



OVERVIEW

Land use decisions and many economic development decisions in Massachusetts are controlled directly by local municipalities through zoning. This planning is guided by a significant body of laws and regulations enacted by the state Legislature and guided by executive orders, policies, and funding programs. At the regional level, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency which represents 101 cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area. Its area and boundaries correspond exactly with those of the MPO region. MAPC is one of 14 voting members of the Boston Region MPO.

The MPO relies on MAPC for developing the region's population and employment projections for use in the travel-demand modeling conducted by the MPO.

MAPC also provides a coordination and consultation function with the region's municipalities regarding these projections and the review and evaluation of land use and economic development plans and their relationship to the MPO's planning.

Federal regulations require that the Long Range Transportation Plan be consistent with the adopted regional land use plan. In 2008, the Council adopted its regional land use plan, "MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region." Council members and staff work to advance this plan through technical assistance to cities and towns, data analysis and mapping, research, collective purchasing, public engagement, and advocacy for public policies that advance its mission.

MetroFuture is a plan to make a Greater Boston Region — to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston, now and in the future. It was developed with the extensive participation partners throughout the region — who shared their visions for the future of the region, evaluated alternative scenarios for

our future using data and computer models, and had difficult conversations about the region's priorities.

MetroFuture capitalizes on the region's most important assets: its diverse people and landscape, a history of innovation, and a commitment to education and civic engagement. It is a vision of a region where growth is focused in areas where it already exists and linked by an efficient transportation system; our land and natural resources are conserved; we invest in our residents by improving their health and education; opportunities are available to all residents of the region, regardless of race or ethnicity; and expanding prosperity benefits all of us.

Through this process, MAPC created a set of 65 specific goals for the year 2030, as well as objectives and indicators to measure progress toward achieving these goals; 13 implementation strategies containing hundreds of recommendations for actions needed to achieve our goals; and a constituency of "plan builders" poised to make our vision a reality. More information on all of these — which, collectively, make up the "MetroFuture plan" — can be found at www.metrofuture.org.

Goals, objectives and implementation strategies are broadly grouped in 5 categories:

- Sustainable growth patterns
- Housing choices
- Community vitality
- Prosperity
- Getting around

Six implementation strategies were adopted for transportation.

1. Integrate land use and transportation planning
2. Prioritize transit and transportation alternatives
3. Establish stable and sufficient financing for all modes
4. Promote an efficient and transparent project delivery system
5. Establish a comprehensive maintenance program for safety and future cost savings
6. Improve the competitiveness of rail freight

These goals, objectives, and strategies coincide with the visions and policies that have been adopted by the MPO for the development of the LRTP – Paths to a Sustainable Region.

As part of the process MAPC created demographic and economic projections of the region's future. The adopted scenario involves significant changes in regional growth patterns. Approximately 53 to 55 percent of growth (housing units and employment) is directed to the Inner Core or Regional Urban Centers; and only 16 to 18 percent of employment and housing unit growth would occur in the Developing Suburbs.

Growth would also be concentrated in Community Oriented Development Areas (CODAs) and near transit. Approximately 77 to 80 percent of housing unit and employment growth would be in CODAs; and approximately 66 to 70 percent of new housing unit and employment growth would be near transit. The scenario also includes aggressive goals for water conservation and educational attainment; so that only 5 municipalities would exceed current Water Management Act limits, and there would be 40,000 fewer daily commuters from outside the region needed to satisfy regional labor demand.

Following the ratification of the scenario, MAPC distributed Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) level forecasts to every municipality in the region and to neighboring RPAs, with a request for comments and information on projects completed since 2000 or currently planned. A TAZ is an aggregation of census geography based on demographic information and numbers of trips produced, and attracted within, its borders. Each zone contains population, employment, and housing information. The average TAZ has approximately 1,800 people. MAPC incorporated into the MetroFuture Scenario the development already underway, and included planned development selectively, based on its consistency with MetroFuture principles.

The latest adjustments were incorporated into the TAZ-level projections for the 101 municipalities in the Boston Region MPO. The final forecasts, known simply as MetroFuture, were delivered to MPO staff in December 2010 for inclusion into the travel-demand model. MAPC is currently undertaking the last phase of MetroFuture, which involves developing strategies to achieve that future, including the implementation of a future Regional Transportation Plan that supports the preferred alternative.

The MPO's travel-demand model includes an additional 63 municipalities outside of the Boston Region MPO in six different regional planning agencies (RPA)/MPOs (see Figure A-1 in Appendix A). The projections from these MPOs were used to ensure that there are no conflicts in demographic assumptions among the MPOs included in the modeled area, per FHWA/FTA regulations. This preferred alternative is known as the RPA Hybrid scenario because it includes the MetroFuture TAZ-level forecasts for the 101 municipalities in the MAPC/Boston MPO region, and projections from neighboring RPAs for the 63 municipalities that are in the modeled area but outside the Boston MPO region. These projections were created by the RPAs using a variety of methodologies and assumptions regarding future growth and the distribution of that growth.

