

Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

February 2025



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Introduction

MAPC worked with thousands of stakeholders to create our regional land use and policy plan, ***MetroCommon 2050: Shaping our Region Together***, which was adopted by our Council in November 2021. It is a vision for the region that MAPC and our allies are working to realize. MetroCommon includes a policy roadmap that, if followed by our region's decision-makers, will achieve this vision. Since adopting MetroCommon, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has been working to implement the recommendations contained in the plan, despite navigating the global pandemic, changes in state and federal administrations and priorities, and historic swings in economic and political circumstances.

Closer to home, we have experienced significant turnover in local leadership, as well as turnover and growth of the staff at MAPC. More than 2/3's of our staff has been hired since the pandemic began in March 2020. Against this backdrop of constant change, MAPC needed to reassess and reconfirm our priorities through the creation of a five-year strategic plan and an internally-focused, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment (DEIA). The latter provides MAPC recommendations for creating a more welcoming and inclusive workplace for all staff, especially for staff of color. The former establishes the priorities for MAPC's work over the next five years, including recommendations from the DEIA.

The Strategic Plan addresses the fundamental questions of who we are, what we do, our vision for the future, and the values we seek to uphold. It also identifies what critical topics MAPC should focus on over the next five years (although there will always be surprises!), as well as how we do our work internally. As part of this planning process, we explored where our technical assistance, advocacy, engagement, and research can deliver the most impact.

As we enter the second half of the 2020's, our region faces ongoing, persistent challenges as well as emerging opportunities. We also must navigate changing demographics, including an aging region and uncertainty in migration patterns. We tried to create a Strategic Plan that can adapt to meet these unknowns, while maintaining the discipline to focus on select priorities, such as helping our region to achieve sustainable development and preservation; to advance equity across the region; to address climate change mitigation and adaptation; and to encourage collaboration among cities and towns, along with other partners in Greater Boston. We are also recommitting our support for our municipal partners to provide the services the people of our region need and deserve; to bolster arts and culture throughout Greater Boston; and to work to ensure our residents and workers are economically secure and healthy. Building and maintaining strong relationships with municipal and state leaders, community-based organizations, and advocacy partners will be more important than ever.

During this process, the people who work with MAPC told us they highly value our work and our leadership in the region. They think MAPC staff are highly capable. This plan acknowledges that while being good partners and delivering quality plans are important to who we are, MAPC must go further to drive and support the change that is envisioned in MetroCommon. We need to ramp up our focus on implementation and regional approaches that cross municipal lines. We need to establish more consistent expectations for work planning, evaluation and learning, and practices to improve the equity outcomes of our work. And we need to focus on recruiting, hiring, training, and advancing a top-notch staff, who will join our Council and Executive Committee members in leading us into the next decade.

Planning Process & Acknowledgements

MAPC initiated its strategic planning process in August 2023 and completed it in February 2025. The process was co-facilitated by Director of Strategic Initiatives Eric Hove, Senior Strategist Ben Faust, and staff from the nonprofit consulting firm TDC. Marc Draisen, Executive Director, and Lizzi Weyant, Deputy Executive Director, were instrumental in the development of this plan and look forward to overseeing its implementation. MAPC would like to give a special thanks to Liz Curtis, Adriane Musgrave, and John Lavin from TDC for their facilitation and guidance during this process. An Advisory Committee comprising members of the Executive Committee and staff provided direction and feedback on the development of the mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities. We also worked closely with the MAPC Directors, Assistant Directors, Managers, and internal working groups to develop the plan. You can find a detailed description of the planning process in Appendix A. Many internal - and some external - stakeholders actively shaped this plan. A full list of participants is included in Appendix B.

MAPC staff participated in workshops and working groups to generate content and hone the priorities, outcomes, and strategies. MAPC Directors attended periodic half-day retreats to build and prioritize content. Staff were also invited to provide perspectives via an organization-wide survey and department meetings. Overall, 28 staff members participated in working groups to draft the strategic priorities and outcomes. Workgroups also developed the recommendations for internal, organizational changes that will be necessary to advance the plan's Strategic Priorities. MAPC's Executive Committee was engaged at key junctures throughout the process to provide direction and feedback. TDC facilitated 25 interviews with a sample of MAPC's external allies to understand how MAPC is perceived and to gather insights from peer planning agencies across the country. Key findings from this research are summarized in Appendix C.

