

MWRC Minutes

Thursday, February 22, 2024

8:00-9:30 am

Via Zoom

Attendees

Ashland: Yolanda Greaves, Amanda Hayes
Framingham: Rick McKenna; Simon Alexandrovich
Holliston: Tina Hein; Barbara Peatie
Natick: Amanda Loomis, Morgan Griffiths
Marlborough: Katie Robey
Southborough: Sam Stivers
Sherborn: Robert Wolff
Wayland: Mary Antes
Wellesley: Colette Aufranc
Weston: Laurie Bent
Associate Members: Susan Nicholl, Office of Senate President Karen Spilka; Jason Palitsch, 495/MW Partnership
MAPC Coordinators: Camille Jonlin, Travis Pollack
Guests: Barry Keppard and Brandon Stanaway, MAPC

Welcome, Roll Call, & Acceptance of November 2023 and January 2024 meeting minutes

Yolanda noted quorum was reached and called the meeting to order at 8:05.

Katie made request that minutes include slides when referencing them as “attached” in minutes. Travis stated the minutes would be amended to include them. Tina made a motion to accept amended minutes, Mary seconded.

Votes: Ashland (Amanda H & Yolanda.), both Y; Holliston (Tina & Barbara), both Y; Marlborough (Katie), Y; Sherborn (Robert), Y; Wayland (Mary), Y; Wellesley (Colette), Y; Weston (Laurie), Y. Motion passed.

Housing Data Scope of Work & Vote on Funding Request; Brandon Stanaway, MAPC Data Services

Camille introduced Brandon Stanaway, from MAPC Data Services Team. MAPC is making a request for the Collaborative to approve \$3,000 in Assessment fees to assist this work.

Brandon -- MAPC is proposing providing housing data that would add information to help with the Legislative Breakfast and tailor discussion on housing, by comparing existing housing and housing needs for communities versus MAPC region. The reports will use US Census and 3rd party data on housing; noting cost burdened areas and build on analysis in MAPC “Homes for Profit” report. The reports will include data at municipal and subregion level. The report could also provide insight on how Housing Bond bill and transfer fee might impact communities, and local housing needs. Final report will be pamphlet on housing for Legislative Breakfast meeting, as well as digital format for other use.

Tina -- what is a transfer fee, and what is intent of data? Brandon – data will give everyone information in each community on current housing stock and needs, for use at Legislative Breakfast and other areas. A transfer fee is one of proposed changes in Housing Bond Bill, which would allow communities to institute

fee/tax on sale of properties over \$1M, either 0.5%, 1%, 2% fee on all sale price above \$1M. It would be a local option, not a requirement.

Colette made a motion to approve funds, Laurie seconded.

Votes: Ashland (Amanda H. & Yolanda), both Y; Holliston (Tina & Barbara), both Y; Marlborough (Katie), Y; Sherborn (Robert), Y; Wayland (Mary), Y; Wellesley (Colette), Y; Weston (Laurie), Y. Motion passed.

MWRC Trails Scope of Work & Vote on Funding Request; Camille Jonlin, MAPC

Camille – David Loutzenheiser at MAPC developed a Scope of Work for trail efforts in MetroWest subregion, based upon feedback from the Collaborative at the January meeting. This Scope is reduced from the list of possible tasks listed in January, to be within budget. David is always a resource for other pedestrian and bicycle planning efforts. MAPC's request is for \$10,000 in assessment funds to continue the trail work in the MetroWest region for 2024.

Colette – If there is still work to be done after funding is exhausted, it would be good to know. Tina – How were the projects and tasks selected? Camille – Tasks came from the list of possible tasks presented in January. Yolanda -- Who chooses which tasks and which communities? Camille and Travis – It may mostly depend on where the communities have capacity to work with David.

Amanda Loomis joined the meeting.

Tina made a motion to approve the funds, Laurie seconded.

Votes: Ashland (Amanda H. & Yolanda), both Y; Holliston (Tina & Barbara), both Y; Marlborough (Katie), Y; Natick (Amanda L.), abstain; Sherborn (Robert), Y; Wayland (Mary), Y; Wellesley (Colette), Y; Weston (Laurie), Y. Motion passed.

Climate Equity Project Share; Barry Keppard, MAPC Public Health

Sam Stivers joined the meeting.

