



## South-West Advisory Planning Committee (SWAP) Workplan July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

### Introduction

The purpose of this Work Plan is to outline SWAP's to provide a schedule of meetings, an overview of potential topics, and ongoing Subregional Topics.

The purpose of SWAP is to:

- Facilitate communication and knowledge sharing between and among the municipalities, in partnership with MAPC representatives, through the participation of local officials involved with planning issues;
- Foster cooperative planning efforts among the municipalities; and,
- Create an agenda for action on planning topics including housing, economic development, environment, natural resources, transportation, smart growth, and land use that will help to manage development while maintaining the region's economic prosperity and desirability.

### Technical Assistance and Current MAPC Projects in SWAP

The Subregional Coordinator may provide small-scale technical assistance on an as-needed basis to member municipalities on topics related to 2022 regional plan for Metro Boston, MetroCommon, goals and objectives. Support may include data collection and analysis, assistance with proposal writing, and collaborative project development. The Subregional Coordinator will also aim to connect SWAP members with funding and technical assistance programs administered by MAPC and work with communities to develop and/or undertake projects that may be funded through a combination of MAPC, municipal, or other resources.

### Ongoing Projects

- Town of Milford Comprehensive Plan: January 2024 – June 2025

### Project Ideas

#### - Living Little Update

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts recently passed the \$6.5 Billion Dollar Housing Bond Bill. One of the provisions of this new law provides for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as by-right for single family zoned property. MAPC conducted a study in 2018 that explored the different types of small housing and ADUs that are well-suited for suburban communities. This project would update that study and provide similar recommendations for ADUs.

#### - Local Area Students to Local Government Pipeline

While the MetroBoston region is home to many Urban Planning and Public Administration Programs, the pipeline to municipal government (especially in the suburban communities) needs improvement. The SWAP communities would be interested in a program that builds relationships with the area colleges and matches interested students to internships or project related work in the communities. Potential project ideas include:



- Subregional Job Fair
  - Enhanced Internships Placement Program
  - SWAP Capstone Project for Local Program
- **Stormwater Enforcement Shared Office/Staff**  
Over the last several years, the oversight of stormwater has become a more important local function. The SWAP communities would be interested in forming a shared office to that would be able to perform stormwater related tasks including: permitting, inspections, enforcement and compliance monitoring, public outreach, regulatory compliance, and improvement planning.
- **Project and Document Database**  
When a unique project is submitted to the community for review, many of the local communities reach out to each other to see if any other departments have experienced something similar. A shared database could hold relevant project documents and be searchable by the project's characteristics. Communities would benefit and learn from each other without requiring
- **Marketing for Municipalities**  
The Planning Departments are often tasked with creating public facing documents and announcements. The communities would be interested in training or resources that would help them create more effective communications and reach more residents. This could include tips and tricks related to graphic arts software, Canva, Microsoft Publisher, Google, social media, other

### Monthly Meetings

Meetings will generally be held from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month unless circumstances require a change in meeting time, with every other meeting held in-person. No meetings will be held during the months of July or August unless a time-sensitive matter arises that requires a meeting of the membership. Meetings locations will rotate among the communities, allowing each an opportunity to host a meeting. Locations are subject to change depending on venue availability.

### Standing Agenda Items

The agenda should consistently feature each of the following items:

- Community Exchange (monthly): opportunity to share notable municipal achievements or updates. The host community may offer an extended update on a project of note that may be of interest to the group.
- Legislative update (bi-monthly): update on legal precedents pertaining to land use and updates on state legislation of note and information regarding advocacy for SWAP or MAPC legislative priorities. These updates will be provided by the MAPC Government Affairs staff in person or by conference call.

Additionally, SWAP will also receive periodic updates from CTPS on the status of the TIP, UPWP, and other relevant transportation planning efforts, as well as updates on SWAP regional projects.



### **SWAP Meeting Schedule and Topics**

Each month, the SWAP Coordinator will facilitate a meeting topic. Meetings topics should be discussed and decided by the Coordinator, SWAP Chairs, and Membership in the month preceding the next meeting. The SWAP Coordinator will attempt to time appropriate meetings topics with the relevant progression of events that affect municipal planning efforts and facilitate presentations from various subject matter experts. SWAP Members are free to propose a new meeting topic at any time.

### **Topics of Interest**

Topics of interest identified in previous fiscal years, that were not addressed in FY'25 include:

#### - E-Commerce

MAPC has conducted 2 recent studies on the effects of E-Commerce on the region, (*From App to Table: Rapid Food Deliveries in Massachusetts; Hidden and in Plain Sight: Impacts of E-Commerce in Massachusetts*). SWAP would like to keep informed on MAPC's work in this space and explore the future of commerce. How do communities protect commercial diversity as retail shifts from retail stores to home delivery through commercial delivery enterprises?

