

MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING

A publication of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association



American Planning Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

Fall 2020

Is New Development More Welcomed in Our Neighborhoods Than We Believe?

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From the President



Hello APA-MA members! I hope that your summer is wrapping up nicely and that this finds you well. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times due to COVID, I am consistently amazed at the ingenuity, adaptability, and camaraderie of planners around the Commonwealth. I love reading the posts on MassPlanners, talking to individual planners about local and regional projects, and seeing the continued availability of programming and networking to keep in touch with planning issues. Case in point, APA-MA participated in a Northeast webinar series which includes topics nearly every week to keep planners apprised of the latest and greatest planning practices. As part of this series, APA-MA organized a webinar on September 3rd entitled: Completing the Count—Planners and the U.S. Census. Many thanks to Jenny Raitt and Kathy McCabe for taking the lead on organizing this well-attended webinar. APA-MA also engaged planners from every region of the state in a series of six focus groups to discuss the needs of our members and how we can adjust to a “new normal” to continue meeting those needs. Planners from the public, private, regional, and non-profit sectors participated. Many thanks for your honest feedback and participation in this important exercise to help us create a year-long strategic plan!

The APA-MA Chapter continues to adapt and be responsive to our members during this time. Here is what you can look forward to from APA-MA in the Fall of 2020:

- We will continue to host programming and networking opportunities through virtual tools (Zoom). This includes the SNEAPA Conference, which will be hosted October 29-30. Please visit www.sneapa.org for the program and how to register.
- The APA-MA Annual Meeting is still on! It will be held during the SNEAPA Conference on October 30th at 12 p.m. We will be sending out a meeting invite and agenda in mid-October.
- The long-awaited *Land Use Guidebook* is going to be released soon! Many thanks to Bob Mitchell and Bob Ritchie for their hard work creating a comprehensive document. Stay tuned for more information on the launch in the next couple of weeks!
- The Call for Awards has been opened! Please check the website to nominate your favorite planner, project, community, or elected official: www.apa-ma.org.

Please visit our website (www.apa-ma.org), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) for regular updates on other Chapter activities. Enjoy the pumpkins, beautiful Fall colors, and cooler weather. I hope to “see” you soon!

Be well,

Angie

Angela J. Cleveland, AICP
aclevelandaicp@gmail.com

SNEAPA 2020 @ A Distance: A Virtual Conference

The Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA) Conference will be held virtually on Thursday, October 29 and Friday, October 30, 2020. Please join the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island Chapters as we host our first ever virtual SNEAPA!

In the last six months during this global pandemic, many planners had to learn a new way to work during self-quarantine, office closures, and social distancing. When it became clear that the conference scheduled to take place in Providence, Rhode Island needed to be postponed until 2021, the conference had to find a new way to host a conference and provide professional



development and AICP Credit Maintenance opportunities to our planning community. The committee immediately shifted momentum and began planning for a virtual conference.

The virtual conference, **SNEAPA 2020 – SNEAPA @ A Distance**, will have many aspects that will be familiar to attendees of previous in-person conferences including the two-day format, 60- and 90-minute sessions presented by planners and other land use professionals, chapter meetings, social networking opportunities, and a keynote speaker.

The conference will offer up to 14 hours of content available to registered attendees. The committee is working diligently on assembling a program that will include a wide range of topics including planning during the Covid-19 pan-

demic, working in changing cities, and planning for diversity and inclusion.

The virtual platform offers opportunities that are not possible at an in-person conference. First, attendees will be able to participate in every session because sessions will not run concurrently! There are no travel expenses and you can experience the conference in the comfort of your own office, home, or even your favorite coffee shop. All sessions will be recorded and available for viewing by all registrants for up to 12 months after the conference.

Conference registration will open in the coming weeks. The conference will be far more affordable this year. Registration is only \$65 for APA members and \$95 for non-members. The fee is further reduced for students and unemployed, furloughed, or retired planners.

Please visit SNEAPA.org for more information on registration, the conference program, and sponsorship opportunities. We very much look forward to seeing you at a safe and social distance in October!

SNEAPA would not be possible without our generous sponsors. Thank you to our early sponsors! Visit SNEAPA.org to add your name to the list of sponsors and see who's already supporting our chapters!

**October 29-30,
2020**

**More info:
SNEAPA.org**

SNEAPA 2020 Conference Committee:

- Alison LeFlore, AICP, Conference Co-Chair, MA Chapter
- Marek Kozikowski, AICP, Conference Co-Chair, CT Chapter
- Jason Parker, AICP, Conference Co-Chair, RI Chapter
- Bob Mitchell, FAICP, MA Chapter
- Demian Sorrentino, AICP, CT Chapter
- Jim Riordan, AICP, RI Chapter

About this year's keynote speaker:

Elizabeth Rush is the accomplished author of *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* and *Still Lives from a Vanishing City: Essays and Photographs from Yangon, Myanmar*. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Guardian*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *Pacific Standard*, and *The New Republic*, among others. She is the recipient of fellowships and grants including the Howard Foundation Fellowship, awarded by Brown University; the Society for Environmental Journalism Grant; the Metcalf Institute Climate Change Adaptation Fellowship; and the Science in Society Award from the National Association of Science Writers. She received her MFA in nonfiction from Southern New Hampshire University and teaches creative nonfiction at Brown University.



Is New Development More Welcomed in Our Neighborhoods Than We Believe?

by Karin Brandt



There's a common misconception in the world of real estate development that community members, more specifically NIMBYs, are generally obstacles to progress. In other words, even those in favor of real estate development are commonly believed to be proponents of progress only so long as a given project is happening in someone else's neighborhood and not their own. But, a new survey of 1,073 people in the U.S. (conducted by my company coUrbanize) challenges such notions and hints at the many ways developers, with the help of planning teams, can and should work with community members to address their collective needs together.

