

**Master Plan Steering Committee
Minutes
July 16, 2025**

The meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee was held at 6:30 p.m. on July 16, 2025 at Hull Memorial Middle School, 81 Central Avenue, Hull, Massachusetts.

Sarah Scott, Jiwon Park, and Samantha Berlus were present on behalf of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Scott said that at this meeting they will give an update on what MAPC has been doing since the last meeting, and will focus on three things: the role of the Steering Committee, the approach to community engagement and the drafting of a community engagement plan, which will involve talking to people and getting feedback, and the development of a community awareness campaign to inform residents that this process is underway.

Scott said MAPC is still in the first phase of the project which involves researching existing conditions in Hull to learn more about the town, its residents, its economy, etc. as well as looking at past plans and studies. They have started to speak with people to get a better understanding of the social fabric of the community and she said they have been conducting 1:1 interview with many of the community-based organizations that committee members suggested at the last meeting. She said these interviews have helped them understand how to reach all segments of the population including those who may be harder to reach such as seniors, and youth. Scott said they are also starting to research conditions in Hull as they relate to the key components of a Master Plan as outlined in the Massachusetts statute. She said they are hoping to have this phase wrapped up by the end of August and then will begin moving into the public-facing phase of the project.

Scott said that based on feedback they received after the last meeting they are focusing on five “context communities” to see where Hull is relative to similar communities. She said the communities they have selected are Nahant, Hingham, Ipswich, Rockport, and Winthrop. She said they had also asked the group to review Master Plans from other towns and to give feedback in three main areas: Content, Process, and Format. She said what they heard is that the Plan should be clear, easy-to-follow, and actionable, and that it should provide periodic check-ins throughout the process to allow for action on larger issues that were not identified earlier. She said the feedback indicated a desire to study context communities for analytical purposes, to include input from diverse community stakeholders, a collaborative decision-making process, and community awareness building through accessible platforms. She said the consensus was that the final product should be clear and concise with charts and illustrations that clearly show where things currently stand.

Scott said the role of the Steering Committee is to be a sounding board for the project team, which is MAPC and town staff. She said that members of the committee are individuals and do not necessarily need to reflect the exact perspective of the town board or committee they represent and said they are on the committee because the town feels they have a valuable perspective to bring to the process. She said they will be meeting monthly, and it will be the committee’s role to guide MAPC and the town, and to keep the project team on track and let them know if they are going in the wrong direction.

Scott said that the Planning Board will be the body that will vote to accept the plan, but MAPC recommends that other town boards and commissions also “adopt” the plan to indicate they understand it and will work to implement it. She said they will have periodic joint meetings with the Planning Board to discuss goals and strategies. She presented a tentative schedule of monthly meetings going from August through May to study existing conditions, draft a vision for the plan, set goals, establish strategies and actions, develop an outline, and draft a final plan. She said that some topics may need more time than others and the schedule can be changed if necessary.

Scott then presented a list of recommended Agreements for the committee:

- 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)
- Speak for yourself, not for others (use “I” statements)

- Respond, don't react

The group was comfortable with all the recommendations and did not feel anything else was needed.

Berlus spoke on the Community Engagement Plan. She said that MAPC leads their engagement work with an equity-centered framework that strives to eliminate processes that harm certain groups and is grounded in social, political, and historical factors. She said they work to build relationships, collaborate with residents and town leaders, to meet people where they are, and to integrate accessibility throughout engagement and make it workable for the people involved. She gave a brief overview of the timeline for the Community Engagement process:

1. Research existing conditions (Spring/Summer 2025) – will conduct initial community interviews, and draft a community engagement plan.
2. Establish vision (Fall 2025) – will conduct a survey that is geared toward targeting as many demographics as possible
3. Develop Goals (Winter 2025/2026) – will get community feedback and have a community-wide survey
4. Identify strategies and actions (Spring 2026) – will conduct follow-up community interviews.
5. Define priorities (Summer 2026) – will take the feedback they have received and hope to be able to hone down some of the priorities that Hull residents would like to see in a Master Plan

Scott said they define a community member (stakeholder) as anyone who has a real connection to Hull, whether it is someone who lives, works, shops, or visits the town. One committee member pointed out that the surveys should also be designed to include summer visitors.

Berlus said the Community Engagement Plan is being developed with guidance from 1:1 interview with CBOs that has helped them focus on the best ways to engage with low-income individuals, seniors, youth, and new families in Hull. They will be suggesting a mix of engagement methods that will allow them to hear from all segments of the Hull population including a town-wide community workshop, pop-up engagements (ex. library-pop-up sessions, Hull business tour), and targeted engagement (ex. youth visioning workshop, senior story-telling session). She said that between now and September they will complete the 1:1 conversations with CBOs, will do a tourism outreach, and in-person business tours and said that from September to December they would engage in a town-wide community workshop, hold more pop-up engagements, and have more targeted engagements with youth and seniors.

Berlus broke the committee into small groups to discuss the following questions:

- What do you want to hear from the community? What questions should we be asking?
- What engagement activities/ideas should we consider during this plan? (What groups in town should we consider doing engagement with?)
- What challenges have you encountered or seen when it comes to doing engagement in town?

After discussion the groups had the following thoughts/suggestions:

- How they can make Hull a better place to live?
- What do residents most love about living in Hull?
- What would make it easier to live in Hull and what would make you feel more included?
- There should be more engagement activities in larger areas of town such as the Post Office and the Village Market as well as at town events such as Endless Summer and the Car Show
- School sporting events might be valuable places for engagement
- A confidential town-wide survey would be valuable
- There should be outreach to tourists
- Social media should be used to target the younger population (there was a discussion of the various platforms that could be used for this)
- It might be useful to have targeted questions for town boards and committees and to encourage members to sign up for the MAPC email.

Berlus said that for the Community Awareness Campaign they would use various methods such as flyers, town media channels, and social media graphics to educate Hull residents on the plan. She asked each committee member to come up with a tagline they would use if they were developing a flyer for the Hull Master Plan. She said that taglines should be specific and something that would immediately draw people in. Several suggestions were made including:

- “Your Voice Matters”
- “Hull is Planning its Future now – Does it Matter to You? If so, connect here...”
- “Where the Sea Meets the Sand is Our Land – Help Plan Our Future”
- A possible pirate theme with buried treasure

There was a brief discussion about the use of the Lighthouse in terms of branding and the colors that should be used. There were several other options mentioned other than the Lighthouse including windmills, waves, the sunrise/sunset, the shape of the town and its shoreline. Scott said they have graphic designers at MAPC who will use this feedback to develop appropriate materials.

Scott opened the meeting up to questions and comments from members of the public who are not on the committee. A suggestion was made that there should be consideration given to various neighborhoods in the town. Scott said that although there may be some site-specific or neighborhood recommendations, they want to start with a higher-level vision and goals, but that later in the process there will be discussion about strategies and actions that apply these in more specific and targeted ways.

One member of the public said she feels that the Vision Statement that is on the town website might give a good sense of what the community wants and how the town sees itself. She suggested they might want to print this and review this at the next meeting. Scott said this is a good point.

Scott said that at the August meeting they will begin a series of presentations on Existing Conditions and will outline some of the upcoming community engagement activities. She said they might send out a survey before the next meeting so members can give their feedback and thoughts. There was a brief discussion of the best night for meetings. DiIorio said he would send out an email asking about everyone’s availability.

The meeting adjourned.

Recorded by Kathleen Fanning