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Massachusetts Chapter

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A Publication of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association

Fall 2018



Thank you for attending the APA-MA Annual Meeting at the 2018 Southern New England Planning Conference!

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On the cover: MA-APA members converge in Hartford at the SNEAPA conference.



From the President

Hello APA-MA Members!

It was great to see everyone in Hartford at the 2018 SNEAPA Conference! We are still awaiting the final numbers, but the conference was very well-attended this year, with fresh new ideas and events to spice up the schedule, including a hearty round of Game of Zones. We also had a great showing at the APA-MA Annual meeting, with nearly 75 planners joining us for a discussion about the Chapter's accomplishments and our focus for 2019. Thank you all for attending the meeting—we appreciate your participation and feedback and welcome it at any time!

At the Annual Meeting, we asked members to vote on the top categories/activities that the Chapter should be focusing on in 2019. The top three clear categories and activities based on the dot voting exercise:

Top Categories:

Professional Development – Topic-Oriented
 Networking
 Communications

Top Activities:

Social Events
 Small Conferences
 Communications (email, social media, etc.)

We heard you loud and clear! The APA-MA Board of Directors will translate your votes into programming over the next couple of months. Stay tuned in the early part of 2019 for more on how these will turn into opportunities for you, our members!

As part of National Community Planning Month, we launched a Planning Spotlight Series in October. Working with Erica Blonde and Fiona Coughlin, two emerging planners, we highlighted two APA-MA members – Andrew Shapiro, AICP, Economic Development Director for the City of Lowell, and Madhu Dutta-Koehler, a professor and Director of the City Planning and Urban Affairs Program at Boston University. Check out these spotlights every month on [APA-MA's website](#) and [LinkedIn page](#).

This Fall, we welcomed *five* new students to the APA-MA Board: Eleni Mackrakis (Harvard), Mariana Pereira Guimareas (Harvard), Alex Wade (UMass), Nicholas Campbell (UMass), and Savannah-Nicole Villaba (Tufts). This is the first time in several years that we have had student representatives on the Board. Welcome to all

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APA Adds Two Massachusetts Locations to the List of “Great Places in America”

Planning is behind the places communities value most. For 11 years, APA has recognized the “Great Places in America” — neighborhoods, streets, and public spaces that make communities stronger and bring people together through good planning. The 2018 Great Places designees represent the gold standard in planning and demonstrate why stakeholder engagement at the local, state, and federal levels matters. We are pleased to highlight the two additions from Massachusetts. (Stories courtesy of the American Planning Association)

The Village of Shelburne Falls: Shelburne and Buckland, Massachusetts

Planning Excellence

Nestled in the Northeast Berkshire Mountains in Massachusetts and bisected by the Deerfield River, the Village of Shelburne Falls is a haven for artists and artisans, shared by residents and businesses in the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. Sharing the Village of Shelburne Falls requires that the two towns take a collaborative approach to planning and organizing the resources, events, and local economy.

History in the area dates to the Native Americans. When European colonists came, Shelburne Falls became the site of the most productive salmon fishing in Massachusetts through the early 19th century, and water power was later harnessed for industry. Today, the preserved buildings are becoming a center for small businesses and remain an historical and architectural backdrop of the village.

In 1999, a Buckland-Shelburne Master Plan was jointly completed, and collaborative planning has since been the approach to strengthening the local social, environmental, and economic resiliency. The towns’ partner organization, the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association — commonly called the Shelburne Falls Area Partnership — was established in 1995 in recognition of the importance of bridging the economies of Buckland and Shelburne. The partnership fosters economic development, planning, and infrastructure and capital improvement projects. Shelburne Falls has been shaped and maintained by many proactive and positive planning initiatives involving both towns.

Shelburne Falls is a National Register Historic District, and local initiatives and zoning codes encourage the preservation of the village’s historic layout through adaptive reuse of historic structures. The historic layout and scale make walking and biking in Shelburne Falls easy. Recent planning projects, including the Massachusetts Complete

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Man walking over the Bridge of Flowers. (Photo courtesy of Martin Yaffee)



Streets Program, are intended to improve the infrastructure for people walking and biking in the village.

The diversity of housing types, including one subsidized housing complex reserved primarily for elderly residents, ensures that the cost of living in Shelburne Falls is relatively affordable compared to metropolitan areas, enabling artists and craftspeople to pursue their creativity and start businesses. In 2012, the village was designated as a Massachusetts Cultural District.

Art is woven into many aspects of village life, including in the creative Shelburne Farmers Market theme-day each month, a nonprofit film theater, and mosaic murals designed by a local artist and crafted by students at Mohawk Regional School depicting the rural history and life of the 10 towns in the “West County” area.

The village has a strong sense of community, and is a well-established destination for visitors. The partnership organizes community events throughout the year that draw people from around New England. One of the most fun events is the Annual Iron Bridge Dinner, which serves courses prepared by local restaurants at a 400-seat table spanning the length of the iconic iron bridge that dates to 1896. Through the partnership, Shelburne Falls has maintained resilience in the face of the changing

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The Annual Bridge Dinner. (Photo courtesy of Martin Yaffee)



People enjoying the Bridge of Flowers with “big cloud” reflections. (Photo courtesy of Martin Yaffee)

rural economy and leveraged its wonderful historic and cultural resources to create a thriving community.

Defining Characteristics and Features

- The village's Massachusetts Cultural District designation helps attract artists, encourage job growth, expand tourism, preserve and reuse historic buildings, enhance property values, and foster local cultural development.
- Many children can walk or bike to the Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School located in the village.
- The Memorial Hall Association runs "Live at the Met" opera performances and "Potholes Pictures," a local volunteer-run, nonprofit movie house that shows classic, foreign, and independent films on the big screen in the historic 420-seat Memorial Hall Theater. The association hosts special events like "Meet the Filmmaker" night and collaborations with local community organizations. Live, local musical acts play on stage for half-an-hour before each film.
- The Shelburne Senior Center hosts a weekly walking group, which recently participated in a training to learn how to complete walk audits, also known as pedestrian infrastructure assessments, meant to empower the local group to identify and advocate for pedestrian level infrastructure improvements in Shelburne Falls.
- Both towns are taking steps to reduce energy use. Buckland and Shelburne have been designated Green Communities by Massachusetts. The businesses in Shelburne Falls via the partnership participate in a collaborative composting program to reduce the volume of solid waste.



Local officials celebrate the Great Places designation.

- There is a planned connection to link the trailhead and section of the long-distance trail (Mahican-Mohawk) to the village to make regional hiking resources accessible to residents.

Designated Area

The area in the village in Shelburne is bounded on the east and north by Route 2 (the Mohawk Trail opened in 1914; designated one on New England's first Scenic Byway in 1952) and in Buckland on the west by Sears Street and the south roughly by Kendrick Road.

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Learn More:

- [Mass Complete Streets Program](#)
- [Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness and Leadership Program](#)
- [Massachusetts Green Community](#)

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Planning Department sites:

- [2014 Town of Shelburne Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)
- [The Town of Buckland Local Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan](#)
- [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Program](#)
- [Buckland Housing Plan](#)

Town Open Space and Recreation Plans:

- [Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)
- [Town of Buckland 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)



Canalway Cultural District: Lowell, Massachusetts

Planning Excellence

Lowell has evolved from the nation's largest industrial center to one of the most exciting cultural centers in Massachusetts, one of 44 cultural districts in the state. Lowell's Canalway Cultural District is defined by a thriving arts community, daily cultural activities, and an array of dining and shopping destinations. Through partnerships between the city and private developers, the district's revitalization has resulted in the creation of over 80 new jobs and a total investment of over \$4 million. Lowell continues to value its rich natural and cultural treasures, honoring its past while looking ahead towards a more sustainable future.

