Executive Director’s Report
Mid-March through Mid-May
Submitted to the Executive Committee
May 17, 2022

Arts & Culture

Making It Public Workshops to Promote Public Art
Between March 15 and April 12, nine municipalities and over 100 Massachusetts-based artists completed Making It Public, a public art training course created by Forecast Public Art and brought to Massachusetts through the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) in partnership with MAPC. The five-week virtual workshop series included two tracks, one for municipal staff and one for artists. Making It Public workshops facilitated conversations, created networks, and provided municipalities and local artists resources to envision and pursue public art projects. Throughout the series, staff from the Arts & Culture Department shared the public art commissioning process developed by MAPC and the Office of the Inspector General during the Lynnstallation project, as well as strategies for inclusive engagement and management of public arts initiatives. Feedback from the municipal participants was overwhelmingly positive, and each municipality is now eligible for up to four hours of 1-on-1 support to support a temporary public art process.

Essex County Cultural Asset Mapping
Staff from the Arts & Culture and Data Services departments launched a project to support the Essex County Community Foundation in mapping Essex County cultural resources in the MAPC region. This effort will complement work completed by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission in 2020 as part of their Place and Meaning initiative. The goal of the effort is to establish baseline cultural resources data municipalities can use to inform planning efforts.

APA Arts & Planning Division at the National Planning Conference in San Diego
In March 2022, the American Planning Association (APA) approved Arts and Planning as the 23rd Division of the Association. The Division Steering Committee celebrated this important milestone at the National Planning Conference in San Diego at the end of April. Division Vice Chair and Director of Arts & Culture Annis Sengupta attended the event with Assistant Director Carolina Prieto and shared the Division’s mission to transform the planning profession through arts and culture by fostering an interest in, contributing knowledge to, and promoting cooperation to enhance the intersection of arts, culture, and planning.

Clean Energy

North Suffolk Zero Carbon Action Plan
The North Suffolk Office of Resilience and Sustainability (NSORS) is a regional collaboration among Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop, in partnership with MAPC. NSORS received a Community Compact Cabinet FY21 Efficiency and Regionalization grant that supports the North Suffolk Zero Carbon Action Plan (ZCAP) project, which kicked off with MAPC in mid-January. The purpose of the ZCAP is to create a regional climate action plan to help the
communities achieve net zero emissions regionally. By leveraging electrification and decarbonization measures, the strategies included in the final plan will focus on regional actions to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across all three communities, helping to mitigate climate change and public health issues experienced vulnerable populations.

MAPC conducted stakeholder assessments during March and April, followed by a greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Additionally, multi-community engagement and visioning for the project will continue to strengthen equitable collaboration. MAPC and community-based organizations in the communities, such as GreenRoots in Chelsea, are helping communities to co-create engagement goals and tailor project outreach to individual community needs.

Covid-Safe Cooling for 2022
The Clean Energy and Public Health departments launched the 3rd year of COVID-Safe Cooling (CSC) grants to communities this spring. MAPC continues to co-manage the CSC program in partnership with the Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA), with generous support from the Barr Foundation. As in prior years, the program provides funding and technical assistance to mitigate extreme heat impacts in the seven communities most impacted by both COVID-19 and extreme heat in Eastern Massachusetts: Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Lawrence, Lynn, and Revere. COVID-Safe Cooling grants fund direct cooling relief, support efforts to build equitable, resilient community support systems, and help communities invest in strategies that will protect residents from extreme temperatures in the long-term. In 2020 and 2021, the program provided over $1 million to municipal departments and organizations.

This year’s grant round launched in March, with proposals submitted by April 15, and award letters sent in early May. MAPC is awarding seven grantees this year: the cities of Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Lynn, Brockton, and Lawrence, and Everett Public Schools. This year’s program design was informed by a series of three focus groups held in February with CSC grantees and other regional partners working to address extreme heat impacts. The discussions helped the project team learn ideas for potential policy solutions. Over 40 participants engaged in the three focus groups. Learn more about the CSC program here.

Metro Mayors Heat Prep Roundtables
As part of the development of the Metro Mayors Regional Heat Preparedness and Adaptation Plan, which MAPC is leading with Cambridge and the Metro Mayors Coalition Climate Taskforce, MAPC hosted two municipal roundtables on extreme heat in March. The first roundtable brought together over 40 municipal staff from across the 15 Metro Mayors communities to provide input and feedback on the draft strategies and actions in the plan. The second roundtable brought together nearly 30 emergency managers, response staff, and key health partners to learn about extreme heat and participate in virtual scenario-based exercises. This roundtable was co-led with MAPC’s inter-departmental Emergency Management team. The input and ideas generated in the focus groups will be integrated into the final heat preparedness and adaptation plan. Stay tuned for a virtual public forum on extreme heat on May 24, and Heat Prep Week (May 23-27), in which MAPC will continue to raise awareness on the risks, effects, and tools to reduce climate-driven heat in the region. Read more about the regional heat preparedness plan here, the inaugural 2021 Heat Prep Week here, and extreme heat resources here.
Melrose, Maiden, and Medford Resilient, Efficient, and Affordable Housing Project
MAPC is working with Melrose, Malden, and Medford to develop voluntary guidelines that promote the development of new housing, which will be affordable, energy efficient, and climate resilient. The project team has been conducting policy research and interviewing stakeholders to inform the development of these guidelines. On May 10 and 11, MAPC conducted Resilient, Efficient and Affordable Housing Focus Groups for residents and community stakeholders. The goal was to understand residents’ experiences and perspectives, and how local policies can improve housing development and retrofits in our region. A public workshop to gather input on the draft guidelines will be held in June.