Mission

The following foundational statements guide our organization and our work.

Who We Are

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the Regional Planning Agency for Greater Boston. MAPC was established in 1963 by an act of the Legislature. MAPC is governed by representatives from our 101 cities and towns, as well as gubernatorial and public agency appointees.

Mission

We work toward a more equitable, sustainable, collaborative, and climate resilient future for the people who live and work in Greater Boston.

We do this by drafting and helping to implement local and regional plans; engaging residents and community partners in planning, especially people who have been excluded or marginalized in the past; advocating for changes in public policy and funding; conducting research and data analysis; and encouraging inter-municipal and regional collaboration.

Vision

Guided by our long-range regional plan, ***MetroCommon 2050: Shaping our Region Together***, we envision a more welcoming, inclusive, and equitable Greater Boston where everyone can thrive; where all communities benefit from a healthy and resilient environment; and where our cities and towns, infrastructure, and economy serve the needs of current residents, newcomers, and future generations.

MAPC envisions a Metro Boston region with the following attributes:

- **We envision a region that is sustainable.** We support developing homes, jobs, and infrastructure close to the areas where people already live and work. We aim to protect our ecosystems and natural resources while minimizing pollution and waste.
- **We envision a region that is climate resilient.** We aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the impacts of climate change, transition to a clean and carbon-neutral economy, and create communities that are resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.
- **We envision a region where all residents prosper.** We aim to create a region where everybody, regardless of the circumstances of their birth or origin, can find meaningful work and build wealth for themselves and their children.
- **We envision a region that is equitable.** We aim to create a more welcoming, inclusive, and diverse region where everyone can thrive, and where all neighborhoods are safe and healthy.
- **We envision a region that values beauty, culture, and diversity.** We strive to pass on to our children a region that is filled with natural and artistic beauty and an appreciation of the many cultures and histories that have made this region what it is.
- **We envision a collaborative region.** We seek to bring people together from different backgrounds and across municipal lines to understand and appreciate each other's commonalities and to solve problems together.

Values

We seek to incorporate the following values into our work, governance, and operations: to advance racial and social equity; strengthen connection and collaboration among all people; foster creativity and innovation; and embrace knowledge and experience.

MAPC seeks to apply the following values to our work, our governance, and our operations:

- **Centering racial and social equity.** Achieving an equitable future requires acknowledging inequities of the past and present. This includes understanding the role the planning profession has played, nationally and here at home, in land use, transportation, and housing policies that have contributed to segregation and the unequal access to opportunity that persists today. We therefore commit ourselves, through our planning, implementation, and policy work, to restructure deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression and to advance more equal access to opportunities, power, participation, and resources that will open avenues to safe, healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives for everyone who lives and works in our region.
- **Strengthening connection and collaboration.** No one person, municipality, or organization can solve the region's challenges on their own. MAPC works to create and strengthen local, inter-municipal, and regional collaborations to address complex challenges. We engage and connect people across life experiences, geographies, and disciplines to help them to realize that we share common challenges and can work together to create a stronger and better future for our region.
- **Fostering creativity and innovation.** Solutions to complex problems require creativity and innovation. We also believe that an interdisciplinary approach is the best way to meet our region's long-standing and emerging challenges. Being innovative means taking risks, trying new approaches, and being flexible and willing to adapt. Being creative means valuing imagination and making novel connections inside and outside our disciplines.
- **Embracing knowledge and experience.** We seek to understand our region more fully through quantitative and qualitative data, research, and analysis, and deeply engaging the region's people in both planning and implementation. We believe that public decisions should be data-driven, based on both quantitative and qualitative data. We focus our engagement efforts on people who have been historically under-represented and marginalized in public processes. We strive to uplift the knowledge, stories, and understanding of the people of our region to improve our work and deepen our impact, whether that knowledge springs from education and research or personal and community experience.

