

**Master Plan Steering Committee
Minutes
August 18, 2025**

The meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee was held at 6:30 p.m. on August 18, 2025 via the Zoom platform as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Sarah Scott and Jiwon Park were present on behalf of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Scott said the agenda for this meeting would cover the following topics: Project Updates, Demographics Analysis Summary, Community Engagement Plan, Volunteer Sign-Up, Visioning Survey Feedback, and Next Steps. She said they had sent out materials on the Community Engagement Plan and a preview of the Visioning Survey as well as a volunteer sign-up sheet before the meeting and asked if anyone had a chance to review this. It appeared that many had.

Scott reminded everyone of the Group Agreements around speaking that they had adopted at the last meeting. She also asked participants to raise their hand before speaking because this meeting is on Zoom.

Project Updates

Scott said that over June and July the MAPC team has done the following:

- Analyzed Hull socioeconomic demographic data to understand community composition
- Held 1:1 conversations with local and regional community-based organizations to understand Hull broadly and how to engage with diverse segments of the community
- Connected with local business owners and customers through show-up-and-talk
- Held 1:1 conversations with Town staff to understand their priorities, town projects, and initiatives
- Developed a Community Engagement Plan
- Developed a draft visioning survey

Scott said they are now working to implement the Community Engagement Plan they have developed. She said there are many upcoming community events and they are hoping committee members will represent the Plan at these. She said they will have a table at Endless Summer and are tentatively planning to host a community-wide Open House/Workshop on September 25th, which would be a complement to the Visioning Survey. She said they are also attempting to have 1:1 conversations with summer residents, are continuing town staff interviews, and are working on the best ways to engage with the HRA and DCR. She said they continue to analyze data to come up with takeaways for the 8 key topics specified by the state for Master Plans.

Demographics Analysis

Park gave a brief overview of the demographic analysis they have done to date, which covered several key areas.

Population. Park said that for the period from 1990 – 2020 Hull’s population decreased 4% and from 2010 – 2020 it had decreased 2%. She noted that in the overall SCC subregion there was a 14% population increase from 1990 – 2020 and a 6% increase from 2010 – 2020. She said that population in the context communities of Hingham, Winthrop, and Ipswich had increased while it had decreased in Rockport and Nahant.

Park said that what is interesting in the data is that while Hull’s overall population has decreased, the total number of households has increased about 25%. She said this could reflect seniors downsizing and moving to Hull after their children are grown, and could also indicate an increase in the number of non-traditional households. She said that currently about 56% of households in Hull identify as family, about 37% identify as singles living alone, and 7% identify as non-family households. Park said this data gives them a sense of the types of households they should be considering in terms of their engagement methods.

Public School enrollment. Hull’s public school enrollment has declined approximately 40% between 2005 and 2023. Park said several other context communities experienced a decline but none as great as Hull’s.

Age. Currently about 27% of Hull’s population is over age 65, which is an increase of 16% since 1990. The median age of the town’s population increased from 47 years to 54 years since 2011. Park said other context communities show a similar trend but it is not as marked as in Hull.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity. Hull remains mostly white but has become more diverse. She said approximately 8% of the total population identify as non-white and 5% were not born in the United States. (She said this data came from the most recent census.)

Income. In 2023 Hull had a median household income of about \$127,000, which is relatively higher than other context communities except Hingham, and is relatively high for Plymouth County and the state overall. However, Park said that 1/3 of households in Hull earn less than \$75,000/year, which is relatively lower and means that at least 50% of Hull’s households earn less than the median income. She noted that the median rent in Hull is currently just over \$3,000/month, which would technically be affordable only for people earning greater than \$120,000/year, meaning that about 50% of households in Hull earn less than needed to afford rents in the town.

A question was asked if the median income included summer residents. Scott said this information was based on census data that only includes people who consider Hull their primary residence.

Education. Park said that Hull residents have higher levels of education and over half have a college degree.

Seasonality of Hull. Park said that approximately 12% of the total housing in Hull is seasonal (referring to people with summer homes). This reflects a higher ratio of summer homes than most Greater Boston context communities but is much lower than areas such as Provincetown, Martha’s Vineyard, and Cape Cod. Approximately 1% of Hull’s housing stock is short-term rentals. Park said seasonality impacts employment and noted that their data shows a clear hike in employment during the summer months, particularly in the hospitality and restaurant sector.

