial, such as those dealing with policing reform and regional housing regulations, and we will continue to seek public input during MetroCommon May.

Speaking of which . . . We are gearing up for MetroCommon May, which is an all-out effort to go back to all those that have engaged with us over the past three years seeking feedback on the provisional goals and draft policy recommendations. We will make final edits to these plan elements in June. MetroCommon May will kick off with the “world premiere” of “Living Together,” a short film highlighting the stories of some of our region’s residents.

### **Annual SPURs visit**

The MIT SPURs Fellows visited MAPC virtually, bringing MAPC staff together with the mid-career fellows that hail from developing countries around the world. Eric Hove, Mark Racicot, Annis Sengupta, and Sarah Kurpiel Lee outlined the work of their departments and the agency as a whole. We typically host a SPURs fellow in one of our departments as a professional affiliation to provide mutual learning and professional development about how our respective agencies and countries approach planning and related fields.

### **Learning and Evaluation**

#### Operationalizing Equity at MAPC

DSI partnered with MAPC’s Equity Team to develop a framework that MAPC teams and departments can use to advance equity in their projects. The framework asks participants to reflect on the ways in which their area of practice has resulted in equitable outcomes, but also may have perpetuated inequities. Staff can use this reflection to design strategies that build

towards and expand on equitable outcomes. We also ask participants to identify activities and processes in which they regularly engage (e.g., project scoping, community engagement) and to redesign these activities to achieve more equitable results. We are currently piloting this effort with a small number of departments and expect the resulting framework to help advance equity more consistently across the region.

## **Community Engagement**

### Hybrid Engagement

Community Engagement staff are exploring what the next phase of community engagement will look like as we start to have in-person meetings. High on our list of concerns is facilitating meetings that involve a mix of in-person and remote participants, the so-called hybrid engagement setting. We are having discussions both internally and externally with partners like the Mel King Institute and nationally at conferences. Recently, DSI Co-Director Emily Torres-Cullinane and Community Engagement Manager Carolina Prieto attended the SXSW Conference (virtually of course) collecting ways the marketing world is pivoting, how the music and film industry are adopting hybrid entertainment models, and learning more about how government agencies may use automated intelligence in the future.

### UnPlanned!

In March, Emily and Carolina had the pleasure of being guests on our very own Sam Seidel's Podcast, [UnPlanned!](#) They discussed [Community Engagement during COVID](#) and explored new realities and restrictions the pandemic placed on planners conducting large group meetings.

### Webinar on Women in the Workforce

On April 1, MAPC hosted a panel discussion on the Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and recession on women in the workforce, with particular attention to the disproportionate impact on women of color. The panel included: Massachusetts Senate President Karen Spilka; Boston NAACP President Tanisha Sullivan, Esq.; Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education founding member Saskia Epstein (PNC Bank); and researcher, entrepreneur, and Black Economic Council of Massachusetts member Leslie Forde. Emily Torres-Cullinane moderated the panel.

The conversation covered a wide range of topics, from naming the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on women, to worker protection, to state policy that could support women in the workforce. As women experienced higher rates of lay-offs this past year and/or more frequently faced the difficult choice of choosing between their family and their work, panelists spoke about the need for safety and security in workplaces. Panelists explored the importance of workplace flexibility and support with caretaking responsibilities, as well as the need for a work culture that recognizes and accommodates the many roles that women play in their lives. Such accommodation, panelists noted, would not only benefit women, but also enable all workers to have a better, safer work experience that recognizes their full humanity.

MAPC intends to use the contacts made in this webinar and the issues discussed to inform our recovery planning and public policy priorities.

## Subregions

For the past two months, most Subregions have hosted **MetroCommon** presentations and gathered feedback on select policy recommendations related to the interests of their members. MAGIC and SSC will host sessions during May.

The **South Shore Coalition** is embarking on a First and Last Mile project. Members identified last mile connection with key transit sites as important to economic recovery and tourism efforts. Additionally, Mass Development, the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, and MAPC have recently analyzed six sites to identify water/waste-water solutions and will soon start meeting with developers and MWRA on how to address some of these challenges.

