

**Executive Director's Report**  
Submitted to the Executive Committee  
January 17, 2024

## ***Arts & Culture***

The Arts & Culture and Land Use Departments kicked off a series of projects that pilot **Preservation and Public History** as a practice area at MAPC.

The **Stoneham Historic Preservation Plan**, led by Sarah Scott in the Land Use Department and staffed by Lindsay Randall in Arts & Culture, kicked off with meetings with the town, the Massachusetts Historical Commission staff, and the Stoneham Historical Commission as well as a town tour between December 4 and 8. At the same time, the team launched an internal project to establish a work plan for the Preservation and Public History practice, which will include convening an equitable preservation advisory group comprising staff at the agency with experience working on historic and cultural resources from an equity perspective.

The Mass Downtown Initiative awarded MAPC funds to complete an **Arts and Culture Action Plan for Reading**. The team kicked off the plan on December 11 with a meeting in Reading where MAPC staff gave an overview of the cultural planning process to local staff and stakeholders, and Emmy Hahn from EOED provided an overview of the Mass Downtown Initiative. The plan will strengthen Reading's network of community stakeholders with a revitalized mission to advance arts and culture in the town, build awareness of local facilities with the potential to house cultural uses, align arts and cultural investments with the development of a Business Improvement District (BID), and identify priority cultural planning initiatives.

Salem Mayor Dominick Pangallo formally awarded the Charlotte Forten Memorial commission to Ai Qiu Hopen/Humanity Memorial's "Moving Spirit of Love," upon the collective recommendation of the Selection Panel and the Salem Public Art Commission. This marks an important moment in the city's journey towards telling Charlotte Forten Grimke's story and amplifying voices of color in Salem. The artist team will begin working in the studio and will engage the community as they finalize their design, which will be installed later this year. Read more about the selected project [here](#).

## ***Clean Energy***

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center has awarded an EmPower Massachusetts implementation grant to MAPC, the Boston Housing Authority, and Alternatives for Community and Environment to implement a program that will deliver clean energy benefits to previously underserved populations. The Green and Healthy Affordable Homes program will build on work completed under a previous EmPower Innovation and Capacity Building grant to implement a pilot program to provide grants and technical assistance to encourage landlords to rent to housing choice voucher holders and make incentivized energy efficiency upgrades to rental properties. This project will kick off in Q1 2024 and run for two years, targeting at least 30 housing units.

The Clean Energy team represents municipal interests on the state's Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC), which provides recommendations to the state's electric distribution utilities on their electric sector modernization plans. Throughout the fall, members of the Clean Energy team reviewed the draft plans, conducted municipal outreach to solicit input, and provided input for the final report. On November 20, the GMAC provided its formal recommendations to the utilities.

Recommendations ranged widely, from requesting further technical analysis to addressing the lack of information about cost-effectiveness of infrastructure investments, and providing a framework for assessing

equity impacts. In particular, MAPC's concerns focused on the limited information provided about how municipalities will be engaged in the infrastructure scale-up. We particularly expressed concern about the need to engage municipalities proactively to streamline siting and permitting timelines, address community concerns, and avoid perpetuating environmental justice issues.

## ***Community Engagement***

The Community Engagement team assisted on the Everett Housing Production Plan, conducting a series of four events to gather community input about preferences and needs for future housing development. Through our efforts, MAPC reached at least 200 residents and community stakeholders.

The team also completed the Language Access Project. They have conducted evaluation conversations with partners and are finalizing a Language Access Guide in collaboration with the Communications Department. The Language Access guide will help municipal staff and regional partners looking to establish language access policies in their communities.

MAPC also hosted a "Subregional Chairs lunch" to reflect on the past year, talk about MAPC and Subregional strategic priorities, and share challenges and opportunities for collaboration. The group discussed housing and transportation priorities and the role of community engagement in those areas. Lizzi and I both attended the discussion, which we aim to hold twice each year.