Strategic Priorities

Beginning in 2025, MAPC commits to advancing the following five **Strategic Priorities**. These topics are a cross section of the most pressing issues facing the region and the issues that MAPC is uniquely positioned to impact. They were inspired by the action areas of MetroCommon 2050. Within each Strategic Priority, MAPC will work with its members, allies, and partners to achieve specific **outcomes** to advance our MetroCommon goals. Under each outcome are **strategies**, which are the approaches MAPC will take, often in partnership with others, to achieve the outcomes.

Strategic Priority 1

Advance the economic well-being, health, and safety of our region's residents.

- A) Resources and policies allow for more stable and affordable housing choices that meet high housing need and minimize displacement of low-income households and people of color.
 - i. Support municipal efforts to pass zoning and permitting for multi-family housing developments to rent or own.
 - ii. Increase funding available for affordable and mixed-income housing development and preservation, at the federal, state, and local levels.
 - iii. Ensure municipalities maximize the positive impact of existing, beneficial housing policies and resources.
 - iv. Champion improvements and innovations to overcome the systemic barriers and high costs of housing production.
 - v. Work with community-based organizations (CBOs), business, faith-based organizations, and advocacy and trade associations to advance local initiatives that increase housing stability.
- B) Municipalities and state agencies create programs and pass policies that ensure jobs offer good pay, strong benefits, and safe working conditions.
 - i. Support state and municipal efforts to enact policies that support workers, such as fair scheduling, minimum wages, hiring requirements, and procurement policies.
 - ii. Improve, connect, and strengthen municipal, state, non-profit, and corporate workforce development pathways so that unemployed or under-employed workers can attain careers in emerging fields.
 - iii. Advocate at the state level to increase the quality of jobs within the early childhood sector and the availability and affordability of childcare.
- C) Residents are prepared for, can respond to, and can recover from health, safety, and climate threats more effectively and equitably.
 - i. Strengthen partnerships with and among local public health agencies, hospitals, sustainability offices, community leaders, first responders, and the general public to improve emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.
 - ii. Increase investment of resources, capacity, and technical assistance to clean up and roll back harmful environmental exposures in at-risk communities.
 - iii. Assist municipalities, law enforcement, prevention partners, and public health officials to address the root causes of community violence, including violence affecting youth.

Strategic Priority 2

Accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to help achieve the Commonwealth's goal of net zero emissions by 2050 while improving the region's resilience to climate change.

Outcomes & Strategies

- A) Expand resources and programs to retrofit buildings for GHG reductions, resilience, and resident health and safety, prioritizing Environmental Justice communities.
 - i. Provide municipalities and owner/operators of public housing, subsidized housing, and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) with the resources and expertise to retrofit existing affordable and mixed-income housing.
 - ii. Partner with municipalities to implement programs and policies that encourage and enable retrofits in all residential and commercial buildings.
- B) Increase affordable carbon-free transportation opportunities.
 - i. Advocate for funding to decarbonize our public transportation system.
 - ii. Provide municipalities with the rationale and know how to increase the number of vehicle charging stations to meet state goals, and ensure that these chargers, including high-speed chargers, are broadly available throughout the region, including low-income neighborhoods and multifamily buildings.
 - iii. Expand non-motorized trails and routes, improve connectivity, and expand these resources in lower-income communities.
- C) Cities and towns implement critical social and physical resiliency solutions, especially in preparation for more frequent and serious disasters induced by climate change.
 - i. Encourage municipalities to update their bylaws and policies to implement nature-based solutions for climate resilience, including improved treatment of stormwater.
 - ii. Support community, municipal, and institutional-led efforts for resiliency that builds on social cohesion and community assets.
 - iii. Provide resources and training to municipalities so they can become better prepared, more resilient, and recover more quickly from emergencies and disasters.
- D) Clean energy infrastructure, such as generation and transmission infrastructure, expands in strategic locations throughout our region.
 - i. Support municipalities in adopting zoning and permitting reforms that result in efficient and fair siting processes.
 - ii. Ensure impacted communities are involved in clean energy infrastructure siting; support community benefit agreements that mitigate the negative impacts of such infrastructure, without delaying needed improvement.

Strategic Priority 3

Encourage sustainable development and mobility with a focus on affordable homes, good jobs for low-income workers, a healthy environment, and non-auto transportation options throughout the region.