Updates to the Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2030
As an active and longstanding member of the Global Warming Solutions Act Implementation Advisory Committee (GWSA IAC), MAPC has been closely following the continuing development of the Interim Clean Energy and Climate Plan (CECP), which EOEEA initially released in December 2020. With the Roadmap Climate Act in March 2021, EOEEA is now required to update and finalize the CECP for 2025 and 2030 by July 1, 2022. In April, EEA released slides with draft updates to the CECP and proposed sector-specific sub-limits, holding public hearings to present those updates on April 14 and 15.

On April 29, MAPC submitted comments that reflected the deep and urgent need for action on equitable greenhouse gas emissions reductions in buildings, transportation, land use and nature-based solutions, and our energy supply. We highlighted the need to shift away from natural gas and other fossil fuel systems rapidly and strategically, to support diverse and equitable green workforce development, and to leverage new and existing funding and financing mechanisms, such as a statewide Climate Bank, to enable the pace and scale of change required. Please find MAPC’s April 29 comments at https://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MAPC_CECP-Comment-Letter_4-29-22.pdf; you can read MAPC’s 2021 comments here.

Communications

Communications supported the launch of MetroCommon2050 this past month, working on advance- and follow-up press. We placed an excellent op-ed by President Erin Wortman and Strategic Initiatives Director Eric Hove in Commonwealth Magazine, and enjoyed coverage on WGBH and in Banker & Tradesman, as well as several local weekly newspaper outlets.

We are gearing up for the release of several transportation reports on rapid deliveries and West Station, working with Clean Energy on Heat Prep Week, and boosting the digital access work into more local media outlets for Data Services. At the same time, Communications is looking to fill the two open positions for a Senior and Junior Communications Specialist.
Data Services

Data Requests
Between December and May, Data Services recorded 44 requests from governments, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders throughout the region. One request came from a reporter seeking data about the number of single-woman households in MA; another came from a researcher developing a project on the composition of tree species by municipalities in MA. We also worked to support our Economic Development team in providing data on remote work trends to the City of Cambridge, for a brownbag focused on the future of work in the life sciences sector.

American Community Survey (ACS) and Census Data
In mid-March, the Census Bureau released new data from the 2016–2020 ACS. Thanks to the hard work of staffers Aseem Deodhar and Lex Berman, over 125 high-priority tables were downloaded, processed, and posted on the DataCommon by mid-April, including summary statistics for MAPC subregions, Community Types, RPAs, and other geographies in Massachusetts. This year we also added new tables about internet access and housing vacancies. Visitors to the DataCommon can view the data or download tables to work with it on their own computer. In addition to the ACS updates, we added new data about school enrollment, the subsidized housing inventory, and housing conditions. Visit https://datacommon.mapc.org/ to find all this and more!

Digital Access: Connect Humanity Grant
In late April MAPC kicked off a project with the Mass Broadband Institute and Chelsea, Everett, and Revere to develop a plan for municipally owned fiber optic networks in those cities. The project is funded by Connect Humanity, and organization working on similar projects elsewhere in Massachusetts and across the country. This project will evaluate priority locations for fiber networks and produce engineering details sufficient to move forward with fiber installation to serve low-income residents.

Environment

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs)
The Malden Hazard Mitigation Team met on April 14 to update the status of the city’s mitigation measures, in preparation for the draft plan. Malden held its first public meeting on May 3, hosted by the Conservation Commission.

The draft Chelsea HMP was completed and submitted to MEMA on April 8 and the draft Hingham HMP was submitted on April 20. FEMA completed plan reviews and issued notices of Approval Pending Adoption for Dover, Lynn, and Nahant. The Select Board adopted Nahant’s plan.
Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant (ACR)
A majority of ACR grantees are on track to complete their projects by June 30; a few projects have been extended, mainly due to supply-chain issues that delayed materials delivery. Two site visits are organized for May: site visit #1 on May 16 is hosted by the Mayor’s Office of Housing in Boston (formerly, the Department of Neighborhood Development) and Boston Food Forest Coalition to showcase the Uphams Corner Food Forest site in Dorchester. Site visit #2 on May 26 is co-hosted by the Town of Natick and City of Framingham, covering Natick’s plan to reduce food insecurity and build social resilience among climate vulnerable populations in town, and Framingham’s plan and green infrastructure designing efforts to retrofit Lake Waushakum and its public beach.