Community plans, such as the Lowell Downtown Evolution Plan and the Sustainable Lowell 2025 Master Plan, inspired projects and initiatives that have helped the Canalway Cultural District become what it is today. The City of Lowell has used city, state, and federal funding, including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, to implement improvements that made the downtown safer, more pedestrian friendly, and attractive.

Streets were resurfaced and painted with bicycle lanes, sidewalks and ADA accessible curb cuts were added, improvements were made to the canal and river walkway, and wayfinding signage was added to increase

accessibility for people walking and riding bikes. These projects restructured the way that people move around town, enhanced safety, and increased access to businesses, cultural facilities, and historic sites.

Since the 1970s, Lowell has seen a remarkable rebirth and revitalization. The designation of the Lowell National Historical Park in 1978 as the nation's first urban national park, along with complementary local and state efforts to promote historic preservation, heritage tourism, and economic renewal stimulated a restoration of the downtown. An early 1980s wave of immigration, especially from Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, enabled Lowell to carry on its proud tradition of drawing upon the vitality of its immigrant communities.

More recently, through the diversification of its local economy, the city's job base has broadened beyond its traditional manufacturing core. Emerging technology, education, healthcare, and creative economy sectors have contributed to Lowell's recent vibrancy and renewed spirit of innovation.

Following the recommendation of the Lowell Downtown Evolution Plan, two-way traffic operations were successfully restored to several downtown streets in 2014, increasing accessibility and making retail storefronts more attractive. Community members have been foundational in the work that has gone into designing and

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Lowell National Historical Park offers tours of the City by boats that travel along the canalways throughout the Cultural District. (Photo courtesy of the City of Lowell)

revitalizing the 158-acre district. Residents can enjoy free public and private events, performances, and activities. Since 2000, the city has worked with private developers to facilitate the rehabilitation and reoccupancy of over three million square feet of vacant downtown buildings. Additionally, over 1,800 residential units have been added to the downtown, representing a total investment of approximately \$877 million.

The vibrancy of the neighborhood is seen in its variety of retail, embrace of diverse cultures and the arts, multitude of community events, and 500,000-plus visitors each year. Yet planning and development are ongoing. The district includes a 15-acre area—the Hamilton Canal Innovation District—which will be renovated to create nearly two million square feet of new building space, including over 700 new units of housing, up to 55,000 square feet of retail, and up to 450,000 square feet of commercial or office space. The renewed vitality of the neighborhood could not have been realized without the creative and thoughtful planning by the city and residents, and the community looks forward to changes yet to come.

Defining Characteristics and Features

- Lowell has protected canals within the city and has often leveraged them to generate new development or redevelopment. The Merrimack Riverwalk, a \$3.5 million walkway along the historic “Mile of Mills” on the Merrimack River, connects the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, LaLacheur Park (the city’s minor league baseball facility), and the Paul E. Tsongas Center with the city’s Central Business District in the Canalway Cultural District.
- Two farmers markets operate in the Canalway Cultural District: one at Lucy Larcom Park and another



APA-MA President, Angela Cleveland (center), giving Mayor Samaras the Great Places Award for the Lowell Canalway Cultural District at their celebration on October 9th. They are joined by (from left to right): Henri Marchand, City of Lowell Director of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Andrew Shapiro, AICP, City of Lowell Director of Economic Development; Councilor Rita Mercier; Councilor Vesna Noon; and Meri Jenkins from Mass Cultural Council. (Photo courtesy of Maria Dickinson, City of Lowell)

at Mill No. 5. The Lowell Farmers Market (Lucy Larcom Park) accepts SNAP dollars and provides transportation for seniors from the Lowell Senior Center.



Outdoor restaurant seating in Downtown Lowell’s Canalway Cultural District. (Photo courtesy of the City of Lowell)

- Historic character has been embraced and enhanced through resetting cobblestone streets, planting trees, hanging planters, installing Victorian-style streetlights, and landscaping around city hall. Millions of square feet of historic mill buildings throughout the district have been adaptively repurposed into residential, office, and mixed-use properties. One example of this in the Canalway Cultural District is the five-acre Western Avenue Studios complex, the largest artist community on the eastern seaboard of the U.S., and home to over 300 artists in 250 work-only studios and 50 live-work lofts.

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Learn More:

Plans

- [Downtown Evolution Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Lowell 2025](#)

Videos

- [Canalway Cultural District ad](#)

Other Links

- [Canalway Cultural District Guide](#)
- [Visit Lowell](#)
- [Hamilton Canal Innovation District](#)
- [Lowell Folk Festival](#)
- [Lowell National Historical Park](#)
- [Mill No. 5](#)
- [Western Avenue Studios](#)

By The Numbers

- Through the Department of Energy's "Better Buildings Program," 500,000 square feet of downtown historic commercial space has been retrofitted for a projected energy savings of 31 percent.
- The Lowell Development and Financial Corporation's Downtown Venture Fund has financed over 40 new businesses in downtown Lowell, representing an investment of approximately \$4.25 million.

Designated Area

Generally encompassing Lowell's downtown core, the Canalway Cultural District is bounded to the northeast by the Merrimack River, running south along Brown and Howe Streets, then running west along the Concord River and Lower Pawtucket Canal, until hitting Central Street. Bounded by Middlesex street to the south, Thorndike Street and Dummer Street to the west, and then along the Merrimack Canal until returning to the Merrimack River.



Visitors can experience the Downtown Lowell Canalway Cultural District via a free trolley system operated by Lowell National Historical Park. (Photo courtesy of the City of Lowell)

From the President *cont'd*

of you – we are looking forward to working with you and strengthening our relationship with our academic partners and future planners!

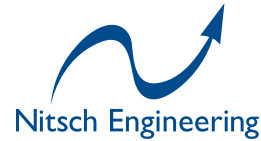
Don't forget: Friday, December 14th is the APA-MA/MAPD Annual Awards Ceremony! This year, we are celebrating at Tufts University. **Please RSVP soon** – space is limited at this event as we recognize the amazing people and projects that are *making great communities happen for all*.

As I wrap up this President's message, I want to share the **blog post I wrote** as part of APA's Blog series. It was such a privilege to share my passion for volunteering and how it has benefited me professionally and personally. I hope it inspires you to volunteer too!

Best,



Angela Cleveland, AICP



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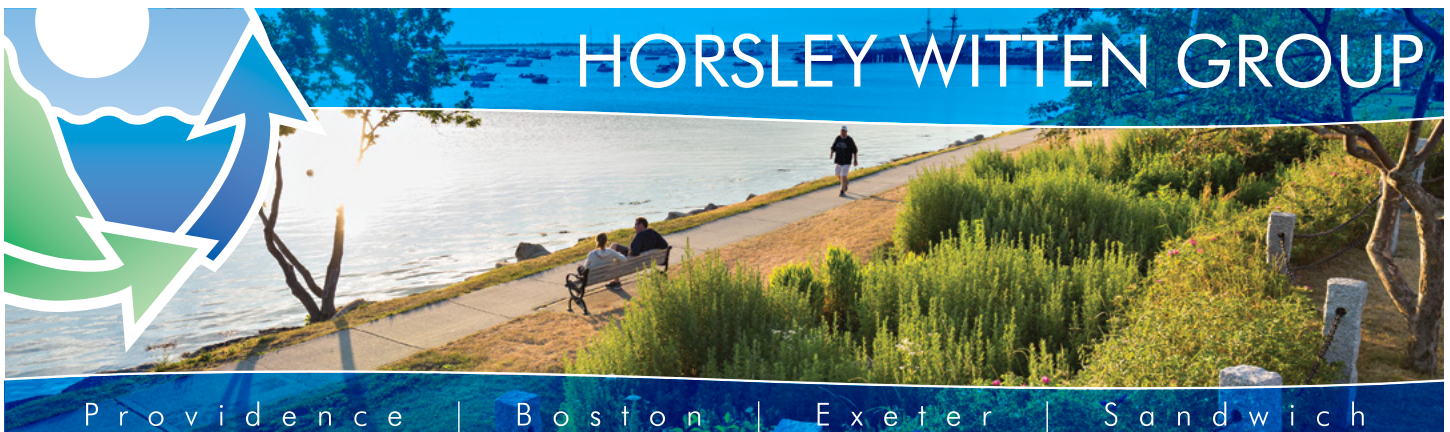
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Unrepresentative Democracy in Local Planning and Zoning Board Meetings

by Katherine Levine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick

Neighborhood meetings have been a cornerstone of local and federal efforts to amplify the voices of underrepresented interests. In the wake of the government- and developer-driven excesses of urban renewal, reformers pushed for more neighborhood input in redevelopment decisions. Our analysis of planning and zoning board meetings in 97 cities and towns in Massachusetts shows that, rather than providing voice to the less advantaged, these forums are dominated by white homeowners who are overwhelmingly opposed to the construction of new housing. Recently published historical analyses of land use regulations found that land use regulations have long been used by white homeowners as tools to preserve property values and exclusive access to public goods. Our research shows that the same people are using land use regulations today to obstruct the construction of new housing.