Outcomes & Strategies

- A) State and local laws and programs support a connected network of transit-served, walkable, mixed-use districts accessible to people of all incomes.
 - i. Support municipal efforts to pass mixed-use and higher density zoning, as well as lower parking requirements.
 - ii. Resources and regulations produce and preserve market rate and affordable housing in transit-served and walkable neighborhoods.
 - iii. Support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and bus-only lanes in urban centers and key corridors.
 - iv. Support transit investments in walkable, mixed-use centers.
 - v. Work with coalitions to support new or enhanced revenue sources to adequately fund the maintenance and expansion of the MBTA and RTAs that serve our region; work to enhance quality of service, reliability, and frequency of public transit, along with affordability for lower-income riders.
- B) Employers are concentrated in higher-density locations that include affordable homes and access to transit.
 - i. Design and implement state and local policies and plans that locate jobs near housing and transit, including the childcare and creative sectors.
 - ii. Partner with the state and municipalities to expand financial and technical assistance opportunities for small business, especially those owned by and employing women, people of color, and people with disabilities.
 - iii. Assist municipalities in establishing community benefit agreements that fund training for good jobs and prevent the displacement of small and legacy businesses.
- C) Support the creation of a regional network of protected parks, trails, and natural and agricultural landscapes.
 - i. Support local and state efforts to update laws and regulations to protect land, waterways, and drinking water.
 - ii. Advocate for additional preservation and restoration funding.
 - iii. Assist in the planning and design of a regional trail and park network.
 - iv. Support expansion and preservation of local agricultural production and local food procurement.

Strategic Priority 4

Expand our region's commitment to support artists, advance the arts, and celebrate our region's diverse cultural heritage.

Outcomes & Strategies

- A) State and local policies and funding support a thriving creative economy and arts community.
 - i. Document, develop, and implement solutions to preserve and expand affordable and accessible places for artists to live and work, including the ability of municipalities to zone for such spaces.
 - ii. Research and advocate for more equitable pathways to jobs and education in the arts.
 - iii. Advocate for sufficient funding and effective procurement policies to support artistic production and creative enterprises.
 - iv. Build coalitions to strengthen support for state and local policies aimed at advancing arts and culture in the region and throughout the Commonwealth.
- B) Public art and creative placemaking play a significant role in the development and preservation of our municipalities, communities, and neighborhoods.
 - i. Assist cities and towns in implementing projects and programs that advance the arts, support artists, and expand the appreciation of our region's broad cultural heritage.
 - ii. Integrate artists and culture-bearers into local and regional planning projects and the implementation efforts that follow.
 - iii. Use artistic and cultural expression as a tool to create more vibrant and livable communities.
- C) The region celebrates and honors our diverse cultures and histories.
 - i. Develop and share knowledge and practices to expand cultural commemoration in the region.
 - ii. Facilitate and build capacity among municipal staff to celebrate the diversity of our varied cultural heritages.
 - iii. Build reciprocal relationships with Native American communities and help to increase their visibility and presence in MAPC planning and implementation projects, policy recommendations, and in the region more broadly.
 - iv. Model an inclusive historic and cultural preservation practice that balances preservation with achieving equity and climate resilience in the region.

Strategic Priority 5

Assist local governments to become more effective, efficient, and inclusive through capacity building, convening and collaboration, and community engagement.