In addition, to mark the end of FY21 grant rounds, MAPC will be hosting an end-of-year Resilience Community of Practice celebration on May 19 for all ACR grantees to connect and share final updates, lessons learned, best practices, and their project experiences. Dr. S. Attyia Martin, CEO and Founder of All Aces, Inc., will be keynote speaker at the event.

Proposed Neponset Watershed Climate Collaboration
MAPC has been invited to partner with the Neponset River Watershed Association (NepRWA) on a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant to develop a regional climate adaptation project with 11 communities in the watershed. The project includes both technical and stakeholder outreach, with translations in the three most spoken languages in the area. The project also includes the development of a hydrologic flood model for the watershed, which will provide town-specific projections of flooding risks under climate change scenarios. The proposal was submitted to EOEEA on May 5. If funded, this would be the second collaborative project between MAPC and NepRWA, following our multi-year project to establish and facilitate the Neponset Stormwater Partnership.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEPA #</th>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>COMMUNITY</th>
<th>MEPA REVIEW</th>
<th>MAPC RANKING</th>
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<td>SCITUATE</td>
<td>ENF</td>
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Land Use

Zoning

Rockport
MAPC has been working with Rockport on an overhaul of its zoning bylaws, culminating in a Special Town Meeting on May 16 to vote on a number of warrant articles. One hotly debated article was a complete revision of the town’s accessory dwelling unit (ADU) bylaw, including allowing ADUs by-right and making the requirements more flexible. This measure was narrowly adopted by a simple majority. Another article was the establishment of a transit-oriented overlay district around the town’s commuter rail station. This bylaw implemented a planning effort MAPC completed with the town several years ago. This measure was also adopted by a simple majority. A third article was a complete revision of the town’s Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) by-law, which is an alternative to traditional, large-lot subdivisions. OSRDs allow homes to be clustered closer together, preserving the remaining open space. A key aspect of the revised bylaw is to allow OSRDs by-right and to require traditional subdivisions to obtain a Special Permit. This vote passed by a strong super majority.

Finally, MAPC developed a recodification of the entire zoning bylaw, reformatting the existing bylaws and bringing various provisions up to best practices. Unfortunately, this measure was unsuccessful, receiving a majority of yes votes but falling short of the required 2/3 super majority.

This was a multi-year effort and demonstrates that time, persistence, and good ideas can pay off. We will undoubtedly be back to revisit the overall bylaw recodification. Congratulations to Land Use Managers Ralph Willmer and Chris Kuschel for their leadership in this endeavor; and kudos to Christian Brandt and Gloria Huangpo (Community Engagement) for last minute outreach and material development to make Town Meeting a success.

Concord
Unfortunately, not every Town Meeting results in a win. MAPC completed a multi-year planning and zoning project for the area around the Concord Thoreau Depot Station. The zoning was intended to help implement the Town’s recently adopted comprehensive plan by
revitalizing this district and facilitating housing production. The zoning allowed for mixed-use development, including an inclusionary zoning requirement for larger projects. Design guidelines supplemented the zoning. Despite an extensive community process and best-faith effort by the Town and MAPC to adopt the zoning, it failed at Town Meeting. The zoning qualified for a simple majority vote, but fell short, receiving 45% of the vote to adopt. Again, we hope to learn from this experience and be back at it soon!

Plans

Wakefield Master Plan 2022-2033
The town of Wakefield, aided by MAPC’s Land Use and Community Engagement teams, held a successful first virtual public forum on April 6, with approximately 50 participants. The forum addressed the first two master planning topics of Land Use & Zoning, and Open Space & Recreation. The forum was also paired with a carefully designed 3-week community survey (with input from the 28-member Advisory Group) as an extended opportunity for the community at large to provide feedback. The survey received 560 responses. A link to the public forum’s recording can be found on YouTube at mapc.ma/WMP2033-Forum1-Zoom.

A link to the PowerPoint presentation can be found at mapc.ma/WMP2033-PPT1.

Marshfield Economic Development Plan
Marshfield has kicked off a planning process with MAPC to develop an economic development plan with analysis and recommendations that will support economic activity, the commercial tax base, and commercial and residential uses. The process will be publicly launched with a presentation to the Planning Board on May 23. Initial data collection, research, and analysis will be prepared over the upcoming months and presented at a Community Workshop in August to develop an initial set of economic development goals with the community.

