

MAPC Matters

*A monthly newsletter from the
Metropolitan Area Planning Council*

July 1, 2021



MetroCommon 2050

Watch it now: “At Home,” evocative new film on housing

Watch and share [At Home](#), an original short film that shows the human side of the region’s housing crisis. Clocking in at just over five minutes, *At Home* was created to help community members step into the shoes of their neighbors who need a decent place to live. The film is free for use by Planners, policymakers, and others to use as a tool to educate their stakeholders. [Watch At Home here.](#)

New Municipal and Regional Finance Policy Recommendations

MetroCommon’s policy recommendations for Municipal and Regional Finance are out, and we want your thoughts! Proposed strategies and actions address the sufficiency and resilience of revenues, and the equitability revenue sources. [Read and react here to these new recommendations](#), or to the recommendations published last month [here](#).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MAPC Economic Development Team Facilitates ARPA Funding Discussions

MAPC's Economic Development team is convening regional discussions about ways to leverage ARPA stimulus funding to create regional initiatives in the areas of small business support and digital access. The small business support conversations are concentrating on ways to support businesses owned by people of color and women through capital, technical assistance, and other supports. The digital access discussions have focused on solutions to improve connectivity to ensure that all residents and stakeholders have sufficient internet access.

These discussions are open to all communities! Please contact **Betsy Cowan Neptune**, bcowan@mapc.org, for information about the small business initiative and **Josh Eichen**, jeichen@mapc.org, for information about the digital access initiative.

TRANSPORTATION & CLEAN ENERGY

Ride-for-Hire Electrification Working Group Policy Recommendations

In the fall of 2020, EOEEA invited MAPC to serve as the primary facilitator and convener of the Ride-for-Hire Electrification Working Group to develop policy and incentive recommendations to accelerate electrification of the ride-for-hire industry, which includes ride-hailing vehicles (Uber and Lyft), taxis, and livery vehicles.

The group included representation from the ride-hailing sector, taxi and livery industries, utilities, state agencies, environmental groups, and the private sector. Strong and near-consensus support was reached for all 14 of the final policy proposals, which focus on vehicle incentives, charging infrastructure, dedicated funding sources, and education and driver incentives. The final policy brief is available [here](#).

TRANSPORTATION

“Get It Rolling” Workbook on Bus Improvements

In 2016, Everett piloted the first shared bus/bike lane in the Greater Boston region since the Silver Line in Boston. Everett’s transformative bus lane led to a domino effect in Greater Boston, with numerous other municipalities piloting and launching bus lanes throughout the region.

To help other communities build on the lessons learned, MAPC released [“Get it Rolling: A brief guide to mobilize bus improvements in Greater Boston.”](#) The guide lays out steps to help municipal staff, community leaders, and advocates launch successful bus improvements in high-ridership, high-delay corridors. These projects are important tools in achieving climate, equity, and transit goals, as well as improving quality of life for our region.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Particulate Policy: An argument for a regulatory approach to transportation-related ultrafine particle exposure

MAPC and the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health (CAFEH) released [“Particulate Policy: An argument for a regulatory approach to transportation-related ultrafine particle exposure.”](#) Particulate matter (PM) pollutants are of special concern due to their small size and ability to penetrate tissues and organs. The paper discusses the basics of PM pollution and lays out state and local policy changes that could protect health.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

FY22 Budget Update

With the FY22 budget still being negotiated by a conference committee, Gov. Charlie Baker signed an interim spending bill earlier this week that will finance state government after the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. This process has become standard in recent years-- it has been a full 11 years since the governor signed a budget into law before the new fiscal year dawned. The interim budget will provide \$5.41 billion dollars to cover the bills and services estimated for the first month of the year and will allow the conference committee to continue negotiations. After the conference committee releases its report, the bill needs to be voted on by both branches and then go to the Governor for his review and signature. A summary of MAPC priorities for the FY22 budget is available [here](#).

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

ARPA was signed into law on March 11, 2021 and was designed to be the first COVID recovery bill, different than a relief bill and states and municipalities are starting to receive the funds. Massachusetts is set to receive a total of \$8.7 billion to be spent by 2026.

Local Funding. \$3.4 billion will go directly to local governments. More information for municipalities about the eligible uses of public health emergency, premium pay, revenue loss and infrastructure can be found in the materials from Division of Local Services and from US Treasury (Interim Final Rule, Fact Sheet).

Statewide Funding. Under legislation signed this week, about \$4.89 billion of the roughly \$5.3 billion that the state government will receive will be swept into a fund controlled by the Legislature. We anticipate more discussion in the coming weeks about how to spend these dollars.