To explore who participates in neighborhood forums, we analyzed all available public planning and zoning board meetings concerning the development of new housing units from 2015 to 2017 in 97 cities and towns in Massachusetts. For over 3,300 commenters, we collected information on the names, addresses, and positions taken on proposed housing developments featuring more than one housing unit. Using individuals' names and addresses, we are able to link these data with the Massachusetts voter file and CoreLogic property records data base to learn valuable demographic information about citizen participants, including homeownership status, gender, age, length of residence, and partisanship. Moreover, we can use these demographic data to estimate meeting commenters' racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Meeting participants are overwhelmingly opposed to the construction of new housing. Only 15 percent of

commenters express support for the construction of new housing; 63 percent were opposed to proposed housing developments. Figure 1 shows the consistent opposition to new multifamily housing across the towns in our sample. This opposition stands in stark contrast to the views of the general public on affordable housing. In 2010, Massachusetts held a referendum attempting to repeal Chapter 40B, a law promoting affordable housing that permits developers to bypass local zoning regulations under certain circumstances. The repeal effort failed, with only 44 percent of the vote in the cities in our sample. While 56 percent of voters in these cities and towns supported affordable housing in a ballot referendum, only 15 percent of meeting commenters expressed support for the development of new housing. In Cambridge, MA—the most pro-40B city in our sample—80 percent of voters opposed the repeal; only 40 percent of comments at Cambridge development meetings supported new housing.

What's more, citizen participants in planning and zoning board meetings are demographically unrepresentative of their broader communities in ways that are normatively troubling. In particular, they are more likely to be white, homeowners, older, male, and longtime residents. The racial and homeownership disparities are especially notable. A whopping 95 percent of commenters are white, relative to 80 percent of the voters in our sample cities. In contrast, only one percent of commenters were Latino—compared to eight percent of sample city voters. In Lawrence, MA—which is 75 percent Latino—only one commenter had a Latino surname.

The overrepresentation of homeowners is similarly stark: 73 percent of meeting commenters own homes, compared to 46 percent of non-commenters. This underrepresentation shapes which views are heard at public meetings; renters and people of color are significantly more likely to support the construction of new housing at these forums, though majorities of all groups still oppose the construction of new housing.

These disparities have potentially serious consequences for housing affordability. Since the collapse of the housing market in 2008, demand for housing has consistently outpaced supply. Communities have largely not, however, built enough new housing to keep pace with growing demand. As a consequence, cities across the country have seen dramatic increases in their housing prices. One key obstacle to the construction of new housing is public meetings dominated by unrepresentative opponents of new housing.

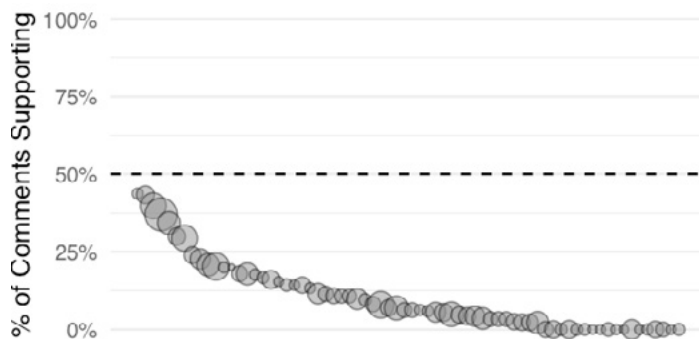


Figure 1: Distribution of Supportive Comments by Town. Each circle represents one town in our sample; the size of the circle corresponds to the number of comments.

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While many reforms addressing the housing crisis have targeted restrictive zoning regulations, we believe that zoning changes are not enough. We need to consider reforming how local communities incorporate public input into land use decisions. Holding meetings at more convenient times may help to ameliorate representative disparities. Moreover, communities might change their abutter notifications to ensure that nearby renters are aware of proposed developments. Massachusetts law currently requires developers to identify abutters using “the most recent applicable tax list;” this means that abutter

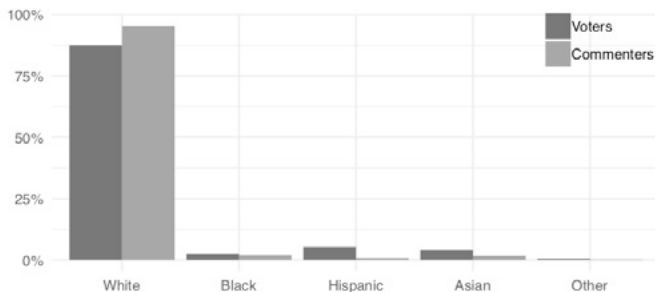


Figure 2: Distribution of commenters and voters by race. White voters are overrepresented at public meetings, while minority groups are underrepresented.




notifications often go to homeowners, but not renters. At a minimum, cities and towns should ensure that homeowners and renters alike are encouraged to participate in public planning and zoning board meetings.

While these types of reforms might help to improve representational disparities at the margins, processes that prioritize neighbors will inevitably attract more opponents of new housing than proponents. The construction of new housing comes with a multitude of concentrated costs, from construction noise to parking disruptions. In contrast, the benefits of new housing—an increase in the housing supply of a few units—are quite diffuse, and therefore less likely to motivate participation; home-seekers are unlikely to see a perceptible change in community housing prices as a consequence of one new apartment building.

We do not suggest returning to a system of developer-dominated land use. Urban renewal and its excesses have taught us that such a system does not produce more democratic outcomes for underrepresented residents. Local officials should, however, consider whether they might achieve more representative outcomes by soliciting neighborhood input on community-level land use planning, rather than on a project-by-project basis that is likely to primarily elicit opposition.

—Katherine Levine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick are professors at Boston University's Department of Political Science. They can be reached at kleinst@bu.edu, mbpalmer@bu.edu, and dmglick@bu.edu.

