

Executive Report
Submitted to the Executive Committee
February 26, 2025

Clean Energy

Community Heat Resilience Pilot Program Launch

In January, Clean Energy and Public Health launched the Community Heat Resilience Pilot (CHRP) in partnership with the Barr Foundation and Frontline Solutions. CHRP is a pilot program for Greater Boston cities that brings municipal governments and community-based organizations together to assess, design, and implement community-scale heat resilience projects. Community cohort participants include Salem, North Shore CDC, and Salem Alliance for the Environment; Lynn, Latino Support Network, and Emerald Cities Collaborative; and Somerville, Culture House, and the Cambridge Health Alliance. In January, the Barr Foundation hosted an all-day in-person workshop with participants from the nine organizations, facilitated by MAPC and Frontline Solutions. In addition to the community-based heat resilience projects, we are working in partnership with Barr to launch a community of practice between the participating cities and other Massachusetts organizations that are actively working on heat resilience.

Good Jobs Metro Boston Coalition: Student-Employer Meet and Greet

As a strategic partner in the Good Jobs Metro Boston Coalition, MAPC continues to organize opportunities for students in local clean energy training programs to connect with high-quality employers in Greater Boston. On January 16, MAPC cohosted a second student-employer meet and greet with training partner AACA. Five clean energy companies joined to meet recent graduates and current students enrolled in AACA's Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills and Weatherization training programs. In the few weeks following the event, at least two students were interviewed for roles by employers they met at the event. MAPC and the Coalition are now focused on encouraging clean energy employers to attend Franklin Cummings Tech's April career fair and coordinating future meet and greets.

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant: Comprehensive Climate Action Plan Engagement

MAPC launched the Greater Boston Climate Action Plan (GBCAP) "Engagement Roadshow" in late January with a kick-off meeting with the RPA (Regional Planning Agency) Steering Committee. The Steering Committee includes MAPC and six other RPAs (including RPAs in New Hampshire) that serve the 168 municipalities in the Greater Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area. The group met in person at NMCOG's office in Lowell and spent the morning preparing for the upcoming events in February and March. During the Engagement Roadshow, each RPA will meet with municipal staff and community members to inform them about the GBCAP and collect input on the plan can support their climate action priorities. MAPC also created several flyers and a survey to collect input from stakeholders across the region.

Communications

Statement in Support of Preserving Hybrid Meeting Access

MAPC, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) recently announced their joint support for legislation to preserve current authorization to hold hybrid and remote public meetings in Massachusetts, which is scheduled to expire on March 31. We back the permanent codification of existing Open Meeting Law provisions in the Healey-Driscoll Administration's recently-filed Municipal Empowerment Act, or MEA. [Full statement available here.](#)

Statement in Support of Immigrants in Massachusetts

On February 4, MAPC executive leadership also issued a statement in support of immigrants in Massachusetts and opposing Trump Administration attacks on immigrants, the vast majority of whom have committed no serious offense and are contributing in meaningful ways to our Commonwealth. MAPC will continue to support immigration, and reasonable immigration reforms, as critical to our future growth and economic well-being. The statement is available [here](#).

Annual Report

MAPC's 2024 Annual Report is now available at 2024.mapc.org. The report includes highlights and accomplishments from each department, news, the agency's special recognitions and opportunities, and photos. MAPC has previously issued the [2024 Media Coverage Report](#), which is a comprehensive listing of where and when MAPC was mentioned in the media in 2024. Did you know that MAPC staff members were interviewed more than 35 times for news stories in 2024?

Housing in the News

I was interviewed by the Boston Globe's Andrew Brinker [for his story](#) on the Healey Administration's Comprehensive Housing Plan. I also contributed a quote to the [EOHLC's press release](#) announcing that accessory dwelling units are now permitted by-right across the state. Senior Housing and Land Use Planner Emma Battaglia and EOHLC Secretary Augustus [spoke to Boston.com](#) about the MBTA Communities Act.

Community Engagement

This past month, MAPC hosted a virtual **Community Engagement Conversation** with more than 65 participants, which provided space for planners and community engagement practitioners across the region to learn about a highly applicable framework for community engagement projects. **The Regional Interpreter Program** is a multi-municipal pilot project that will follow the recommendations from the Language Access Project and build off a local community interpreter model in Quincy. The program will work with municipalities to recruit three to four participants each to participate in a 45-hour community interpreter training. As part of the **Malden Open Space Recreation Plus Arts Planning**, MAPC successfully engaged with youth by collaborating with community organizations to

bring various groups together. MAPC continued one-to-one conversations with Council members, which informed the creation of the **new Council member orientation** content.