**Downtown Collaborations and Revitalization** was the focus of SSC's April meeting with the launch of Scituate's visitor's center and the Chamber's offering of funds to incentivize tourism across different communities.

**MetroWest** has begun a monthly series of presentations from their members on Town Boards and Commissions, as well as starting a segment in the meeting where members raise topics that people would like to explore, such as municipal finance and budgeting.

In March, the **Inner Core Committee** discussed new opportunities to connect with communities online and also raised issues of equity across the digital divide. Speakers participated from CoUrbanize, Nelson Nygaard, and DS4SI to share their efforts to facilitate equitable community engagement during the pandemic and beyond.

In March **TRIC and SWAP** hosted Alexis Smith, Senior Regional Housing and Land Use Planner, who presented a research brief as part of the first phase of the SWAP/TRIC Shared Housing Services Office (SHSO). The research synthesizes information about SHSO functions, costs, and staffing from the three existing SHSOs in Massachusetts. This work is intended to help inform local decision making about future participation in a potential SWAP/TRIC SHSO.

At the March **SWAP** meeting, Research Manager Jessie Partridge Guerrero discussed MAPC's recently released [Housing Submarkets](#) research. They had a great discussion about some of the findings of this research and how it could guide more targeted policy decisions to suit each community's unique needs.

**TRIC** and **MAGIC** both held Legislative Breakfasts that were well-attended by both municipal officials and legislators, covering a wide array of topics for the upcoming session. **North Shore** and **North Suburban** will be holding their joint Legislative Breakfast on May 19.

In March, **MAGIC** focused on **Age-Friendly Housing and Transportation** with a panel discussion. Senior Transportation Planner David Loutzenheiser presented on the [Landline](#) and the Nashoba Regional Greenways (NRG) coalition. Adam Duchesneau, Sudbury Director of Planning and Community Development and MAGIC Chair, updated the group on the Making the Connections initiative, which will use rideshare data to inform the feasibility of a microtransit program for the subregion. Sudbury's Select Board has approved and signed an

Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) for the program, and the IMA has been shared with other participating communities for their review and signature.

Jeanette Pantoja, Public Health Planner II, provided a refresher on **MAGIC's [Healthy Aging, Healthy Living](#)** report and the subregion's age-friendly housing goals for expanding housing choice and affordability, improving access to home maintenance and modification, and integrating housing and services. Participants had the opportunity to hear from Antron Watson, AARP Massachusetts, who shared AARP's new [Handbook for Improved Neighborhoods](#), that offers smaller-scale zoning and policy change strategies for making communities age-friendly, as well as the [2021 AARP Community Challenge](#) Grant Opportunity to fund quick-action projects for community livability. James Fuccione, Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, shared resources available to communities, including a [Healthy Aging for All](#) guide for promoting inclusion in age- and dementia-friendly communities, and a [community profile](#) data portal resource.

The **North Suburban Planning Council** followed up their MetroCommon discussion by hosting Dawn Sibor, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, who shared information about the Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps and how to expand capacity for local health departments.

And in April, the **North Shore Task Force** hosted Economic Development Planner II Jenn Kaplan, who presented lessons learned from the Shared Streets program, how to make certain aspects such as outdoor dining more permanent, and what issues municipalities should consider when pursuing these changes.

## ***Public Health***

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Resource**

As the pace of COVID-19 vaccinations picks up and eligibility becomes universal, local officials, health organizations, and community groups are vital messengers to raise confidence in vaccines and communicate updates to Massachusetts residents and to assure we achieve the high percentages of vaccinations needed to halt this pandemic. MAPC developed a communications hub to assist with these efforts. The hub includes examples of municipal efforts to raise awareness about vaccines in ways that resonate with residents as well as sample messages and reference materials for municipalities and local organizations to use and share. The Public Health team is available to assist in curating the materials to help meet local goals. Email Public Health Planner Elaine Zhang at [ezhang@mapc.org](mailto:ezhang@mapc.org) to gain access to the communications hub and for more info.