This is the first significant planning activity MAPC has undertaken in Marshfield during the past five years, after a period during which Marshfield attempted to leave the MAPC region through legislative action. We hope this planning process will help to generate an improved and productive relationship between MAPC and the town, which would help to advance both local and regional goals.
Municipal Land Use Planning Overview

The Land Use Division participated in a Municipal Land Use Planning seminar session on May 6, as part of the continuing education certificate program sponsored by Suffolk University and the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA). Several dozen municipal officials participated. The PowerPoint presentation provided a useful overview of municipal land use planning in general, as well as its relation to zoning and various forms of housing planning initiatives; it can be viewed here: https://mapc.ma/land_use_overview

Housing

Living Little
MAPC has completed Phase 2 of Living Little, which involved engagement with the SWAP, TRIC, and South Shore subregions. Final deliverables include a report on missing middle multifamily housing types and a digital toolkit. The latter includes examples of living little with photos and layouts, short videos on its benefits and barriers to development, and frequently asked questions about living little. This work was presented at the MetroCommon2050 launch the first week of May, with an interactive station that allowed visitors to explore the toolkit.

Hull Housing Production Plan (HPP) 2026
MAPC held the second virtual public for the Hull HPP 2021-2026 on April 5. The second public forum built upon the work of three Advisory Group working sessions, where data, trends and housing issues were discussed. In addition, participatory exercises were held to determine priority housing strategies and policies, as well as to confirm potential housing subareas for production. The presentation of the materials and meeting recording can be viewed at http://mapc.ma/3yBhs5V and https://hulltv.net/show/hull-housing-plan-forum-2-4-5-22/.

Housing Quincy
Housing Quincy is wrapping up and the project team is preparing for local adoption. In April, MAPC hosted an “online open house” where residents learned about, commented on, and helped prioritize the draft recommendations. They also prioritized locations for future housing and the types of housing they think are most appropriate for each location. On April 28, MAPC held a webinar to share the results of the online open house, share the recommendations, and give residents the opportunity to ask questions of the project team. MAPC has just completed a draft of the Housing Production Plan, which is currently being reviewed by the Advisory Committee. MAPC is scheduled to appear in front of the City Council and Planning Board in June for votes on local adoption.
Franklin for All
The Franklin for All project is gearing up for its next round of community engagement. A hybrid forum will be held on Monday, May 16, where residents can learn about and provide feedback on draft zoning recommendations for Franklin Center. These recommendations are the result of considerable public engagement to date, including a public forum, online survey completed by approximately 650 residents, four focus groups with stakeholders, and targeted engagement with town staff. MAPC will also have a presence at the June 10 Strawberry Stroll, where attendees will be able to review recommendations that have been further refined based on feedback from the May 16 forum. Beginning this summer, MAPC will work with the town on the next phase of the process: rezoning.

Burlington Housing Needs Assessment
In April, MAPC facilitated a town-wide public forum with the Burlington Housing Partnership Committee to present the findings from a comprehensive housing needs assessment and to gather public input. The forum caps a public engagement process that started last December to increase understanding of local need and provide a foundation for a future housing plan. The process will also include a series of communications materials designed to educate Burlington residents about the town’s current housing landscape and demographics. We expect to complete the materials, a final report, and executive summary later this summer.

Ashland Inclusionary Zoning
MAPC recently completed drafting an inclusionary zoning (IZ) bylaw for Ashland, and finalizing a digital story map to support public education and adoption of the bylaw. Originally slated for Spring Town Meeting, town officials have unfortunately postponed consideration of the bylaw until Fall Town Meeting. If passed, the bylaw would require between 12 and 15% of dwelling units in new developments to be set aside as Affordable Housing available to households with incomes between 60 and 80% of Area Median Income (AMI), depending on the project size and tenure. The town will continue to coordinate with MAPC and may seek further assistance to support the passage of the bylaw this fall.

Economic Development

Equitable Main Streets Recovery
MAPC held an information session attended by representatives of 15 cities and towns on how to respond to the Commonwealth’s Communities One Stop for Growth funding round, with a focus on helping communities to achieve an equitable recovery of their Main Streets after the COVID pandemic and recession. We walked participants through the One Stop application and how to submit their proposals to access 12 different state funding programs in one application. As a first step, we are helping these communities explore funding for a mix of public realm, circulation/walkway and public space improvements, façade upgrades and commercial district activation, based on their priorities.

Meanwhile, we await word on our EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application. If funded, the Equitable Main Streets concept incorporated in that application focuses on helping communities to combine their commercial district upgrades and enhancements with efforts to strengthen businesses owned or operated by people of color, women, or immigrants.
**Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) Enterprise Center**

BHCC received a grant from Senators Markey and Warren to develop an online entrepreneurship learning center, the BHCC Enterprise Center for Entrepreneurship and Training (ECET), to support residents and small businesses in Chelsea, Everett, and adjacent communities. In 2020, MAPC staff worked with BHCC, Chelsea, and Everett to create a plan for a business support center at the college, supported by funds from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. Now, partial project funds are in place to realize the study’s recommendations that the BHCC Enterprise Center provide business consulting services, for-credit courses, continuing education workshops, and seminars on marketing, financial management, business model planning and more.