Outcomes & Strategies

- A) Municipal elected officials and staff deliver increasingly high-quality services to meet the growing and changing needs of residents.
 - i. Learn more about the needs, successes, and challenges of our municipal members, along with ideas from outside the region, so that we can build strong, sustainable relationships, produce relevant materials, and effectively support municipal staff and elected officials.
 - ii. Train municipal leaders and staff to use compelling data, materials, and equitable community engagement practices (such as Language Access) that are inclusive and responsive to residents' needs and experiences.
 - iii. Assist our communities to meet the challenge of a changing technical and communications environment, artificial intelligence, on-line service delivery, virtual and hybrid meetings, an altered local news environment, and the need to continue to advance digital equity initiatives throughout the region.
 - iv. Catalyze and lead the way to shared regional services, including collective planning, service delivery, and procurement; share success stories and data to demonstrate benefits to municipal elected officials and staff.
- B) Community-based organizations engage with MAPC, trust our work, and we work together to advance shared priorities.
 - i. Learn from community-based organizations and their constituents and incorporate their knowledge and perspectives into our plans, activities, and priorities in ways that are consistent with MetroCommon.
 - ii. Strengthen relationships with mission-aligned community-based organizations so their constituents better understand how local and state governments work, how to engage in governmental decision-making, and how to encourage municipal leaders to incorporate their perspectives.
 - iii. Train residents on civic engagement and organizing for change in alignment with MAPC's mission and strategic priorities.
- C) Municipalities increase local and regional revenue so they can provide better, more reliable services.
 - i. Provide compelling research about the need for additional local and regional revenue that can be invested into municipal programs and services.
 - ii. Advise municipalities on stable financial structures to support their residents' needs.
 - iii. Support the ability for municipalities to raise local and regional revenue, including for critical capital projects that are aligned with MetroCommon, such as transit, trails, TOD, and affordable housing.

Organizational Investments and Improvements

MAPC always strives to improve our organizational structures, systems, and practices to increase the quality and effectiveness of the services and projects we deliver to our members and our region. To help accomplish these ends, MAPC staff must have the resources and support they need to excel in their projects and policy work. All of this must happen within an internal culture that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming.

Below we offer strategies that we think will help to achieve these improvements and resources over the next five years. They represent the combined efforts of the Strategic Planning process and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Assessment, which took place concurrently. Some strategies come from a working group of the Strategic Planning process tasked with improving internal practices. Others come from a working group asked to make MAPC projects more equitable in our practice and impact. Others represent commitments made to the staff of color and Equity Team in response to memos and recommendations provided to MAPC leadership. Working with the MAPC Departments and Equity Team, MAPC leadership will prioritize specific, actionable improvements in the following systems and procedures:

More Effective Project Types and Impacts

- Increase the resources and opportunities for **implementation activities** that result in the adoption of new policies and programs and on-the-ground change. We understand that planning is core to who we are and what we do. Yet we also know that a plan that sits on the shelf has little impact – it needs to be implemented to improve conditions. MAPC staff could better integrate implementation strategies into project scoping where appropriate, and, in some cases, pursue a follow-up project with the same partner to support implementation of recently completed plans.
- Work to generate and, when successful, replicate effective **multiple-municipal and regional projects**. Regional Planning Agencies – and regionalism as a concept – exist to transcend geographic boundaries and to foster regional solutions that can be developed collaboratively and implemented locally, regionally, or statewide.
- Improve MAPC’s capacity to pursue **external funding** from both philanthropic sources and grant opportunities. MAPC’s entrepreneurial culture brings with it many benefits, but responsibilities for responding to funding opportunities are not well-defined. Clarifying roles and responsibilities will increase efficiency and create a more systematic approach to pursue funding opportunities that are most aligned with our strategic priorities.

How We Work

- Continue to be **proactive and strategic** in determining what projects to do, and where, so that the agency focuses on advancing our strategic priorities. We should use data to evaluate and improve the project selection process to meet our goals. Changes in project initiation and selection could help us to conduct more projects that are multi-municipal and/or focus on implementation.
- Develop shared expectations for **project evaluation, learning, and follow-up**. Individual projects often lack the resources to enable staff to assess the work they've done and its implications for future efforts. We do not always ask members and other partners for input on the effectiveness of our work, and suggestions for future improvement. Establishing reasonable expectations for evaluating our on-going and recently finished projects would give MAPC information that we could use to increase effectiveness and impact as well as encourage innovation and professional growth. More effectively sharing these learnings across departments and occasionally with external partners would also lead to better informed and more successful future projects.
- Create clearer ties between our Strategic Plan and the development of the annual work plan to ensure the Strategic Plan is being implemented. Consider the adoption of a two-year MAPC **work plan**, alongside annual Departmental workplans.
- Improve our **project/budget management systems**, including our charge code procedures, while allocating sufficient funding for collaboration, engagement, evaluation and learning, and seeking out new ideas to improve our work.

Key Equity Improvements

Based on recommendations from staff of color at MAPC; the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment (DEIA); the Equity Team; and the Strategic Planning work groups, we are prioritizing the following goals.