### **Region 3 COVID-19 Case and Vaccine Dashboard Prototype**

Since the start of the pandemic, the Municipal Collaboration and Public Health teams have assisted the DPH with resource and technical assistance to local health departments in the Region 3 emergency preparedness region. Most recently, the team has developed a dashboard to track and provide a reference for case trends and vaccine uptake in the region.

The prototype dashboard, which is still in development, visualizes case data according COVID Act Now, an independent non-profit, which sponsors a nationwide COVID risk and vaccine tracker. A goal for this dashboard is to provide context for actions to reduce transmission and to achieve equity and uptake in vaccinations across our region.

The prototype dashboard can be found [here](#). Feedback and questions are welcome and can be sent to [bkeppard@mapc.org](mailto:bkeppard@mapc.org) or [ezhang@mapc.org](mailto:ezhang@mapc.org).

### **Evaluating Community Food Plans**

The Getting Further Faster project brings together a national cohort of over 40 grantees to evaluate the effectiveness of public health initiatives. The findings of the evaluation will be brought together in a report intended to inform future programming and investments in initiatives that improve the social determinants of health.

A grantee of the project, MAPC is partnering with DPH to evaluate the public health initiatives of the Mass in Motion program, and in particular the program's community food plans. Mass in Motion has been a leader in the proliferation of community food plans, and since 2015, the initiative has facilitated 19 such plans, comprising most of those that exist in Massachusetts.

The project team will distill through the evaluation process the approaches to conducting community food plans that have been effective, and the outcomes that have had the greatest impact on improving food system conditions and promoted health.

### **Public Health Excellence Grant Submissions**

DPH released a funding opportunity to support shared public health efforts across municipal lines. The grant program was recommended in the final report of the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health. MAPC assisted seven cohorts (applications required at least three participating municipalities) to coordinate, draft and submit applications. Proposals include a mix of positions, including health inspectors, public health nurses, and epidemiologists. Decisions are expected by late April with potential start dates in May.

### **JP Morgan Chase Advancing Cities Grant – BOS Collaborative**

The Public Health team is part of the Boston Medical Center-led collaborative that received a three-year, \$5 million grant aimed at changing systems that serve as barriers to economic mobility and housing stability of residents in the Fairmount Corridor. The collaborative partners include the City of Boston, hospitals, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Action for Equity, and Jewish Vocational Services. The Public Health team is serving as the lead evaluator for the project.

## ***Transportation***

### **Boston MPO**

As the Boston MPO develops the FFY 2022–2026 TIP, funding has become available in the near-term because several previously programmed transportation projects are not ready and need to be pushed into outer fiscal years. Additionally, the Green Line Extension in Somerville and Medford has received additional funds from the recently passed federal Recovery Act, so less of the Boston MPO’s portion of federal funds will be dedicated to GLX.

The result is that the MPO will dedicate \$15 million to an extension of the Columbus Avenue bus project in Boston. Columbus Avenue center lane buses will now extend one additional mile north, to Ruggles Street near Ruggles Station. It is currently under construction from Jackson Square to Walnut Street. The MBTA will be finalizing designs soon, and the project will likely be in construction by next Spring to meet the MPO funding schedule.

Assistant Director Sarah Kurpiel Lee has been supporting the MBTA and Boston with planning this corridor, so it was great to be able to prioritize this project at the MPO.

### **South Shore Coalition Pilot Mobility Study**

The MAPC Transportation team is working with the South Shore Coalition on a regional mobility pilot study. The study area will include Braintree, Cohasset, Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Rockland, Scituate, and Weymouth. For this study, we will evaluate the existing transportation patterns and modes on the South Shore. After conducting this evaluation, the team will propose recommendations for one or more pilot programs, including potential funding sources to operate the pilot. The Coalition will determine which pilot is the most pertinent. The suggested pilots will afford greater access for workforce and tourism-related travel, specifically for visitors who do not own a vehicle. This study will focus on links to transportation hubs, including Red Line, Commuter Rail stations, and ferry terminals. This project is taking place at a significant time as the MBTA works on the Bus Network Redesign to improve bus routes across the MBTA service area.

