

The background features a collage of images. On the left, a mural depicts a person wearing a yellow hat and a colorful jacket, holding a camera. The word "RECORDS" is visible in the background of the mural. On the right, there is a photograph of a community garden with several raised wooden beds filled with various plants and flowers. The overall design is divided into large, overlapping geometric shapes in teal, yellow, red, and dark blue.

Community Engagement Conversations

Designing Accessible Engagement

February 27, 2025



Welcome!

Introduce Yourself in the Chat

- Name
- Pronouns
- Agency / Organization
- What helps you feel like you belong?

Welcome!

Group Agreements

- Listen for understanding, not disagreement
- Consider the opinions and experiences of others
- Bring a spirit of experimentation and creativity
- Step up, step back (take turns speaking, make room for others to speak)
- Have fun

Welcome!



Agenda



Introductions and
Overview



Considering
Accessibility



Applying
Accessibility to
Community
Engagement



Discussion & Share
Outs



Closing

What is MAPC?



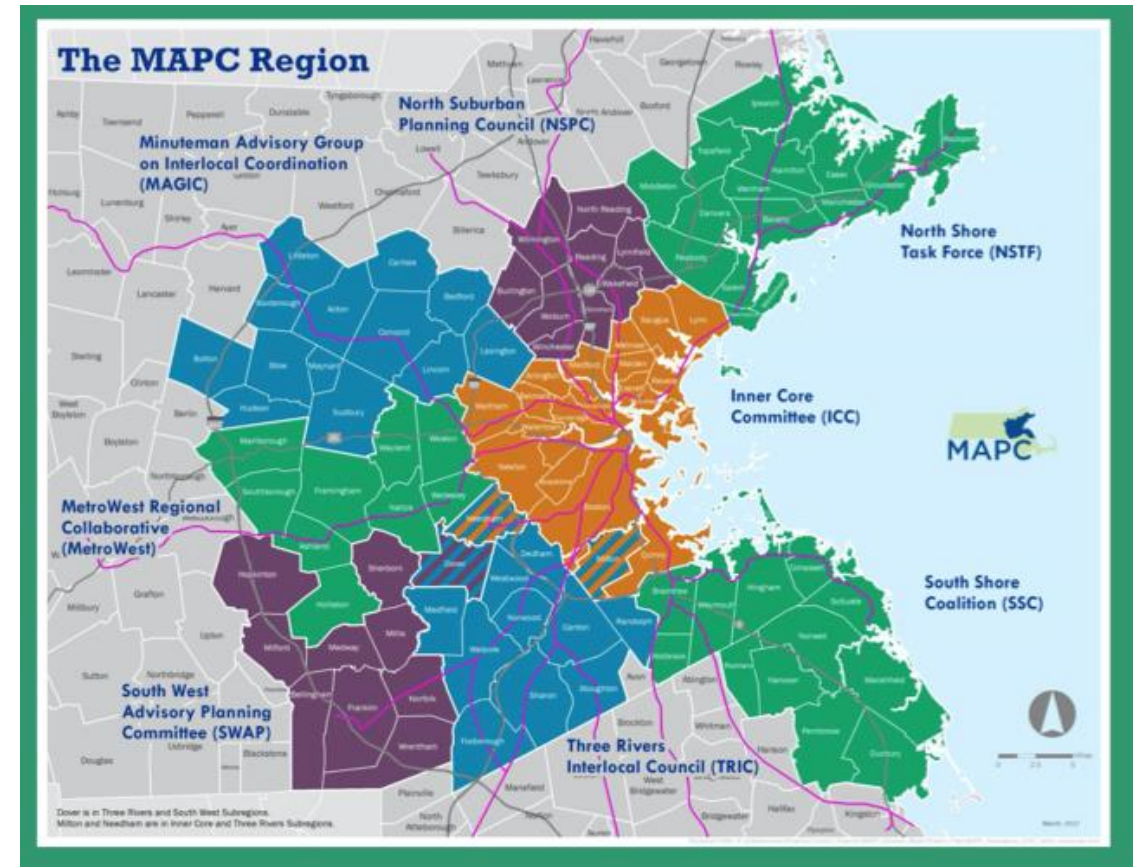
The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of the Metropolitan Boston region.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to promote smart growth and regional collaboration.

