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MetroWest Regional Collaborative (MWRC) Work Plan FY2026

Effective July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Adopted by the MWRC on September 25, 2025

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17 Introduction

18 The MetroWest Regional Collaborative (“MWRC” or “the Collaborative”) is a subregion group
19 within the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). The purpose of MWRC is to:

- 20 • provide a forum for communication and knowledge sharing between and among the
21 MWRC municipalities¹ about municipal and planning best practices;
- 22 • support regional coordination on policy and planning matters;
- 23 • advocate for regional priorities; and
- 24 • pursue projects of regional significance.

25 The purpose of the MWRC Work Plan FY26 is to provide an outline of goals and priorities,
26 establish a meeting schedule, and identify meeting topics and activities to be undertaken by the
27 MWRC and MWRC Coordinators for fiscal year 2026.

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29 MWRC Meetings

30 During FY2026, MWRC will hold two distinct meeting types: subregional meetings, and special
31 events. MWRC subregional meetings will be held monthly with special events held intermittently.
32 According to the MWRC Bylaws, there shall be a minimum of six meetings of the full
33 Collaborative each year.

¹ MWRC municipalities include Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Sherborn, Southborough, Wayland, Wellesley, and Weston

- 34 • **Subregional Meetings:** Meetings will generally be held from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on
35 the 4th Thursday of the month with presentations at the beginning followed by community
36 exchange. Agendas and topics for exchange will be circulated in advance. No meetings
37 will be held during the months of July, August and December. Meetings will be held via
38 Zoom with occasional in-person meetings where appropriate.
- 39 • **Special Events:** MWRC may include workshops, forums, tours, trainings, or planner
40 roundtables for municipal staff, in addition to annual events such as the MWRC Legislative
41 Breakfast. These events can replace subregional meetings.

42
43 **MWRC Meeting Agenda Items**

44 Meeting agendas will typically include time for:

- 45 • **Learning exchange:** Update on subregional or local projects that might be of interest and
46 applicable to members. This may include external presentations.
- 47 • **Community exchange:** Opportunity for each member to share notable municipal
48 achievements or updates.
- 49 • **Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) updates:** Updates and calls for feedback
50 on regional planning work such as MetroCommon x 2025 and topical planning work.
- 51 • **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) coordination:** Discuss priority projects for
52 the region and opportunities to engage with MPO staff regarding the Transportation
53 Improvement Plan (TIP), Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Unified Planning Work
54 Program (UPWP), and related transportation planning efforts. These conversations are
55 coordinated with the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) of the Boston Region
56 MPO.
- 57 • **Funding and technical assistance opportunities:** Update on programs, workshops,
58 funding opportunities, initiatives, meetings, etc. sponsored by MAPC and others that
59 MWRC members may be interested in attending.
- 60 • All meetings will be held remotely via Zoom with occasional in-person meetings where
61 appropriate. Updates to meeting dates, times, locations, will be posted on the [MAPC](#)
62 [MetroWest Regional Collaborative webpage](#).

64 **Proposed FY26 Meeting Topics**

65 The following are proposed topics for FY2026 meetings. All topics, times, and locations are
66 subject to change based on presenter availability and project status, but generally take place on
67 Thursday mornings at 8-9:30am on Zoom. Changes will be communicated well in advance. These
68 topics are based on voiced interest by Collaborative members and June 2025 projects & topics
69 survey results.

Date	Location	Topic
September 25, 2025 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom	MWRC Board Election, Work Plan Approval, Engagement/Communications Project Approval, MPO Elections, and In-Depth Community Share
October 23, 2025 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom	State Transportation Connections: Presentations and Q&A with contacts at CTPS, MBTA, and MassDOT about who to contact at each agency for various purposes,

Date	Location	Topic
		and any transportation questions from the Collaborative.
November 20, 2025 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom	Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Presentation and Implementation Discussion
January 15, 2026 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom or potential in-person	Historic Preservation Planning Presentation and Ideation; potential in-person indoor showcase
February 26, 2026 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom	Business Attraction 101 for Cities and Towns
March 27, 2026 (Friday 8-10am)	Holliston Town Hall	Legislative Breakfast at Holliston Town Hall
April 23, 2026 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom	MWRC Work Planning for FY27 and hold for a housing related topic that is relevant at that time
May 28, 2026 (weekday lunchtime)	Zoom or potential in-person	MetroWest staff lunch and coordination – lunch for regional town or city staff at lunchtime (anyone welcome to attend)
June 25, 2026 (Thursday 8-9:30am)	Zoom or potential in-person	Vision Zero & Safe Streets Demonstration Projects/Implementation Projects

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71 Potential other topics that have been voiced by Collaborative members include
 72 wastewater/stormwater, solar and electric vehicle (EV) charging, and municipal finance. These
 73 topics may be substituted for the listed topics if presenters are unavailable or there are other
 74 unforeseen circumstances. Many members have voiced interest in communications and community
 75 engagement; these topics are being pursued through a regional project that is requesting funding
 76 for approval at the time of this Workplan approval.