Camille introduced Barry Keppard, MAPC Public Health Director who provided an update on the MetroWest Climate Equity Project.

Barry – The Climate Equity effort in MetroWest can be applicable in many communities. Barry asked the question, what word or phrase comes to mind when you hear Climate Equity? Responses included environmental justice (EJ), and distributing the burden of climate impact fairly; resolving climate issues for communities with less resources. Barry noted in MA EJ is defined by demographics, not via concentration of environmental hazards like in other states/areas.

See MW Climate Equity [website](#) for summary of work and resources. The Community liaison model is what is unique with this project. The project was through community-driven planning, where residents in burdened communities with less resources, but who face more impact or harm along with EJ, led the process on what was needed. Included peer level process with feedback and work together to develop liaison model, and documented process on work together.

The work first defined the liaison role and recruitment process, then got liaison commitment and commitment from MAPC for compensation. Collaborated with liaisons on what data was needed, and how to collect data – through conversations, surveys, and develop process collaboratively. In MW, this model included materials and surveys, looking at the surveys data together and interpreting it along with other sources.

This led to a process of action, celebration, with pieces of work. Slide 4 has link to MAPC's community liaison guide.

Liaisons had priorities – Clean Energy; Cooling areas (pools, etc.); Emergency communications; both Winter and Summer. Project website has links to flyers developed for Ashland, Framingham, Natick, in English and other languages. This information was also added to magnets Liaisons could distributed as well. [See](#)

[project website for downloads of flyers](#) and other resources. This work also led the munis to look at their websites on emergency preparedness and updated them to include more simplified information with more visuals, and up to date. Winter communications efforts included social media too.

Other impacts – Framingham adding splash areas; emergency outreach updated in the municipalities; Portuguese What's App group was created, and Ashland updated their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan update. Framingham and Natick CE advocate hire. Natick began to think of trails as cooling areas in their new ped plan.

Other examples/similar work: Cambridge Revere, Watertown, Statewide efforts too.

Questions and comments: Laurie – liked iterative process. Colette – will share in Wellesley for new Hazard Mitigation work. Yolanda -- this work led to Ashland updating their websites. If communities were not involved, how can they work on this? Barry – reach out to the MAPC Public Health team, or connect to peer municipality. MAPC Public Health is also developing a webinar. Laurie – how to work with adjacent communities with different demographics? Barry – talk to municipal staff, or reach out to MAPC. Some are looking at shared services model or coordinated effort with first responders to better address needs.

Community Share, All

Rick McKenna joined the meeting. Tina Hein left the meeting.

Weston/Laurie –Water tank project still a challenge. Town has now hired outside communications firm to get word out; also working to get different boards to talk and work together. Win – Getting DCR finally engaged on possibly getting access to Norumbega Park on the Charles River. This is an underused resource. Trying to work with Waltham on this as well, access will help both munis. 3A/MBTA Communities Act efforts, watching what happened in Milton with community vote there.

Wellesley/Colette – Preparing for annual Town Meeting with 52 articles to vote on. MBTA Communities compliance work underway. Don't need to change zoning, just update permitting. For Weston -- one idea in Wellesley is chair/vice chairs on different town committees meet and coordinate on regular basis. Would be great if the Collaborative had a phone list to allow us to connect more one on one in similar fashion.

Wayland/Mary – Update on behalf of Robert Hummel (who could not attend) – MBTA Communities hearing in March. Town got request for storage facility, which has neighborhood resistance. Town meeting to happen in May. Also starting on Community Center after 15 years of planning and design. Thinking of adding splash pad like Framingham.

Southborough/Sam – MBTA Communities compliance also still underway. Also considering regional public safety dispatch. New building projects include schools, Town library being considered, which has significant capital budget.

Sherborn/Robert W – MBTA Communities zoning efforts, still work to be done so not yet being presented at Town Meeting. Working on plan, integrated plan for 3A and other future growth in community. Some owners want to be opted in, but also there is opposition to doing anything beyond minimum what State requires. Community survey of crosswalk and sidewalks, seeing what capital improvements are needed. Did reroute of Bay Circuit Trail to connect more sites and have quieter alternate routes, and alternate routes on when trail floods.

