

# Inner Core Committee

A subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council including 21 cities and towns:

Arlington • Belmont • Boston • Brookline • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Lynn • Malden • Medford • Melrose • Milton • Needham • Newton • Quincy • Revere • Saugus • Somerville • Waltham • Watertown • Winthrop

## Inner Core Committee (ICC) Work Plan

July 2023 – June 2024

### Purpose

The Inner Core Committee (ICC) is a subregional council of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area. The ICC represents the largest number of municipalities of any of the 8 MAPC subregions and includes 51 percent of the MAPC region's population—over 1.6 million residents. **The ICC provides a forum for planners and municipal representatives to explore issues of mutual concern and foster joint and cooperative action within the subregion.**

### Membership and Voting

The ICC consists of representatives from 21 of the metropolitan area's innermost communities: Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Needham, Newton, Quincy, Revere, Saugus, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, and Winthrop.<sup>1</sup>

As of June 2021, the ICC has 22 voting member positions. The municipal representatives to the MAPC Council are the default voting members of the subregion; however, these individuals may appoint others to represent the municipalities' interests at ICC meetings.<sup>2</sup> The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) are also voting members of the ICC. On occasions when the ICC has formal business to approve by vote, each member has one vote, and a quorum is considered a majority of attending members.

### Work Plan Goals for FY2024

The ICC will advance its purpose through the following mechanisms:

- **Consistent Meetings.** Bimonthly ICC meetings are dedicated opportunities for the ICC membership to share and discuss challenges they're facing and work they're undertaking, hear from experts and practitioners on various planning topics, and learn about statehouse news and technical assistance opportunities from MAPC. The ICC also offers special events on priority topics of concern to the membership, such as an annual Legislative Breakfast and field visits to see and learn about recent interventions within the inner core; these special events also offer opportunity for relationship building beyond the inner core membership, across sectors and community partners. All subregional meetings and events will relate to MAPC strategic priorities, including advancing an equitable region, sustainability and climate resiliency, smart growth and regional collaboration.
- **Subregional Projects.** Every so often ICC municipalities will collaborate on subregional projects to jointly address shared challenges or leverage shared assets through MAPC's Technical Assistance Program. The ICC Subregional Coordinator (the Coordinator) works with interested ICC members to develop municipal and regional planning project ideas and draft proposals. This year, it is decided that the ICC will not pursue a subregional project, though that decision can be changed at any point.
- **Input on Regional Transportation Policy and Planning.** Working with the MPO and CTPS, ICC leadership and staff will ensure opportunities for membership to comment on the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects list and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). There will also be mechanisms to learn about funding opportunities through the Unified Planning Work Program, Livable Communities Workshop (LCW), and the Community Transportation Technical Assistance (CTTA) program. This will largely be advanced through a quarterly meeting series between ICC transportation staff and CTPS.

### FY2023 Program of Activities

<sup>1</sup> Milton and Needham have dual membership with ICC and the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC).

<sup>2</sup> Milton votes as part of TRIC, rather than the ICC. Needham votes as part of the ICC.

## Bimonthly ICC Meetings

The ICC will meet at least four times over FY23 (between September 2023 and June 2024) on a bimonthly basis. These virtual meetings will provide updates on subregional and statewide news and opportunities, facilitate peer learning, connect ICC representatives with potential partners (such as community-based organizations or community development corporations), highlight planning ideas and best practices, share concrete examples of planning in action, offer equitable, sustainable and innovative strategies to workshop common planning challenges. The ICC will also conduct a vote at the June meeting on next year's work plan and co-chairs. Should time-sensitive issues arise between scheduled meetings, the coordinator may schedule additional meetings, conference calls, or other opportunities to convene. Meetings will generally occur in the morning of the third Wednesday of every other month. Typically, meetings are held at MAPC's offices; due to COVID-19, FY21 and FY22 meetings were held via Zoom. During FY24, bimonthly meetings will be held virtually as ICC members feel this is more convenient, although several of the meetings may be held in person at the discretion of the group for the purposes of relationship-building.

