

Executive Director's Report

Submitted to the Executive Committee

June 18, 2024

Arts & Culture

On June 13, MAPC welcomed communities in Malden to the first public meeting for the Malden Open Space and Recreation + Art Plan (OSRAP). This marks the first time that MAPC's Arts & Culture Department is leading an OSRP update process, and the planning process is integrating learnings from the arts and culture elements of OSRPs developed in 2017- 2018 plans for Everett, Chelsea, and Revere. Arts & Culture is working closely with the Land Use and Community Engagement Departments to infuse the plan with deep community engagement, language access, cultural resonance, and creativity.

The MAPC Arts & Culture Department is thrilled to share that the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) will award their Major Metro Achievement Award to MAPC's [*Rooted in Nature: Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Resiliency*](#) series at the organization's conference in Atlanta, GA next week. This award recognizes the program as an example of regional excellence, innovation, and impact. Staff across MAPC continue to seek out opportunities to apply the learnings and integrate indigenous knowledge and partnership into our planning work, but I would like to give special credit to Regional Humanities Specialist Lindsay Randall for spearheading this award-winning project. Well done!

Clean Energy

Greater Boston Climate Action Plan- Regional Steering Committee In-Person Meeting

In early June, MAPC gathered the six other regional planning agencies/commissions that serve on the Steering Committee for the Greater Boston Climate Action Plan (GBCAP) for the first time in-person. The GBCAP is funded by the U.S. EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program and serves the entire Metro Statistical Area (MSA) encompasses 167 municipalities across Eastern Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. The meeting began with a debrief and reflection on the [*Priority Climate Action Plan \(PCAP\)*](#) submitted in March. The bulk of the time was spent developing a shared vision for the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), which is due to the EPA in August 2025, and refining the workplan to generate the CCAP. The workplan includes robust stakeholder engagement, including continuing the 30-member Municipal Advisory Group, 25-member Justice 40 Advisory Group, as well as sector-based workshops and focus groups to inform the regional plan. Engagement for the next phase of the GBCAP will kick off in earnest in July with a virtual public forum July 17.

MAPC planned and facilitated the Regional Steering Committee meeting, and Merrimack Valley Planning Commission hosted, with participants in-person from Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Nashua Planning Commission, and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. Old Colony Planning Council and the Rockingham Planning Commission attended virtually.

Malden Climate Action Plan

MAPC is in the final stages of completing the Malden Climate Action Plan (CAP) after a 3-week long public comment period. The project team conducted robust community engagement to gather feedback from a diverse range of residents, including tabling at the Green Malden Fair in April, hosting a virtual meeting, leading a focus group with local service providers, and conducting a series of focus group meetings over dinner with local CBOs (Malden Youth Civics Council, Chinese Cultural Connection, the Suffolk Manor Resident Association, and the Bike & Ped Advocacy Group). Interpretation services were offered at the virtual meeting and focus groups with CBOs. Now that the public comments have been received, MAPC is revising and finalizing the CAP in anticipation of a July launch. The team collaborated with Malden Public Schools to feature "climate art" by local students in the Plan. We are also working with Urban Media Arts, the local cable station, to create a 3-5 minute summary video of the CAP.



Photo caption/credit: MAPC, CAP Steering Committee members, and City Councillor Carey McDonald ready to collect feedback on the CAP at the Green Malden Fair (April 2024). (Brooks Winner)

Direct Pay Webinar

On June 14, MAPC facilitated a webinar about Direct Pay for our municipal and other governmental and non-profit partners. Direct Pay is the commonly used term to describe the Elective Pay provision from the Inflation Reduction Act, which enables governmental and non-tax-paying entities to receive the value of clean energy tax credits as direct payments. Direct Pay allows governmental and nonprofit entities to take advantage of 12 clean energy tax credits, including investing in solar, wind, geothermal, energy storage, electric vehicles, and vehicle charging infrastructure. Many municipalities have expressed interest in utilizing Direct Pay, but are uncertain about how to start, so MAPC convened a group of Direct Pay experts to share information and resources. The panelists were Bob LaRocca, Deputy Director for Federal Funds and Infrastructure for MA, Emily Brock, Director of the Federal Liaison Center at the Government Finance Officers Association, and Liam Monahan, Boston's Green New Deal Development Coordinator. The panelists presented information about Direct Pay and shared resources and support available to help municipalities take advantage of this program.