**Workforce Transit, Housing, and Childcare Accessibility**

In April, MAPC partnered with the North Shore Alliance for Economic Development and North Shore Workforce Investment Board to replicate the Cherry Hill Pilot Study in two additional North Shore employment centers: Cummings Center in Beverly and Centennial Park in Peabody. The pilot study conducted at Cherry Hill Park assessed specific barriers to labor recruitment stemming from housing and transportation issues for employers in the Cherry Hill industrial park. The ongoing technical analysis will produce maps of travel times to each selected job center and will compare the housing opportunities available within the selected travel time bands to the income and occupational characteristics at the target job center.

MAPC is also using this opportunity to present a holistic picture of the challenges employees are facing that impede job retention, including transportation, childcare and healthcare issues, as well as housing instability. Employers in both Cummings and Centennial Parks show robust demand to hire workers with less than a bachelor’s degree (32% and 38% respectively). MAPC will conduct a comparative analysis among all three office parks to assess trends regarding the regional labor shed, transportation networks, and housing affordability.

**Municipal Collaboration**

**Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC)**

MAPC staff continue to support Region 3 hospitals by convening Load Balancing Meetings where bed availability and patient transfer needs are discussed, among other issues hospitals are facing. When hospital metrics were improving, on April 4, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) announced that hospitals across the state would be de-escalated from tier 2 to tier 1. With this tier change, Region 3 hospital meetings now take place every other week and hospitals are required to report bed data every other week. MAPC staff continue to support Region 3 hospitals through the 24/7 Duty Officer role.

MAPC staff hosted a HMCC Stakeholder Meeting on March 29. A panel of EMS representatives from Northeast Region III EMS, Cataldo Ambulance and Reading Fire/EMS discussed lessons learned and best practices from how EMS providers successfully responded to COVID-19 in a collaborative effort while also meeting the needs of multiple stakeholders.
Emergency Preparedness Practice
MAPC staff hosted a webinar to launch the Emergency Preparedness Practice within the region. A panel comprising the Lynnfield Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director, Lynnfield Town Administrator, Malden Health Director/Deputy Emergency Management Director, Malden Police Captain/Emergency Director, and the former Director of New York City Emergency Response addressed how municipalities created strong partnerships across their governments and communities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The panelist also spoke about how these lessons can be applied to future emergencies. The second half of the webinar was dedicated to how MAPC staff from the Emergency Preparedness Practice can support and assist municipalities in a variety of ways.

Metro Mayors Coalition Shannon Grant Community Safety Initiative
The Metro Mayors Coalition Community Safety Initiative (MMC CSI) collaborated with the Center on Child Wellbeing & Trauma during the April 12 partner meeting. During this meeting, resources and trainings were highlighted for our Coalition's 18 partners. Specifically, Racial Trauma and Equity Training was discussed, which will help partners build on the skills of adults working with youth in recognizing race-based traumatic stress symptoms and advocating for equity. The MMC CSI Steering Committee also held a meeting on April 12 to discuss Shannon FY2022 goals, upcoming events, and committee bylaws.

Greater Boston Police Council (GBPC), Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts (FCAM), and Municipal Procurement
At this time, annual GBPC sales total $31,987,563. We believe we are on pace to end FY22 in a similar place to FY21. Current FCAM sales total $12,869,470, which is more than 5 million dollars in sales above FY21.

Currently, we are experiencing issues associated with supply chain and price fluctuations relating to our contracted products, and the immovability of pricing under MGL Ch. 30B. We are meeting with vendors who have recently bid under our contracts, as well as with our vendors who may rebid this year in response to our construction equipment RFP. The procurement team has been brainstorming possible courses of action to address supply chain and price fluctuations in the middle of contract periods, and we are looking to implement them in the coming months to gauge their effectiveness.

The procurement team and members of the legal department also attended the Massachusetts Association of Public Purchasing Officials' (MAPPO) conference focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Procurement. The departments look forward to implementing the additional guidance provided during the conference in future procurements.

Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC)
NERAC recently sponsored two active shooter preparedness events for first responders, each with a component focusing on Rescue Task Force (RTF) skills. Under the RTF model, law enforcement provides security for medical personnel entering a warm zone (an area with potential danger but no direct or immediate threat) to begin administering care to victims as soon as possible during an incident.
The Burlington Mall Full-Scale Exercise occurred on the evening of Sunday, April 3, as the culmination of a multi-year project through which incident response plans were tested and revised. The exercise simulated an active shooter, mass casualty incident at a public venue to validate the response capabilities of approximately 100 participants from 20 agencies. Then, over the course of four days in April and May, first responders from the mutual aid communities of Concord, Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland convened to apply RTF skills learned at previous lecture sessions. The hands-on practice allowed EMS and law enforcement to train together on rapid rescue and emergency medical response in high-threat, mass casualty scenarios.