Areas of Work:

arts and culture, clean energy, climate, community engagement, land use planning, economic development, environment, housing, public health, public safety, transportation, public procurement



Community Engagement Conversations

Objectives for This Series:

- Create a space for attendees to share barriers they face around community engagement;
- Gain a group understanding of community engagement principles, strategies, and frameworks;
- Introduce participants to MAPC Community Engagement Team and how they can support your work;
- Fostering relationships between participants to help collectively overcome current and future barriers to engagement.

Objectives for Today's Session:

- Develop a shared understanding of accessibility considerations;
- Share how MAPC aims to make our engagement more accessible;
- Hear how you will apply accessibility in your respective work;
- Share your own accessibility strategies with fellow attendees.

January – Relationship Building Recap



Goal: To include relationship building as a crucial part of our work, as we understand the harm that the government and planning field has inflicted, particularly to historically excluded groups.

Components of Relationship Building

- Establishing Trust
- Making Space for Learning
- Creating Connections

Tactics of Relationship Building

- Meeting People Where They Are
- Active Listening
- Reciprocity & Resource Sharing

Accessibility & Community Engagement



Pair Share

- **In groups of 2-3 discuss:**
 - What does accessibility mean to you?
 - Think of a time when you felt like you belonged, what helped you feel that way?
- **Share out themes in chat**

A note on Disability:

- “Disabled people have always existed, whether the word disability is used or not. To me, disability is not a monolith, nor is it a clear-cut binary of disabled and nondisabled. Disability is mutable and ever-evolving. Disability is both apparent and nonapparent. Disability is pain, struggle, brilliance, abundance, and joy. Disability is sociopolitical, cultural, and biological. ”

— Alice Wong, [Disability Visibility : First-Person Stories from the Twenty-first Century](#)

- "1 in 4 (28.7%) adults in the United States have some type of Disability."

- Center for Disease Control

A Note on Disability Justice

- **“A Disability Justice framework understands that all bodies are unique and essential, that all bodies have strengths and needs that must be met.”**
- **“Stop forgetting about disability and access. Read some of the many brilliant, made-by-disabled-people access guides out there. Normalize access and disability. Learn about disabled cultures and histories. Look at the histories of disability in your own family and communities. Ask how you are fighting ableism in every campaign you do. Don’t forget about us. Realize you are or will be us.”**

— Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*

Principles of Disability Justice

- Intersectionality
- Leadership of those most impacted
- Anti-capitalist politic
- Commitment to cross-movement organizing
- Recognizing wholeness
- Sustainability
- Commitment to cross-disability solidarity
- Interdependence
- Collective Access
- Collective Liberation

Sins Invalid, 2015

Defining Accessibility (Through a Language Justice Framework):

Language Access is the practice of designing public process, services and communication that:

- Are offered in plain language;
- Include multiple languages (translation, interpretation or in-language facilitation, multiple modes of access etc);
- Meet people's access needs (closed captions, sign language interpretation, etc);
- Honor and celebrate people's cultures.

- ***MAPC Language Access Guide***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