- Improve **outreach and recruitment of staff of color**, with a particular focus on recruiting leaders of color into management positions.
- Support the **retention of staff** as a means of reducing turnover at MAPC through a variety of professional and leadership development opportunities.
- Create **clear and regular communication** of all internal policies, especially those related to human resources.
- Better connect our agency-wide project goals that focus on equity with our internal practices. This includes the institution of agency-wide **equitable practice standards** to ensure a shared understanding of how we advance equity.

Appendix A: Process Overview & Timeline

TDC supported MAPC in its strategic planning process for a year and a half through the following four phases.

Project Launch (August – October 2023)

- Outlined roles and responsibilities
- Oriented participants and stakeholders to process via an Advisory Committee kickoff, Executive Committee kickoff, and All-Staff presentation
- Met with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment (DEIA) consultants to align between the Strategic Plan process and the assessment
- Conducted Advisory Committee focus groups to receive input on key strategic and research questions
- Discussed the existing foundational statements with organizational leaders
- Finalized strategic questions and created a research agenda

Research and Analysis (October 2023 – May 2024)

- Reviewed internal documents, conducted internal stakeholder interviews, administered all-staff and Executive Committee surveys
- Interviewed key external stakeholders, including peer RPAs, local municipal leaders, CBO leaders, legislators, and funders
- Discussed findings with the Advisory Committee and directors and aligned these findings with the DEIA process

Strategic Framework Planning (May 2024 – August 2024)

- Utilized research findings and conversations with Directors to update and create new draft Outcomes and Foundational Statements
- Facilitated planning conversations with five Strategic Planning Work Groups and hosted a Director's Retreat to refine the document and develop Strategies
- Held a series of iterative conversations with internal stakeholders to articulate and revise and confirm the plan content with the Advisory Committee

Organizational Investments (August 2024 – December 2024)

- Based on the outcomes of the Directors Retreat held in July, MAPC identified opportunities for how the organization would improve its internal operations
- Project-Related Changes for Impact: working group comprised of a cross-section of MAPC staff that met four times and commented on documents asynchronously, as well as a survey of Directors
- Equitable Practice Standards: working group comprised of a cross-section of MAPC staff that met three times to present recommendations for comment to all MAPC staff
- Charge Codes: focus groups of staff, supervisors, finance staff, and IT lead, as well as an interview with MAPC's Deputy Executive Director

Throughout this engagement, we liaised with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment (DEIA) process to ensure that those findings would be brought into the organization's strategic plan.

Appendix B: Participants

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

1. Eric Bourassa, MAPC, Director of Transportation
2. Van Du, MAPC, Assistant Director of Environment
3. Josh Fiala, MAPC, Land Use Manager
4. Sharon Ron, MAPC, Assistant Director of Public Health
5. Courtney Lewis, MAPC, Senior Planner
6. Angela Howard, MAPC, Director of Equity and Culture
7. Jessie Partridge Guerrero, MAPC, Director of Data Services
8. Shirronda Almeida, MACDC, Director of the Mel King Institute
9. Keith Bergman, MAPC Past President
10. Erin Wortman, MAPC President
11. Angie Liou, MAPC Executive Committee
12. Gina Martinez, MAPC Executive Committee Past Member
13. Magnolia Contreras, Vice President of Community Health at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
14. Imaikalani Aiu, MAPC Secretary
15. Karen Canfield, MAPC Executive Committee
16. John Depriest, MAPC Executive Committee

Past members included: Mark Fine, Hannah Gathman, Diego Huevo

Executive Committee Members

1. Claire Ricker, Arlington
2. Segun Idowu, Boston
3. John DePriest, Chelsea
4. Keith Bergman, Concord
5. Jennifer Constable, Hull
6. Taber Keally, Milton
7. Moe Handel, Needham
8. Curt Bellavance, Peabody
9. Tom Daniel, Salem
10. Thomas Galligani, Somerville
11. Erin Wortman, Stoneham
12. Colette E. Aufranc, Wellesley