Finally, the team completed a series of briefings on the Draft Norfolk Master Plan vision and goals with the Norfolk Select Board, Small Business Association, and Council on Aging, all using a new online engagement platform called Social Pinpoint, which helped us to expand our outreach to hold more conversations and gather broader feedback.

## ***Data Services***

On November 30, Data Services released the **Homes for Profit research** to a virtual audience of 200. The study included many findings and recommendations, including that one in five Greater Boston homes sold to an investor from 2004-2018.

The webinar included a presentation of findings by Interim Data Services Director Jessie Partridge Guerrero, and a dynamic panel discussion with Angie Liou, Executive Director of Asian CDC and MAPC Executive Committee member; Tim Reardon, Chief of Data and Research at the EOHLC; Katie McCann, Rent Control Campaign Manager at City Life/Vida Urbana; and Brian An, Professor of Public Policy at Georgia Tech University.

## **Digital Equity Apartment WiFi Program Update**

MAPC's digital equity program team closed out 2023 with a list of more than 60 expressions of interest from public housing authorities and affordable housing developers across Massachusetts for the free apartment wifi installation program. The team conducted dozens of assessments with interested parties and will be announcing an initial cohort of five housing sites for the program in the first quarter of 2024.

The webinar recording can be found on [MAPC's website](#) and the data and report can be found at [homesforprofit.mapc.org](https://homesforprofit.mapc.org). Thanks to MAPC's Communications team, the research received robust press coverage, including a [front-page article](#) in the Boston Globe, a [feature](#) on NBC 10 Boston's @Issue Sunday morning news show, and a [story](#) on CBS News Boston, among others.

**Nov 30, 2023 12:00 PM**

## Homes for Profit

Speculation and Investment in Greater Boston

MAPC will provide a briefing on new research, which found one in every five homes sold to an investor from 2004 – 2018. Guest panelists will include:

- Tim Reardon**  
Chief of Data and Research,  
Executive Office of Housing  
and Livable Communities
- Brian An, PhD**  
Director,  
Master of Science in  
Public Policy Program,  
Georgia Institute of Technology
- Angie Liou**  
Executive Director,  
Asian Community  
Development Corporation
- Katie McCann**  
Rent Control  
Campaign Coordinator  
City Life / Vida Urbana

**Homes for Profit** | Map | Executive Summary | Report | About

Legend: Share total investor transactions (inv\_p)

- 0% - 15%
- 15% - 20%
- 20% - 30%
- 30% - 100%

## Environment

### Neponset Watershed Climate Collaborative

MAPC is partnering with the Neponset River Watershed Association and Weston & Sampson Engineers to convene and support the Neponset Watershed Climate Collaborative, a 10-town initiative to coordinate climate resiliency efforts. The initiative began its second phase this fall. MAPC's role is focused on convening and engaging municipal and community stakeholders and providing technical assistance on resilience tools such as local bylaws and regulations.

On December 11, the Environment Department, in coordination with the project partners, convened the first Community Advisory Group Meeting. Participants included various community members, business owners, and municipal committee volunteers. This virtual meeting and breakout rooms allowed for small group discussions about climate concerns, priority populations, and effective community engagement in the municipal conversations about climate change impacts and subsequent projects.

### Accelerating Climate Resiliency (ACR) Speaker Series

MAPC hosted the last webinar in 2023 of the Accelerating Climate Resilience Speaker Series, which explored the role of the clean technology sector in building more resilient communities and economies. Representatives from the City of Boston's Green New Deal Team and Greentown Labs in Somerville shared how they are supporting the adaptation of clean technologies and helping expand equitable workforce development in the cleantech sector.

### Federal and State Grant Proposals

The Environment Department submitted two major grant proposals, one for NOAA and the other in response to an RFQ from EOEEA. For the EEA grant, MAPC's Community Engagement and Data Services Departments collaborated on our proposal.

