

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

Created in 1963, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) promotes inter-local cooperation and advocates for smart growth by working closely with cities and towns, state and federal agencies, non-profit institutions, and community-based organizations in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston. MAPC strives to provide leadership on emerging issues of regional significance by conducting research, building coalitions, and acting as a regional forum for action.

MAPC provides technical assistance and specialized services in land use planning, water resources management, transportation, housing, environmental protection, economic development, public safety, geographic information systems (GIS), collective purchasing, data analysis and research, legislative and regulatory policy, and the facilitation and support of inter-local partnerships. More information about MAPC's services and ongoing activities is available at www.mapc.org.

MAPC is governed by 101 municipal government appointees, 21 gubernatorial appointees, and 13 appointees of state and City of Boston agencies. An Executive Committee comprising 25 elected members oversees agency operations. The agency employs approximately 40 professional staff under the leadership of an executive director. Funding for MAPC activities is derived from governmental contracts and foundation grants, and a per-capita assessment on member municipalities.

To better serve the people who live and work in Metro Boston, MAPC has divided the region into eight subregions. Each subregion is overseen by a council of local leaders and stakeholders, and a staff coordinator provides organizational and technical staff support.

Smart Growth across Municipal Boundaries

MAPC's MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region initiative is planning for Metro Boston's growth and development through 2030. In 2006, the project involved nearly 2000 people. At more than 50 briefings, participants analyzed "Scenario 1: Current Trends to 2030," MetroFuture's "base case" of what the region might look like if current trends continue. We also hosted two working sessions in June 2006, where participants designed alternatives to the "base case," and two in December 2006, where participants chose the scenario they liked the best. In 2007, after additional public input and a May 1, 2007 Boston College Citizens Seminar, the project will complete a regional strategy to achieve the preferred scenario.

MAPC assisted cities and towns in a variety of ways throughout 2006. The agency helped over 70 cities and town to rewrite zoning by-laws, evaluate smart growth uses for key parcels, keep traffic under control and expand transit, deal with crime, and prepare for natural disasters.

As a member of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, MAPC worked with six allied organizations to advocate for sustainable development throughout the Commonwealth. MAPC participated in a successful Alliance campaign to recapitalize and reform the state's Brownfields Tax Credit; researched, analyzed, and reacted to significant state land use and transportation policy proposals, including Governor Romney's 20-year transportation plan; and advanced research about the impact of sprawling development in Massachusetts.

In partnership with the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, MAPC produced the Massachusetts Low Impact Development Tool Kit, which presents state-of-the-art practices for managing stormwater and increasing the recharge of water to aquifers. MAPC also produced *Once is Not Enough: A Guide to Water Reuse in Massachusetts*, a manual that describes techniques for non-potable reuse of treated wastewater and provides case studies of several successful water reuse projects in Massachusetts. In partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey, MAPC began work on a hydrologic modeling project that simulates the impacts of future development on the water resources of the Charles River and Assabet River watersheds.

Getting Around the Region

In March 2006, MAPC sponsored a conference on the impact of transportation emissions on public health. The workshop began a process to build connections, raise awareness, and stimulate action around the issue of air pollution adjacent to major roadways and rail corridors. The content and results of this workshop are available at www.mapc.org/air_quality.

MAPC developed a Regional Bicycle Plan in 2006 to assess current conditions and to guide future improvements to bicycle transportation in the region. The plan reviews goals set in previous plans, and proposes six general goals and strategies for the region, including encouraging more trips by bicycle in each community, working with state and federal agencies to simplify and coordinate funding programs, and

increasing regional knowledge about bicycling. The plan can be accessed at www.mapc.org/transportation/transportation_alternatives.html.

A consistent complain of bicyclists is the lack of parking. To address this need, MAPC worked with the MPO and EOT to develop the Regional Bike Parking Program. Under this program, MAPC negotiated discount group purchasing contracts with three leading vendors of bicycle parking equipment, funded through federal transportation funds. More information about MAPC's bicycle and pedestrian planning activities, and the bike parking program, is available at www.mapc.org/transportation/transportation_alternatives.html.

Collaboration to Address Shared Municipal Challenges

MAPC, through its Metro Mayors Coalition, played a leading role in developing legislation to create a statewide anti-gang initiative known as the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative, which supports regional and multi-disciplinary gang and youth violence prevention and law enforcement efforts. MAPC coordinated Shannon grants totaling \$1.2 million for 10 Metro Boston communities and 7 Essex County communities. These communities used the funds to enhance public safety through targeted workforce development, after-school mentoring, re-entry initiatives, gang-prevention education, and collaborative community policing.

MAPC facilitated the work of the Municipal Health Insurance Working Group, which drafted and proposed landmark legislation to let cities and towns purchase their health insurance through the Group Insurance Commission.

Collaboration for Safety

MAPC carries out fiduciary, planning, and project management duties for the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC), a network of 85 cities and towns north and west of Boston. In 2006, NERAC distributed more than \$1.5 million in emergency equipment and supplies to member communities, and trained hundreds of first responders in various roles in the United States Department of Homeland Security incident command system.

In 2006, MAPC advanced Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) plans for cities and towns throughout the region. These plans are designed to help communities reduce their vulnerability to damages due to natural hazards. The plans include an inventory of critical facilities and infrastructure in each community, a vulnerability analysis, and a mitigation strategy with specific recommended actions and projects that will protect the communities from future damages.