Natick/Amanda L – Challenge of linking/coordinating communities when MassDOT is doing projects; Route 30 is example with Weston, Natick, Framingham. How best to work collaboratively – for example Natick TAP request for bike/ped plan that could build on Wellesley plan. MBTA Communities vote to happen later this year.

Marlborough/Katie– MBTA Communities Zoning still a big topic. Have new Mayor; previous Mayor submitted 3A options to Council. Concern was whether 3A zoning would only be in areas with existing housing, and will this add more housing. Consultant working with City. Will submit draft plan to EOHL for review. Also looking for new Communications staff positions.

139 Holliston/Barbara P – Budget and Town Meeting in May. Have working group for MBTA Communities;
140 Barbara not part of group, but will try to learn more for next month.

141 Framingham/Simon and Rick –Shoppers World has new owner, City staff met with them and City is
142 considering new zoning. Lots of surface parking. MassPort’s Logan Express looking to expand (have tried
143 previously to get federal funds), now looking to get more housing and hotel near Logan Express. Might be
144 good for travelers and airport workers. City is MBTA Communities compliant, but need to do more next
145 year to continue compliance. 135 Corridor new zoning being considered, higher building heights;
146 Northeast Univ Architect studies doing work. Got One Stop grant on rezoning for downtown study,
147 considering cultural district in southern part of downtown Framingham with International restaurants, etc.
148 Challenges though with unhoused in area. Union Street project almost completed.

149 Ashland/Amanda H and Yolanda– Working on MBTA communities, in the community forum / input phase
150 and hoping to proceed at spring town meeting. Also workshopping a tree bylaw, and that is ongoing with
151 our sustainability committee leading efforts. Public Safety building done! School building improvements
152 underway. Route 126 MassDOT project underway. Town Manager contract re-signed for 3 years.

153 495/MetroWest Partnership/Jason P – March 22, Charles River Watershed on EPA Presentation on
154 Charles River plan discharge permits etc. Standards are changing. Can register for webinar on 495 [MW](#)
155 [Partnership website](#). Also there will be annual State House day April 24 (registration invitation coming
156 soon).

157 State Senator Spilka/Susan Nicholl – Legislative session underway, a lot of work. Budget will be tighter
158 this coming fiscal year. Please reach out to us and other legislators with ideas. Hearing about housing costs
159 from communities, and thank you to everyone working on improving housing.

160

161 **Other Business Not Known at Time of Posting**

162 Camille and Travis – there is a chance Legislative Breakfast date may shift due to legislator availability.
163 Also, the FY25 invoicing process will be starting. MAPC can start an informal phone spreadsheet to allow
164 members to connect. At the next meeting in March we will get an update on MAPC’s I-90 study
165 presentation, and a draft FY25 Work Plan.

166 Colette made a motion to adjourn, Sam Stivers seconded, which passed on voice vote. Meeting adjourned
167 at 9:30.

168

169 Attachments:

170 February 2024 MWRC Budget Proposal

171 MetroWest Climate Equity Project slides

172

173 *Minutes compiled by Travis Pollack, MAPC*

174 *Minutes approved April 25, 2024*



FY24 MetroWest Regional Collaborative Special Assessment Projects for Consideration

As of February 9, 2024 MWRC has \$34,454 of unallocated special assessment funding from previous fiscal years and FY24. Annually, the Collaborative collects approximately \$38,000 from member communities through a per population charge.

If both projects below are adopted as proposed, the Collaborative would have \$21,454 in unallocated funds from past years to carry forward.

Housing Data

MWRC Request	\$3,000
Other funding secured	MAGIC Subregion funding requested; MAPC Special Assessment funding
Communities Committed (100% MWRC members) plus MAGIC Communities	All MetroWest Regional Collaborative Communities plus MAGIC communities (Acton, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Stow, and Sudbury)

Data Services staff at MAPC will assemble municipal and subregion-level housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau, EOHLC, and private sources to illustrate characteristics of people living in communities in the MAPC region and the housing market generally. MAPC will analyze home sales at the same levels of geography to understand the fiscal implications of levying a transfer fee (in accordance with the outline for a transfer fee included in state level legislation). Additionally, to follow up on MAPC's "Homes for Profit" report, MAPC staff will put together information about the types of home buyers and sellers, how they are paying for properties, and how home prices and rents are affected by investor purchases in the MAPC subregions.