### NOAA Coastal Resiliency Regional Challenge Grant

MAPC is one of several partners invited to participate in the state-wide “Team Massachusetts” grant proposal, which is led by EOEEA. The Environmental Department submitted our portion of the scope for the state-wide proposal, which if awarded would provide MAPC with \$375,000 in funding over five years (\$75,000 annually from October 2024, through September 2029) to increase our staff capacity to support local and regional coastal resilience planning and project work. If funded by the grant, a coastal resilience planner at MAPC will enhance existing initiatives such as the South Shore Climate Network and develop and implement new initiatives focused on the 24 coastal communities in the MAPC region. EOEEA will submit the application to NOAA in February, and grant awards will be announced in summer 2024.

### RFQ for Assessing the Impacts of Flooding on Environmental Justice Communities

MAPC led a team of partners to submit a \$400,000 proposal to EOEEA/DCR for a project focused on engaging communities statewide to complete a flood vulnerability study, with an emphasis on Gateway Cities and EJ populations. The project would last for 18 months, with technical support from our partners Weston & Sampson Engineers, R.E.G. Solutions, and Planning Communities. MAPC's Community Engagement and Data Services departments will also play a large role in both the technical analysis and community engagement aspects of this project. To provide statewide outreach to Gateway Cities beyond our region, MAPC will coordinate through MARPA to engage our colleagues in the other Regional Planning Agencies.

## **Land Use**

### **Milford Comprehensive Plan**

MAPC has finalized the contract to begin a town-wide Comprehensive Plan in Milford. Over the next 15 months, MAPC staff will work closely with town staff and a Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee to undertake a robust public engagement process to determine what residents envision for Milford over the next 10 years. The town's previous comprehensive plan was completed in 2003. It is anticipated that managing growth and change, attracting investment to downtown and light industrial areas, supporting an aging population, and exploring ways to diversify the housing stock will be key aspects of the process. The process will engage staff from nearly all MAPC departments in a dynamic team that will cover all required aspects of a comprehensive plan.

### **Economic Development: Somerville Commercial Leasing Toolkit / Anti-Displacement Engagement**

MAPC is working with Somerville to help prevent commercial displacement of small businesses. Increasing real estate market pressures, land prices, and new development in the city have led to an increased risk of displacement of small businesses. We will research existing models to help small businesses obtain or preserve their commercial leases and achieve stable commercial occupancies to be featured in the toolkit. The project aligns with MAPC's commitment to equity by addressing the needs of small businesses, including BIPOC-owned businesses, in a changing real estate market. Preventing displacement of these businesses aligns with our MetroCommon 2050 goals, including advancing healthy neighborhoods and increased economic prosperity. Retaining ethnically based small businesses and others with a loyal customer base can help establish a sense of belonging for long term residents.

### **Municipal Funding Application Assistance for Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices Grants**

In the last quarter of 2023, MAPC wrapped up a series of one-on-one discussions and application development in pursuit of grants under the Commonwealth's Community Compact Cabinet Best Practices (CCCBP) program with representatives of 11 municipalities.

## **Housing**

### Chelsea Fair Housing Plan

In December 2023, MAPC and the City of Chelsea finalized the Chelsea Fair Housing Plan. The one-year process associated with developing this plan involved significant community engagement to hear from members of protected classes who are facing fair housing issues in Chelsea. MAPC engaged hundreds of community members and undertook robust data analysis, based on protected class, to investigate patterns

of segregation, unequal access to opportunity, and barriers to finding housing that meets households' needs. The plan concludes with a variety of recommendations for improving fair housing conditions in Chelsea, including adopting an Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning District to incentivize the development of deed-restricted affordable housing, supporting redevelopment at Chelsea Housing Authority properties to add increased density at existing sites and make use of vacant and underutilized publicly owned land, and advocating for state-level policies that advance local priorities such as a local-option real estate transfer fee.

Many partners were crucial to the success of this project, including the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board; City of Chelsea Law and DEI Departments; Chelsea Black Community; GreenRoots; Chelsea Housing Authority; La Colaborativa; The Neighborhood Developers; Winn Development, and The Salvation Army. The Chelsea Fair Housing Plan can be accessed [here](#).