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Whose Backyard? APA-MA Chapter Responds to the Housing Crisis

by Peter Lowitt, FAICP editor and Steve Sadwick, AICP Chapter Legislative Chair

As many planners know, we have a housing crisis in both the Commonwealth and throughout the country. To help arm planners with the necessary tools and resources to reshape the way planning is used to address America's housing affordability crisis, the American Planning Association (APA) created the *Planning Home Initiative*. Essential to the Planning Home initiative are six principles:

- Modernize State Planning Laws
- Reform Local Codes
- Promote Inclusionary Growth
- Remove Barriers to Multifamily Housing
- Turn NIMBY in YIMBY
- Rethink Finance

In this issue of *Massachusetts Planning* magazine, Boston University authors Katherine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David Glick delve into the M in NIMBY. Their work involved comparing who attends land use hearings in Massachusetts and to how the same communities voted on the

There are a number of land use process reforms included in past versions of Massachusetts Zoning Reform legislation which can support making land use decisions more equitable and reflective of an entire community's interests.

referendum to repeal Chapter 40B affordable housing legislation. This comparison underscores the disparity between those attending the hearings and the communities' stance on providing additional housing. They suggest that input on land use projects be collected on a community-wide level, rather than an abutter or neighborhood level, in order to achieve more representative outcomes

for land use decisions. In keeping with APA's Planning Home Initiative, we believe planners should focus on Modernizing our State Planning Laws, last acted upon by the legislature in the late 1970s. Massachusetts Planning Statutes remain modeled on the original U.S. Department of Commerce template created by Herbert Hoover during the Coolidge Administration. Much of this template was focused on enabling the new automobile technology to mesh with growing communities. Times have changed. There are a number of land use process reforms included in past versions of Massachusetts Zoning Reform legislation which can support making land use decisions more equitable and reflective of an entire community's interests. Some of the suggested elements of reform include:

- A requirement for consistency between the Master Plan (adopted by the community) and local zoning. The broader constituency represented in a community-driven Master Plan provides a rational deliberative policy statement that local land use boards can rely on to make decisions in the face of angry neighbors.
- A reduction in the voting requirements for special permits from super majority to simple majority could lower barriers to housing.
- A simple majority for zoning changes is another recommendation from previous zoning reform efforts that will help in this area and was most recently included in Governor Baker's Housing Choice Initiative specifically for housing.



In order to tackle the very difficult issue of local land use controls and barriers to housing production, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the public that opposes the projects and what motivates the turnout at public hearings. Einstein, Palmer, and Glick do a very good job in laying out this information in *Unrepresentative Democracy in Local Planning and Zoning Board Meetings*.

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I Don't Know What He Is Talking About But I'm Opposed

by Dennis DiZoglio

The following passage is excerpted from Chapter 5 of *Value of Political Capit\$!*, recently published by Loom Press. The author, the former Mayor of Methuen, spent almost 40 years in local and regional government (which included career stops in Peabody and the MBTA). "I felt I had something to share about how government works and doesn't work," he told us, in explaining why he wrote the book. You can find the book on [Amazon](#) or purchase it from [Loom Press](#).

Public officials are constantly reminded that they work for the people. In order to properly work for the people you need to know what they are thinking. The mechanism most often used to form an opinion on what people are thinking is through civic engagement. However, civic engagement is not as easy as calling a meeting and listening to the people. Many people are intimidated by government and are mistrustful. They don't understand how the process works and come to meetings full of mistrust and try to use threats and intimidation as opposed to providing meaningful engagement. In a democracy public participation is the foundation on which decisions are made. You need to take into consideration the feelings of those people who are impacted by decisions or who are interested in the decisions that are being made. This interactive process is where the challenge begins.

People mistrust the government because it will not do what they want it to do. They come to a meeting angry and provide very little useful opinions except verifying opposition. For example, land use permitting requires that the public has an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns regarding pending developments. While community development director for the City of Peabody, I helped create and develop the Centennial Industrial Park. The industrial park became one of the premier parks in northeastern Massachusetts...

Centennial was reaching capacity and the mayor wanted to continue encouraging industrial development on land industrially zones adjacent to Centennial but for the most part privately owned. Since we did not have control of the land we needed to find another way to ensure that the building design standards key to the success of Centennial would be in place for future development. We came up with an idea to create an overlay zoning district on the adjacent land that would require set design standard. The overlay district would be called the Designated Development District (DDD) and site plan review would be required to ensure the standards were met. Today this approach is called form base code

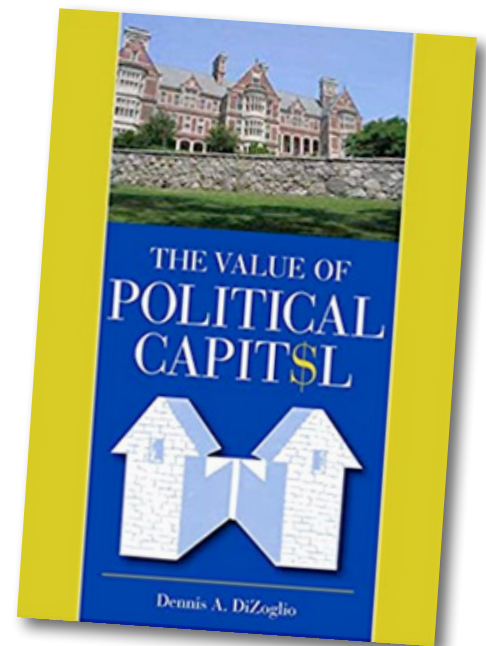
zoning and has gained popularity but at the time this was a new approach.

In Massachusetts zoning changes require a public hearing before the planning board and then before the city council...

The night we had scheduled the hearing for the overlay there were two other public hearings scheduled to consider two new subdivisions. Our public hearing was sandwiched between the two other hearings. As anticipated the attendees were opposed to the new subdivision and forcibly spoke in opposition at the first hearing. Usually the last people who move to a neighborhood are the first to oppose any new development. This was somewhat the case that night and many of the attendees were unfamiliar with Centennial Park since they were new to the community. Planning boards very rarely make a decision after a hearing and wait for feedback from city department heads on the impact of a subdivision before making a decision and the attendees were also unfamiliar with this process and remained to hear a decision.

When we began our public hearing, the Chairman asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak in favor of the overlay. We had prepared a complete presentation for the public hearing and presented it at that time. We had taken pictures of buildings we were trying to prevent through the zoning overlay and showed pictures of what we wanted to encourage. We talked about the development of Centennial and the intent of the overlay to ensure good development with good jobs and new tax revenue. The Chairman then asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak in favor, with none, he asked the other board members if they had any questions, they had none. The Chairman then asked if anyone opposed the overlay. A person who attended the first public hearing came to the podium and said "I don't know what he is talking about but I'm opposed." With that the crowd erupted in applause and cheers. Another

continued on page 14



person who was waiting for the next hearing on the other subdivision went to the podium and said, "I agree with this gentleman I'm opposed..."

Mistrust even enters into a discussion when you ask peoples' opinion if you should consider something. When I was Mayor of Methuen, I was approached by a developer who had identified some land adjacent to Route 110 and a short distance from I-495 that could potentially be developed into an office/R&D industrial site. This developer had a good reputation and had developed a similar development in the neighboring community of Andover. These are good developments in that they are high-end for tax purposes and create good paying jobs and require very little municipal services.

The land under consideration was behind a series of single family dead-end streets. The streets were developed before the extension of sewer and water to the area and did not have municipal sewer. Septic systems were constantly failing, and the neighborhoods were constantly requesting sewer be extended. Funds were not available to extend the service and the neighborhoods were not in full favor of betterment assessments to gain sewer.

The land would need to be rezoned for the proposed use. I thought in exchange for the zoning the developer would be required to extend water and sewer to each street when extending it for the development and that the developer would pave each street, which in effect would give everyone a new neighborhood. We could also preclude any access to the development from their streets and require the developer to acquire the last street with only 3 homes and use that as their access to the site and do any traffic improvements warranted.

The developer agreed, and I offered to reach out to the neighbors and invite them to a Saturday morning meeting at city hall to present the idea. Obviously, this was before any permitting or hearings associated with zoning would begin, just a meeting to take the neighbors "temperature" as to their interest in pursuing the idea. Since the neighbors may not be familiar with the kind of development being proposed I suggested the developer do a rendering.

The meeting was well attended and the two east end councilors were there to hear if the neighbors would be interested in the idea. I explained the idea to the group and then asked "what do you think?"

The first comments were very negative. "Are you trying to jam this development down our throats?" I assured them that that was not the case and I was only floating the idea to get their reaction. The negativity continued and one person said, "If this is only an idea then why do you have a rendering of what the buildings would look like?"