The data collection and analysis will provide municipal planning and development staff with an image of the people living in their municipalities and their housing status and needs. Cognizant of the current conditions of their municipality's residents, municipal housing staff and elected officials can make more informed decisions about policy, zoning, and development. While the data analysis is not specific to MBTA Communities/3A, the analysis will provide an idea of what the status quo zoning and development has helped create in communities. The data should help define how changes to the typical structures of development will produce different outcomes, including potentially lowering housing costs, building a sense of place, and access to goods/services/jobs in denser areas of their towns.

The deliverable will be a hard copy pamphlet of the data and analysis for each attendee at the legislative breakfast. The information may be digitized if this is of interest to subregion members.



MetroWest Trails and Greenways

MWRC Request	\$10,000
Other funding secured	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) funds for trail work in the MAPC region
Communities Committed (100% MWRC members)	All MetroWest Regional Collaborative Communities , plus Hopkinton

The tasks below summarize MAPC's proposed work in 2024 with regards to trails and greenways planning within the MetroWest communities. Along with the MetroWest communities, Hopkinton (specific to one trail) will be engaged in this process.

Task 1 – MW Trail focused meetings. During 2024, up to three trail focused meetings will be held, as well as the annual summit. The trail focused meetings to occur separate from regular MW meetings. The budget currently allows for specific trail projects in two communities.

Place based focused meetings, with deep dive discussion on scoping, planning or implementation of priority projects on two of the below plus the annual trail summit.

- Framingham focus – recap of the fall trail summit progress toward next steps on a number of projects
- Ashland Upper Charles Trail – work toward revisioning the Upper Charles Trail
- Southborough and Marlborough – focus developing a Greenway corridor to connect the Assabet and Open Channel Trails
- Aqueduct Trail Network – focus on completing the last remaining sections, and identify challenges and opportunities
- *Annual trail summit* focusing on information sharing and an outdoor walk. Target locations – Marlborough, Southborough, or Ashland

Task 2 – Project Tracking and Mapping. Trail projects in the MW region have been identified in the [MW Project Spreadsheet](#). The spreadsheet identifies projects in each of the MW communities, and indicates whether a MassDOT project, or located in an environmental justice block group. Key tasks are to contact each community and update the project sheet.

Task 3 – Priority Project Deep Dives. Corridor specific meetings will held with no more than two of the communities below to brainstorm ideas, develops specific tasks, track progress and identify next steps.



Framingham

A continuous north south greenway corridor between the Bruce Freeman and Sherborn is desired. This corridor would connect to Framingham Centre, MBTA station, Framingham State Univ, and several residential neighborhoods. Framingham is currently focused on the Chris Walsh Trail, which is adjacent to Farm Pond. The City is also planning to work with MassDOT to engage with CSX to identify a trail ROW into Sherborn.

Additional work that can be the focus of Metrowest in Framingham include connection between the Bruce Freeman and Chris Walsh Trail, and opening the remaining permitted aqueduct corridors in South Framingham and adjacent to Callahan State Park.

Ashland


The Ashland Selectboard has expressed a commitment to move forward with implementation of the Upper Charles Trail that would connect Sherborn and Hopkinton via downtown Ashland and the MBTA station. A few sections have been implemented however the proposed alignment identified in the feasibility study requires some revisioning. MAPC has engaged with the Town to identify a revised corridor for the Trail. Several sections are being reviewed by the Town, with a revisitation proposed in the next months.

Marlborough and Southborough

Marlborough has the Assabet trail that runs north from downtown. Southborough has the open channel trail which is not accessible. The desire is to connect downtown Marlborough and Southborough with the MBTA commuter rail station, and Hopkinton State Park. Connecting with the communities will identify the priorities in this area.

Aqueduct Trails

The aqueduct trail network is close to completion. However, there are still a few segments that have not yet been opened to the public, or designated by the communities. This task will focus on work to complete the last segments of the network.



February
2024

MetroWest Climate Equity Project

MWRC Project Share

What comes to mind for you when you hear the phase *Climate Equity*?