Remote Meetings and Pandemic Related Policy Adaptions

When the COVID-19 State of Emergency ended on June 15th, the Legislature and Governor stepped in to provide extensions to some, but not all, of the pandemic related policy adaptations. Among the extensions included in Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 were:

- **Remote Meeting Options.** Extends ability for public bodies to meet remotely until April 1, 2022 and includes language that remote meetings that happened between the expiration of the emergency order and the passage of the law can be considered legal. Remote permissions for nonprofit member meetings, notary services and reverse-mortgage loan counseling are extended until December 15, 2021.
- **Restaurant.** Extends to-go beer, wine and cocktail sales by restaurants through May 1, 2022. It includes language requiring that takeout and delivery drinks be sold at the same prices as those consumed on-site. Special permits for expanded outdoor dining, which would otherwise expire in 60 days, are valid until April 1, 2022

- **Housing Related.** Extends requirement that notices to quit issued to tenants include particular documentation and resources, which otherwise would have expired at the end of the State of Emergency, until January 1, 2023.
- **Town Meeting Options.** Extends ability for all town meetings to reduce their quorum and the ability for representative town meetings to meet remotely until December 15, 2021

Other matters, including billing protections for COVID-19 care and a cap on fees that delivery apps charge restaurants, remain before the conference committee.

CLEAN ENERGY

June Update

In this month's clean energy newsletter: MAPC has released a [Ride for Hire Electrification Working Group Policy Brief](#). We also hosted the Mass Save Three-Year Plan Municipal Engagement Session to share the current draft for the 2022-2024 Energy Efficiency Plan. Other updates include upcoming July events and more! Read the full newsletter [here](#).

Staff Picks

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Reduce Air Pollution from Diesel Engines Announced

Deadline: July 12

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental protection announced that it has opened a new \$2.1 million competitive solicitation for projects that will reduce diesel emissions from vehicles and equipment throughout the Commonwealth. The program, funded through the federal Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program, will help accelerate the retirement of older, less efficient, and more polluting vehicles. For more information on the DERA grant solicitation, turn [here](#).

EV CARSHARE PROGRAM

Income-Tiered Electric Community Carshare Launch

Good2Go is an income-tiered and equity-focused electric vehicle carshare program. It allows users to reduce their environmental footprint while minimizing the insurance costs, maintenance, and other expenses that come with owning a car. Good2Go features tiered pricing, and customers can qualify for the reduced five dollar per hour rate (half the regular rate) by demonstrating enrollment in a public assistance program such as showing a SNAP or WIC card, a utility bill showing receipt of fuel assistance, or living in affordable housing. The hourly rate includes charging, insurance, and roadside assistance for all customers. There are now six

electric vehicles deployed at Roxbury Community College, Bartlett Station, and in Jamaica Plain.

E4TheFuture is partnering with Nuestra Comunidad Development Corporation, MAPC, Eversource, the City of Boston, and Shared Mobility, Inc. to deploy this project under an Accelerating Clean Transportation Now (ACTNow) grant awarded by MassCEC. [Registration](#) is open!

MAPC in the News

FALL RIVER REPORTER

Massachusetts bill seeks remedies for air pollution hotspots

"[...] the Metropolitan Area Planning Council pointed out in a white paper published Monday that detailed links between transportation emissions and negative health effects, is ultrafine particle pollution (UFP) from vehicles. Those tiny particles tend to concentrate within about 500 feet of their source, putting people who live along major roadways at an increased risk of UFP-related health issues. [...] A bill (H 2230/S 1447) filed by Barber, Rep. Mike Connolly of Cambridge and Sen. Patricia Jehlen of Somerville would require the executive branch to convene a technical advisory committee made up of environmental justice community residents who live near major roadways, experts in air monitoring and labor representatives to identify likely air pollution hotspots across the state." [Read article.](#)

CHELSEA RECORD

Beat the Heat! City Program Offers Free Air Conditioners

"The Covid Safe Cooling program, an initiative of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council with financial support from the Barr Foundation, seeks to offer alternatives to traditional cooling centers, pools, and other public cooling resources, which may have limited capacity in 2021, due to the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. [...] "We're pleased to participate in MAPC's COVID Safe Cooling program for a second year, thanks to the support of the Barr Foundation" said City Manager Thomas G. Ambrosino. "Chelsea residents have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Boston area, due to racial and public health inequities. This year again, we are pleased to offer a resource for residents who need cooling in their homes to reduce the health impacts of extreme heat." [Read article.](#)