More than 150 people participated in the webinar. Many thanks to Communications and Government Affairs for staffing the webinar and conducting the outreach, so the “room” was full. The recording will be shared on MAPC's website and in the Climate Newsletter.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement team presented to about 20 Resilience Community of Practice (RCOP) members as part of the Accelerating Climate Resilience (ACR) program. ACR is a program run by MAPC, and funded by the Barr Foundation, which provides direct grants to municipalities to advance strategies to protect people, places, and communities from the impacts of climate change. RCOP is the learning group of municipal officials from ACR recipient communities and other allies. The Community Engagement team presented MAPC's Community Engagement framework, services and approach, before leading a discussion workshopping ways to address RCOP members' engagement questions and challenges.

As part of the Boston to Blue Hills Project, Community Engagement staff gave an update on the project to our funder, the Conine Foundation, with our partner the Neponset River Watershed Association, strongly emphasizing community engagement and equity. Other agencies and leaders of (transportation) community organizations attended. The project was well received and had strong support.

The Municipal Immigrant Support Network convened in person to discuss priorities for collaboration in supporting immigrant communities across the region. The Network is a space for municipal staff who are interested in connecting with other municipalities supporting migrants and immigrant communities, including those that are not yet hosting families.

Data Services

Solar Suitability Mapping

Senior Land Use and Transportation Analyst Conor Gately completed an analysis to identify the most suitable parcels for large ground-mounted solar within every municipality in Massachusetts. This analysis can be used to inform local zoning and land use policies to ensure that statewide solar deployment targets are met, and that solar is deployed equitably across municipalities. The research highlights how municipalities might help to achieve the statewide targets for solar power production laid out in the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan and the 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap. A map of the most suitable parcels can be explored [here](#). Data underlying the analysis come from the Department of Energy Resources' recently released [Technical Potential of Solar Study](#).

Statewide Trails Database – Partnership with MassGIS

Last month, MAPC Data Services achieved a major milestone in our ongoing, multi-year effort to work with other RPAs to produce a statewide database for standardized trails data. For the first time, we have formalized a partnership with MassGIS through which MassGIS will host the database and enable RPAs to contribute data directly and moderate/manage data for their respective regions. At a meeting on May 30, MassGIS demonstrated a preliminary version of the database and editing environment for RPAs.