Scott said they will be asking committee members to consider how this data helps them understand Hull, its residents, and its challenges and opportunities. She said the data might help them understand which context communities they could look to for specific goals or possible solutions to Hull’s challenges. She asked if anyone had a question on the data that had been presented.

Kate Barclay asked how they account for the population decrease given the huge burst of development and construction in the town. Park noted that the population has decreased but the number of households has increased and said that to understand this they need to talk to people to see how things have changed.

Scott said they would break into small groups and take about 10 minutes to discuss key takeaways from the data that would be helpful to make decisions about goals and strategies moving forward. She presented three questions for discussion:

- What surprised you about this information
- What additional information would you like to have
- How do you think the information should be shared

After the discussion period the groups presented these key takeaways:

- Surprise at the median income and a sense that income disparity in Hull is higher than in other towns they have been compared to
- A need for projections on whether aging and median income will continue to grow
- A need for data on seasonal rentals, Airbnb’s, number of vacancies in the housing stock and the type of vacancy (rentals or for sale), how long homes stay on the market, and overall, how long do people rent in Hull
- How does the data differ from one neighborhood to another
- How many people live in Hull and work in Hull for local businesses
- Focus on the aging population v. the school population and whether there is an ideal number of students to have in the town in terms of physical structures and staffing

There was a brief discussion of Airbnb's. Scott said the team had discussed the issue of Airbnb's and realized it would be very difficult to get accurate data from Airbnb so they are trying to think of ways to get useful information on short-term rentals.

Scott said that in terms of ideal school population they should talk to the schools to understand their physical space and staffing capacities, but the conventional wisdom is that it is best for a town to have a "population pyramid" where there is a healthy number of people in their middle years and smaller numbers on the top and bottom, preferably with a median age of 40 or less. She said it might be helpful for Hull to look at a community like Nahant that has faced a similar demographic trend and currently has an elementary school but is part of a regional system in the higher grades. Paul Newman asked if it might be part of the Master Plan to recommend regionalization. Scott said this might be raised as a consideration but since school systems operate so independently of the rest of town government they are not generally as big a component for a Master Plan.

Newman asked if they need two sets of data for Hull to account for the increase in population during the summer. Scott said they do not want to get too caught up in the data and need to find a balance that helps them confirm or perhaps change their ideas about what Hull is and what the trends are, and that will help them develop a vision and goals for the town.

Abby Klieman said she hopes they can get some guidance on the topic of the schools because they are a significant part of the town's budget and she assumes that some recommendations of the Master Plan will involve major capital expenditures.

Liz Kay said her group had asked if there is a context community that Hull should aspire to or whether they should be looking at more communities. Scott said she feels they did a good job in choosing the context communities because they are like Hull, but in different ways.

Community Engagement Plan

Scott said that Chris DiIorio had sent out a proposed timeline for the project:

- **August – October 2025: Visioning**
Promote the plan, hold town-wide open house, launch town-wide visioning survey, and conduct targeted engagement for summer residents and tourists by tabling at town events
- **December 2025 – February 2026: Goals**
Hold focus group and kitchen table conversations in partnership with the trusted cbo's, launch goals survey
- **March – May 2026: Strategies**
Connect with potential implementors of the plan to review and discuss draft strategies
- **June – August 2026: Draft Plan Comment Period**
Invite community-wide feedback on the draft plan

Scott said in the visioning stage they are focusing on getting the word out about the plan and the planning process. She said they will be attending community events and will be holding a town-wide Open House to have a conversation on visions for the future of Hull, and at the same time will be conducting the town-wide survey.

She said that during the goals phase, as they move toward the more technical aspects of the project, they will continue with the town-wide survey but will also hold focus groups and kitchen table conversations in partnership with community organizations. She said the strategy phase of the plan will not involve community engagement but they will be connecting with potential implementors of the plan – staff, property owners, employers, etc. – to understand how they can develop a plan that is actionable.

Scott said they will welcome community feedback on the full draft of the plan and will make sure it is available during the summer of 2026 so that it includes comment from summer residents.

Scott said they will welcome community-wide feedback on the full draft of the plan – sometimes they will do this as a comment period. They will make sure it is available throughout the summer so it includes summer people.