I walked over to the easel that held the rendering and threw it across the room. I then told them that if

they did not want the development then it is gone just like the rendering. The rendering was only there to show them that this was not going to be a smoke stack kind of industrial development. If the majority of the neighbors did not want to pursue the idea we would stop our discussions with the developer. I then called for a show of hands in favor of continuing the discussion with the developer. While there were a number who wanted to continue the discussion, it was clear that the majority did not and I told them the idea was off the table. Some pleaded with their neighbors to keep an open mind because of the significant improvements being offered but since the mistrust had set in I ended our discussion with the offer to reconsider only if a majority came in and requested reconsideration. The neighbors never came back...

Sometimes public engagement is a "full contact sport" and trying to make it a productive experience is very difficult. The best opportunity to engage the public in a meaningful way is to approach them with a clean slate. However, it is the responsibility of public officials to bring ideas, concepts and projects to the public for input and the opportunities to ask what the public thinks without specifics are rare. This dynamic occurs most during master and long term planning efforts. Asking citizens how they want their community to grow, or the kinds of housing needs they have, or what areas funding should be prioritized is a lot easier than asking them if an in-law apartment should be approved in their neighborhood. When it personally affects them, the public is not shy in giving their opinion; yet if it does not affect their daily life they seem apathetic. A public meeting is held on the proposed \$100M annual budget, and no one attends; a ZBA variance public hearing is held, and the room is full.

— Dennis DiZoglio is the former Mayor of Methuen, where he served six years before leaving due to term limits. He has been a planner for most of his professional career, serving as planning director for the cities of Taunton and Peabody, Deputy General Manager for Planning and Development at the MBTA, and the Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. Dennis can be reached at ddizoglio@comcast.net.



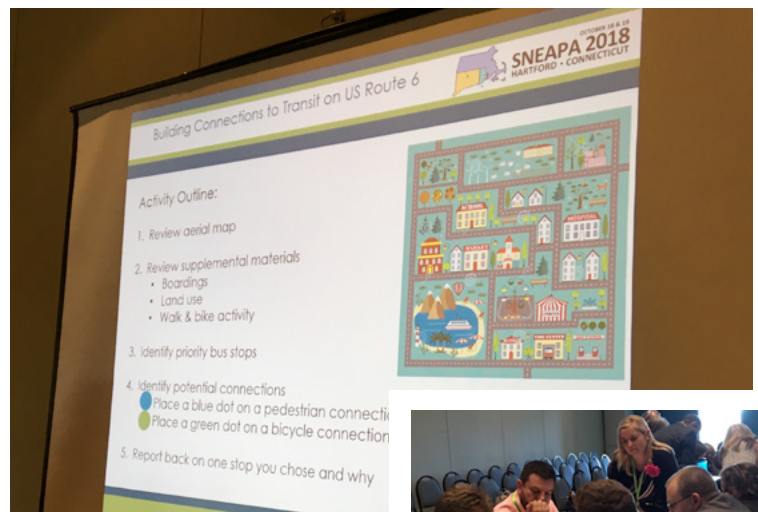
Scenes from the SNEAPA Conference in Hartford



Nearly 75 chapter members attended this year's APA-MA Annual Meeting at the 2018 SNEAPA Conference in Hartford, CT.



Above and below: A great round of Game of Zones at the SNEAPA Conference! Thanks to the Massachusetts contestants Neil Angus, Tom Bott, and Jonathan Church.



Above and right: SNEAPA attendees use a game format to learn about real issues connecting pedestrians to transit.



Attendees enjoy one of the many excellent breakout sessions during the conference.

Games, Surveys + Virtual Reality: Three Ways Massachusetts Communities Can Improve Emergency Preparedness and Climate Resilience

by Kim Lundgren, CEO of Kim Lundgren Associates



We're now on the other, cooler side of summer, but the heat waves we endured this year won't soon be forgotten. Extreme heat is just one of the impacts our region can expect to see with climate change; flooding is another. Communities should be getting ready, and involving their citizens in those planning processes — whether it's an emergency, sustainability, resilience, comprehensive, transportation, and/or land use plan.

So are you giving everyone in the community a voice? And are there more effective ways? What are some of the best practices out there for getting community members and key stakeholders more active in your emergency preparedness and climate resilience planning?

Make it fun. Make it hit home. Give them easy entry points. Here are three ways to do just that:

1. Gamify With Game of Floods

Maybe you've heard of the Game of Floods, an award-winning game created by Marin County and now implemented nationwide. Here's a good summary:

The *Game of Floods* is a resource-management game in many aspects similar to the *Settlers of Catan*. Players play on the playing board with hexagonal flood zones. They manage community assets, which could be flooded at any

moment. Players strategize on how to protect their chosen parcels constantly worrying about community well-being and resources. They have to consider the potential loss or deterioration of homes, community facilities, roads, agricultural land, beaches, wetlands, lagoons, and other resources.

The [Urban Sustainability Directors Network](#) version has multiple roles for participants, including wastewater treatment operator, economic development director, mayor, and mangrove protection activist. It can be used with all variety of stakeholders to help them more clearly understand challenging scenarios and difficult decisions when it comes to climate change impacts and building a resilient community. We have used Game of Floods with citizens during Multi-Hazard Mitigation plan public workshops and with staff embarking on a climate action and adaptation plan.

2. Give Everyone Easy Access

When it comes to community engagement for a planning process or other city initiative, many local governments struggle to get the quantity and quality of feedback that truly reflect the population in numbers or diversity.

To reach target audiences—youth, low-income, veterans, seniors, etc—KLA forges partnerships with local, on-the-ground organizations that

already work the folks we're trying to reach. They know how to find and talk to them and what matters to them.

To get to scale, we have partnered with MetroQuest, a company with a history of getting record numbers of engagement. They offer an interactive online engagement platform that allows us to get survey responses from people we might not meet at an event or reach through the city's communication channels.

3. Get “IMMERSED” With Virtual Reality

Several of our team members had the opportunity to experience FEMA's new **IMMERSED virtual reality tool** at the APA National Planning Conference last spring. Here is how FEMA describes it:

To help educate community leaders about the value of preparing for the worst, FEMA has created a virtual reality experience called IMMERSED. This tool puts users at the center of a flood crisis, allowing them to assess damage in a community and see the benefits of mitigation first-hand. Through simple tasks, users experience a major flood event in a real, personal way. From the perspective of a community leader in a flood-affected town, they:

- Explore the damage in a flooded neighborhood
- Witness the challenges of an evacuation
- Lead a stranded teacher to safety at a flooded school

continued on page 17

Games, Surveys + VR *cont'd*

- Experience mitigation decisions being made
- Discover which preparations can lead to positive results

After users experience *IMMERSED*, they are encouraged to explore additional information about mitigation action, including:

- Descriptions of and specifications for the different types of action
- Details on grants and other programs that are available to support communities in taking action
- Information about a variety of related topics, including the National Flood Insurance Program, hazard mitigation planning, and community engagement.

In our experience, this could have a huge impact on elected officials and other stakeholders in areas where flooding poses a potential threat—especially with climate change impacts like sea level rise and more intense storms.



The National Emergency Management Association conducted a webinar on IMMERSED last fall.

FEMA is working on ways to scale this tool so that it can easily—low cost and simple logistics—be deployed in communities across the country. In the meantime, you can contact FEMA to inquire about bringing the experience to an upcoming local government or stakeholder meeting.