Please feel free to share or provide comment in chat





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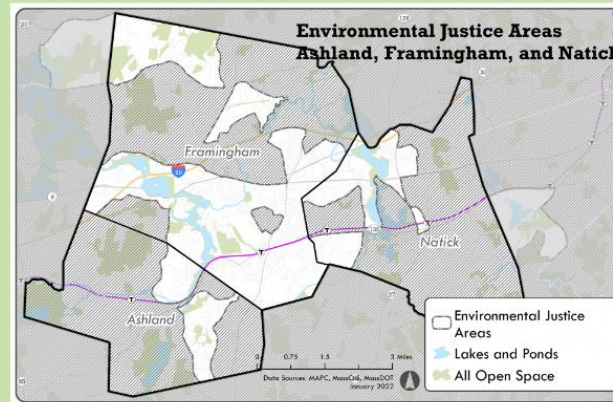
MetroWest Climate Equity Project

The Towns of Ashland and Natick and the City of Framingham have partnered on a project focused on the intersection of climate change and equity, called *The MetroWest Climate Equity Project*.

The project began in Fall 2021 with three goals:

1. **Build lasting relationships with Metro West Environmental Justice (EJ) communities** that will facilitate long-term engagement on climate change resilience and action
2. **Learn from the community about how they experience climate change** and what their climate priorities are and update local plans, direct funding, and seed projects to reflect findings.
3. **Increase city and town staff's knowledge of climate equity** through training and improve their capacity to support and engage Environmental Justice communities

Support for the first phase of this project came from the [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) program](#), which "provides support for Massachusetts cities and towns to begin the process of planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects."



Map of EJ neighborhoods in Ashland, Natick, and Framingham. EJ neighborhoods are more likely to be home to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); lower-income households; and people who are non-native English speakers.

Content

Most, if not all, information and materials shared today is available at <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/metro-west-climate-equity/>

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding scenery. The middle ground is filled with a dense forest of evergreen trees, interspersed with bright yellow wildflowers. In the background, rugged mountains with patches of snow rise against a clear blue sky.

Process/Structure

Starting up and working Community Liaisons

Contributions

Emergency Communications

Worked with groups of Community Climate Liaisons on two rounds of emergency communications materials and community dissemination

Summer and Winter

Additional Impact

Additional outcomes that are directly the result of liaison work or where liaison work has contributed to local action.



BUILDING SPLASH PADS TO KEEP COOL

Framingham began constructing two parks with splash pads and planned additional splash or spray pads for existing parks.



INNOVATING ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY OUTREACH

MWCEP guided towns and cities in revamping their websites for clear display of emergency planning info and translation options.

MWCEP pioneered the delivery of climate emergency materials through mail and online channels.

Framingham created a Portuguese-language WhatsApp group to provide resources and information to residents.



ADVANCING AFFORDABLE CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS

Framingham made progress on a project to bring cleaner heating and cooling to a diverse, low-income neighborhood with public housing through geothermal energy.



BUILDING CAPACITY FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Natick applied for funding to develop a bike and pedestrian plan, incorporating a liaison model in their process.

BUILDING PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO BIKE AND WALK SAFELY

Framingham purchased property to expand the Bruce Freeman Trail and is working to buy another that will be the site of a future trail.

Reflection

What, if anything, is sticking with you about the information and impact shared from using a Community Liaison model?

What additional detail(s) would help clarify information shared so far about using a Community Liaison model?



Additional Examples

Municipal

- Cambridge Community Corps (C3)
- Community Ambassadors (Revere)
- Climate Action Plan (Framingham)
- Resident Ambassadors (Watertown)

State and Other Organizations

- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 (EOEEA; e.g., Ashland)
- Community Ambassadors Program (Office of Economic Empowerment; statewide)
- Healthy Neighborhood Study (9 city and town locations)

Additional Work Underway

Continuing Work

- Older Adult Climate Corps
 - Focus liaison model to work with older adults using DEI lens in formation of the group and to guide work (Framingham, Ashland, Natick)
- **Co-Identifying Additional Action on other Identified Priorities**
 - Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy, Transit and Mobility, Clean and Accessible Bodies of Water
- **Additional Summer Climate Emergency Communications**

Thank you MWRC for your support !!!





THANK YOU!

Barry Keppard

*(and on behalf of Sharon Ron, Claire Hoffman,
municipal Sustainability lead staff, and Liaisons)*

bkeppard@mapc.org

<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/metro-west-climate-equity/>