



Report to the MAPC Executive Committee

Land-Use-Planning-Related District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Projects

2007 - 2010

6/15/10

This document provides a brief summary of each of the land-use-planning-related projects undertaken by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) utilizing District Local Technical Assistance funds during 2007 - 2010.

Completed Planning Projects

In addition to the community-level or multi-community projects funded by DLTA, MAPC also participated with other members of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies on the preparation of *A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting*. MAPC wrote a number of sections of this document, worked on editing of the final document, and prepared PowerPoint presentations to promote the Best Practices. The most recent presentation was in June to a business group sponsored by the Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor. The document is on line at www.mass.gov/mpro.

Town of Ashland

The purpose of this study was to assist the Town of Ashland in increasing economic development by revising zoning to encourage mixed use development within the Route 126 corridor. MAPC hosted a community forum to solicit community input, reviewed the existing zoning, made initial recommendations for zoning changes, and presented examples of alternative bylaws to the town. A Mixed Use bylaw prepared by the town's land use committee, based upon MAPC's work, was approved by town meeting in 2009.

Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Wayland, Weston and Wellesley: MetroWest Housing

At the request of the communities of the MetroWest Growth Management Committee, MAPC researched the potential benefits of establishment of a regional housing trust for the MetroWest area. MAPC conducted a multiple-municipality survey of communities to determine interest/need for such an organization, and prepared a report on results to MetroWest communities and others interested in participating. The report highlights models of regional trusts from throughout the country and a model tailored to MetroWest. See below for update on Phase 2 of the project.

Bellingham: The Bellingham Housing Production Plan

As part of the municipal master plan effort, MAPC worked with the Town of Bellingham to undertake a Housing Production Plan. This effort included significant research and analysis, as well as hosting several public forums to solicit public input regarding goals and to evaluate implementation options and opportunities. The final Housing Production Plan was delivered to the Planning Board at the end of 2009.

Braintree and Weymouth: Weymouth Landing Zoning and Design Guidelines

At the request of the mayors of Braintree and Weymouth, MAPC led an effort to coordinate a shared vision for Weymouth Landing. This traditional business district, straddling the border of Braintree and Weymouth, is an ideal site for compact transit oriented development that can provide services, jobs, housing, and tax revenue for the surrounding communities. MAPC used a 3-D computer model of the district and interactive public workshop formats to engage residents, merchants, and community leaders in deliberations about zoning, parking, pedestrian safety, and economic development. As part of this project, MAPC has provided draft amendments to bylaws for both communities, recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements, and design guidelines. PowerPoint presentations, a copy of the final report, and a video of the 3-D model are accessible on the MAPC web site at <http://www.mapc.org/smart-growth/land-use/weymouth-landing>. See below for Phase 2 of the project.

Canton, Sharon, Foxborough, and Stoughton: South Coast Rail Project Priority Development and Priority Preservation Areas,

MAPC assisted four municipalities in determining Priority Development Areas and Priority Preservation Areas to provide input to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) as part of the planning for the South Coast Rail project. MAPC obtained input from the communities regarding their goals by hosting forums (in the case of Stoughton, in conjunction with the Old Colony Planning Council), by review of the communities' existing recent planning

efforts, and by correspondence with town officials. The Priority Development and Priority Conservation Areas were mapped at the municipal level. MAPC then prepared maps of Regionally-significant Development and Preservation sites, and looked at the potential open space connections across municipal boundaries. The local priorities and the regional mapping were provided to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for their inclusion in the South Coast Rail analysis. MAPC also prepared demographic modeling to assist DOT in determining how population and employment in the South Coast Rail Corridor might shift if these Development Areas and Preservation Areas were implemented. MAPC allocated both DLTA funding and funds available to MAPC under its partnership with the US Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Town of Danvers

Supported by funding from both DLTA and the town, this project included an analysis of the Industrial 1 zoning districts in the town, a visioning session and subsequent public meetings with the Planning Board over two years, a review of the possibilities of 40R in several of the zoning districts, an analysis of the existing dimensional standards and the degree of non-conformity within the industrial districts, and drafting of bylaws for 2 new Districts: a Waterfront Village and Waterfront Industrial district, both of which were approved by town meeting in 2009.