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- Travis Pollack, MAPC
- NAIOP
- Metro/West 495 Partnership

#### - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Staff Training

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is an important component of municipal planning. As municipalities engage the public in key decision making and long-term planning, it is imperative that they connect with all demographics in which they represent. Planners play an important role in advancing DEI efforts as they often engage the public and advocate for policies that promote equity.

Potential Speakers or Presentations

- MAPC DEI Team
- Robert Principe, Organizational Change for Social Impact

#### - Zoning Reform

A core function of planning, SWAP is always interested in new trends in zoning reform and the efforts of our region's municipalities to reform their zoning.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- MAPC Land Use Team

### **Newly Identified Topics of Interest:**

#### - Community Compact Grant

The [Massachusetts Community Compact Cabinet](#) is a competitive grant program awarded to municipalities across 4 categories; Best Practices, Efficiency and Regionalization, Information Technology, and Municipal Fiber. Each of these programs is intended to aid municipalities in the areas of modernizing municipal operations and invest in future services.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:



- UMass Collins Center
- Representative from the Heally/Driscoll Administration

- New PFAS Standards

In April 2024 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized the first-ever national drinking water standards for six Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), also known as 'forever chemicals'. The new regulations set maximum contaminant levels for these substances.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

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- COMMBUYS Assistance and OSD

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Operational Services Division is responsible for the operation of the COMMBUYS statewide purchasing platform. Communities can use this platform to access state contracts for a variety of goods and services. Training on how to access this platform, and the subsequent contract are useful in expediting the procurement process.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD)

- Decarbonization of Public Housing

Decarbonizing public housing involves reducing or eliminating carbon emissions from energy consumption in residential buildings through strategies like improved energy efficiency, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and retrofitting old systems. This shift is crucial for reducing the environmental impact of public housing while ensuring affordable, sustainable living conditions.

- Health Care Access and Planning

All Massachusetts Hospitals are required to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. Recently many communities have had success partnering with their area Hospitals during the CHNA process to improve the resident outreach process and in implementation of findings. This is increasingly important as many residents are uneasy over the closure of several Massachusetts Hospitals.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- MAPC Public Health Department
- Local Area Hospital Representative

- Clean Energy Siting

Many communities grapple with the challenges of increasing requests for renewable energy projects like solar, wind, or geothermal. This current State Administration and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has established the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting to provide recommendations for reforms to remove barriers to responsible clean energy infrastructure development. The final report was provided on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- MAPC Clean Energy Team



- First Amendment Training

Many Massachusetts Town Hall's have been visited by members of the public to conduct a 'First Amendment Audit'. These recorded interactions have brought up many questions regarding the rights and boundaries of members of the public to occupy public working space to exercise their right to free speech.

- Right to Farm and Farm Events

Right to Farm laws protect farmers from nuisance complaints, like noise and odors, from normal farm operations and protect the viability of farming in suburban areas. However, farm events like weddings, music festivals, and farm tourism, create unique complications to these protections. Looking at Western Massachusetts and the local ordinances and bylaws may provide SWAP planners with tools to address this challenge.

- Auxiliary Dwelling Units/Living Little

MAPC conducted a study in 2018 that explored the different types of small housing that would be well-suited for suburban communities throughout the region, which traditionally build large single-family housing. SWAP would like to receive an update on any small housing projects or building trends in the region.

Potential Speakers or Presentations:

- MAPC's Housing Team

**Other identified topics of interest in FY'25 include:**

- Local Reporting/Community Learning
- Phosphorus Reduction
- Stormwater Utilities
- Supporting Grassroot Organizations
- MS4 Permitting
- Online Permitting
- Technical Assistance and Funding
- Engineering Support
- Urban Agriculture Planning and Local Farm Ordinances



Proposed SWAP FY24 Meeting Times

Date	Time	Location
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Norfolk Town Hall
October 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Virtual
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	In-Person (Location TBD)
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Virtual
January 14 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	In-Person (Location TBD)
February 11 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Virtual
March 11 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	In-Person (Location TBD)
April 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Virtual
May 10 <sup>h</sup>	9:00am-11:00am	Medway Thayer Homestead
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	Virtual
June 10 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 – 11:00 am	In-Person (Location TBD)

- Note: Meeting dates and times are subject to change. Please note that the SWAP Legislative Breakfast is generally held on a Friday.