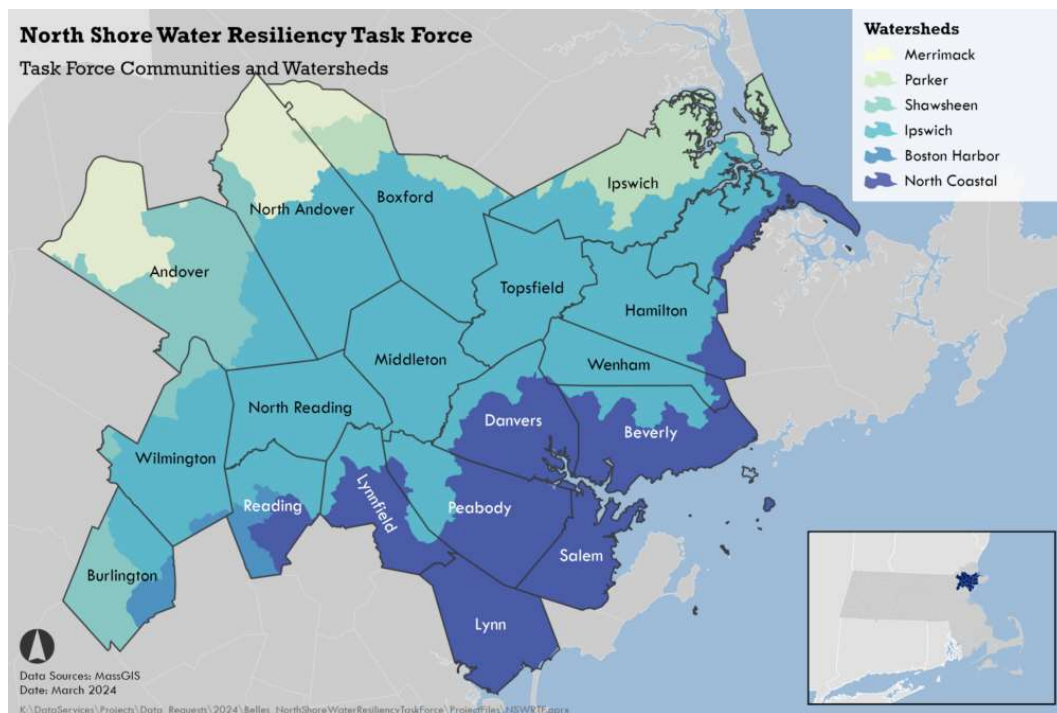
We anticipate this work will continue through next fiscal year, and we hope that this approach, which enables two-way data exchange between RPAs and MassGIS in the production of statewide data assets, could serve as a model for other domains beyond trails.

Environment

North Shore Water Resilience Task Force

The full Task Force convened in person on June 7 in Danvers for the first time since January. The Task Force marked several milestones in May and June. The recently appointed Water Conservation and Demand Management Subcommittee hosted an interactive table exercise to identify the Task Force members' top priorities for further action on water conservation. MAPC prepared a web page for the Task Force, <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/north-shore-h2o/>. Draft reports for all three technical analyses were submitted by the consultants for review by the subcommittee, and Senator Tarr announced that the state

budget in the Senate includes a \$200,000 earmark to further the work of the Task Force next year. Over the summer the draft consultant reports will be finalized, and the Water Conservation Subcommittee will begin work on the top priority issues identified by the Task Force. The full Task Force will convene again in September, which will mark two years since all parties signed the formal Charter.



MVP 2.0

MAPC staff worked with Acton, Sudbury, and Ashland to complete the first phase of the State's MVP 2.0 Pilot Program, focusing on building local core teams and providing tools and content to understand climate resilience, equity, and climate justice. On June 8, Environment staff supported the Acton Core Team during the "ActOn Climate Resilience Festival," which presented a great opportunity for sharing information about the MVP 2.0 process and speaking with the residents of Acton about community climate resilience.



June 8, ActOn Climate Resilience Festival, photo taken by MAPC staff of two Acton Sustainability Department staff members standing in front of the “Community Resilience Quilt” one of several interactive activities planned with the help of MAPC for MVP 2.0 community outreach and engagement.

Land Use

Norfolk Master Plan

The Norfolk Master Plan has been completed in draft form and is currently in a public comment period. Staff attended the Norfolk Farmer’s Market on June 5 to share the draft master plan, hand out copies of the executive summary, and invite conversation and feedback. The comment period will close this month and the plan will soon be ready for adoption by the Norfolk Planning Board.

Milford Comprehensive Plan

The Milford Comprehensive Plan has been underway since the beginning of the year. The first community meeting of the process was facilitated by MAPC on May 13. The focus of the meeting was to hear from community members through small group discussions. Feedback was gathered on defining concerns and priorities, and a shared vision for Milford. The community meeting opened a community-wide survey that provides an additional way to gather feedback from the community.

State Grant Support for Housing Work

The Housing team worked with Boxborough, Essex, Acton, Rockland, and the Metro Mayors Coalition Housing Task Force to apply for state grants to support local housing planning and production. If awarded, housing projects will include MBTA Communities zoning, housing production plans, zoning reform to allow for expanded “missing middle” housing types, and improved affordability requirements.