How You Can Help/Volunteer Sign-up

Scott said they currently need help connecting with longtime Hull summer families, the Yacht Club, the Saltwater Club, and Temple Israel. She asked that committee members plan to attend the Visioning Open House on September 25th at Hull High School, and that they sign up to help at the various community events. She said they have identified how many volunteers they need for each event, and will provide information about what they would be doing at each event. She said that members of the committee are trusted people in the community and having them out and talking to residents will be very helpful. Park said that Matt O’Sullivan has business cards that they can hand out at events and there is a flyer on the project website that can be printed and handed out as well.

Visioning Survey Feedback

Scott said that DiIorio had sent out a link to the survey so committee members could have a sense of the questions being asked. She said they would like feedback from them on the following questions:

- Are the questions clear, concise, and easy to understand?
- Are there any questions that feel repetitive or unnecessary?
- Did we mischaracterize Hull or refer to anything incorrectly? (e.g. called a neighborhood by the wrong name)

She said that she and Park had also put together a survey asking members’ feelings about the draft visioning survey and demographic information provided at this meeting and she would send that out to everyone. She said they would like the visioning survey to be live before Endless Summer, but the sooner they can get it out to residents the better. Park asked if everyone could submit their feedback on the draft survey by August 25th.

Newman said the question on the survey about whether a person identifies as middle eastern or north African seems a bit random. Scott noted that all the demographic questions are optional. Newman also asked that at future Zoom meetings either Scott or Park keeps participants updated on what is being written in the Chat. Scott said they would try to do that.

Danielle Dolan said she finds the section asking people to rank all the statements overwhelming and suggested it might be condensed or eliminated as she is afraid people may skip over it.

Liz Kay asked if this survey will be parallel to the survey used for one-on-one interviews. Scott said the interview conversations are separate and are used to get contextual information about Hull. She said the survey is aimed at people who live and work in Hull to obtain feedback specifically aimed at creating a vision for Hull.

Susan Vermilya said she feels there are things missing from the survey and does not think it is specific enough, for example in the areas of housing, the schools, how to draw more families into Hull, or whether they want Hull to be a tourism town. Scott said that more specific questions will be asked once they move into the goal section of the project. Vermilya also asked how they arrived at the list of people they are contacting. Scott said they are using the list the Committee developed at their first meeting. DiIorio said a list of the organizations they have contacted was on the Community Engagement Plan document he had sent out. Scott said it would be good for them to get suggestions for community-based organizations that might host a kitchen table conversation during the winter.

Scott said that for now they have paused the one-on-one conversations and are working to get word about the plan out in the community as broadly as possible.

Next Steps

Upcoming meetings:

September (on Zoom) – preview of visioning open house, and existing conditions topic discussions

October (on Zoom) – debrief visioning Open House, existing conditions topic discussions

November (in person) – drafting a vision, preview of goals engagements

December (on Zoom) – finalizing the Vision, existing conditions Topic Discussions

Homework

Scott said that before the next meeting they would like feedback on the demographic analysis and draft visioning survey. She also asked that members sign up for volunteer slots. DiIorio said there have been some good comments on the survey in the meeting's Chat and he would download those and send them to Scott and Park.

DiIorio said it appeared that meeting on the third Monday of the month seems to work well for most committee members. He said the next meeting will be on September 15th on Zoom and he will send out invitations.

Before closing the meeting Scott opened it up briefly for comments from members of the public.

Jeanne Paquin asked whether a list of the businesses they have contacted would be posted on the project webpage after this meeting and if it would be possible for members of the public to make suggestions. Scott said the list would be posted and Paquin would be welcome to make suggestions.

Anne Murray asked who she should contact with information about long-time summer residents who might be willing to speak to MAPC or participate in the survey. Scott said she should direct this information to either Chris DiIorio or Matt O'Sullivan.

Borges indicated that at their last Planning Board meeting it was the sense of the Board that they should be more involved in this process than they currently are. DiIorio said that Scott and Park will be speaking with the Board at their meeting on the 27th. Scott said any committee member who is on another board or committee is welcome to share what is going on at their meetings. She noted that they are moving into a phase of the project that will be much more focused on community engagement.

Borges said she does not see the meetings posted anywhere other than the Town Calendar. Scott said they will be doing a whole awareness campaign.

Klieman said she that at their meeting the Planning Board discussed wanting to review the survey before it goes out.

Park reminded everyone that they are hoping to have the survey out by Endless Summer so she asked that everyone submit their feedback by August 25th.

The meeting adjourned.

Recorded by Kathleen Fanning