#### Salem Inclusionary Zoning Policy Adopted

MAPC first worked with Salem on inclusionary zoning in 2019. At the time, the policy was not adopted by the city. However, the city received a 2023 TAP grant to revisit the inclusionary policy and confirm financial feasibility ahead of council adoption this fall. Salem City Council adopted the inclusionary policy in December 2023. MAPC also prepared an Economic Feasibility Assessment for Salem to ensure the affordability requirements apply to new developments under their MBTA Communities/Section 3A Zoning.

#### Rapid Transit Communities Compliance with MBTA Communities/Section 3A Zoning

MAPC provided technical assistance to Rapid Transit Communities (RTC) as they worked towards the December 31 deadline for MBTA Communities multi-family zoning. MAPC provided an array of assistance, including compliance testing, zoning assessments, conducting economic feasibility analyses, and application submittal support. Compliance testing and zoning assessments were conducted for the municipalities of Everett, Revere, and Somerville. Cambridge received support in verifying compliance model findings. Economic feasibility analyses of inclusionary policies were provided for Brookline, Everett, Medford and Newton to ensure that developments with affordable housing are economically feasible in new multi-family zones. MAPC is pleased to report that all 12 RTC municipalities adopted multi-family zoning, although Milton's will be challenged on the ballot in February. The zoning for all communities is under compliance review by EOHL.

#### NARC Housing Working Group Re-Established

MAPC has joined the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) to reconvene a regional housing working group under NARC (National Association of Regional Councils). The working group brings regional planning professionals from around the country together quarterly to share best practices, research, and lessons learned for housing planning and policy. The first working group meeting is scheduled for January 29. MAPC's Homes for Profit research will be highlighted. The working group is also coordinating with NARC to highlight housing work at upcoming NARC conferences in February and June.

## ***Municipal Collaboration***

### **Launch of the First Apartment Wi-Fi Project in Revere**

Municipal Collaboration and Data Services celebrated an incredible milestone with the public launch of their first Apartment Wi-Fi project at the Revere Housing Authority Rose and Pomona property. The Communications Department helped to plan a successful press event that received solid local media attention. A big congratulations to both teams, led by Digital Services Manager Stephen Larrick and Municipal Services Manager Brian Luther, for this major milestone!

### **Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council**

To prepare for increasing concerns and incidents of cybersecurity threats and their impact on homeland security, NERAC has amended its bylaws to include an additional cybersecurity representative on the Council and voted in two new members to fill the vacant seats. Dorinda Goodman (Director of Information Technology for the Town of Lexington) and Ryan Knowles (Director of Information Services for the City of Gloucester) have



joined existing member Colby Cousens (North Shore IT Collaborative Director) as NERAC's three cybersecurity discipline representatives. These experts will advise on the most effective expenditure of the homeland security grant funding and provide guidance for projects that will enhance cybersecurity protections for the communities in the NERAC region.

### **Shannon Grant Community Safety Initiative**

On December 15, over 90 public safety personnel, community partners, and youth participants from across the Commonwealth gathered at Boston University for the 2023 Shannon Grant Community Safety Summit. Throughout the day, participants learned about the latest trends in gang and youth violence, and innovative prevention strategies and initiatives that various partners are currently implementing. The keynote address was presented by Dr. Jonathan Jay, Assistant Professor Boston University School of Public Health. Dr. Jay highlighted recent trends and comprehensive responses to community gun violence from a public health perspective. The first session, Innovations in Police Responses to Community Violence, brought together law enforcement and community partner leaders to discuss innovative approaches being implemented in local departments across the state. The second session, Spreading HOPE, Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences, was led by the Director of HOPE National Resource Center, Dr. Robert Sege. Dr. Sege discussed how HOPE identifies ways that communities and systems of care can better ensure that all children have more positive experiences and that all families have support to nurture and celebrate their strengths.