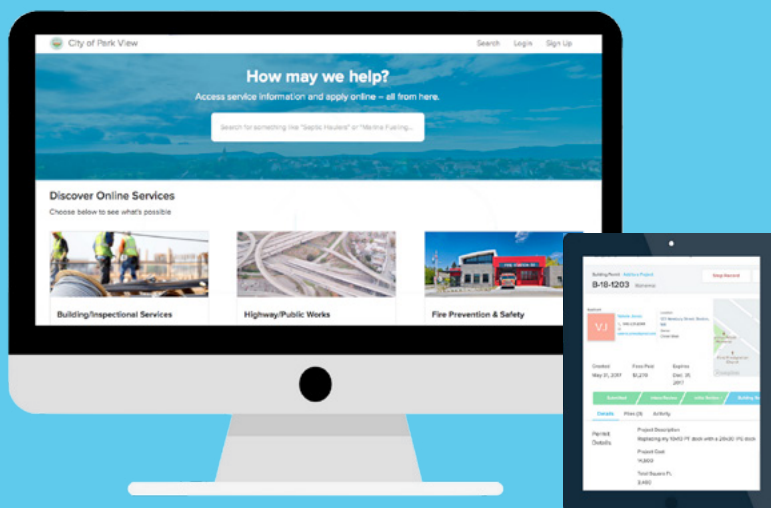
Massachusetts has taken an important step in supporting communities' preparedness efforts with the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program,

which includes public engagement like workshops at its core. Whether or not you're an MVP community, planners have an opportunity and responsibility to proactively reach out to the public when it comes to our preparedness and resilience goals and actions. And many of us are already doing this but might need a fresh approach.

— Kim Lundgren is CEO of Kim Lundgren Associates, Inc. Learn more about the firm at kimlundgrenassociates.com.

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Downtown Lynn Mural Tour

by Bob Mitchell FAICP, Chair, Sustainable Development Committee

On October 25, the APA-MA Chapter Sustainable Development Committee sponsored a tour of the downtown Lynn murals that were installed during two Mural Festivals in 2017 and 2018. More than 40 murals have been painted on buildings throughout the downtown.

Organized and managed by Beyond Walls, a creative placemaking non-profit organization in Lynn whose mission is to activate space to strengthen communities, the Mural Festivals have brought artists from around the world into Lynn to create an inspired public art project.

Al Wilson, the founder and Executive Director of Beyond Walls, provided an overview of the organization and the Mural project. Pedro Soto, Associate Director, led the tour and described the artists, the background, and meaning of the individual murals, as well as the process for creating this collection of art in Lynn.

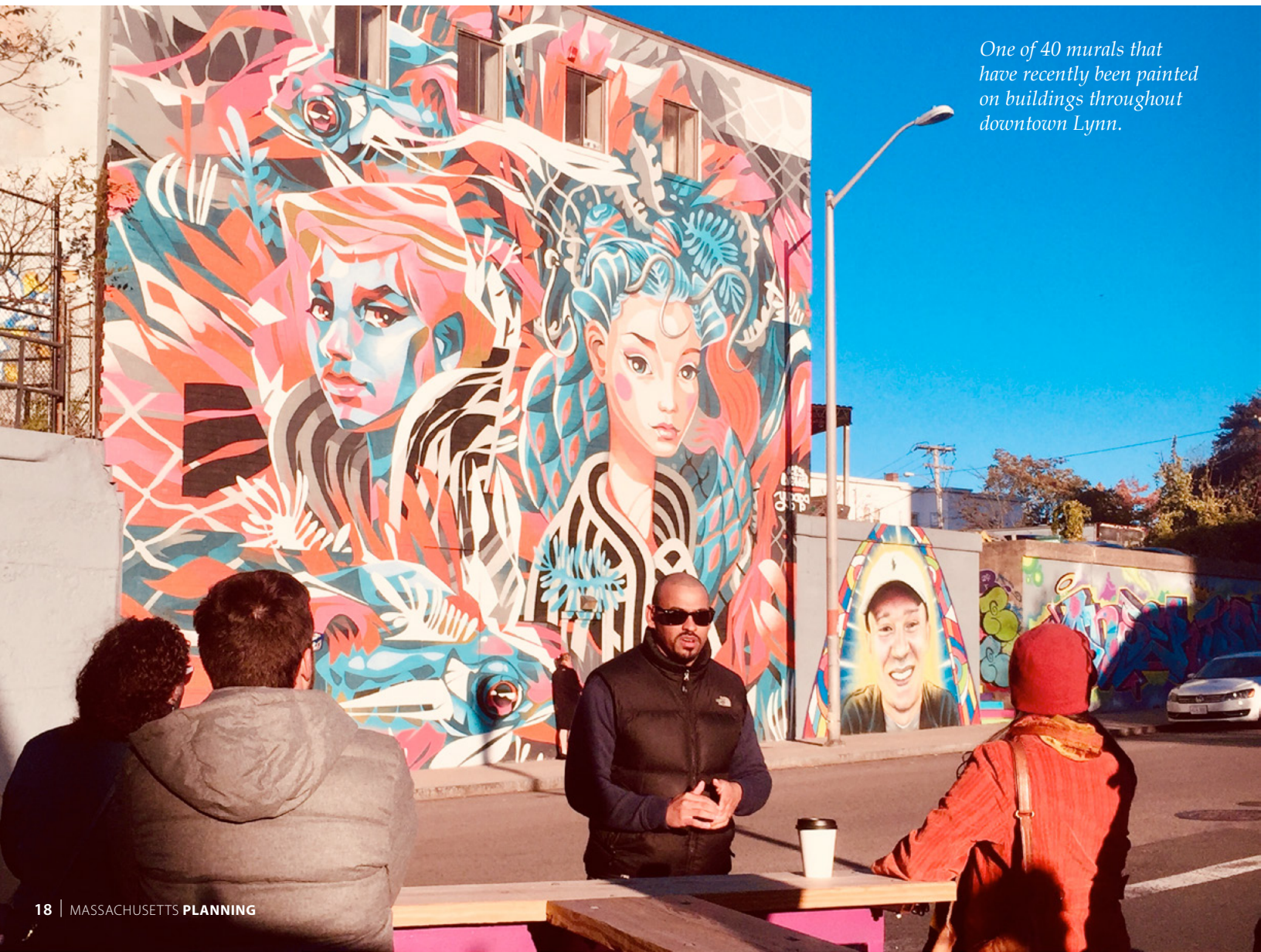
In addition to the murals, Beyond Walls has also restored and displayed vintage neon artwork. These

artifacts of classic commercial Americana have been dusted off, spruced up, and displayed in all their retro glory. The pieces are evocative of the heyday of Lynn's commercial and industrial past.

This past summer Beyond Walls assembled a team of partners and worked to brighten and activate the underside of the shadowy MBTA overpasses with dynamic LED lighting installations.

The underpasses of Central Square, Washington Street, and Market Street now have an exciting and visually compelling field of dynamic and color-changing full-spectrum lighting that not only delights the eye, but contributes to pedestrian safety along the undersides of the underpasses.

For more information about Beyond Walls and its mission, the murals, the artists, and the other art initiatives mentioned, see www.Beyond-Walls.org.



One of 40 murals that have recently been painted on buildings throughout downtown Lynn.

Water Transportation Tour and Networking Event



On September 28, 2018, the APA-Massachusetts Transportation Committee hosted a water transportation tour, which started with a Hingham Ferry trip to Hingham and ended with a land-side walking tour of The Launch at Hingham Shipyard.



Alice Brown, Director of Water Transportation for Boston Harbor Now, and Nathan Peyton, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, gave presentations during the ferry trip on the Commonwealth's current water transportation initiatives, including the soon-to-be released Comprehensive Boston Harbor Water Transportation Study. They

also provided a history of and future plans for the Hingham Ferry, which has been active for over 40 years and has an estimated 5,000 daily riders.

Upon arriving in Hingham, Mary Savage Dunham, Director of Community Planning for the Town of Hingham, and Mike Fitzpatrick, VP of Development for Samuels and Associates, led a land-side walking tour of The Launch at Hingham Shipyard, a new mixed-use development that builds on the Shipyard's historical past as a key shipbuilding and launching site during World War II.