In the RPA Hybrid scenario, municipal-level demographic totals projected by neighboring RPAs are maintained, but Boston Region MPO staff reallocated the projected data for population, households, and employment. The allocation methodology assumes that the distribution of population and employment in the future will be the same as in the MetroFuture scenario, regardless of the amount of growth (for example, if a particular TAZ contains 10 percent of its municipality's population or employment in the MetroFuture scenario, it would also contain 10 percent of the municipality's population or households in the RPA Hybrid. Since

growth rates for most municipalities are relatively modest in the MetroFuture projections, this methodology has the effect of allocating the higher levels of growth projected by other RPAs according to the existing population and employment data; many TAZs that have slow growth under MetroFuture are projected to grow considerably under the RPA Hybrid scenario. For purposes of trip generation inputs, MPO staff applied the age distribution, educational attainment, and labor force participation rates from the MetroFuture scenario to the total population for each municipality and TAZ, regardless of the level of growth. MPO staff also assumed that the sectoral mix of employment (basic, service, and retail) would be the same for each TAZ in the RPA Hybrid as it is in the MetroFuture scenario, regardless of the level of growth. Municipal population and employment growth rates were not constrained by water availability using existing Water Management Act permit limits. RPA Hybrid projections were not distributed for community comment.

The RPA Hybrid scenario was adopted by the MPO as the preferred land use plan on _____, and is being incorporated into the LRTP – Paths to a Sustainable Region through its use in the travel demand model.

CONTEMPORARY PLANNING INITIATIVES

Many municipalities have adopted or opted in to contemporary planning initiatives and other planning activities that promote economic development, smart growth, healthy transportation, and greenhouse gas emission reductions. Each corridor chapter showed the municipalities that are participating in these programs. A brief description of each program is presented below.

Economic Development

Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Program:*

Helps municipalities fund transportation infrastructure projects that have economic development impacts. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has received a PWED Program grant since the program began in 1992.

Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites:

Provides communities with a tool for targeted economic growth. It guarantees that local permitting decisions will be made within 180 days of submittal. A property must be zoned for commercial or industrial development and must be approved by the local governing body to be eligible. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has received permitting approval since the program began in 2007.

Transportation Management Association (TMA):

A private, non-profit association of businesses that has a financial dues structure joined together in a legal agreement for the purpose reducing traffic congestion and pollution by improving commuting options. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community is currently served by a TMA.

Smart Growth

The Transit-Oriented Development Infrastructure and Housing Support Program (TOD Bond Program):*

Promotes TOD by providing funding for pedestrian, bicycle, and parking facilities in mixed-use developments near a transit station that meet housing affordability criteria. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has received a TOD Program grant since the program began in 2004.

Chapter 40R Smart Growth Zoning Incentive Program:

Provides incentives for municipalities to adopt zoning bylaws that encourage smart growth, including development near transit services. In addition to state incentive payments for 40R development, Chapter 40S provides payments to offset unmet education expenses for new students in developments. Although several municipalities have adopted 40R districts, there is no current incentive funding for additional districts. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has adopted a 40R district since the program began in 2004.

Growth Districts Initiative (GDI):*

Partners with municipalities that have identified areas within their community as being appropriate locations for significant growth. The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development works with the community and property owners to create highly attractive and competitive districts for growth within the municipalities. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has been designated as a Growth District since the program began in 2004.

District Local Technical Assistance Program:

Provides funding to the Regional Planning Agencies to undertake planning efforts with communities on any issues relating to smart growth or shared municipal services. MAPC has used this funding to write bylaws for communities that want to institute mixed-use developments in transit-oriented area or other community centers. It can also be used for other purposes such as writing open space residential design bylaws to further cluster developments in greenfield areas. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has received assistance through the program since it began in 2006.

* These grant programs became part of the MassWorks Infrastructure Program in October 2010. The MassWorks Infrastructure Program streamlines the process for municipalities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development by consolidating the following six grant programs: Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grants, Community Development Action Grant (CDAG), Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grants, Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE), Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP), and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Program.

Land Use

Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) Districts:

Many communities with commuter rail stations have begun to take advantage of the opportunities to establish a greater density of residential development within walking distance of the stations. This not only provides better access to the commuter rail system to the new residents, it also provides a significant new population base to support existing and future businesses nearby. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has adopted denser zoning around a transit station.

Mixed Use Zoning Districts:

Many communities without commuter rail have also undertaken new mixed use zones within village centers; these areas also lessen dependence on single occupancy vehicles by enabling more walk and bike trips for local shopping. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has adopted some form of mixed-use zoning.

Community Preservation Act (CPA):

Helps cities and towns address open space, recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing concerns by allowing communities to raise funds through passing a dedicated property tax surcharge. The state matches the amount raised by a community through the CPA Trust Fund. Almost half of the cities and towns within the Boston region have utilized CPA funds, but due to a slowdown in real estate sales, the state is unable to match funds at this time. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has adopted CPA.

Public Health

Mass In Motion:

A multi-faceted approach to promote wellness and to prevent obesity in Massachusetts – with a particular focus on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. Awards grants to cities and towns to make wellness initiatives a priority at the community level. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has received a Community Wellness Grant through the program.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS):

Encourages safe, healthy trip options for travel to and from school by collaborating with superintendents, public officials, principals, teachers, school organizations, students, community stakeholders, and neighbors. Aims to reduce congestion, air pollution, and traffic conflicts near participating schools, while increasing the health and mobility of school-aged children through the five E's: education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has a school that participates in the SRTS program.

Walkable Community Workshops (WCW):

Helps the region's communities to promote safe, accessible, and aesthetic walking environments through a workshop with members of the community, including

elected officials, business owners, involved residents, and local professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement, and education. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has participated in a WCW.

Climate Change

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability:

International association of local governments as well as national and regional local government organizations who have made a commitment to sustainable development. ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local government in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level. ICLEI works with its members to help them achieve ICLEI's Five Milestones for Climate Mitigation Process. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community is an ICLEI member.

Green Communities Act:

Makes up to \$10 million per year available for qualifying communities to implement significant energy-efficiency measures, construct large renewable energy projects, or pursue other innovative projects to reduce their fossil fuel energy consumption. A checkmark under this category indicates that a community has been designated as a Green Community.