### **Hidden and in Plain Sight: Impacts of E-commerce in Massachusetts**

The Commonwealth is seeing rising numbers of delivery trucks and vans on the roadway network as people increasingly order online for goods, meals, and groceries. For these deliveries to arrive timely each day, a sophisticated logistics network of warehouses, distribution centers, and delivery vehicles needs to be in place. While the effects of this growing form of retail on the roadway network may be noticeable, e-commerce is also having effects on land use, traditional retail, and employment which are not as directly apparent.

In February, MAPC released “Hidden and in Plain Sight: Impacts of E-commerce in Massachusetts.” This report concentrates primarily on the transportation and land use effects of increasing online shopping, highlighting key trends both nationally and in Massachusetts. MAPC suggests directions for further research and puts forward potential policies that could help communities sustainably manage the growth in warehousing and distribution centers

and its associated delivery traffic. The report's release garnered local media attention and was featured in a Boston Globe article last week, "Suburban Towns Like Amazon's Fast Deliveries, but not its Warehouses."

MAPC intends to serve as a resource for continued information sharing and findings from surveys and pilot programs and conduct research on how municipalities in Massachusetts are mitigating and managing the impacts of e-commerce. As a follow up to this report, MAPC plans to collaborate with municipalities to develop a playbook on the management of e-commerce warehouse and distribution centers as a resource for other municipalities.

### **MIT Civic Innovation Grant**

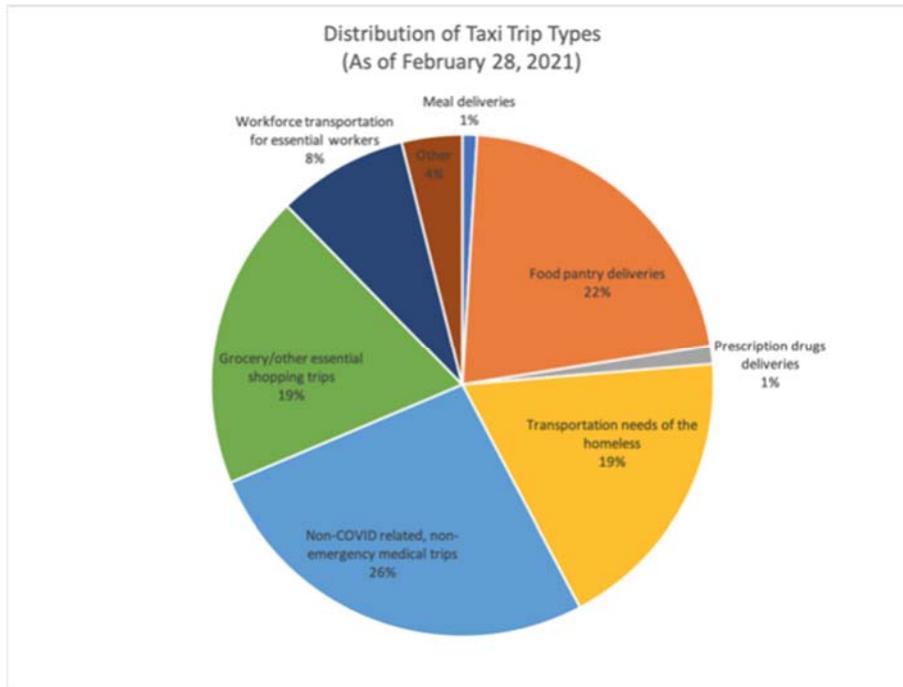
The National Science Foundation awarded a Stage 1 Civic Innovation Planning Grant to MIT to design a pilot program that tests ways of providing flexible, transit-friendly access for low-moderate income residents in a study area focusing on Chelsea and Everett. MAPC is serving as the Lead Civic Partner in this project.

Working with Union Capital Boston, a local non-profit, MAPC and MIT hosted two virtual focus groups in March. The objective of both focus groups was to learn about transportation needs and choices of low-moderate income residents before, during, after the pandemic and to understand their use of technology to inform travel. Several MAPC staff served as break-out room facilitators during the focus groups, which had an estimated 150 participants. The learnings from the focus groups will contribute to developing a Stage 2 proposal for a one-year pilot program.