During the tour, Ms. Savage Dunham and Mr. Fitzpatrick shared insights about the public and private sector initiatives that helped activate the waterfront and utilize the ferry service. Throughout the tour, attendees learned that between 1941-1945, the Hingham Shipyard was an operational shipyard and 227 World War II warships were produced at this site. After the war, some of the shipyard remained vacant and underutilized with other sites used for a mix of marine (boat storage, lobster pound, marina), industrial, and commercial uses. In the early 2000s, mixed-use development began to be planned at this location. The Launch at Hingham Shipyard is intended to serve as a gathering place where residents and visitors to the South Shore can shop, dine, and stroll the waterfront. It

is a mixed-use development with approximately 30 stores and restaurants, over 200,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, and an additional 30,000 sq. ft. of office space. Residential development, owned both by Samuels and other developers, is also part of the overall site.

By assembling a wide range of uses in a waterfront setting, at the front door of the MBTA ferry terminal, the Hingham Shipyard is promoting important values of smart growth.

Many of us do not think about water transportation when thinking about transit-oriented development. The tour offered an opportunity to demonstrate the linkages between the two. Participants learned how Hingham has led redevelopment around their ferry terminal and continues to build upon the area's historical connections to create an inviting, community-driven atmosphere.

Those in attendance enjoyed a fun and educational experience both on the sea and on land. Keep your eyes open for future events to expand your network and professional development!

If you are interested in getting involved with the APA-MA Transportation Committee, please contact Alison Felix, Sr. Transportation Planner & Emerging Technologies Specialist, at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council at afelix@mapc.org or (617) 933-0742.



Planner Spotlight: Andrew Shapiro

As they say, behind every great city is a great planner.

Well...maybe they don't say that now. But APA-MA is ready to get the momentum going!

In APA-MA's **Spotlight Series**, we'll be chatting with planners across the Commonwealth about their communities, their newest projects, and their career paths. For our first installment of this new series, we chatted with **Andrew Shapiro**, AICP, Director of Economic Development for the City of Lowell. — Erica Blonde, AICP

Andrew Shapiro's passion for Lowell was immediately evident, and he has much to be proud of. Lowell is a city on the move, led by a diverse entrepreneur base eager to show the state what Lowell can do. We recently caught up with Andrew to talk about his career, the planning profession, and especially the exciting things that are going on in the City of Lowell.

What was it that made you decide to pursue a degree in planning?

After spending five years working in federal government relations in DC, it was time for a career switch. The love I have for cities and the way they change — and the persuasion of a good friend — resulted in me taking the leap.

What brought you to Lowell?

My last position was as an economic development planner in Salem, another Massachusetts Gateway City. I wanted to bring the experience I gained in Salem to a larger Gateway City with a similarly rich history. I took this role on in November 2017.

What's one project you're really excited about?

I've been working on the revitalization of a downtown park called Kerouac Park, named for the famed author who was born and raised in Lowell. The park is located on Bridge Street at the foot of the Cox Bridge — one of the gateways into the city. We applied to the MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places Program, through which we were able to crowd-fund close to \$30,000, and receive a match of \$25,000. The revitalization will include a retail business incubator housed in a shipping container.

It will also feature new landscaping, a performance stage, and games and activities such as ping pong tables, chessboards, and mini-libraries. The goal is to unveil all of these upgrades by the spring of 2019.

What do you wish people knew about Lowell?

Lowell is tremendously diverse. It has the second largest population of Cambodian residents in the United States outside of Long Beach, California. Cambodian residents comprise almost 13% of Lowell's population. There is also a significant Latino population, comprising about 17% of the population. This diversity translates into the business community, where we have strong immigrant entrepreneurs and business owners. Lowell is very much a community of makers, innovators, and artists, which is evident from our various makerspaces and collaborative work environments spread throughout the city.

Why did you decide to join APA-MA? What do you like about it?

I've been an APA member since I was in graduate school, and have maintained membership since then. It's been great to be a part of our local chapter and share ideas, network, and learn about the great work others are doing in communities throughout the state.

Do you have any advice for young planners?

Be willing to intern or work in various settings. Try local and state government, private sector, and quasi-public agencies. Give yourself as broad a spectrum of opportunities as you can to learn about the various facets of planning.



Hometown: Bethesda, Maryland

Lives In: Newburyport

Current Title: Director of Economic Development, City of Lowell

Do you have any favorite websites or tools related to planning that you'd like to share?

As a data nerd, I'm a fan of [DataUSA.io](https://datausa.io/), which is a terrific website where you can visualize demographics at the municipal and regional levels. I also frequent Boston Bisnow, [bisnow.com](https://www.bisnow.com/), which covers mostly commercial real estate and development, and has a site dedicated specifically to Boston and its surrounding suburbs.

What are a few of your favorite places?

Burlington, Vermont and Quebec City, Quebec both have very well thought-out planning. Quebec City in particular has incredible public art, is extremely walkable, and provides great wayfinding. In Burlington, I was impressed with the robust business community — there are a number of enticing restaurants and breweries, as well as independent businesses. As a Bethesda native, I'm also a sucker for my pseudo-hometown of Washington, D.C.

Would you or someone you know like to be featured in our Spotlight Series? Contact communications@apa-ma.org.

Good Aggrievement, Charlie Brown!

by Bob Ritchie, Esq.

Have you ever felt “vexed” when those around you begin to discuss “standing” in zoning appeals? Well, you’re in good company. Judges and lawyers also find this subject vexatious. In the words of Appeals Court Justice Rubin in his concurring opinion in the case of *Murrow vs. ESH Circus Arts*, 93 Mass. App. Ct. 233 (5/17/18):

This case involves an important question that has vexed the judges of the trial court, who have reached different conclusions about it....The question of standing involves a construction of who is a “person aggrieved” under G. L. c. 40A, § 17. While some “parties in interest” may also be “person[s] aggrieved,” and vice versa, the concepts are different.

In *Murrow* the plaintiff Murrow filed an appeal to the Land Court challenging the Somerville ZBA’s approval of ESH’s petition to modify a special permit. The requested modification related to an increase in floor area for ESH’s school for art instruction and for an alteration of the site plan. The issue on appeal was not directly related to whether Murrow was a “party aggrieved”, but whether she enjoyed a “rebuttable presumption of aggrievement” on the undisputed facts of the case. Her claim of aggrievement was, she asserted, based in part on the undisputed fact that her property lies within 300’ of the subject property – albeit *not* directly opposite it – and in part on the undisputed fact of having received a notice prescribed by G.L. c. 40A, § 11.

The important but vexatious question appears to be whether “standing” is effectively conferred upon a land-owner appellant because either (a) her land is within 300’ of the subject property and *abuts* – but is not itself – land directly opposite the subject property; or (b) her land lies within 300’ of the subject property, and that she has received notice under G.L. c. 40A, § 11, in effect, she asserts, making her “a party in interest” based upon the “the most recent applicable tax list.” G.L. c. 40A, § 11, boldly states that “tax assessors ‘shall certify...the names and addresses of parties in interest,’ and further that the tax assessor’s certification of parties in interest ‘shall be conclusive for all purposes.’”

Ironically, had this case arisen prior to 1975, the outcome might have been quite different. After 1954, the ZBA had a measure of discretion

as to whom notice must be sent; i.e., to the petitioner and to “owners of all properties the board deems to be affected” by the board’s decision. To constrain the exercise of this discretion, in 1975 the Legislature amended G.L. c. 40A, § 11, to define “a party in interest” as 4-member class of qualified recipients of notice, i.e.: (1) the petitioner; (2) abutters; (3) owners of land directly opposite the subject property; and (4) owners of property within 300’ of the subject property as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list. Murrow would have been a “party in interest” under this definition, her land lying within 300’ of the subject property under category (4).

But in 1979, “party in interest” was further narrowed in scope. The amendment changed the definition of “party in interest” to read: (1) the petitioner; (2) abutters; (3) owners of land directly opposite the subject property; and (4) abutters to abutters within 300’ of the subject property as they appear on the most recent applicable tax list. This change meant that Murrow would now have to establish that her property abuts an abutter; and, as this court determined, “land directly opposite” is not an abutter.