The primary purpose of the ICC bimonthly meetings is to allow ICC members to share their work and learn from each other. Accordingly, these meetings are structured to include a mix of the following:

- **Legislative and MAPC updates.** MAPC's Government Affairs staff will regularly attend meetings to provide legislative updates and hear input on priorities for the session. Other updates might pertain to relevant legislative priorities, the MMC Regional Housing Taskforce and Climate Taskforce, State of Equity in Metro Boston, MetroCommon 2050, new technical assistance opportunities and the COVID-19 response and recovery. These updates may also include facilitated discussion on questions related to MAPC strategic priorities, including equity, sustainability and resiliency, and regional collaboration.
- **ICC member or guest presentations.** Members of the ICC, their colleagues, or other guest speakers will be invited to present their work. Likely no more than two speakers per meeting will be on the agenda to allow time for discussion between them and ICC representatives. ICC members will be asked to present in advance of each meeting.
- **Community exchange.** Meetings will also include a community exchange where ICC representatives can share on a pre-determined subject or spontaneously. This might include municipal initiatives, challenges, or opportunities or a shared topic of interest. In advance of each meeting, ICC members will be asked if they'd like to begin the next community exchange.
- **Business.** Other matters that require consensus or a vote of the ICC membership, such as elections for subregion leadership roles and the annual work plan, will be on the agenda as needed.

Suggested meeting dates and times:

- Wednesday, September 20th, 9am - 11am
- Wednesday, November 15th, 9am - 11am
- Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 9am - 11am<sup>3</sup>
- Wednesday, May 15th, 9 am - 11am<sup>4</sup>

Possible meeting topics (multiple topics may be addressed at each meeting):

1. **Housing & Displacement.** This meeting will consider how to address the Greater Boston housing crisis. Specifically, this meeting will focus on anti-displacement efforts and the resources and strategies needed to combat displacement. Guest speakers may include anti-displacement research specialists, practitioners and/or municipal leaders who have had success in preventing displacement.
2. **Racial Justice.** This meeting will build on previous conversations the group has had to strategize on how to strengthen equity in the subregion through planning. This conversation will be facilitated by Community Engagement Specialist and Project Manager of the MA Municipal DEI Coalition, Najee Nunnally. The session will explore collaborative equity strategies, specifically exploring pathways for collaboration and longer term relationship building with local Municipal DEI Directors and other community-based partners in planning efforts.
3. **Transportation & Regional Connectivity.** This meeting will consider how regional transportation strategies. Discussion may include: innovative transportation strategies, a discussion on shared challenges and collaboration opportunities, a presentation from a Regional Transit Management Authority and/or updates from the Boston Region MPO on their work towards regional connectivity.

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<sup>3</sup> This meeting will primarily be devoted to discussion of the FY23 Work Plan.

<sup>4</sup> This meeting will include a vote on the FY24 Work Plan and co-chairs.

4. Regionalization. This meeting will consider what projects and processes lend themselves to regional collaboration and how MAPC and other regional entities can facilitate collaboration. This will likely be an interactive meeting, with potential local case studies for regionalization highlighted in the meeting. The group may also brainstorm opportunities for collaboration through the upcoming TAP Project Proposal process.
5. Walkability. This meeting will consider how urban design can expand walkability. Focus may be on new initiatives to facilitate walkability, combat misconceptions around shared streets and walkable cities, address mixed-use space and active transit as strategies to support walkability and explore opportunities for collaboration or innovation in strengthening walkability in the Inner Core.
6. Climate & Clean Energy. This meeting will focus on climate resiliency initiatives in the state and their impact on the inner core subregion. Subject matter may range from advancing climate goals through land use planning and zoning to recently adopted climate legislation to specific efforts by the MMC Climate Taskforce.
7. Masterplanning. This meeting will focus on masterplanning efforts and best practices. The meeting may feature a panel with speakers who have recently undergone a masterplanning process and can share their reflections and recommendations, as well as interactive activities to strategize around masterplanning in the inner core, specifically looking at innovative strategies for diverse and equitable engagement processes, managing project and implementation timelines and developing an intersectional masterplanning approach.