BOSTON GLOBE

Five finalists selected for 'Lynnstallation'

"The city is commissioning the "Lynnstallation," a signature outdoor artwork to be installed at the entrance to Lynn's commuter rail station at Mt. Vernon and

Exchange streets. Five finalists were recently announced in a competition to choose an artist or artist group for the project. The city is now asking the public to help select the winner. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is assisting Lynn with the initiative. The five finalists received grants from the council to fully develop their proposals. The winner will earn a \$75,000 award and create and install the selected sculpture this fall." [Read article.](#)

MPO Corner

Events and news from our partner in transportation planning



The **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** is Boston's regional transportation planning agency. MAPC is one of 22 voting MPO board members. [Subscribe for updates](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#), @BostonRegionMPO.

Pilot Transit Working Group Meeting

July 9, 2021 | 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

[Register Here](#)

At this meeting, Rich Farr, Executive Director of [rabbittransit](#) in York, Pennsylvania, will discuss his experiences facilitating transit regionalization and consolidation in the area, along with the successes and challenges associated with these initiatives. Most recently, he has been coordinating the merger of rabbittransit and the Capital Area Transit system in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, which will form the Susquehanna Regional Transportation Authority. MPO staff will also provide updates on transit-related MPO activities. Transit operators and members of the public are invited to attend.

If you have any questions or need more information, contact **Michelle Scott** at miscott@ctps.org or 857.702.3692.

From Freeway Revolts to the Future: The History of MPOs

July 13, 2021 | 12:00 PM–1:00 PM

[Register Here](#)

Join the MPO and the [American Planning Association's \(APA\) Massachusetts Transportation Committee](#) for From Freeway Revolts to the Future: The History of MPOs. Hear from Tegin Teich, Executive Director of the MPO staff, who will talk about how MPOs were created in a time of protest to promote cooperation in

regional transportation planning. Then join a Q&A with a panel of board members and staff from the Boston Region MPO and [Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission](#) about the present and future activities of MPOs.

Suggest Municipal Intersections for Low-Cost Improvements Study

MPO staff are looking to select a set of municipally-owned intersections to study and develop recommendations for low-cost improvements. Ideal locations have a keen municipal interest in quickly implementing study recommendations with local funding, feature municipally-owned signals, and are experiencing delays or safety concerns due to signal timing or issues that could be mitigated by restriping or other short-term fixes. To suggest a location, email **Casey-Marie Claude** at cclaude@ctps.org.

Livable Cities Depend on Trip Generation Rates

Research increasingly shows that adding parking induces more driving. This surge in new trips could place stress on local roads, increase traffic congestion, raise safety concerns, and downplay walking, biking, and transit use, among other effects. So where do the trip forecasts used in development come from? Why do mitigation efforts primarily focus on vehicle trips? And how can planners better understand these forecasts to plan livable, walkable communities? [Recent MPO work](#) explores these questions, finding a broad interest among planners in addressing the issues associated with the conventional trip generation rate methods.

Moving Toward Equity: Engaging the public to prevent discrimination

One of the ways the MPO works toward achieving equity is to ensure that the transportation projects the MPO funds are not discriminatory toward minority and low-income communities. Between 2018 and 2020, MPO staff undertook an extensive public engagement process to develop a Disparate Impact and Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB) Policy that would achieve that goal. [Moving Toward Equity](#) traces the history of the MPO, federal protections for people of color and low-income communities, the demographics of the region, and tells the story of how the MPO developed a policy that is one of the first of its kind in the country.

Understanding Parking Capacity at MBTA Stations

The MPO recently created a [Park-and-Ride dashboard](#) to showcase parking use and capacity data at all MBTA stations. Since 2000, the MPO has periodically collected car and bike parking data at every lot near MBTA stations, including those owned by the MBTA, privately, or by the municipality the station is located in. The data inform the public and provide planners and engineers insight on where to invest in infrastructure to support transit use. [More information.](#)

COVID-19 Resources and Assistance

MAPC is committed to helping local officials and other allies and stakeholders address their needs, and we are encouraging a statewide, coordinated response to this virus. MAPC stands ready to assist your community and the region during this time. This is a challenging, unprecedented situation for all of us, but we can make it easier by supporting each other, sharing resources, and continuing to collaborate. [Click here](#) for the latest updates.

Accessibility, Translation, Interpretation



Your participation is important to MAPC. Call 617-933-0700 for accommodations. Advance notice (10 days) is necessary for certain accommodations.



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