The 1979 amendment provided that the assessors’ certified tax list “shall be conclusive for all purposes.” But as Justice Rubin notes in the concurrence, either (a) the certified list is *not conclusive* for at least one purpose (i.e., the presumption of standing), or (b) the antecedent of “conclusive” is something else. Justice Rubin states: “[I]t is not clear with respect to what ‘such certification’ is supposed to be conclusive.” Justice Rubin writes:

In my view, however, the reason our courts provide this rebuttable presumption is clear: it is not because the parties have been given notice, which is what the legislature has required be provided to “parties in interest,” or because they have been deemed “parties in interest,” whether by a tax assessor, a zoning board of appeals, or anyone else. It is because they meet the definition of “parties in interest” set out by the Legislature.



Murrow lost because her property, although within 300’ of the subject property, abutted “land opposite” the subject property not a direct abutter, thus depriving her of the rebuttable presumption of standing.

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The PDO Corner

by Darlene Wynne, AICP, APA-MA Professional Development Officer

With the CM Reporting Period deadline of December 31st fast approaching, below are some ideas on how to fulfill your CM requirements:

- Read the APA-MA Chapter's twice-monthly events email — many of the events we include provide CM credits.
- Visit APA's [CM Search](#) to find CM credit training opportunities near you. Search the "Filter" tab by date, state, event type, and provider.
- APA's [Interact](#) also includes upcoming and nearby events that offer CM credit opportunities.
- Check for upcoming live webinars offered through the [Planning Webcast Series](#). CM credits can be claimed by looking up the sponsoring Chapter or Division as provider. You must watch the webinar to claim credits.
- Two recorded webcasts from 2017 have been selected for AICP CM Distance Education credit for viewing anytime during the 2018 calendar year. Remember that the event numbers for DE credits are different from those for the live sessions.

Law: [Images, Creative Commons and Copyright](#) — Urban Design and Preservation Division. Event #9143138

Ethics: [Queer and the Conversation: The Ethics of Inclusion](#) — LGBTQ and Planning Division. Event #9143146

- Earn credits through [APA's e-learning](#) which provides easy access to a variety of online formats — from live interactive webinars to on-demand education on

topics including [planning law](#), [ethics](#), and [climate change](#), among others.

- Find a listing of [free trainings](#) offering CM credits through Distance Education. Opportunities are added as they become available, so check back frequently for the most current information.
- Use the [self-reporting](#) tool that enables members to record up to eight credits within each two-year reporting period for activities that meet CM criteria but aren't registered by a provider. Click on the "Add Self-reported credits" button located on your [CM Log](#). Other options for earning CM credits outside traditional learning sessions include: "[authoring](#)," and "[pro bono service](#)" which includes mentoring (a benefit added in 2017).

If you can't get all your credits logged by the end of the year, the grace period for the 2017-18 AICP CM reporting period closes on April 30, 2019. Remember to close out and certify your credits earned for the two-year reporting period in your [CM Log](#).

Introducing...APA Learn!

APA released a new, online education platform, **APA Learn**, on November 14! APA Learn is a catalog of over 375 courses with topics ranging from A(ffordable housing) to Z(oning). APA Learn has a seamless CM logging feature, too, so it may replace some of the links above. APA members also receive special pricing. [Learn more.](#)

— Darlene Wynne, AICP is Assistant Planning Director for the City of Beverly. Reach her at dwynne@beverlyma.gov.

Under the Gavel *cont'd*

Murrow lost because her property, although within 300' of the subject property, abutted "land opposite" the subject property not a direct abutter, thus depriving her of the rebuttable presumption of standing. She lost also because now having the burden of establishing aggrievement, she produced no credible set of facts to support her conclusion that she was aggrieved in the statutory sense. Her conclusory assertion of aggrievement, "unadorned with particularized details," was found insufficient to establishment of aggrievement.

In sum, an appellant can be a party in interest but shown not to be a person aggrieved, while also an appellant can be a person aggrieved without being a party in interest. Standing is jurisdictionally indispensable for

pursing an appeal of a board's decision, and aggrievement is indispensable for standing. While the focus of the *Murrow* decision is the rebuttable presumption, the case may help in dispelling any lingering vexation about standing in zoning appeals, and reading it might let you participate with more confidence when those around you mention the subject.

— Formerly Town Counsel for Amherst, Assistant Attorney General and Director of the AG's Municipal Law Unit, and General Counsel to the Mass Department of Agriculture, Bob Ritchie is currently a consultant to Massachusetts cities and towns.



NEWS FROM MACP

From the President of the
Massachusetts Association of
Consulting Planners

The “Know-How” Versus the “How-To”

Recently, three significant events took place. First, MACP featured the Ric Burns film, *The City and the World* (1945-2000). Anthony Flint from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy introduced the movie and discussed the contributions by Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses to the growth of New York City. Thanks to Anne McKinnon, MACP Treasurer, the event took place at the Jacobs offices in the Boston Back Bay and was well attended by primarily private-sector planners. A great discussion followed the viewing.

Second, the Envision Cambridge Housing Working Group held its final meeting. This topic-focused working group, comprised of Cambridge residents, provided recommendations to the City’s ongoing comprehensive master planning effort. Around 200 residents and business owners applied for the 22-seat Housing Working Group – and fortunately, I made the cut. The Housing Working Group meetings were open to the public.

Finally, this past Saturday, MIT held “Transportation Transformation: A Conference About the New Urban Mobility.” This conference hosted a national “A-team” of urban mobility and micromobility experts, representatives of some of the world’s largest bike and scooter sharing companies, local government officials, advocacy groups, area residents, and urban planners. As a regular user of a non-motorized scooter and cyclist, I enjoyed the conference.

In each one of these events we have experts (the “know-how”) and others challenging the practical implementation (the “how-to”). As shown in the movie, Robert Moses believed he had all the knowledge and reasoning as to why highways were more important than the urban pedestrian environment that Jacobs and others wanted to protect. But he did not always factor in the pedestrian “how-to” experience.

The Housing Working Group faced opposition from some members of the public to the proposed increased housing density, in order to “preserve the character of the City.” These opponents seemed to suggest that previous attempts to increase density resulted in dull architecture that “destroyed” neigh-

borhoods. Further, while the consultant and City staff presented theoretical details such as projected number of housing units, funding sources, and vacancy rates, members of the Housing Working Group and the public challenged practical issues such as necessary zoning changes, how to pay for this work, and how to ensure that local residents occupy the units. Similar in scope, but understood from different perspectives.

At the micromobility conference, the panel was challenged by Craig Kelley, Cambridge City Councilor, to discuss a potential explanation for the influx of scooters to a concerned 80-year-old lady. The planners and transportation innovators claimed – with all the planning ammunition and evidence available – that this is the future of transportation and change may be difficult, but we need to accept it. They highlighted that a scooter encroaching on a sidewalk is less dangerous than the “disruptors” we seem to have gotten used to, such as a delivery truck unloading goods while cars and pedestrians are forced to maneuver around it. However, little consideration was paid to the perspective of this hypothetical older resident. This ongoing discussion between those with the “know-how” and those experienced with the more nuanced “how-to” is important for planners to pay close attention.

How do planners know we are going to get it right next time? Sometimes, it seems that planners are hedging that the legitimacy of the decisions are due to them coming about, not through an “executive decree” but rather through extensive public participation and community engagement. Yet concerns continue that the voices being heard are those with resources and may not always represent all demographic populations. The differences between the approach of professionals, the “know-how,” and the public, often individuals thinking of the “how-to,” continue to widen.

Recently, the country celebrated another chapter of its democracy and the world will see it as an exemplary one. What we haven’t explained to the world (or to many Americans) is that evidence of a solid democracy is not only having people go to the polls to select their leaders in government, but also having these individuals motivated to participate directly in attempts to plan at the local level, which is a lovely mess.

—Leonardi Aray, AIA, NCARB
MACP President

leonardi@larayarchitects.com

Learn more about MACP: www.macponline.org