#### Subregional Field Visits or Strategic Workshop

This year, the ICC will swap two virtual bi-monthly meetings to hold two field visits or strategic workshops. These events will provide a venue to explore new development and other interventions in the inner core, as well as networking and relationship-building/maintenance opportunities for ICC members. These will also be opportunities to build new relationships in the inner core with local community partners and non-planning sector representatives, to strengthen the practice of cross-sector collaboration and learn about innovative strategies for equitable and sustainable development that could be applied to the planning field. Field visits will include guided tours to new developments, public realm improvements, or other types of projects throughout the inner core; they will provide ICC representatives the opportunity to see real planning outcomes and hear from speakers familiar with the project, such as the developer, municipal staff, community-based organizations, content area experts, or others. Strategic workshops may be co-facilitated by an ICC member or MAPC staff member and a community partner and will explore a shared topic of interest or shared challenge that the group would like to strategize on collaboratively.

Suggested meeting dates and times, pending weather and other factors:

- Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 11am
- Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 11am

#### Legislative Breakfast

In fall 2024, potentially October, the ICC will hold a legislative event to bring representatives and legislators together to discuss priorities for the session. This event will provide ICC representatives the opportunity to speak with legislators about what their community needs are and what legislative changes will help meet them. In addition, legislators will have the chance to share what they're working on and how it intersects with these priorities. To prepare for the breakfast, the ICC Coordinator, co-chairs, and will brainstorm and solicit ideas from ICC representatives to identify the topics and legislators of interest this year. The legislative event will be held in person.

#### Quarterly ICC Transportation Meetings

In addition to the bimonthly meetings, the MPO via CTPS will bring together ICC municipal transportation planners on a quarterly basis to discuss coordinated transportation planning and regional visioning. Launched in FY21, this meeting series provides transportation staff within the inner core with opportunities to comment on the annual TIP projects list and LRTP; hear updates on funding opportunities through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Livable Communities Workshop (LCW), and the Community Transportation Technical Assistance (CTTA) program; and provide input on Boston Region MPO initiatives, such as project evaluation criteria, resiliency planning, and dedicated bus lanes. This series allows the appropriate inner core municipal staff person to attend transportation-specific meetings and provides a direct line of communication between them and the MPO.

Suggested meeting dates and times:

- Tuesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9am-11am
- Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 11am

Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 9am – 11am  
Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9am-11am

## Leadership and Staff

**Co-chairs.** The co-chairs for FY24 are John DePriest, Director of Planning and Development, City of Chelsea, in his sixth year, finishing his third consecutive term, and Dan Bartman, Deputy Director of Planning & Zoning, City of Somerville, in his fifth year, starting his third consecutive term. According to the ICC Bylaws, should no alternative member of the ICC accept nomination to assume the office of co-chair, the current co-chair(s) may continue in office.

The co-chairs are responsible for suggesting agenda items, reviewing draft materials, facilitating meetings, encouraging attendance, and providing advisory support to the coordinator. The co-chairs shall meet with the coordinator as needed to advance the ICC work plan. The co-chairs shall assist the coordinator with the appointment of any sub-committees and working groups and will represent the ICC before local, regional, or state agencies or organizations.

**Staff.** The ICC coordinator is a MAPC staff member appointed by the MAPC Executive Director. The coordinator shall schedule bimonthly meetings, develop the content, prepare agendas, and coordinate with guests; organize special events; conduct outreach and engagement; coordinate with members on project development and technical assistance requests; provide technical assistance on topics and short-term projects; manage the subregional budget; identify opportunities for coordination with other MAPC-staffed coalitions and initiatives that serve subregion municipalities, i.e., the MMC; and provide regular correspondence to the membership on events, projects, and funding opportunities.

Karina Oliver-Milchman, MAPC's Chief of housing + Neighborhood Development, served six years as coordinator. In her recent departure from MAPC, Sasha Parodi, Subregional Programs Manager has stepped in as coordinator, until a new coordinator is identified.