Littleton: Visioning and bylaws

Continuing on economic development work that was previously funded by the town, MAPC worked with the Town of Littleton to undertake planning efforts related to the Littleton Common business district and two adjacent areas. A public forum was held to solicit the public's goals for land uses within the three study zones, as well as to obtain input regarding design issues in the commercial district. MAPC drafted two zoning amendments and design guidelines to focus economic development opportunities and promote a more pedestrian-friendly village, and provided concepts for an overlay bylaw to preserve key farmland areas, to carry out the goals expressed by the town. PowerPoint presentations and maps used to solicit input at the public forums, and the results of these discussions, are found at <http://www.littletonma.org/content/1261/5191.aspx>. The final report on the project can be found at <http://www.littletonma.org/filestorage/1261/5104/LittletonVillageZoning-MAPCreport.pdf>.

Staff presented the bylaws and answered questions at a public hearing and at town meeting in May 2010, where both bylaws were approved.

Town of Hudson and City of Marlborough

MAPC undertook an analysis of the two communities' regulations in light of planned improvements to Route 85. The study resulted in recommendations for six zoning

recommendations in Marlborough and 11 zoning recommendations in Hudson, along with a series of transportation recommendations. Zoning recommendations included rezoning for commercial development, LID regulations, landscape buffers, sign regulation changes, bicycle parking, shared parking and design guidelines.

Town of Maynard:

MAPC provided assistance to the Maynard Planning Board in the completion of their mixed use zoning district bylaw. The town had completed much of the bylaw using a previous grant and consultant, but needed assistance from MAPC to complete the bylaw and to bring it to town meeting. The bylaw was approved in spring 2007.

Town of Millis

Project consisted of preparation of a zoning amendment to allow for limited retail and business uses in the Industrial area at the west end of town. This project was a follow up to previous MAPC work with the town, including the Community Development Plan and writing of mixed use overlay bylaws for the downtown. The industrial zone re-zoning was done in a way to coordinate with the downtown rezoning work rather than compete with it. The zoning change was approved by town meeting in 2008.

Town of Sherborn

MAPC facilitated a visioning session to determine the town residents' goals for the village center, as well as design features that they would want in any future bylaw regulating development in the town center. MAPC prepared visualizations of the town center based upon the visual preference polling. MAPC also provided examples of bylaws from other communities for the town's consideration.

Town of Saugus

MAPC hosted a visioning discussion for the Cliftdale Square area of town, and subsequently wrote an Accessory Dwelling Unit Bylaw to help Saugus provide safe, diverse and affordable housing opportunities while preserving the residential character of the town's neighborhoods. Bylaw was approved by town meeting in 2009.

Somerville, Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford: Mystic River Corridor Planning

The Mystic River Corridor Project brought together 6 cities along the lower Mystic River to discuss transportation, open space, economic development, regulatory constraints and other mutual issues. MAPC hosted regular meetings of the staff from the 6 communities; ran a public forum; drafted a set of development principles; and solicited input regarding, prioritized, and mapped open space and transportation priorities for the corridor. The proposed priorities, development principles and the Mystic River Corridor Web Site were presented to the mayors for final approval, and then presented at a public forum. Materials related to this Corridor Project, including the Mystic River dynamic map and information clearinghouse, can be found on the MAPC web site at <http://www.mapc.org/smart-growth/environment/mystic-river-corridor-strategy-project>. See below for continuing work on this project.

Multiple Municipalities: Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites

MAPC met with economic development subcommittees, selectmen, planning boards, chambers of commerce and other municipal officials to provide information related to the Chapter 43D Priority Development Site program to support establishment of PDS locations and Expedited Permitting programs in more than 2 dozen MAPC cities and towns. MAPC also assisted several communities in completion of their applications for 43D Sites.

Ongoing or continuing Planning Projects

Bellingham has proposed a concept for a project with Franklin and Milford for MAPC to research alternative storm-water utilities. These communities are pilot communities for upgraded storm-water (SW) regulations by the US EPA. As a result of these regulations, these communities will be responsible for significant reductions in nutrient loading from storm-water. The communities are considering establishment of storm-water utilities to implement physical storm-water improvements, using fees raised from landowners, to achieve the levels of reductions mandated. MAPC will undertake research and will prepare a presentation to give at the Bellingham and Milford Selectmen's meeting and to the Franklin Town Council meeting, on the existing state laws related to SW Utilities, the towns that now have one in place, how they use them and how they work. Scope details still being reviewed by communities.

The City of Beverly has requested assistance related to the examination of land uses around the Brimball Ave Interchange Area: MAPC will undertake a study of existing land uses and make recommendations for alternative zoning to promote smart growth in the area, whether or not the Brimball Avenue interchange is relocated by MassDOT for safety reasons. Examination will include access to semi-landlocked parcels, potential for redevelopment of the capped landfill, and access to a city-owned open space area that currently has no access/parking.

Town of Bolton has requested assistance in developing a mixed use bylaw and design review guidelines for their village center and other possible locations in town. Scope details for this project remain to be worked out.