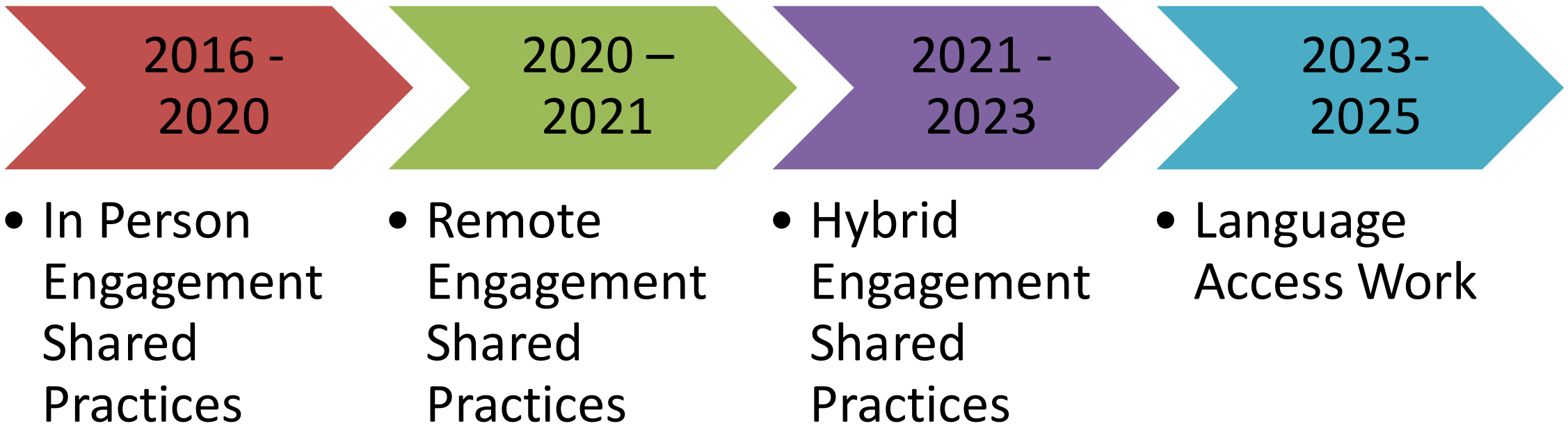
- We are legally obligated to provide accessibility in accordance with the ADA for public events. This can include:
 - Notice of accommodations availability;
 - Hosting public meetings in buildings compliant with ADA regulations;
 - Providing accessibility information to participants ahead of time;