Municipal Collaboration

The Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC)

MAPC completed the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) to learn the foundational principles of exercise programs and the common approaches to exercise program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. This knowledge will aid NERAC in incorporating

a whole community approach to develop, execute, and evaluate exercises that address the preparedness priorities in the region.

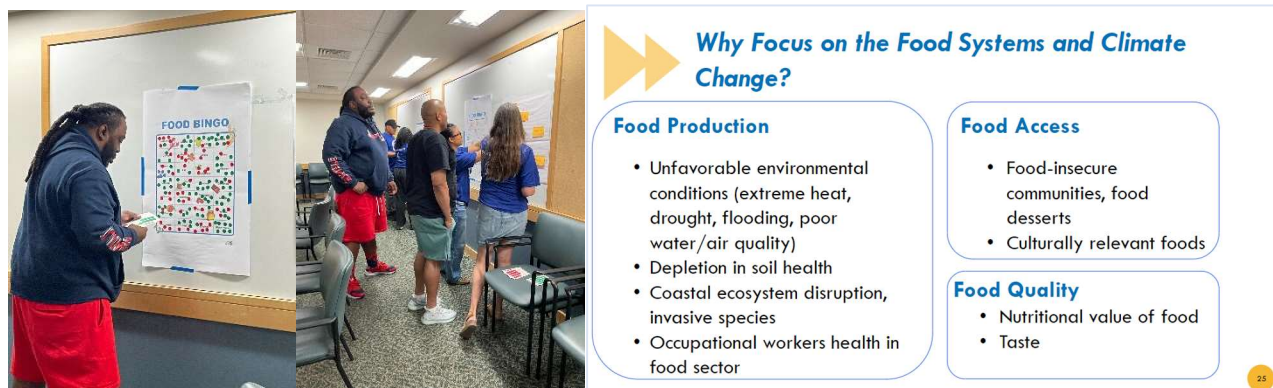
Procurement

A new IFB was issued for Northeast Schools seeking fresh produce for schools. The bid is due to be returned June 21. The expectation is for the bid to cover the 2024-25 school year. A bid was also issued for red bus lane and green bike lane road paint in collaboration with the MBTA. It will cover several MBTA projects as well as stretches of roadway in seven municipalities.

Public Health

Climate Resilience – Cambridge Community Corps

This month marks two years that MAPC has been supporting climate readiness training with the [Cambridge Community Corps](#), who comprise diverse, grassroots network of paid ambassadors coordinated by the Cambridge Public Health Department. In the past year alone, MAPC has facilitated six trainings on climate resilience topics including: Climate Justice, Heat & Health, Vector Borne Disease, Food Security & Resilience, and Flooding. It has been an incredible partnership with CPHD and co-design engagement model with the ambassadors. Training materials and information on setting up your own community liaison program can be found here: <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/c3-climate-readiness/>.



Equitable Approaches to Public Safety

The Public Health and Municipal Collaboration teams recently wrapped up a second year evaluation of the [EAPS grant being](#) implemented in the City of Revere. The process is bringing attention and change to local police and public health efforts to improve how behavioral health incidents are managed and the support – case management, connection to local resources, and cultural approaches – that can be offered to residents.

Older Adult Climate Corps

The Public Health team, in partnership with staff from Framingham, Natick, and Ashland, kicked off a new phase of the [MetroWest Climate Equity Project](#). We are now working with a group of older adults with diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds to identify ways that older residents cope with changing conditions (e.g., extreme heat) and building toward municipal actions that will increase community resiliency. Outreach led by the Older Adult Climate Corps will happen over the summer to provide support during the hotter months and to connect what they hear to the municipal actions.

Lynn Food Action Plan

Working with the City of Lynn Health Department and food system leaders in the community, the Public Health team is completing the Lynn Food Action Plan. The plan provides city and community partners with a guide to key actions that will address food insecurity and food access as well as seek to support changes to address other community factors that affect food affordability (e.g., transportation, housing). The plan will be released in July and the team at MAPC looks forward to supporting its implementation.