13. Imaikalani Aiu, Weston
14. Steve Olanoff, Westwood
15. Rob King, Department of Conservation and Recreation
16. Elaine Wijnja, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
17. Juan R. Vega, Executive Office of Economic Development
18. Vandana Rao, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
19. Karen Canfield, Gubernatorial
20. Jon A. Fetherston, Gubernatorial
21. Angie Liou, Gubernatorial
22. Samuel Seidel, Gubernatorial
23. Stephen J. Silveira, Gubernatorial
24. Gina Martinez, Gubernatorial

MAPC Leadership

1. Marc Draisen, Executive Director
2. Lizzi Weyant, Deputy Executive Director
3. Amanda Linehan, Communications Director
4. Leah Robins, Government Affairs Director
5. Marjorie Weinberger, General Counsel
6. Angela Howard, Director of Equity and Culture
7. Anna Cole, Chief Financial Officer
8. Annis Whitlow Sengupta, Director of Arts and Culture
9. Julie Curti, Director of Clean Energy
10. Javier Gutierrez, Director of Community Engagement
11. Jessie Partridge Guerrero, Director of Data Services
12. Martin Pillsbury, Environmental Planning Director
13. Andrea Harris-Long, Director of Land Use
14. Amy Reilly, Director of Municipal Collaboration
15. Barry Keppard, Public Health Director
16. Eric Hove, Director of Strategic Initiatives
17. Eric Bourassa, Transportation Director

External Stakeholders

1. Casey Bowers, Environmental League of Massachusetts
2. Dominick Pangallo, Mayor of Salem
3. George Proakis, Town Manager of Watertown
4. JD Chesloff, Mass Business Roundtable
5. Joe Kreisberg, MassINC
6. Kurt Gaertner, MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
7. Leon Gaumond, Jr., Town Manager of Weston
8. Michael Bobbitt, Mass Cultural Council
9. Michelle Ciccolo, Office of Michelle Ciccolo
10. Nicole Obi, BECMA
11. Oami Amarasingham, Mass Public Health Association
12. Peter Forman, South Shore Chamber
13. Rachel Heller, CHAPA
14. Roseann Bongiovanni, Green Roots
15. Sam Wong, DPH Office of Local and Regional Health
16. Samantha Montaña, Office of Samantha Montaña
17. Steven Freeman, Office of Lydia Edwards
18. Tom Ambrosino, Former Municipal Leader
19. Tom Ryan, A Better City

Leaders of Peer Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs)

1. Andrew Gruber, WFRC - Salt Lake City
2. Chuck Wemple, H-GAC - Houston
3. David Warm, MARC - Kansas City
4. Erin Aleman, CMAP - Chicago
5. James Corliss, SACOG - Sacramento
6. Linda Dunlavy, Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Organizational Investments Working Group:

1. Andrea Harris-Long, AICP; Director of Land Use
2. Jeremy Koo, Assistant Director of Clean Energy
3. Stephen Larrick, Digital Services Manager
4. Sasha Parodi, Community Engagement & Subregional Programs Manager
5. Van Du, Assistant Director of Environmental Planning
6. Gloria Huangpu, Community Engagement Planner II/Coordinator, Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

Equitable Practices Working Group

1. Eric Bourassa, Director of Transportation
2. John Cruz, Senior Housing and Land Use Planner
3. Josh Fiala, AICP, AIA, LEED AP; Manager of the General Land Use Division
4. Raul Gonzalez, Principal Economic Development Planner
5. Angela Howard, Director of Equity and Culture
6. Barry Keppard, AICP; Director of Public Health
7. Jeremy Koo, Assistant Director of Clean Energy
8. Julia Nassar, Senior Clean Energy & Climate Planner
9. Najee Nunnally, Community Engagement Planner II
10. Serai Zelada, Public Health Planner II

Appendix C: Research Insights that Informed the Strategic Plan

The strategic planning process included research with internal and external stakeholders:

Internal Stakeholder Analysis

TDC conducted research with MAPC's internal stakeholders early in the strategic planning process, which included interviews and focus groups with staff and the Executive Committee, an all-staff survey, and an Executive Committee survey. The purpose of this work was to:

- Receive input on MAPC's foundational statements, most notably the mission and vision;
- Better understand MAPC's primary audience and who the organization serves;
- Identify areas for potential improvement that the planning process should address; and to
- Develop an initial understanding of potential strategic priorities for the agency