To Keep In Mind

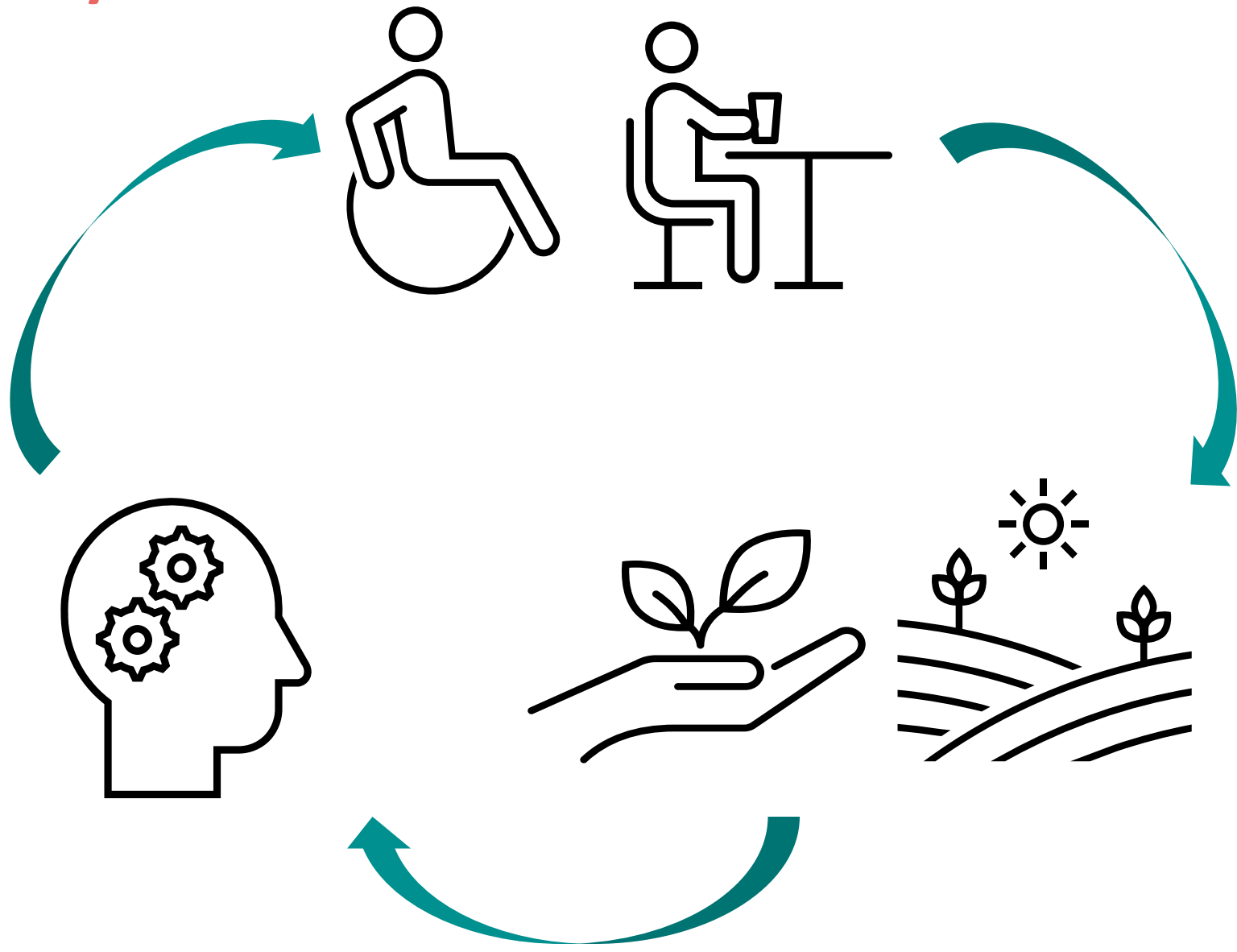


- Listen to and follow the lead of those most impacted by accessibility.
- There are many fantastic sources of expertise locally, regionally, statewide and nationally, here are just a few:
 - [MA Office on Disability](#)
 - [Disability:IN](#)
 - [DEAF, Inc.](#)
 - [Disability Visibility Project](#)
 - [Web Accessibility Initiative](#)
- We are not experts, this is a learning journey
- The goal is practice, not perfection

MAPC Community Engagement's Road to Accessibility:



Accessibility Ecosystem



Mind:



- How are you designing your content so that participants can understand and interact with?
- What knowledge or context do your participants need to have to engage?
- Are you offering materials in multiple formats? (Visual, plain language, audio, translations)
- Do your participants have multiple ways of engaging? (Verbal, written, small group)

Body



- Is your space physically accessible?
- What is your strategy for supporting people in navigating the physical access of the space? (i.e. Event Ambassadors, signage)



- What can you offer people to expand physical comfort in the space? (i.e. Food, varied seating)

Environment



- What are participants bringing with them into the space you're creating? (Community context, cultural context, family context, etc.)
- What will help participants be fully present in space? (Childcare, technology access, wifi access, educational materials, transportation support)
- What holidays, cultural, community or religious events, school happenings or other relevant information can you consider for your engagement timing and design to best reach the communities you are hoping to?

Where does this fit in CE Process:



KEY:

\$ - BUDGET



- LANGUAGE ACCESS.



- MATERIALS



- TIMELINE



- TECHNOLOGY & REMOTE TOOLS



Before Engagement:

- Who are the people you are trying to connect with?
- What do you need participants to do at this event? (Listen, interact, provide feedback, connect with each other, etc.)
- What information do they already have? What information do they need ahead of time to be able to participate?
- What are the areas of interest for this audience? How can you connect the content to those interests?
- What might prevent or support their ability to participate? What can you do to address those factors?
- What are your budget, time and staffing capacity and limitations?

During Engagement:



- How have you set up your space to meet ADA access standards?
- Do you have signage and staff who are helping people navigate the physical space?
 - If you are online: do you have staff orienting to the virtual space?
- If you are offering language services or closed captions, do you have clear instructions in multiple languages/formats for participants to access those services?
- How are you providing materials to meet people's various access needs?
- What are the ways that people can participate (are there multiple options)?
- If someone expresses a need live in the event, how are you prepared to adapt to that need?