**Strategic Initiatives**

**MetroCommon2050**

After three years of planning, we launched *MetroCommon2050*, our new regional land use and policy plan, on Thursday, May 5, at the JFK Library. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley provided the keynote remarks. The event concluded with a Legislative Panel featuring State Representatives Christine Barber, Michelle Ciccolo, and Andres Vargas, moderated by Deputy Executive Director Lizzi Weyant. MAPC staff and project partners discussed their work at five stations, highlighting innovative work already underway that advances the goals of *MetroCommon*. A huge thank you to the participants and staff that contributed to a wonderful event. We are planning a virtual follow-up event for folks who were unable to attend; that event will take place on Zoom June 22 at 1 PM.

We’ve also been presenting *MetroCommon* to a variety of audiences including to the Cambridge Community Development staff, the MIT SPURs program, NSPC subregion, and a
delegation of Chinese conservationists! We also held a site visit to explore how Burlington’s development initiatives align with MetroCommon to see if a technical assistance partnership could help advance shared priorities.

**Learning and Evaluation**
Senior Strategist Ben Faust, with support from the Equity Team, continues to roll out the MAPC’s Operationalizing Equity Framework. As a reminder, the framework guides MAPC departments and teams to a more consistent understanding of equity within their discipline. In Phase I, participants identify how their discipline may have perpetuated inequity and what they can do about it. In Phase II, participants choose a tool or process that they use frequently, break it down, and rebuild it to center equity. In March, MAPC’s Transportation Department completed Phase I and in April the Clean Energy Department completed Phase II. Clean Energy staff are working on ways to “rebuild the project lifecycle.” They have separated into two teams. One team is working on project proposals, scoping and budgeting, while the other is improving project metrics and evaluations.

**Community Engagement**

MA DEI Coalition members from Salem, Danvers, Arlington, Revere, Lynn, Newton, Andover, Lexington, Westwood, and Westborough

**MA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Coalition**
Over the past year, MAPC has been supporting the creation and development of the Massachusetts Municipal DEI Coalition, a group of professional DEI practitioners in the local government space, who meet virtually bimonthly to share experiences, compare best practices, and support each other through common challenges. It comprises more than 40 members representing municipalities in and around MetroBoston. MAPC staff have taken on administrative duties, as well as working with coalition members to complete a guide book to assist with their work.
On May 6, the group met in person in Arlington at the new Senior Center for an afternoon work planning retreat and luncheon. MAPC staff helped to facilitate the meeting and will be working closely with the group to implement their work plan.

**Subregions**

It’s Legislative Breakfast season in the Subregions! Government Affairs and Coordinators have worked collaboratively to plan virtual and in-person events across the region.

The *South Shore Coalition* kicked off their virtual breakfast on April 29. Representatives Joan Meschino and Josh Cutler, along with Senators Susan Moran, John Keenan, and Walter Timilty discussed upcoming legislative priorities for the South Shore. The panel was moderated by MAPC Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Lizzi Weyant. The discussion included COVID-19 recovery, economic development, transportation, and water and sewer system needs. A special thank you to South Shore Chair Lauren Lind, who welcomed participants and facilitated the breakfast. Lastly, we celebrated Valerie Sullivan, Weymouth’s Mass in Motion Coordinator, for her many dedicated years of work on the South Shore.

*North Shore Task Force (NSTF) and North Suburban Planning Council (NSPC)* also opted for a virtual event and held a joint Legislative Breakfast on May 12, co-hosted by Senator Bruce Tarr and Representative Michael Day. Senator Brendan Crighton and Representative Sally Kerans talked about the importance of financing an affordable transportation system for the long term. Senator Joan Lovely and Representatives Anne-Margaret Ferrante, Richard Haggerty, and Kate Lipper-Garabedian discussed their ideas for investing the second round of ARPA funds. Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representative Michelle Ciccolo advocated for more steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance clean energy.

In April, NSTF invited Land Use Manager Chris Kuschel to present his recent research, “Rethinking the Retail Strip,” while NSPC featured the *MetroCommon2050* plan at their monthly meeting before the launch event.

*SouthWest Advisory Planning (SWAP)* chose to host an in-person Legislative Breakfast, our first one since before March 2020, on May 13 in Medway. We were joined by State Representatives Jeffery Roy and Michael Soter. A wide array of topics were covered, including the climate bills passed earlier by both branches (Rep. Roy chairs the conference committee), and the Section 3A multifamily requirement for MBTA communities.

The *Metro West Regional Collaborative, MAGIC* and TRIC Legislative Breakfasts are coming up in June. Dates can be found at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org). And, we wish Leah Robins well as she welcomed a baby girl, Miriam Sylvia Sternberg, at the start of May. While she is out on parental leave, Rana Mana-Doerfer from Municipal Collaboration, will be managing MWRC.