Collaboration for Savings

MAPC's Consortiums Project administered 37 procurement contracts for 42 municipal clients in 2006, saving cities and towns up to 20% on the purchases. As the administrator of the more than 300-member Greater Boston Police Council (GBPC), MAPC concluded 7 procurement contracts for public safety, public works and general use vehicles. In all, 142 municipalities purchased 180 vehicles. MAPC staff also collaborated on procurements that advanced MAPC's environmental and transportation objectives, helping communities to buy bicycle racks, hybrid vehicles, and water leak detection services at a favorable cost.

Charting a Course to Regionwide Prosperity

MAPC developed its annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), an assessment of current regional economic trends and conditions. The report includes background about trends and conditions in the regional economy, including a discussion about the relationship between the economy and factors such as geography, population, labor force, resources, and the environment. MAPC's 2006 CEDS report can be downloaded at www.mapc.org/economic_development/comprehensive_economic.html.

Tools to Improve Planning and Decision-Making

MAPC's Metro Data Center partnered with The Boston Foundation to develop the MetroBoston DataCommon, a new online data and mapping tool for residents and leaders in the region. The resource, which helps individuals to create customized maps and charts, is available at www.MetroBostonDataCommon.org. The Data Center partnered with MAPC's Legislative Committee to advocate for the establishment of a statewide population estimates program at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute. The program, funded at \$100,000 in the FY2007 budget, lays the foundation for the Commonwealth to analyze Census estimates in a more robust way.

MAPC's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Lab provides professional services and products and technical assistance in support of local and regional planning projects. In 2006, MAPC's GIS team completed extensive projects for the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC)

region, and maps associated with the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, both of which are described above. The GIS Lab also made major contributions to the MetroBoston DataCommon and the MetroFuture planning project. The Lab also began mapping areas suitable for economic development throughout the region, in accordance with smart growth principles.

In 2006, MAPC transitioned from a paper to an electronic newsletter, the **Regional Record**, which is distributed quarterly, and provides updates on the latest regional projects and thinking, and provides opportunities for residents and communities to get involved in various events. People interested in receiving the e-newsletter can send their e-mail addresses to contactinfo@mapc.org.

On Beacon Hill: 2005 – 2006 Legislative Session

- **Brownfields Redevelopment:**

The Legislature recapitalized the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund with \$30 million, and extended and enhanced the Brownfields Tax Credit so that non-profit development projects can raise equity by selling the credit to taxable entities.

- **Expedited Permitting:**

The Legislature passed a law to expedite permitting of commercial/industrial developments in “priority development sites” designated by cities and towns. In part as a result of MAPC’s advocacy, the new law includes funding for technical assistance to municipalities, development of a statewide expedited permitting model, and criteria to steer priority development sites toward smart growth locations.

- **GIS Data Layer:**

MAPC successfully advocated for \$400,000 in the FY2007 budget to update and improve the quality of Mass GIS data linking aerial photographs to land uses on the ground.

- **Statewide Population Estimates Program:**

MAPC led the advocacy effort to establish a statewide population estimates program at the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute. The program was funded at \$100,000 in the FY2007 budget.

- **Shannon Community Safety Initiative:**

The Legislature created a new \$11 million grant program to encourage the creation of regional, multi-disciplinary initiatives to combat gang violence, youth violence, and substance abuse.

- **Sewer Rate Relief:**

The Legislature included \$25 million in the FY2007 budget for water and sewer rate relief, which will help lower costs for residential consumers and businesses served by sewer districts, including the MWRA.

- **Surplus Land:**

Both the House and Senate passed legislation to reform the state’s surplus land disposition policy. Both bills included an assignable municipal right of first refusal to purchase the parcel at a discount; a professional smart growth review for larger parcels; a Surplus Land Coordinating Council to oversee disposition; and a municipal share of 10%-25% of proceeds in instances where the municipal right of first refusal is not exercised. Unfortunately, the Conference Committee did not advance the bill to final passage, but significant progress was made setting the foundation for the 2007-08 legislative session.

Two major development issues were also highlighted this year; mixed-use zoning and Chapter 40R. MAPC presented an overview of the mixed-use zoning toolkit that is available on the website. Based on member interest, the November meeting was a panel discussion of Chapter 40R that brought together consultants and communities to share their experiences with 40R.

The two key environmental issues that were addressed were peak season water demand management and the natural hazard mitigation planning grant. Seven NSPC communities chose to participate in the regional grant to develop natural hazard mitigation plans. This planning effort got underway in July.

Inner Core Committee (Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Braintree, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Holbrook, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Milton, Nahant, Newton, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Saugus, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, Winthrop)

The Inner Core Committee held 8 regular meetings in 2006. At the meeting, communities share what is happening in their community and stay up-to-date and provide input on MAPC initiatives including MetroFuture and legislative issues,

Guest speakers in 2006 included:

- Wendy Landman of WalkBoston discussed coping with school traffic and encouraging walking.
- Ken Buckland, Principal at the Cecil Group and Ted Tye, Managing Partner at National Development discussed tools and techniques to build public support for transit oriented development projects.

- Stephen Greeley, President DCA, Inc., discussed how to use the arts to stimulate local economic development.

The ICC elected Lisa Lepore (Somerville) as chair and Gregory Watson (Watertown) as vice chair. The ICC thanks outgoing chair and vice chair Jeff Levine (Brookline) and Ezra Glenn (formerly of Somerville).

Actions taken by the Committee in 2006 include approving a FY 07 work plan, commenting on the proposed Central Artery Commitment Regulatory Changes, and determining Inner Core priorities for the UPWP and TIP. The ICC also continued to participate on the MPO's RTAC.

Respectfully submitted,
Marc D. Draisen, Executive Director