77

78 **Representatives, Leadership, and Staff**

79 **MWRC Representatives**

80 According to the MWRC Bylaws, each MWRC municipality may have two voting designees: one
 81 Select Board member or an appointed designee, or one Mayor or their appointed designee; and
 82 one member of the Planning Board or the Planning Board’s appointed designee. A majority of
 83 appointed members shall constitute a quorum. Additional staff and leadership from each
 84 municipality attend the meetings, but there are only two voting members per municipality.

85 A list of the prior year’s MWRC voting members is included at the end of this document.

86 **MWRC Community Organizations**

87 MWRC is fortunate to also include key partners in work across the region at meetings. In recent
 88 years, meetings have regularly included:

- 89 • the 495/MetroWest Partnership
- 90 • Mass Audubon
- 91 • MetroWest Regional Transportation Authority (MWRTA)
- 92 • MetroWest Nonprofit Network

- 93 • Staff from Legislative Offices
- 94 • Municipal officials from neighboring municipalities

95
96 MWRC meetings and events are open to the public and, as such, additional members from
97 municipalities and community-based organizations are encouraged to attend, particularly when
98 the topic of discussion impacts their work. Recommendations for additional attendees are always
99 welcomed.

100 [MWRC Executive Board](#)

101 The MWRC Executive Board assists the Coordinators in the MWRC management and is authorized
102 to act in place of the Collaborative on any matters that arise between scheduled meetings.
103 Annual elections are typically scheduled for the same meeting as approval of the workplan.

104 [MWRC Staff \(“Coordinators” or “Subregional Coordinators”\)](#)

105 The Coordinator(s) works with the MWRC Executive Board to represent MetroWest’s interests at
106 MAPC, communicate MAPC’s priorities in MetroWest, draft the annual work plan, schedule
107 meetings and prepare agendas, organize forums and workshops, and provide technical
108 assistance to participating municipalities when needed. Coordinators also help implement MWRC
109 projects at MAPC and provide regular correspondence regarding MAPC or MWRC projects,
110 events, meetings, announcements, or funding opportunities.

111 [MWRC Representation at MPO and MAPC Committees](#)

112 The City of Framingham currently represents MWRC at the Boston Region MPO. The Boston
113 Region MPO is composed of 22 voting members and two nonvoting members.

114 We are fortunate as a region to have MWRC members Colette Aufranc, Town of Wellesley,
115 MAPC Executive Committee member, and Imaikalani (Imai) Aiu, Town of Weston as MAPC
116 Secretary and [MAPC Executive Committee](#) member. Imai is also a member of MAPC’s Legislative
117 Committee; the legislative committee meets monthly to set the legislative policy agenda for the
118 entire agency and is comprised of members from each subregion and coalition partners.

119

120 [Funding and Finances](#)

121 There are four main funding sources for MWRC’s project work and facilitation by MAPC.

- 122 • Federal transportation funds are allocated from the [Boston Metropolitan Planning](#)
123 [Organization \(MPO\)](#) to facilitate public participation in the development of the MPO’s
124 annual [Unified Planning Work Program \(UPWP\)](#), including the [Transportation Improvement](#)
125 [Program \(TIP\)](#).
- 126 • MWRC Coordinator time is funded by MAPC’s annual assessment collected from its
127 member municipalities via the community’s [Cherry Sheet](#).
- 128 • Funding for regional projects may also be sought from the [MAPC Technical Assistance](#)
129 [Program](#) (DLTA and PMTA) and other state grant or technical assistance programs.
- 130 • MWRC member communities also pay into the MWRC Special Assessment Fund, which is
131 used to support larger regional projects and forums for member communities such as
132 understanding regional best practices, implementing emerging practices, and multi-
133 municipal collaboration. Each municipality pays into the Special Assessment annually with a
134 base fee of \$1,500 plus ten cents (\$0.10) per capita. MAPC holds the funds for the

135 Collaborative, but any and all use of funds is dependent on an affirmative vote by the
136 Collaborative members as per the MWRC Bylaws. Some projects are supplemented
137 through other funding streams. When all Collaborative communities pay the fee,
138 approximately \$38,000 is available annually for use by the Collaborative.

139 MWRC Bylaws

140 The MWRC Bylaws, adopted October 1985 and last revised April 2024 include additional
141 details regarding the purpose of the committee, membership, officers, elections, fees, and
142 meetings. [MWRC Bylaws](#) are available on the MWRC website and upon request.
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144 Communications

145 **Meeting Notice:** Official MWRC meeting notices are posted on the MWRC webpage of the
146 MAPC website at <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/mwrc-subregion/> at least 48 hours in
147 advance of each meeting.
148

149 Meeting agendas and materials will be kept on file at MAPC and made available upon request.
150 The Collaborative communicates its activities through two main avenues, which include:

- 151 ● **Email:** MWRC Coordinators send out periodic emails on upcoming meeting dates and
152 agendas and provide notice about funding and technical assistance opportunities, as well
153 as events of interest.
- 154 ● **Website:** The MWRC website, <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/mwrc-subregion/>
155 is a resource for anyone interested in learning more about the MWRC. The MWRC
156 Coordinators, Camille Jonlin and Travis Pollack, are the main points of contact for all
157 matters related to the Collaborative. They may be reached at cjonlin@mapc.org and
158 tpollack@mapc.org.
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Appendix – Recently Completed Regional Projects

Regional projects are longer-term initiatives that typically involve several or all MWRC communities, engage MAPC staff as facilitators and technical assistance providers, and address a scope of work and objectives over a defined period of time. The Collaborative completed and started several regional projects in Fiscal Year 2025.

