

# NOTIFICATION OF RECORDING

This meeting will be recorded and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) may choose to retain and distribute the video, still images, audio, and/or the chat transcript. By continuing with this virtual meeting, you are consenting to participate in a recorded event. The recordings and chat transcript will be considered a public record. If you do not feel comfortable being recorded, please turn off your camera and/or mute your microphone, or leave the meeting.



# Exploring Together: Navigating Hybrid Engagement



Shared practices, tools, and policies

November 17, 2021



# Today's Agenda<sup>+</sup>

- Hybrid Initiative Introduction
- State Policy Updates
- Exploring Policy Themes
- Break-Out Discussion/Q&A
- What's Next

# Project Partners

## Town of Dedham

**Leon Goodwin**

Town Manager  
Town of Dedham, MA

**Sarah MacDonald**

Selectboard Member  
Town of Dedham, MA

**Amanda Smith**

Public Information Officer  
Town of Dedham, MA

## Town of Randolph

**Michelle Tyler**

Planning Director  
Town of Randolph, MA

## City of Framingham

**Hannah Woit**

Senior Advisor of External Affairs  
City of Framingham, MA

# MAPC's Community Engagement Division



**Emily Torres-Cullinane**  
Co-Director of  
Strategic Initiatives  
etorres@mapc.org



**Carolina Prieto**  
Community  
Engagement  
Manager  
cprieto@mapc.org



**Iolando Spinola**  
Community  
Engagement  
Specialist II  
ispinola@mapc.org



**Christian Brandt,**  
**AICP**  
Planner &  
Community  
Engagement  
Specialist II  
cbrandt@mapc.org



**Sasha Parodi**  
Event Planner &  
Special Projects  
Coordinator  
sparodi@mapc.org



# Group Agreements

- Use “I” statements
- Take Space, Make Space
- Use accessible language
- Push past your comfort zone
- Accept and expect lack of closure
- Active Participation

# Hybrid Initiative: June – December



**In-person  
Engagement**

***Hybrid  
Engagement***

**Virtual  
Engagement**

Synchronous vs  
Asynchronous



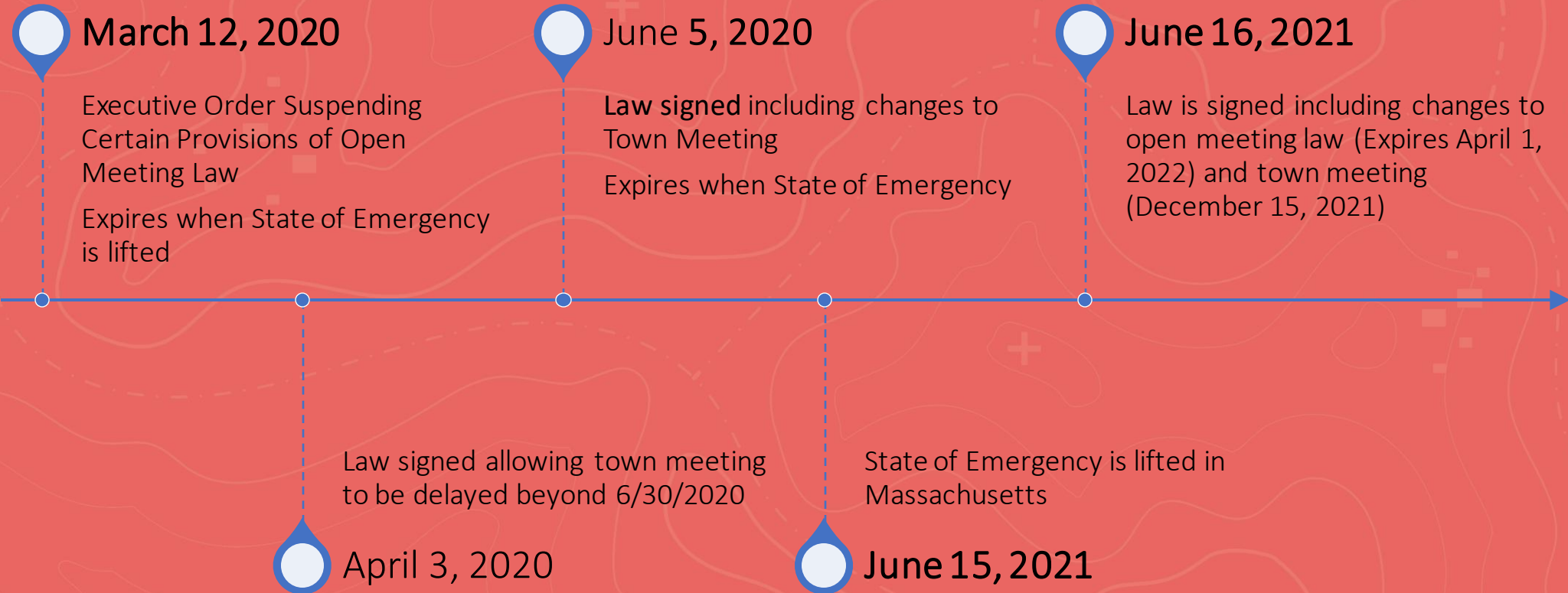
# State Policy Updates



Leah Robins  
MAPC  
Government Affairs  
[lrobins@mapc.org](mailto:lrobins@mapc.org)