Data Services

Statewide Housing Plan released on February 6, 2025

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities released their first ever [comprehensive statewide housing plan](#) on February 6. Data Services and the Housing & Neighborhood Development Division served as research consultants for the plan in partnership with the UMass Donahue Institute.

Gloucester and Quincy Digital Equity Plan Completed

Digital Equity Planner Anagha Devanarayanan led the team in incorporating final edits to the Quincy and Gloucester Digital Equity Plans and submitting the completed documents to their respective cities and the Mass Broadband Institute (MBI). Final recommendations in Gloucester emphasized providing access to Wi-Fi for impacted populations in public spaces and facilities, as well as building on existing assets such as the soon-to-be launched Digital Learning Lab at the Sawyer Free Library. Recommendations in Quincy included amplifying existing programs, including digital literacy programs, from Quincy Community Technology Integration and Support (QCTIS), as well as focusing on municipal infrastructure improvements to support long-term broadband access.

With the completion of these plans, both Quincy and Gloucester will now be eligible for implementation funds from MBI to put at least one recommendation into action.

Environment

FY25-27 Accelerating Climate Resilience (ACR) Grant Program

MAPC is kicking off a new round of ACR grants with generous support from the Barr Foundation. This program funds actionable resilience interventions that facilitate long-term, innovative changes leading to greater readiness for climate change. MAPC seeks to elevate projects that will advance climate equity, regional coordination, and social cohesion. The MAPC project team is currently preparing to launch the next grant round, tentatively in Spring 2025. There will be a period for Expressions of Interest prior to the release of the Invitation for Proposals. For more details about ACR, visit <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/accelerating-resiliency/>.

Fostering Collaborations: A Symposium to Advance Equitable Heat Health Actions

In January, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation awarded MAPC \$125,000 to organize and host a regional symposium, with the goal of reducing the negative health impacts of climate change through research, policy, and program development and ultimately working towards a healthier future for all. MAPC, in partnership with the Center for Climate and Health at the BU School of Public Health, will engage with and foster constructive dialogue among key stakeholders across

sectors in the MAPC region. By bringing together experts and leaders from academic, state/municipal governments, healthcare, community-based organizations, foundations, and advocates, we seek to bridge the gap between research and practice. This project, which is a cross-department collaboration among Environment, Clean Energy, Public Health, and Government Affairs, will start in March and conclude by mid-July.

Cohasset Floodplain Bylaw Updates

The Environment and Land Use departments assisted Cohasset with updating its Floodplain Zoning Bylaw. Amendment to the Floodplain Bylaw passed unanimously at Special Town Meeting on December 9. As part of the project, MAPC developed a final memo, summarizing the process and outlining recommended best practices on flood resilience (informed by examples of similar efforts in other coastal municipalities such as Quincy, Scituate and Winthrop). This memo serves as guidance for evaluating and prioritizing potential projects in Cohasset's floodplain overlay district. Examples of the recommendations to Cohasset on flood resilience include (but are not limited to) protection of flood volume storage and restriction of development in the district.

Government Affairs

Meetings in Congress

Deputy Executive Director Lizzi Weyant, Senior Government Affairs Specialist Norm Abbott, and I attended the Annual Policy Conference of the National Association of Regional Councils in Washington last week. We used the occasion to meet with Congressman Seth Moulton, Congressman Stephen Lynch, and staff for Senator Ed Markey, Congressman Jake Auchincloss, and Congresswoman Katherine Clark. Conversations naturally focused on attacks against federal spending programs and their possible effects on city, town, and RPA finances. We also discussed transportation funding programs, various critical capital investments, earmarks for municipalities, and a wide array of related topics.

Immigration Webinar and Statement

The Government Affairs team led the first in a series of webinars about immigration on January 28. Co-hosted with the Mass. Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, the event had nearly 400 attendees and featured a panel of municipal leaders discussing best practices for welcoming and protecting immigrant communities. A recording of the briefing and resources shared are available [here](#).