The *Inner Core Committee* spent the last few months discussing grant opportunities, receiving legislative updates, and work planning for the next fiscal year.
Public Health

**COVID-19 Communications Strategy: North Suffolk Public Health Collaborative**
The Collaborative, a shared service among Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop and staffed by MAPC, engaged a communications consultant to develop and test new COVID-19 outreach materials. The work targeted four specifics actions – testing, vaccines, masking, and hygiene – to raise awareness and drive behaviors that are responsive to changing COVID-19 conditions. The project also conducted an online A/B test through social media in coordination with MAPC’s Communications Department to test the messages’ resonance. Materials were developed in both Spanish and English. The group is looking forward to promoting consistent messages as levels – and related actions – change over time.

Example of NSPHC communications materials: *Know the Basics*

**Reading Local Health Department Review**
The Municipal Collaboration and Public Health teams recently completed a department review with the Reading Public Health Department and Board of Health. The review assessed Reading’s health services in the context of local goals, using several state and national resources to evaluate department activities. Recommendations from the project are already in motion around new data and information systems, staffing, and credentialing.

Report and priority actions recommended
**Transportation**

*American Planning Association – National Planning Conference 2022, San Diego*

Transportation Planner I, Jessica Boulanger presented at the National Planning Conference in San Diego with Dr. Justin Hollander of Tufts University, on a panel moderated by Niel Angus, an Environmental Planner from the Devens Enterprise Commission. The title of the presentation was, “Using Biometrics to Design Better Places for People.” Biometrics are innovative tools that planners can use to understand how subliminal brain behavior drives the experience of urban settings. The speakers used case studies, preference studies, and video — as well as biometric outputs such as heat maps, gaze-path images, and galvanic-skin-response graphics — to demonstrate how planners can use these tools to understand the impact of visual stimuli on mind and body.

Jessica used an eye emulation software to draw conclusions about the use of 3D Crosswalks for her Master’s thesis at Tufts. The project originated in 2019 after a local story about the Brooks Elementary School in Medford, MA made national news.

**Operationalizing Equity Workshop**

In April, the Transportation Team participated in the first phase of the Operationalizing Equity Framework, developed internally by MAPC staff as well as the Equity Team. The goal of this effort is to develop a process to consistently and meaningfully center equity into the department’s strategies, projects, and processes. (For more information, see the report of the Strategic Initiatives Department on p. 13.)

**Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

In April the Boston MPO developed the [FFY 2023 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP), which is the rolling five-year capital plan for the region’s federally funded transportation projects. This TIP cycle is the first with the increased funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which Congress passed last year. A combination of increased funds and a few large projects that were pushed to outer fiscal years due to lack of readiness, resulted in a large amount of unprogrammed funding in fiscal years 2022, 2023, and 2024. MAPC staff, working closely with MassDOT, MBTA and MPO staff (CTPS), and in coordination with several municipal MPO members, identified new projects that were at a level of design readiness to be able to access the unprogrammed federal funds.

These projects include:

- Rehabilitation of the Lynn Commuter Rail Station
• Improvements to the Forrest Hills Orange Line Station
• Rehabilitation of the Route 30 bridge over I-90 and the Charles River in Weston and Newton
• Replacement of the Maffa Way bridge over the Orange Line tracks in Sullivan Square.

The Boston MPO also programmed several new projects on the TIP in outer fiscal years 2026 and 2027. Highlights include:
• Belmont Community Path
• Swampscott Rail Trail
• Reconstruction of Western Avenue in Lynn
• Reconstruction of Park and Pearl Street in Chelsea
• Improvements to Boston Street in Salem
• Reconstruction of McGrath Boulevard in Somerville
• Rehabilitation of Washington Street in Brookline
• Reconstruction of Route 30 in Weston
• Bluebikes expansion in Cambridge, Medford, Malden, and Salem

Detailed project descriptions start on p. 140 of the FFY 23 – 27 TIP document. Congratulations to Transportation Director and MPO Vice Chair Eric Bourassa and his team for working to generate an improved TIP, funding many important projects.

Federal Transportation Discretionary Grants
MAPC staff have been coordinating with MARPA and MassDOT on new federal transportation discretionary grants, including outreach to cities and towns to identify eligible projects and promote several new programs that are targeted at cities and towns, including:
• Safe Streets and Roads For All, focused on planning and implementation of comprehensive roadway safety initiatives and other Vizion Zero efforts.
• Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program, focused on planning, capital construction, and technical assistance to restore community connectivity in an equitable and safe manner, through the removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible transportation infrastructure facilities that create barriers to mobility, access, or economic development.
• Healthy Streets program focused on the deployment of cool and porous pavements and to expand tree cover and mitigate urban heat islands, to improve air quality, and other climate projects.