A big congratulations to Program Specialist Rosemary Volinski and the entire Municipal Collaboration team, along with support from Public Health, Government Affairs, and Communications, for this successful event.

### **Region 3 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition**

The Region 3 HMCC held two stakeholder meetings both focused on cyber awareness and security. In the first meeting, subject matter experts from Mass Cyber Center and Beverly Hospital discussed ways health and medical stakeholders could prepare and respond to a cyber incident, as well as best practices and down time procedures. In attendance were 35 HMCC stakeholders. During the second meeting, the HMCC participated in a nationwide virtual FEMA tabletop exercise focused on cyber security. This format allowed the connected sites to assess current plans, policies, and procedures while learning from the other connected sites, as they provide their perspective while exercising a similar situation. In attendance were 25 HMCC stakeholders.

### **Emergency Preparedness Practice**

MAPC staff completed a year-long project with Medford to enhance their Emergency Management Program. Over the course of 12 months staff worked with city officials to develop the plan, create an Internal Emergency Management Team for the city, and conduct a tabletop exercise to test the plan staff created.

## ***Public Health***

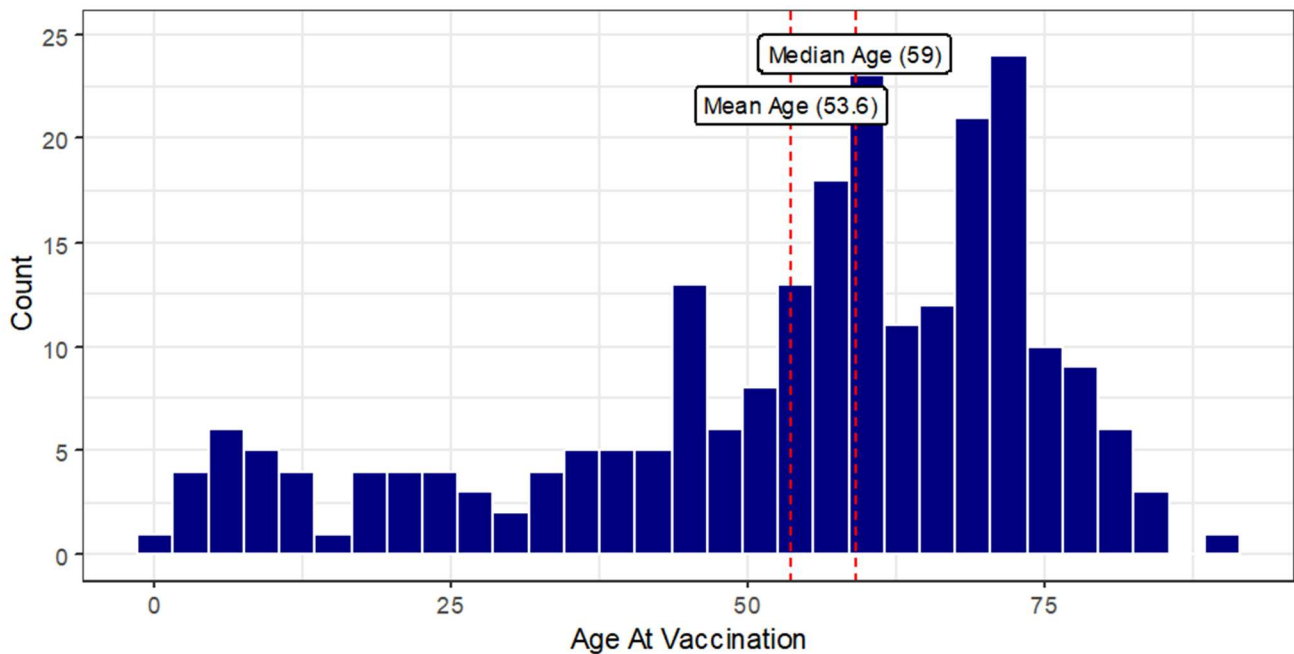
### **Boston Urban Agriculture Strategy**

In January, the MAPC and GrowBoston project team successfully wrapped up community engagement for the Boston Urban Agriculture Strategy. The engagement initiative brought together residents, neighborhood committees, city staff, and artists to discuss ways to enhance food production in Boston, specifically in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and East Boston.