Lauren Goldberg  
KP Law  
Managing Attorney  
[lrobins@mapc.org](mailto:lrobins@mapc.org)



# Open Meeting Law: Prior to COVID

Remote participation by members of a public body was permitted in certain circumstances

- Remote participation may be used if it has first been adopted by the chief executive officer of the municipality for local public bodies; also empowered to "opt out" of remote participation
- Local commissions on disability are able to permit remote participation even without adoption by the municipal adopting authority
- Once remote participation is adopted any member of the public body may participate remotely only if physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult

## Minimum requirements

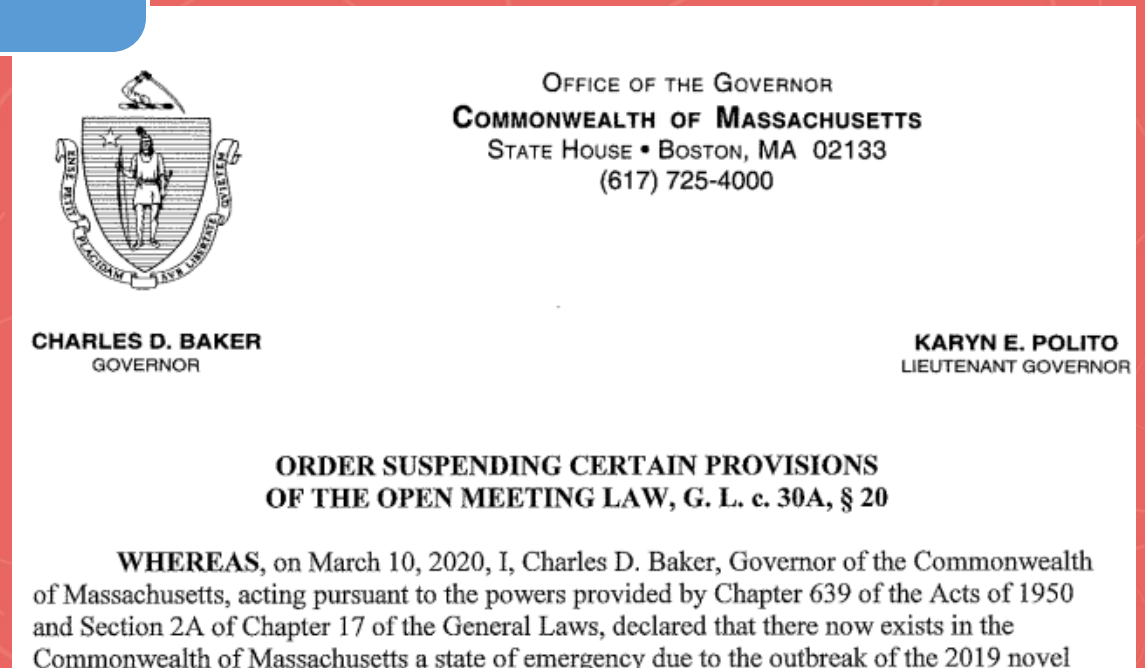
- Quorum of the body, including the chair or person chairing the meeting, must be physically present at the meeting location;
- Members of a public body who participate remotely and all persons present at the meeting location must be clearly audible to each other; and
- All votes taken during a meeting in which a member participates remotely must be by a roll call vote



# Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Meetings of Public Bodies

- March 12, 2020: Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law
- In effect until State of Emergency is terminated



# Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Town Meeting

- April 3, 2020 Law signed that enables Town Meeting to be delayed after June 30, 2020
- June 5, 2020 Law signed that enabled reduced quorum and ability to hold meeting outside of municipal borders
- Both in effect for duration of State of Emergency

## Representative Town Meeting

- June 5, 2020 Law signed that established a process whereby a representative town meeting can be held remotely, including through the use of phone or video conferencing
- In effect for the duration of the State of Emergency

# After the State of Emergency

## Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency

### Meetings of Public Bodies

- Extends, until April 1, 2022, remote meeting provisions of a previous executive order that enable meetings to be held remotely