Mass in Motion

MAPC will continue to be a Mass in Motion (MiM) technical assistance (TA) provider after receiving a new multi-year award from DPH. The Public Health team, in collaboration with other departments, will provide Healthy Community Design TA, which in the previous years has included work to support food systems, active transportation, open space and recreation, housing, and racial equity efforts. A resource capturing some of this work is the [Food Systems Map](#) and the Healthy Community Design Toolkit, which are available for use beyond MiM efforts.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Plan

The Directors met for a half-day retreat on June 6 to discuss the draft outcomes and strategies developed by the inter-departmental work groups. They also dove into changes the organization can make to better position us to implement the new priorities. We discussed becoming more proactive in shaping projects, undertaking more regional and multi-municipal work, and continuing to move into more implementation activities. We are incorporating the feedback from that day and will be sharing an updated document with staff and the Advisory Committee for review and additional feedback.



AARP Age-Friendly Region Designation

On May 17, MAPC was awarded AARP's age-friendly designation by national Executive V.P. Nancy Leamond. Lizzi Weyant and Eric Hove accepted the designation on behalf of the agency. MetroCommon 2050 outlines the importance of working with our aging population. MAPC has worked on a number of projects with an age-friendly lens and we have committed to increasing our focus on this growing and important demographic.

L-R: Sanda Harris, AARP MA Volunteer State President; Nancy Leamond, AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer; Eric Hove, MAPC Director of Strategic Initiatives; Lizzi Weyant, MAPC Deputy Executive Director; and Jeffrey D. Dunn, AARP Board of Directors

Transportation

Working Group Kickoff for Revere Bike, Ped, Roll Plan 6/10

On June 11, Marah Holland (Transportation) and Sasha Parodi (Community Engagement), in partnership with City of Revere staff, held the first meeting of the Revere Walking, Biking, and Rolling Working Group. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom and approximately 17 people attended. We facilitated a relationship building activity, gave background on the project, answered questions, and identified opportunities for working group members to engage with the project and the public in the near future. This group will play a key role in guiding the Walk, Bike, and Roll Plan for the next year, and potentially play a long-term role as a permanent committee for the city. A public survey will also go live around June 18 and will be open for approximately 5 weeks.

MAPC Invited to Apply for Federal Grant on Bikeshare Station Electrification

In partnership with the City of Boston, MAPC's Transportation Team submitted a concept paper last month to the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation's Communities Taking Charge grant program to pilot four different types of station electrification and was invited this week to proceed towards a full application. Called "Charging Up Boston's Bikeshare," MAPC's proposal will allow the Bluebikes system to pilot the installation of eight electrified stations in four distinct ways. This pilot will allow Boston, and possibly other municipal owners of the system, to evaluate the cost, time, and benefits of various installation methods, and determine which method(s) to use to scale the installation of up to 80 electrified stations in the system's busiest locations. The four installation methods we plan to pilot include solar charging, trenching, overhead wires, and over the sidewalk (with an ADA ramp installed over the wire). Each of these methods has benefits and drawbacks, and we plan to evaluate various aspects of using them, including cost, time to install, effort needed, long-term feasibility, scalability, and ability to use in various urban settings.

Subregions

Legislative Breakfasts

The TRIC, SSC, SWAP, MAGIC, and ICC subregions hosted Legislative Breakfasts, discussing the Municipal Empowerment Act, the Affordable Housing Act, and key priorities for municipalities and legislators in their communities. Each breakfast welcomed between 20 and 40 attendees and included robust discussion.

Human Resources

New Staff

Vanessa Guardado-Menjivar joined MAPC this month as the new Regional Epidemiologist for the North Suffolk Public Health Collaborative with the Public Health Department. In this role, she will assist local health departments in projects that address emergency and ongoing risks to community health. Vanessa recently graduated with an MPH in Global Epidemiology from Emory University. As part of her recent graduate schoolwork, Vanessa has contributed to community-oriented projects in Nepal, Guatemala, and the in the Atlanta region.