As US DOT continues to roll out new grant programs, MAPC staff are preparing to provide technical assistance for municipalities and coordination with MassDOT and MBTA. Staff have also worked with the Boston Society of Architects and the Massachusetts Chapter of the APA to host a three-part series on the IIJA. There are three separate hybrid events, last week, this week, and next week. Deputy Executive Director Lizzi Weyant spoke on a panel last week about overall funding availability. This week, the MBTA, MassDOT, and Boston MPO will discuss project strategy, and next week will feature deeper dives into a few projects, e.g., Blue Hill Avenue in Boston and East-West Rail.
Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) Progress
The MCRT is the state’s signature east-west shared use path that will go from Cambridge in the east to Northampton in the west. For the past 13 years, MAPC staff have worked with DCR and the municipalities in the region to advance sections of the trail. When complete, it will link Berlin, Hudson, Sudbury, Wayland, Weston, Waltham, and Belmont in the MAPC region to the Alewife Red Line Station in Cambridge, as well as other regional trails such as the Minuteman Bikeway and Somerville Community Path. Most critically, it will improve safe bicycle connectivity for Environmental Justice communities in Cambridge and Waltham.

Recently, the City of Waltham finished design of a 2.7 mile section and released it for bid, funded through the Community Preservation Act and other local funds. As noted above, the Boston MPO has programmed the path section in Belmont on the Boston MPO TIP in FFY 26, which was initiated by an MAPC planning study in 2011. The Conein Foundation, with input from MAPC, is also funding design of an additional section of the MCRT across Route 128 and the Fitchburg Commuter Rail line to connect with an already completed section in Weston.

On May 11, MAPC hosted a public bike ride of this trail from Alewife Station through Waltham as part of Baystate Bike Week.

Metro Mayors and Means Tested Fare Pilot
Over the winter, MAPC convened several Inner Core municipal planners to discuss piloting a means-tested fare with the MBTA. Meetings occurred in February and March to discuss the goals of a pilot, how a means tested fare is different from free bus pilots, what other transit agencies nationally have established a means tested fare, and how it could be piloted in Greater Boston. In April, the Metro Mayors Coalition agreed to support a legislative strategy to pursue funding for a system wide Means Tested Fare Pilot, which would also support Free Bus pilots in those communities interested in that alternative, such as Boston and Cambridge.

New Staff
Gloria Huangpu has joined MAPC as a Community Engagement Specialists, transitioning from her previous role as intern. She is completing her master's degree at Tufts’ Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning. Gloria has experience in regional planning, creative placemaking, and community engagement from prior work at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s Department of Planning and Regional Development and the Asian CDC in Boston. She's eager to help municipalities develop more equitable and inclusive community engagement practices in her new role.

Katie Goldrick has joined the Municipal Collaboration Department as the new Grants and Program Management Specialist. Her portfolio will include grant management, fiscal oversight, and procurement work associated with the variety of federal funding streams related to homeland security, public health and health care, and emergency preparedness.
Katie will also assist with public education and social media outreach, as well as inventory management. Katie comes to MAPC from West Newton Healthcare, where she served as the Business Office Manager. She is a resident of Holbrook and has served on the Board of Health there since 2018.

**Abbey Judd** joined the Arts & Culture Department as a Regional Arts & Culture Planner from her current home in Austin and will be moving up to Boston at the end of May. Abbey brings experience as an arts administrator at the Levitt Shell in Memphis. She has a dual graduate degree from the University of Texas in Community and Regional Planning and Public Affairs, with a portfolio in Arts & Cultural Management and Entrepreneurship. A musician herself, she brings an interest and experience in music-based creative placemaking/keeping efforts and regional arts-based economic development. She has done research on housing and displacement as well and is eager to learn about planning work across the agency. Abbey will be supporting a variety of active and emerging projects in the Arts & Culture Department.

**Gurdeep Kaur** will be joining the Economic Development Team in the Land Use Department on June 6. Her portfolio will include commercial/industrial land use, developing plans and conducting market analyses for development opportunities at major sites/locations, industry sectoral partnerships that can support career pathways for residents, and workforce and wealth creation activities. For the past five years, Gurdeep worked in economic and land use planning in California, most recently at the City of West Hollywood. Gurdeep has experience in mixed-use development, historic preservation, and other projects and in supporting neighborhood businesses through the COVID-related economic downturn. Gurdeep holds a bachelor’s in geography/environmental studies and English from UCLA and a master’s in urban planning from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In June, **Rachel Bowers** will join the Analytical Services group as a Data Analyst, where she will support staff throughout the agency by providing data and analysis to inform their planning projects. Rachel will focus primarily on climate planning, particularly the application of our growing number of climate datasets to Climate Action Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans, and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness projects. Rachel joins us with a Master’s Degree in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts and a Bachelor’s Degree in Environmental Science and Technology from the University of Maryland. Most recently, Rachel worked as a planner at Sasaki, where she provided spatial analysis and visualization across a variety of mapping platforms, and interned for the City of Newark Office of Sustainability, where she assisted with the development of an environmental justice-focused Environmental Resources Inventory (ERI).