### Town Meeting

- Extends, until December 15, 2021, the ability for town meeting quorum to be reduced

### Representative Town Meeting

- Extends, **until December 15, 2021**, the ability for remote town meetings to be held in towns with representative town meeting form of government



# Current Law Allowing Virtual Meetings

Until April 1, 2022 Meetings of Public Bodies are modified in three key ways

1. Continues "adequate, alternative means of public access" to the deliberations of the public body and, where real time participation by the public is a requirement of a general or special law, regulation or local ordinance or bylaw, participation with the body as well;
2. For reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts enables alternate methods of compliance
3. Authorizes all members to participate remotely; the requirement for a quorum and the chair be physically present at the meeting location remains suspended;
4. All other provisions unchanged

An American flag is shown waving in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle containing text.

# The Open Meeting Law

Learn about the Open Meeting Law or report  
a violation with the Attorney General's  
Division of Open Government.

# What next?



# Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government

## SENATE MEMBERS



**John J. Cronin**  
Chair



**Diana DiZoglio**  
Vice Chair

Edward J. Kennedy

Susan L. Moran

John C. Velis

Bruce E. Tarr (Ranking Minority)

## HOUSE MEMBERS



**Lori A. Ehrlich**  
Chair



**Paul F. Tucker**  
Vice Chair

Michelle M. DuBois

John Barrett, III

Christina A. Minicucci

Mike Connolly

Tami L. Gouveia

Tram T. Nguyen

Edward R. Philips

Mathew J. Muratore (Ranking Minority)

Norman J. Orrall



### Senate Contact

24 Beacon St. [📍](#)

Room 504

Boston, MA 02133

Phone: (617) 722-1230



### House Contact

24 Beacon St. [📍](#)

Room 540

Boston, MA 02133

Phone: (617) 722-2090

# Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

## SENATE MEMBERS



Marc R. Pacheco  
Chair



Rebecca L. Rausch  
Vice Chair

John J. Cronin

Walter F. Timilty

John C. Velis

Bruce E. Tarr (Ranking Minority)

## HOUSE MEMBERS



Antonio F. D. Cabral  
Chair



Christine P. Barber  
Vice Chair

Carmine Lawrence Gentile

Maria Duaine Robinson

Christopher M. Markey

Michelle L. Ciccolo

Mary S. Keefe

Paul J. Donato

Paul A. Schmid, III

Steven G. Xiarhos (Ranking Minority)

F. Jay Barrows



### Senate Contact

24 Beacon St. [📍](#)  
Room 312-B  
Boston, MA 02133

Phone: (617) 722-1551



### House Contact

24 Beacon St. [📍](#)  
Room 22  
Boston, MA 02133

Phone: (617) 722-2140

# "P"olicies: What we have heard





# Major Policy Themes

Leverage current investments  
(American Rescue Plan  
Act/Infrastructure/Build Back  
Better)

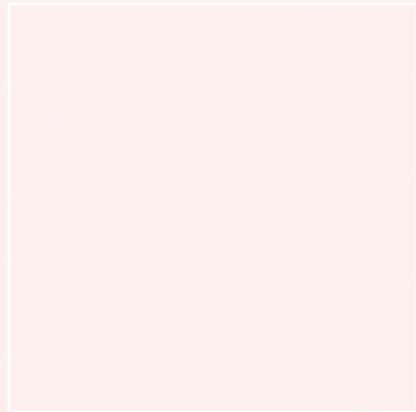
Updates to Open Meeting Law

Equitable Practices





# Major Policy Themes



Adopt Public Meetings Policy

If adopted:

- When should in-person meetings require virtual option?
- What meetings need to be in person?



# Major Policy Themes

Build Staff Capacity

Hiring: Require New  
Skills





# Major Policy Themes

Make Technology Upgrades a Capital Expense

Invest in Broadband Access/Get more people connected

Community Trainings on Virtual Tools

- Consider doing a Digital Access & Equity Plan
- Have you heard of the Digital Navigators Program?

# Break-Out Discussions

*What is your reaction to these themes?*  
*What are your practices currently?*  
*What kinds of policies are you thinking of implementing?*

# Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Executive Order suspending certain provisions of Open Meeting Law

- "Adequate, alternative means of public access" to deliberations and, where required by law, regulation, ordinance or by-law, must also include option for participation by the public;
- Alternative option for reasons of economic hardship and despite best efforts (only for meetings that do not require active participation);
- Remote participation authorized for all members in any meeting; requirement that a quorum and chair be physically present at a meeting location is suspended;
- All other provisions of open meeting law unchanged