MAPC Today: Foundational Statements, Current Priorities, Stakeholders

There was significant alignment between Executive Committee members and staff regarding MAPC's foundational statements, priorities, and stakeholders. Most notably, the Executive Committee and staff agreed that MAPC:

- Advances the values developed for MetroCommon 2050 and successfully pursues its current strategic priorities and
- Effectively supports government leaders at the local and state levels

However, a few areas of difference emerged, including:

- Staff were more focused on better understanding how they should "operationalize" the value and strategic priority related to equity;
- Some stakeholders believed there was room for improvement regarding how MAPC addresses climate change and fosters regional collaboration; and
- Staff and Executive Committee respondents were not fully aligned regarding how MAPC supports community-based organizations (CBOs), advocacy groups, businesses, and individuals.

Future MAPC: Priorities & Goals

Regarding the future, staff and Executive Committee members shared significant agreement regarding what MAPC's future priority areas and goals should be.

Both groups agreed that MAPC should:

- Prioritize the following areas: climate, equity and vulnerable communities, housing, and transit and transportation;
- Be recognized as a national model for planning agencies;
- Work on more regional planning initiatives and prioritize work that spans multiple municipalities;
- Have more influence in the region;

- Generate and shape projects more proactively rather than primarily responding to specific requests from municipalities; and
- Collaborate with each municipality regularly.

Staff and Executive Committee members were not fully aligned in two areas:

- There was less cohesion regarding the role that CBOs, advocacy groups, and individuals should play within MAPC's work as well as the extent to which they should be prioritized as stakeholders. Many staff would like MAPC to develop a more reciprocal approach to working with CBOs, and
- Perspectives ranged widely among both Executive Committee members and staff about the ideal size and scale of MAPC projects, and whether we should concentrate on a smaller number of larger projects.

External Stakeholder Analysis

TDC conducted interviews with a sample of external stakeholders that included peer regional planning agencies, advocacy leaders, CBOs, municipal leaders, state agency staff, legislators, and business leaders. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix B. The purpose of these interviews was to:

- Understand their perceptions of MAPC's strengths and weaknesses;
- Receive feedback on the initial draft of MAPC's strategic priorities and strategies; and
- Collect potential ideas and opportunities not yet considered.

Strengths

External stakeholders were highly complimentary of MAPC and nearly universally shared their respect for the institution – locally, statewide, and nationally. Additionally, TDC heard that MAPC:

- Provides subject-matter expertise with exceptional data and research capabilities;
- Offers a strong convening skillset and can bring multiple types of stakeholders together;
- Influences policy, advocacy, and lobbying efforts with a progressive approach;
- Fosters a regional approach to projects and issues and is uniquely suited for this role; and
- Is the best-suited organization to identify and pursue progress on key indicators for the region.

Opportunities for Improvement

While external interviewees thought highly of MAPC, they highlighted the following areas that the organization to address:

- Community engagement practices are not uniform across departments;
- Processes and approaches do not consistently employ equitable practices, and staff demographics often do not reflect the communities they serve;
- MAPC could be more innovative and proactive;
- MAPC's recent turnover and staff constraints are challenges;
- There is a need for MAPC to better inform and educate community members, municipal staff, and legislative or state-level leaders/staff on key issues; and
- MAPC can play a larger role in helping municipalities to implement projects

Feedback on the Strategic Priorities

TDC utilized a portion of the interview process to test an early version of the strategic priorities to ensure they were progressing. Overall, the comments were extremely positive, and many suggested that the priorities were trending in the right direction. In addition to the many positives, TDC heard the following suggested refinements:

- Multiple external stakeholders discussed equity and wanted to ensure it is reflected in each strategic priority.
- A few external stakeholders encouraged MAPC to consider adding areas of focus during the next five years, including:
 - Talent, people, and jobs in the region, which are especially important to the business community
 - Mental health, which is a severe nationwide issue
 - The impact of an impending population change in Boston and its surrounding communities, which are projected to grow by at least 10% in the coming decade
- A couple of external stakeholders encouraged MAPC to think about how MAPC can effectively communicate these priorities.



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