### **Taxi, Livery, and Hackney Transportation Partnerships Grant Program**

The Urgent COVID Taxi Program awarded grants to 25 agencies state-wide to partner with taxi, livery and hackney businesses in the summer/fall of 2020. All the programs actively supported vulnerable populations to access essential services. Roughly half the programs expended their funds as of March 31, 2021, and half of the programs have been extended until June 30. We are receiving bi-monthly reports from the programs, which have generated a lot of interest in this service. As of our most recent reports (through February 28), over half a million has been spent of the \$1 million we distributed. This money has gone to 41 taxi companies and allowed over 20,000 essential trips, with nearly 10,000 individuals served.

The pie chart on the next page outlines the distribution of trips. The highest use of taxi rides through February was for non-COVID related, non-emergency medical trips, including vaccination trips. This overall category remained pretty steady when compared to the last report, as of December 31, 2020. Almost as large were trips and deliveries to address food access, including food pantry deliveries and trips to the grocery store, both of which increased when compared to the last report. Trips addressing the needs of the homeless and workforce transportation for essential workers were both down slightly.



In November, MAPC launched the second round of funding, no longer limited to “urgent COVID” needs. We 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 funded 45 applications including municipalities, RTAs, health and human service providers, and non-profits. The vast majority of these applications are continuing to focus on serving vulnerable populations for essential travel, as this is still a high need. We announced the awards in February and checks were sent out to grantees in March and April. On April 20, MAPC hosted a virtual Taxi Panel Discussion for new grantees to share their experiences, knowledge and tips with new grantees as they start their programs.

We hope to offer this grant twice per year, depending on funding. MAPC will post updates on the taxi partnerships webpage at <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/taxipartnerships/>. Here you can also find a list of grantees for the urgent and new taxi programs, contact information and descriptions of their programs.

## ***New Staff***

### **Van Du**

Van Du has joined the Environmental team, where (among other tasks) she is overseeing Accelerating Climate Resiliency grant program and learning community. Van holds a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from Bowdoin and a Master’s Degree in City Planning & Urban Affairs from Boston University. She has held positions with the Boston-based NGO Second Nature and with the City of Boston as Special Assistant to the Chief of Environment, Energy, & Open Space. There she assisted with research on the City’s climate and sustainability initiatives, and development of Boston’s 2014 Climate Action Plan. She

also managed Greenovate Boston—Boston’s citywide sustainability initiative—and served as Acting Executive Secretary for the Conservation Commission. She most recently worked at Vannasse, Hangen, Brustlin, Inc. as Sustainability and Resiliency Planner/Project Manager where she oversaw several sustainability and resiliency projects in our region and beyond. Van holds certifications as a LEED Green Associate, Envision™ Sustainability Professional, and WELL AP. She is bilingual in English and Vietnamese, and proficient in French.

### **Allison Zimmon**

Allison has joined MAPC as Legal Counsel. Allison comes to us with extensive experience working on labor and employment matters and litigation in the private sector. She has managed a caseload in both the federal and state court systems and has presented before the National Labor Relations Board. A graduate of Boston College Law School, Allison also hold a Master’s Degree in Labor Studies from UMass Amherst, as well as a Bachelor of Arts from Smith College. Prior to Allison attending law school, she served as an Associate Director at the Massachusetts Nurses Association, AFL-CIO in the Division of Labor Action.

### **Will Dorfman**

Will has joined the Economic Development team as a Planner II. He will be working on the downtown revitalization plans in Braintree, Framingham, Hudson, Lynn, and Revere. Will served as Director of Economic Development for the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, a non-profit business improvement district. In that role, he oversaw market and demographic research, provided technical assistance to small businesses and developers, and served as the primary liaison for transportation policy. Will also worked on COVID-19 economic recovery efforts by connecting local businesses with grant programs and creating an economic impact report. We're particularly excited to leverage Will's expertise for our COVID response work in the region. Will received his Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science & Public Policy from the University of Delaware.