The engagement process comprised 12 working sessions with neighborhood committees, a community event in each priority neighborhood, 17 stakeholder interviews, a celebratory community share back session at the Dudley Greenhouse, and multiple meetings with 10 City of Boston departments to coordinate implementation strategies. Led by Public Health in collaboration with Arts & Culture and Community Engagement, these events sparked meaningful conversations on food production, setting the stage for impactful implementation strategies.

### Evaluation of Chelsea's Community-Based Vaccination Clinic



MAPC's Regional Epidemiologist Ann Kissel completed an evaluation of the City of Chelsea's vaccination clinic, operational since April 2021 and extended into the 2023 booster season. Despite declining attendance, our evaluation found that the community-based clinic remains a crucial access point, fostering health equity as a trusted resource for community members.

The city's targeted text message campaign reached nearly 9,000 individuals and had an impressive engagement rate; 87% of patients who attended this clinic received this informational text message. Demographic analysis of the clinic's attendees emphasized the clinic's role in addressing health inequities: more than half of participants (60%) identified as Hispanic or Latino, and almost two out of every five attendees (39%) lacked insurance. Two-thirds of participants (67%) were aged 50 and above. These findings underscore the community-based clinic's role in addressing health inequities in communities like Chelsea. Although Chelsea had very impressive vaccination rates during the pandemic, booster rates have fallen below the statewide average, so efforts to increase those rates should continue.

### **Framingham's Opioid Task Force Final Recommendations**

The Public Health team made recommendations to the City of Framingham's Opioid Task Force about how to allocate its opioid settlement funds. We interviewed 22 key informants, conducted three focus groups with people with lived experience with drug use, and analyzed survey results to make the following recommendations about areas of investment: Housing, Drop-in Day Center, Case Management, Transportation, and a Detoxification Center. The Public Health team submitted a report and presented the findings to the Framingham Opioid Task Force. The recommendations represent structural solutions to abating opioid use and serve as guidance for the City of Framingham as decisions are made to allocate opioid settlement funding over the next 15 years.

## ***Strategic Initiatives***

### **Strategic Plan/DEI Assessment Update**

Earlier this winter, TDC Consulting surveyed staff and Executive Committee members about priorities for the agency that we should focus on over the next few years. We will share some of the themes that emerged at today's meeting. Generally, staff and Executive Committee members agreed on elevating the work we do on climate, housing, and transportation, employing our regional lens whenever possible. There was also general agreement on continuing to build relationships with state and municipal, who make many public policy decisions. There were some differences in opinions and questions about our role working with Community-Based Organizations. The staff survey also provided rich responses on internal changes to improve our impact and productivity, through changes in scoping and budgeting procedures, for example. Over the next month, we will develop an updated mission statement, vision, and values. And TDC will be hosting focus groups of leaders from municipalities, state agency, the Legislature, CBO's, and advocacy organizations.

In December, our DEIA consultants, JJR/Bijoux Consulting, had separate engagement meetings with staff and managers/directors to discuss the initial findings in the "thematic analysis" and recommendations. The initial findings are based on the data collected from the individual survey meetings and engagement with senior leaders. During the month of January, the consultants are working on creating the final report, which includes the analysis of data collected and recommendations.

## ***Transportation***

### **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council**

MAPC Transportation Director, Eric Bourassa, was appointed by Governor Healey to serve on the legislatively established Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordination Council (EVICC) in June 2023. EVICC has produced a [report](#) with a set of recommendations to advance EV infrastructure in Massachusetts. EVICC is also charged with allocating \$50 million of ARPA funds to implement the recommendations. MAPC has helped EVICC dedicate approximately \$7 million of this funding to a municipal EV charging technical assistance program that will be publicly introduced in February.