After Engagement:

- Do participants have another opportunity and/or format to engage with the materials provided at the event/engagement?
- How are you following up with participants?
- Are you collecting feedback to understand what worked well for participants and what improvements to consider for future engagement? If so, how?
- Are you debriefing with your team and adjusting based on learnings for future engagements?

What we've learned to keep in mind



Accessibility Impacts Everyone



Technology + Staffing = Adaptive & Accessible Events



Keep It Simple (Plain language, clear instructions, etc.)



Data is Your Friend



Practice Makes Better: Build Your Skillset

Accommodations & Accessibility Tools



- **CART Services**
- **ASL Interpretation**
- **Assistive Listening Services/Devices**
- **Screen Readers**
- **Braille**
- **Closed Captions**
- **Language Interpretation**
- **Language Translation**
- **PDF Remediation**
- **Bionic Text & Large Print**
- **Color Contrast Adjustment**
- **Descriptions for Images or Video**
- **Ramps**
- **Plain Language**
- **Material in multiple formats**
- **Varied Seating**
- **Designated spaces for care**
- **Masks & PPE**
- **Decompression/Low stimulation spaces**
- **Multiple modes for participation/input**

How we tried to be accessible today:



Sent Materials
Ahead of Time

Material in
Multiple
Formats

Closed
Captions

Recorded
Presentation

Different Ways
to Participate

Pair Share

- **In groups of 2-3 discuss:**
 - How do you relate to what was shared today? What did it make you feel?
 - How do you/will you apply accessibility to your work?
- **Share out themes in chat**

Share Outs



What is a theme
that you heard in
your group?

In Closing:

"We cannot have disability justice without [accessibility]. but we want to question a culture that makes inaccessibility even possible. Just because disabled people are in the room doesn't mean there is no ableism (a set of beliefs that favors non-disabled people) or that people won't pretend we're invisible. This work is about shifting how we understand access, moving away from the individualized and independence-framed notions of access put forth by the disability rights movement and, instead, working to view access as collective and interdependent."

- Mia Mingus

Closing



Reflections on Today's Session

Today's Objectives

- Develop a shared understanding of MAPC's Community Engagement (CE) Process
- Share how MAPC applies the CE Process in projects and initiatives
- Hear how you will apply the CE Process in your respective work
- Share your own engagement processes with other fellow attendees

What is one way you'll apply accessibility to your work moving forward?

Closing Questions:

- Something that squared up, or affirmed, what I already know?
- Something that changed my thinking or is new knowledge?
- Something that has me thinking in a new direction that I will take forward by applying or learning more about?



Please complete our feedback survey!

Next Community Engagement Conversation

Register at
mapc.org



<p>September 19, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Principles of Community Engagement</p> <p>You will be introduced to MAPC's approach to community engagement work.</p>	<p>October 17, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Conducting a Stakeholder Analysis</p> <p>How to engage different voices when considering your strategic direction and plans.</p>	<p>November 21, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Wheel</p> <p>Learn about the framework that can be used to approach any community engagement project.</p>
<p>January 16, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Establishing Relationship Foundations</p> <p>Gain an understanding of how to build core foundational relationships with stakeholders, members of your community, partners, and others.</p>	<p>February 27, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Designing Accessible Engagement</p> <p>Build an understanding of tools you can use to make engagement accessible for people of different languages and for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>March 20, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Building/Engaging Community Groups</p> <p>Learn about the best ways to involve key stakeholders in decision-making processes and how to manage expectations from residents while leading impactful public participation work.</p>
<p>April 17, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Evaluating Community Engagement</p> <p>Build an understanding of tools to implement evaluation of equity in your community engagement.</p>	<p>May 6, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Facilitation Techniques</p> <p>Build an understanding of how to facilitate digital and in-person meetings to help your participants share their needs and challenges.</p>	

Reach Out – We Can Help

Services

- Development of Community Engagement Strategies
- Facilitation
- Strategic Coalition, Partnership, and Network Development
- Creative Engagement

Trainings and Workshops

- Principles of Community Engagement
- Hybrid Engagement
- Language Access
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Building and Engagement Community Advisory Groups

Contact us at: CommunityEngagement@mapc.org



Thank you!