Legislative Session Begins and Legislative Priorities Filed

In January, legislators were sworn in for the 194th General Session. There are 12 legislators newly elected to represent communities in the MAPC region. In the first weeks of the session, legislators filed more than 7,000 bills, among them the nearly 60 bills endorsed by MAPC, and many more that we are monitoring that would impact the region. The Government Affairs and Communications teams are also working to relaunch the Government Affairs website to spotlight the 20 bills that are top priorities for the agency and to direct visitors to site more effectively.

Land Use

Winchester Housing Production Plan Adoption

The recently completed Winchester Housing Production Plan was submitted to EOHLC for review. This Plan was locally adopted at a joint session of the Planning and the Select boards in January. The plan focuses on increasing deed-restricted affordable housing supply, as well as production of naturally occurring affordable housing for moderate-income households, targeting growth in specific smart locations, engaging the community, enhancing local implementation capacity, and simplifying housing permitting processes. The strategies complement recent successes, such as the local adoption of the Community Preservation Act in 2024, and recent zoning successes with the adoption of the MBTA Multifamily Overlay District and the Main Street Mixed-Use District.

3A Implementation Support in Rockland and Hingham

Using Grant Assistance Program (GAP) funds, MAPC supported Rockland and Hingham in submitting a [MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund](#) grant application to support sewer infrastructure improvements necessary for multi-family developments under the new 3A zoning. MAPC also promoted this grant opportunity at the January MetroWest subregional meeting.

Metro Mayors Coalition Housing Task Force Awarded \$150K Grant, Other Updates

MAPC received a \$150,000 Community One-Stop for Growth state grant to fund the Rightsizing Zoning project. This project will identify mismatches between current built form and local zoning regulations across all 17 participating communities and offer recommendations for continuing to modernize zoning to encourage desirable development types.

MAPC also updated the [Task Force's website](#) to include permitting data and information on local projects, policy priorities, and meetings. The Task Force met on February 5 to discuss anti-displacement efforts underway in Boston and Somerville.

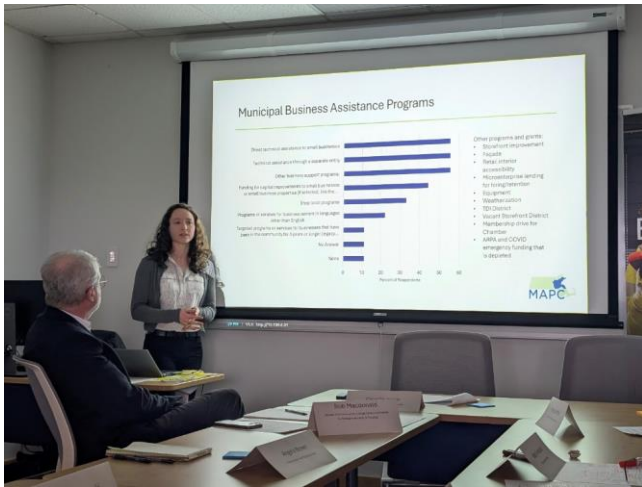
Statewide Housing Plan Release

MAPC's Data Services and Housing teams have been working with UMass Donahue Institute and Dain Research to support the development of the Statewide Housing Plan. MAPC played a critical role in the development of the housing needs assessment, population scenarios, and resource library materials (forthcoming). The [plan was released on February 6](#).

Small Business Resilience: Exploring Small Businesses in 10 Communities North & West of Boston

MAPC is developing a Small Business Resilience Plan to assess opportunities for the small business ecosystem in the 10 contiguous cities and towns north and west of Boston. On February 11, the Project Advisory Committee met in person at Bunker Hill Community College's Chelsea campus. At this meeting, committee members provided input to support the development of a plan, which, when completed, will offer various forms of support, including small business technical assistance, connections with loan providers, and ideas for municipal business support programs. The project will explore data on small businesses in the retail, food service, hospitality, recreation and entertainment industries, and industries affected by the Encore Casino in Everett. The effort is

funded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's Community Mitigation Fund. We extend our gratitude to the municipal staff and business support organization representatives who are serving on the Project Advisory Committee and look forward to their further input as we complete the plan.