### **Bluebikes**



MAPC has been convening the Bluebikes municipalities monthly to prepare for the next procurement process to select an operator for the regional bikeshare system, in preparation for when the current contract with Lyft expires in April 2026. The group formed a procurement committee in 2023 to conduct market research, refine the existing business model, and release a bikeshare RFI in early 2024.

MAPC has also facilitated a conversation between the Bluebikes municipalities and MassDOT officials in request of dedicated state funding. In November, MAPC staff drafted a proposal, on behalf of the municipalities, to MassDOT for five years of funding to support operations costs and system upgrades. Currently, most of the funding available to the municipalities is for capital expenses, and they are burdened by the lack of funding for operating costs, hindering both maintenance and expansion of the system.

Finally, on December 20 the bikeshare system announced the [launch of 60 new electric bikes](#) within the Bluebikes network, funded through a combination of municipal and Boston MPO resources that MAPC helped establish. By the end of January, 750 e-bikes will be mixed in with the existing 4,000 non-electric bikes.

### **Everett Upper Broadway Parking Analysis**

The Transportation Team finalized a parking utilization study for the City of Everett and the MBTA to support the Bus Network Redesign implementation and the eventual Phase 1 Silver Line extension through Everett to Sullivan Square. The study evaluated the potential for all-day, bi-directional curbside bus lanes on upper Broadway and a section of Chelsea Street. Currently, the dedicated bus lanes on Broadway operate only during morning and evening peak hours, then revert to on-street parking the rest of the day. The study determined that the combined side street and off-street public parking capacity in the area was more than sufficient to accommodate the number of parked vehicles on Broadway and Chelsea Street. We are hopeful that this data will help the city to establish an all-day dedicated bus lane.

### **Encore Casino Expansion**

MAPC's comments to EOEEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper, in response to Encore's Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) in October, successfully resulted in the Secretary's subsequent requirement that Encore submit a Supplemental FEIR addressing many of the concerns that MAPC and our municipal and agency partners raised. Together with the cities of Boston, Everett, and Somerville, the MBTA, and MassDOT, we have participated in regular meetings with the Encore team to discuss updates and concerns regarding Phase 2 of their project and have also met independently with Wynn Associates to address our specific recommendations regarding parking, TDM, and transit investment. While opportunities for improvement remain, we are pleased that many of our recommendations were reflected in the SFEIR, notably a significant reduction in parking, doubling the financial commitment to the MBTA's Phase 1 Silver Line expansion, and increasing employee subsidized T passes.

### ***New Staff***

**Saundra Baker** joined MAPC in December, as the new Grants and Procurement Specialist in Municipal Collaboration. In this role, she will support MAPC's grants management work on behalf of the homeland security councils in the Commonwealth, as well as the Region 3 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition. Saundra brings Massachusetts focused public procurement experience, having previously worked with the Massachusetts RMV, DOT, and most recently the City of Boston.

**Brian Griffin** joined MAPC in December, as the new Grants and Procurement Coordinator in Municipal Collaboration. His main priorities will focus on invoice and document management for GBPC and FCAM contracts, the public works municipal contracts, while also working with our homeland security and HMCC teams regarding inventory management and reporting. Brian taught English in Qufu, China for a year after graduating from Skidmore College.

**Rodoshi Sinha** joined MAPC in December as the new Environmental Planner II with the Environment Department. She brings experience in climate and water resources management, as well as planning at the regional scale. Previously, Rodoshi served Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments in the Cincinnati Metro. Rodoshi's academic preparation includes three Master's Degrees, including a Dual Master's in Environmental Sciences and Public Affairs from Indiana University. She will be helping MAPC's "Green Team" with several new and ongoing projects, including our two MVP 2.0 projects, the US Army Corps of Engineers Boston Harbor Flood Study, Neponset Climate Collaborative, and the Accelerating Climate Resilience program.