

Throughout MetroCommon we have strived to place equity at the center of this plan. We developed the plan's recommendations by working closely with partners who are leading voices for creating a more equitable and resilient region. We sought feedback from residents most likely to be impacted by the policy and programmatic decisions made in the future. The Equity of Wealth and Health Action Area dives deeply into two aspects of unequal and inequitable outcomes found in our region. The other four Action Areas are devoted to other significant challenges facing Metro Boston, but they too seek to address the disparities that exist within those topics. Just as it will take the work of many partners and allies to implement MetroCommon, it will also take many partners and allies to fashion a more equitable region. We look forward to supporting their efforts and continuing to learn and work toward a more equitable and resilient region. A Greater Boston region that supports and serves all residents and workers is possible!

Achieving an equitable future requires acknowledging the inequities of our past and present. Since the colonization of what is now the United States, much of our country's wealth has derived from the dispossession of native populations and economic exclusion of low-income and BIPOC communities. This exclusion and oppression have continued over the centuries through our economic systems as well as through governmental policies and programs. Of course, our nation's history included the enslavement of Black Americans, followed by almost a century of Jim Crow. The federal and state governments established and maintained disparities based on race and ethnic background through policies and programs that enforced segregation in neighborhoods, at the workplace, and in schools. Even today, many labor, environmental, housing, educational, and health care systems include remnants of programs that ensure the opportunities and outcomes for BIPOC will be worse than for Whites.

Greater Boston has its own particular history of oppression and exclusion based on race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. State, local, and regional governments have played a role through land use and other policies that directly or indirectly advanced oppression and exclusion, and some of these policies remain in force today.

Our region encompasses lands that are the original homelands of the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Abenaki, and Massachusetts tribal nations. The painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory is infrequently taught by modern day curricula. And harm and erasure continue to be perpetrated against Indigenous people to this day.^{1,2}

1 O'Brien, Jean. *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2010.

2 Gould, Rae. *The Nipmuc Nation, Federal Acknowledgment, and a Case of Mistaken Identity. In Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles, and Indigenous Rights in the United States. A Sourcebook*. University of North Carolina Press. 2013.

Residents of African descent have experienced a painful history as well. From the history of slavery to the practices of redlining, school segregation, and environmental injustice, Black residents have been intentionally excluded from the freedoms, privileges, and neighborhoods enjoyed by Whites. Even after realizing the same legal rights as Whites, Black residents continue to face systematic racism and economic exclusion. In Metro Boston, such policies have led to the stark differences in health and wealth outcomes at the zip code level.

Many of the disparities Black residents currently experience in wealth and income, health, educational, and safety are similarly shared by other BIPOC populations, notably Latinx residents. (www.regionalindicators.org) In addition to systemic oppression and exclusion, violence and intolerance also operates on the individual level. This past year we have experienced national and regional increases in hate crimes and violence targeting Asians and members of the Jewish faith.

The planning field has played a complicit role in the nation and region's history of oppression and exclusion. Land use, transportation, and housing policies have led to the segregation and unequal access to opportunity that persist today. MAPC acknowledges that we are part of this system that has caused harm and are committed to doing our best to undo the practices and policies that lead to oppression. In 2015 as part of a strategic planning process, we adopted four strategic priorities. One of them is to advance equity, including a special emphasis on racial equity, in our work. While we have made strides in this work, we realize that, like many in our field, we are early in our journey and we approach this work with humility and a willingness to learn. To meet our commitment, we believe that we need to partner with - and support- allies and leaders in this work and to center the voices of those most impacted in our projects and in our advocacy campaigns. This work is rooted in long term relationship- and trust-building, which we understand will take time and resources. We are committed to prioritizing this work and helping to dismantle inequitable systems to create a Metro Boston where all can succeed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought even greater clarity and understanding of how some populations are at greater risk of public health and economic devastation and insecurity. This crisis compounded the already existing vulnerabilities facing particular residents and workers. Residents of nursing homes, those incarcerated, older adults, people of color, and low-income service and gig workers were disproportionately affected by death, illness, and unemployment during the pandemic. It is promising that federal and state priorities for use of recovery funds are prioritizing equity. However, we have to make sure that the voices of those most impacted by COVID-19 have an impact on how these funds are allocated. This is a once in a generation opportunity to begin addressing both the long-standing disparities and more acute impacts that the pandemic inflicted on certain populations. MetroCommon2050 goals and recommendations strive to be in line with this goal, but success can occur only through implementation, not planning.