



FY27 Work Plan

Effective July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

Purpose

This work plan identifies the goals of the North Shore Task Force (NSTF) for the 2027 fiscal year (FY27) and outlines the activities the Subregional Coordinator will undertake to support NSTF member communities.

Background

The NSTF is one of eight [subregions convened by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#). MAPC's subregional program encourages two-way communication between MAPC and local partners; designs innovative project ideas and policy recommendations; fosters dialogues and programs to advance equity, regional collaboration and resiliency goals across the region; and provides collaborative peer support for planners, local elected officials, and municipal staff. Each subregion is comprised of multiple communities with shared interests that have formed a voluntary association to facilitate cooperative regional planning. The subregional program is funded by two sources: funds from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to implement the annual Unified Planning Work Program and funds collected through MAPC's annual assessment.

The NSTF is composed of the following municipalities: Beverly, Danvers, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester, Marblehead, Middleton, Nahant, Peabody, Rockport, Salem, Swampscott, Topsfield, and Wenham. Municipal planning staff and volunteer land use board members comprise the majority of members, but membership is informal and open to anyone who works to advance smart growth and regional collaboration in those communities. Each city and town in the subregion is encouraged to send a representative to NSTF meetings, but attendance is not mandatory. Community-based organizations and state and local legislative offices are also encouraged to attend.

Subregional Program Goals

1. Create a space for peer support for planners and municipal staff;
2. Provide a pathway for resource-sharing and information-gathering;
3. Serve as a container for innovation and project development; and
4. Offer opportunities for leadership development.

Subregional Coordinator Responsibilities

The main responsibility of the Subregional Coordinator is to implement the work plan. The Subregional Coordinator will assume that 7.5 hours of the work week will be devoted to supporting the NSTF, though that amount may vary by week. Specifically, the Subregional Coordinator will do the following:

- Organize regular meetings and special events;
- Share timely information about relevant events, meetings, announcements, and funding opportunities;
- Meet regularly with NSTF communities to understand opportunities and challenges;
- Meet regularly with MAPC staff working on projects or otherwise providing support to member communities to understand opportunities and challenges;
- Represent NSTF's interests through various MAPC channels and forums;
- Coordinate with MPO staff on subregional transportation priorities and facilitating closer connections between subregional groups and the MPO board;

- Provide small-scale technical assistance to NSTF communities by request; and
- Draft the annual work plan.

Work Program

Monthly Meetings

The Subregional Coordinator will convene monthly meetings open to all NSTF members. The focus of each meeting will fall into one of three categories: community exchange, where attendees talk about recent challenges and successes in their community; skills building, where attendees learn about best practices related to their work; or MAPC updates, where MAPC staff share information about the agency's work.

NSTF members identified the following topics of interest for FY27:

- Massachusetts legislative updates;
- Leveraging public land for affordable housing;
- Building relationships and buy-in with property owners and developers;
- Lookback at ADU regulation, permitting, and production since the Affordable Homes Act;
- Relationship between water infrastructure and land use planning;
- Equitable community engagement;
- Establishing and running municipal affordable housing trusts; and
- Regulating short-term rentals to balance housing, environment, and economic development goals.

Meetings will typically be held on the third Thursday of the month from 9:30-11:00 a.m. unless circumstances require a change in meeting date or time. Meetings are generally not held in July, August, or December. Most meetings will take place remotely via Zoom, but occasional in-person meetings will be arranged when appropriate. Information about upcoming meetings will be posted to the [NSTF webpage](#) and an email will be sent to members of the NSTF mailing list. All NSTF meetings are open to the public, but they are not considered to be public meetings for the purposes of the Open Meeting Law.

Special Events

The Subregional Coordinator may intermittently organize special events to support the goals of the subregional program. These events may include workshops, forums, tours, trainings, or roundtable discussions. In addition, MAPC will hold an annual legislative breakfast in conjunction with the North Suburban Planning Council or a similar event with legislators. Special events may replace regular subregional meetings for the month in which they are held.

NSTF members identified the following special event of interest for FY27:

- Convening for land use board members and staff on planning best practices.

The Subregional Coordinator is also available to present at municipal land use board or Select Board/City Council meetings to talk about MAPC and planning best practices to support municipal planning goals.

Regional Initiatives

The Subregional Coordinator will identify and support opportunities to advance regional initiatives that benefit multiple NSTF communities.

NSTF members identified the following regional initiatives of interest for FY27:

- Applying for a OneStop grant to support a training series on inclusionary zoning policy development;
- Developing a comparative guide to individual municipal approaches to zoning; and
- Researching municipal fiscal benefits of administrative support for planners.

MAPC Capacity-Building

In addition to providing direct support and resources to NSTF communities, the Subregional Coordinator will work to build capacity within MAPC to achieve the subregional program goals. This may include:

- Supporting project managers doing work in the subregion, including coordinating quarterly staff project shares, advising on scoping and community engagement, and helping staff meetings and events;
- Creating tools that connect staff to resources in the subregion, including event venues, caterers, and community-based organizations;
- Developing multi-municipal projects that advance regional goals; and
- Serving on the PIE Rivers Partnership Steering Committee.