1. **LandLine/MW Trails and Greenways.** MAPC has been working with Collaborative communities on advancing planning, design and construction of trails for several year, with the purpose of filling in gaps in the regional [LandLine](#) network. Recent work has focused on closing at least one priority trail gap in each participating municipality with an opportunity for communities to choose a new focus if necessary.

In October 2024 more than 80 trail advocates, supporters, nonprofits, municipal staff, and elected officials gathered at the Ashland Community Center for the annual MetroWest Trail Summit. Since 2017, the communities of Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Wayland, Wellesley, and Weston have worked together to create a connected, prominent, regional active transportation and recreation network that follows MAPC's Landline Vision Plan.



With a focus on Ashland, the 2024 MetroWest Trail Summit highlighted advancing the Upper Charles Trail in the town, including connections to the East Coast Greenway in Framingham, as well as to Ashland and Hopkinton State Parks. MAPC staff members also presented on the Holliston Creative Placemaking Strategy, which included a call for public art and resulted in new murals across Holliston. Additional speakers included Senate President Karen Spilka, Senator Jamie Eldridge, and Representative Jack Lewis, and many others.

After the speaking portion of the event, attendees were invited to participate in two walks to adjacent trails: one to an abandoned rail right of way to the west of the Community Center that has the potential to be developed into a trail; and the other to Ashland State Park, where a bridge will be replaced to allow for more accessible access.

190 2. **School Fleet Electrification** (FY2024/FY 2025). This project studied pathways to electrify
191 school transportation in each community with consideration of opportunities for funding
192 and regional collaboration. The aim is a study that results in recommended strategies and
193 considers financial, operational/logistical, political and equitable access implications. This
194 report aims to position communities to be able to apply for anticipated state and federal
195 funding.

196 The project addresses several community needs: reducing greenhouse gas emissions and
197 improving air quality, reducing noise pollution in the community, diminishing racial and
198 social disparities by providing equal access to clean and safe transportation for all
199 students. All MWRC communities participated along with other communities that are part
200 of school districts in greater MetroWest.

201 3. **Regional Trails Creative Placemaking** (FY2024/FY2025). In October 2023 MAPC staff
202 hosted a Regional Trails Creative Placemaking Workshop in Holliston as part of the
203 [Regional Trails Creative Placemaking Strategy](#) project. The workshop included interactive
204 mapping activities, breakout group discussions, and “WalkShop” discussions on using arts
205 and culture, including inclusive signage and wayfinding, to connect trails with commercial
206 areas and make them inclusive for all users.

207 Caoim O’Durgy, a
208 talented artist
209 based in
210 Somerville, MA,
211 was selected to
212 create vibrant
213 murals that will
214 connect Holliston
215 Downtown and the
216 Rail Trail. O’Durgy,
217 leading his team,
218 The Good Boy
219 Collective—a
220 trans-led group of
221 artists dedicated to
222 fostering support
223 and collaboration
224 within the artistic
225 community—brings
226 a unique illustrative
227 style that beautifully captures the essence of Holliston’s past, present, and future.



228 His mural design features a pavilion symbolizing Holliston’s history, with a trail weaving
229 through the town’s architecture and creating a path through time. Portals found in
230 doorways physically connect different eras, inviting viewers to reflect on the town’s rich
231 heritage. The mural also includes dynamic 3D hanging acrylic pieces that depict how the
232 rail-trail might be traveled in different periods, with some figures designed to move in the
233 wind. In addition to the main mural, O’Durgy has designed murals for two electric boxes.
234 The artwork was celebrated at an unveiling in September 2024 with music, art, dancing,
235 and food.

236 4. **Municipal Communications Best Practices Municipal Communications Study (FY2025).**
237 This study explored sought to understand how each city or town in the MWRC region is
238 currently communicating with constituents and what challenges the staff face in reaching
239 residents or particular populations. MAPC Senior Communications Specialist Tim Viall
240 interviewed staff members in 9 of 10 MWRC municipalities who are responsible for
241 communications, and analyzed responses.

242 In addition to the above regional projects, the Collaborative hosted its annual MWRC Legislative
243 Breakfast in March 2025. This year's Legislative Breakfast was hosted jointly with the [SouthWest](#)
244 [Advisory Planning Committee](#) (SWAP) subregion at the Thayer Homestead in Medway.



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