Senior Economic Development Planner Camille Jonlin presenting to the Small Business Resilience Plan Advisory Committee. Photo credit: John Cruz

Economic Development Plan Completed for Braintree's Wood Road District

MAPC completed the [Wood Road District Implementation Plan](#), a comprehensive strategy designed to support the district's long-term economic growth, infrastructure enhancements, and community engagement efforts. This plan provides a roadmap for development and will facilitate a more vibrant, accessible, and sustainable Wood Road District. Developed through research and collaboration, including an Existing Conditions Report, community survey, focus groups, and an interactive workshop, the plan was shaped by the insights of local businesses, residents, and community stakeholders. A special thank you to Connor Murphy of the Town of Braintree and the Core Team for their leadership and expertise throughout the process.

Commented [AB1]: @Harris-Long, Andrea See what you think?

Municipal Collaboration

Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council

Through NERAC funding, MAPC contracted with a consultant to provide seven municipalities (Essex, Hamilton, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marblehead, Middleton, Topsfield, and Wenham) with cybersecurity incident response plans based on individualized vulnerability assessments and interviews. A tabletop exercise was then held for administrators to address steps and considerations for response to a cyber attack. This project has improved the municipalities' cybersecurity awareness and defenses, assisted with insurance requirements, and better prepared them to respond in the event of an attack affecting their operations or data.

Region 3 Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC)

Staff collaborated to update the HMCC Response Plan, which is intended to establish an organizational framework for the activation and management of HMCC activities in response to incidents or events having public health or healthcare implications. The Response Plan provides an overview of Region 3 HMCC's policies and organization during an emergency response and describes the structure and processes of a coordinated approach.

Charles Shannon Community Safety Initiative

The SFY25 Shannon Community Safety Initiative (CSI) grant, funded through EOPSS, has been awarded to the Metro Mayors Coalition for FY25. The total award amount is \$815,703, which includes the general Shannon award of \$757,298, as well as additional funds of \$58,404 dedicated to violence prevention initiatives at state or federally assisted public housing sites.

Transportation

New Federal Grant Awards Put on Hold

At the end of 2024, MAPC received two federal grant awards from the Federal Highway Administration, and separately, from the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation. The two grants included \$21.6 million to expand the Bluebikes system and to establish several new transit shuttles in Boston (plus a 20% match from MassDOT); and \$414,000 (plus a 50% match from the City of Boston) to pilot electrification of Bluebikes stations to charge e-bikes. Unfortunately, both grants are now paused under the Trump Administration's Executive Orders. MAPC Transportation and Government Affairs staff have been closely coordinating with our congressional delegation to support these programs and, hopefully, get them back on track.

Transit-Supportive Density in Greater Boston Report

On January 30, The Boston Foundation hosted an event to celebrate the release of a new report, *Transit-Supportive Density in Greater Boston*, by Boston Indicators and Transit Matters, exploring the interplay of transit and housing. MAPC's Assistant Director of Transportation Julia Wallerice joined the panel to discuss how transit-oriented density is integral to supporting optimal and frequent transit service. The report adds numeric benchmarks to help visualize and guide policymakers, advocates, and developers in expanding both housing and transit service. [Access the Event Recording and More Information](#) | [Read the Report](#)

Human Resources

We're excited to welcome four new team members who joined MAPC in January!

Samikshya Dhami has joined the Clean Energy Department as a Climate Planner I, after working a year as an intern. Her previous experience includes working with the South-Central Regional Council

of Governments in Connecticut and supporting policy and advocacy initiatives at the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts. Samikshya holds a Master's in Regional Planning from UMass Amherst and a B.A. in Environmental Science and Policy from Smith College.

Karla Kahale has joined the Municipal Collaboration Department as a Program Specialist. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from Clark University and a Master's in Criminal Justice from Salem State University. Karla brings valuable program management experience from her time at the Central MA Housing Alliance and has most recently overseen constituent services for Massachusetts State Senators Harriette Chandler and Michael Brady.

Nathan Powell has also joined Municipal Collaboration as a Municipal Services Specialist. He holds a B.A. in Urban and Regional Studies from Cornell University and a Master's in Geography, Urban, and Environmental Studies from Concordia University in Canada. Prior to joining MAPC, Nathan worked at MIT's Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism, where he managed projects and general operations. He has extensive experience in grants, budgeting, and financial reconciliation, and has also worked as a DEI consultant for the past three years.

Nubes Chen has joined the Arts & Culture Department as an Arts, Culture, and Humanities Planner II. She holds a Master's in City Planning with a concentration in Arts and Culture from USC. Nubes brings experience in cultural heritage preservation in China and arts-led community engagement through her work with Public Matters in Los Angeles.