Mystic River – Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford and Somerville - Staff have presented the results of the first phase of this project at the Urban Rivers Conference (via poster session), and have begun work on a related project (a pilot of a “walk-to-the-river” program) with funding from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust. Staff have also continued discussions with the communities regarding the next phase for the DLTA-funded scope for the six communities participating.

Framingham-Ashland Cell Towers -

MetroWest Growth Management Committee (MWGMC) and MAPC staffs have provided assistance to the Towns of Ashland and Framingham with zoning issues relating to the location and impacts of cellular towers. Preliminary research was presented to the Framingham Board of Selectmen and Town Counsel on case law, FCC rulings, Attorney General’s rulings, and successful town bylaws. Both Towns have since adopted moratoriums on cellular tower construction and will be developing new zoning bylaws. MWGMC will be assisting in that effort.

Town of Lexington, on behalf of municipalities in MAGIC and MWGMC, has requested funding for a pilot for establishment of the Regional Housing Trust outlined in the MWGMC project last year. Staff began working on this project for the communities of Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Sudbury and Weston in March. A template Municipal Assessment Tool was created to quantify the municipal staff and outsourced consulting time and cost for municipal affordable housing services. Four financial models will be created to determine the best collaborative approach for regionalizing affordable housing administrative functions.

Rockport requested MAPC planning assistance in examination of re-zoning downtown Rockport from “General Use”. Staff began working on this project in late April by determining the current status of the General Zone in Downtown Rockport. Plans have been reviewed, a site visit was conducted, and staff attended and facilitated a Downtown Planning Forum hosted by the Rockport Planning Board. Next steps include drafting zoning recommendations and attending meetings with the Planning Board for further input and refinement.

Salem and Peabody: MAPC will provide assistance in undertaking a zoning, economic development, housing and mobility study for the Boston Street/Main Street corridor. This work will be augmented by work to be done by Salem State College planning students. The first forum is planned for late June.

MetroWest Regional Open Space Connectivity Study: MWGMC has coordinated with MAPC's Data Services Staff and have begun developing data mapping and outreach strategies for the communities of Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Marlborough, Natick, Southborough, Wayland, Wellesley and Weston. Initially, each of the member communities' existing open space plans will be mapped and consolidated into an overall open space map of the region. A series of meetings with individual towns will be held in the fall to verify mapping and suggest ways in which the individual town plans can be linked into a regional open space network, including identifying priority parcels to be protected and/or acquired.

Southborough, Framingham, Natick and Wellesley: Route 9 Corridor Study Phase 2: Alternative Land Use and Mitigation Measures for future development

This project is designed to assist four communities along Route 9 in MetroWest in their efforts to plan for land use within the Route 9 corridor. A first phase of the project was completed using previous-year's DLTA funds, and examined the potential for growth in development (and associated traffic) within the corridor based upon the existing zoning. Phase 2 of the project examines the implications of changes to land use, as well as other mitigation options such as design elements (sidewalks, parking lot interconnectivity) and improved transit. MAPC met with the communities to determine the alternative land use patterns that should be examined, as well as to discuss the range of transportation options and mitigation measures. MAPC allocated both DLTA funding and MAPC funds available under the UPWP; the DLTA funds were expended by the end of December 2009, and the UPWP funds will be used to carry this project forward to completion during 2010.

Waltham, Weston, Lexington, Lincoln and Burlington: Route 128 Corridor Study

At the request of 5 communities along Route 128, MAPC is analyzing the impact of future economic development along the already congested corridor that could lead to traffic increases of over 50 percent on Route 128 and on local streets. MAPC will complete a corridor plan in 2010 that will include increased transit, pedestrian, and bicyclist opportunities. MAPC's work on this project includes hosting regularly-scheduled inter-municipal discussions, updating demographic and employment projections based upon major proposed developments, estimating traffic impacts of changes, examining multi-modal transportation solutions, and researching mitigation alternatives. MAPC allocated both DLTA funding and MAPC funds available under the UPWP; the DLTA funds were expended by the end of December 2009, and the UPWP funds will be used to carry this project forward to completion during 2010.

Weymouth Landing - Completion of final zoning, and participating in public forums to discuss proposed zoning in Weymouth and Braintree, in anticipation of votes this summer by both communities on new zoning, as follow-up to 2009 DLTA project.

Additional Project Proposals

MAPC continues to review and discuss with communities several additional projects in both the land use and shared services categories. These projects will be scoped, as funds allow, once the final scopes and budgets are approved for the above projects and the remaining funds available are known.