## Funding

The ICC is funded through two sources: funds from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to implement the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the annual assessment collected from MAPC member municipalities.

## ICC Municipal Member Leadership: Transportation Agencies and MAPC Committees and Coalitions

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): The Boston Region MPO is responsible for conducting the federally required metropolitan transportation-planning process for the Boston metropolitan area. The MPO uses this process to develop a vision for the region and then decides how to allocate federal and state transportation funds to programs and projects. Cooperatively selecting transportation programs and projects is a role of the MPO's voting members. Learn more about the Boston Region MPO here: [bostonmpo.org/mpo](http://bostonmpo.org/mpo).

- As of May 2021, the City of Somerville is the official Inner Core Committee representative on the MPO. The other ICC municipalities that have a seat on the Boston Region MPO are Arlington, Brookline, Everett, and Newton.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC): The Advisory Council is an independent group charged with providing public input on transportation planning to the Boston Region MPO. The Advisory Council Chair has one seat on the MPO. Learn more about RTAC here: [bostonmpo.org/rtac](http://bostonmpo.org/rtac).

- As of May 2021, the following ICC municipalities are voting members of the RTAC: Belmont, Cambridge, and Needham. The following ICC municipalities are non-voting members of RTAC: Arlington, Boston, Newton, Quincy, Revere and Somerville.

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Advisory Committee: The chief elected official of each of the Inner Core cities and towns, or his or her designee, is a voting member of the MBTA Advisory Board. As assessments change, so does the precise weight of each municipal vote. To learn more about the Advisory Board mandate, visit <http://www.mbtaadvisoryboard.org/about-us/>.

MAPC Executive Committee: MAPC's Executive Committee comprises the four officers, the immediate past president (if a member of the Council), and five elected members from each of the following caucuses: towns, cities, gubernatorial,

and ex officio. The City of Boston is a permanent member of the Executive Committee within the city caucus. The 25 members in total oversee agency operations and appoint the executive director. They meet monthly.

- As of June 2022, the following individuals from ICC municipalities have seats on the committee: John DePriest for the City of Chelsea, Maurice Handel for the Town of Needham, Taber Keally for the Town of Milton (officer/treasurer), and George Proakis for the City of Somerville.

MAPC Legislative Committee: MAPC's Legislative Committee members develop legislative priorities for the agency each year. Committee members meet monthly to determine action steps for furthering MAPC's legislative priorities, and to decide the agency's position on matters of regional importance. Members include municipal staff and nonprofit organizations.

- As of June 2022, the following individuals from ICC municipalities serve on the Legislative Committee: Diego Huevo and Ellen Quinn from the City of Boston, Tom Ambrosino from the City of Chelsea, and Steve Magoon from the Town of Watertown.

Metropolitan Mayors Coalition: The MMC is a coalition made up of 15 communities in Greater Boston. It is a voluntary forum where members exchange information and develop solutions to common problems. MAPC helped to establish the MMC and provides staff support and financial administration. Mayors and managers in the following 14 ICC municipalities participate in the coalition: Arlington, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Newton, Quincy, Revere, Somerville, and Winthrop.<sup>5</sup>

## Communications

The subregion communicates about its activities through two main avenues:

- **E-newsletter.** The ICC quarterly newsletter shares news and events of interest to stakeholders throughout the subregion and provides notice about funding and technical assistance opportunities.
- **Website.** Information about the ICC as well as notes and materials from bimonthly meetings are posted on the ICC website, <https://www.mapc.org/get-involved/subregions/icc/>.
- **Email and calendar invitations.** The coordinator primarily communicates directly with ICC representatives about meetings and business via email.

The Interim ICC Coordinator, Sasha Parodi, is the main point of contact for all matters related to the Committee. She may be reached at [sparodi@mapc.org](mailto:sparodi@mapc.org).

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<sup>5</sup> The 15<sup>th</sup> Metro Mayors Coalition community is Braintree, which is a member of the South Shore Coalition subregion.