It turns out that 82 percent of survey respondents were able to cite at least one benefit that development brings to their community and nearly half described themselves as pro-development regardless of whether they lived in urban, suburban, or rural communities. It was interesting to note that gender seems to play a role in attitudes about real estate development, as men were more likely to describe themselves as being in favor of it.

While finding out that many people are actually receptive to the idea of development within their respective communities should be welcomed news, those findings still beg the question: what kinds of development projects are most attractive and what kinds of features and factors should be weighed most heavily during the planning and design phases? Perhaps unsurprisingly, economic, environmental, and traffic impacts were all major concerns surrounding development. But, affordable housing ranked surprisingly high as a valued aspect of development with 55 percent of respondents defining it as such. Perhaps that is less surprising given that only

29 percent of study participants would describe their community as "affordable to live in."

A challenge that planners and developers alike face is the dichotomy between this majority who want affordable housing solutions and the fewer, but nevertheless mighty, NIMBY voices that actively oppose new housing development throughout the entitlement process. Unfortunately, those who directly benefit from new housing development are not the voices heard at planning board meetings. This lack of representation is something that must be tackled head-on in order to address long-term affordability and sustainability in our communities.

These data points don't only matter in terms of the type of projects developers pursue, but also in terms

While conversations around development can often center on short-term inconvenience or immediate economic impact, the greatest concerns revealed by the survey revolved around development's long-term impact viability.

of how developers should be communicating and engaging with community members about those projects. For example, many residential or mixed-use developers focus on promoting the "luxury" or "modern" aspects of

their projects. But, according to the survey results, affordability, economic benefits, and even public greenspace are more important to residents.

Admittedly, the study was concluded just before the coronavirus pandemic gripped our nation. So, some priorities may have changed since the survey's inception. It's easy to imagine that job creation and economic

continued next page

New Development *cont'd*

growth, for example, might have ranked even higher on the list of positive impacts that development can have on a community if the survey were fielded today. However, even before COVID-19, those still ranked among the four most commonly selected responses along with retail and/or other public amenities and new housing stock.

Other factors to consider include features that make a given project an attractive and welcomed addition to existing community members. When asked to name such appealing features, the most common responses included greenspace (59 percent), streetscape improvements (57 percent), and affordable housing units (55 percent). Regardless of whether those data points diverge from a developer's ambitions, they are highly valued by a project's future neighbors. By leading conversations around development with such benefits in mind, developers can build trust in the community, which in turn can speed progress and lead to consensus and quicker planning conclusions.

While conversations around development can often center on short-term inconvenience or immediate economic impact, the greatest concerns revealed by the survey revolved around development's long-term impact viability—in other words, how a project changes life in the community for years to come. Traffic and parking challenges are great examples, as 62 percent of respon-

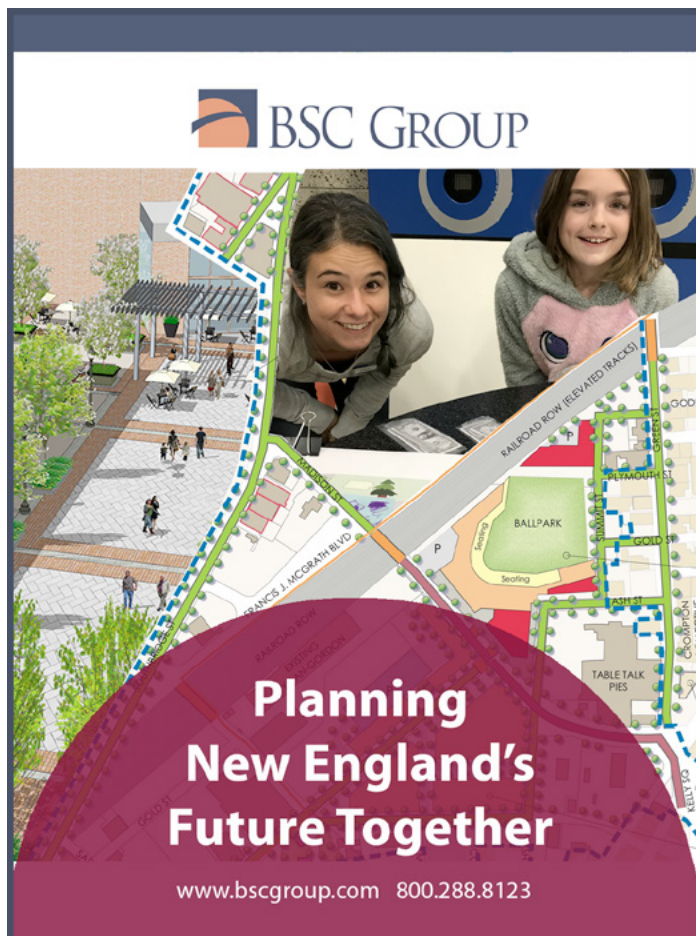
dents chose them as top concerns. Increased cost of living and environmental concerns followed.

It should be noted that responses to many of these questions varied by age and demographics, so developers must examine key traits of a neighborhood before jumping to conclusions based on general statistics of a wider population base. Even demographics can fail to convey important information about the connections local residents might feel to a particular neighborhood, for example. So, learning the history and culture of a neighborhood is as critically important as identifying the best qualities and greatest needs before moving forward with any development plans.

It bears repeating that this survey was concluded before the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 and before the killing of George Floyd radically changed our public discourse around diversity and inclusiveness. So it's important to constantly reevaluate the unique and rapidly shifting needs of any community.

More than ever, development teams must walk hand in hand with community members by engaging in thoughtful and meaningful discussions. That's the best way to develop a clear path toward a mutually beneficial development process.

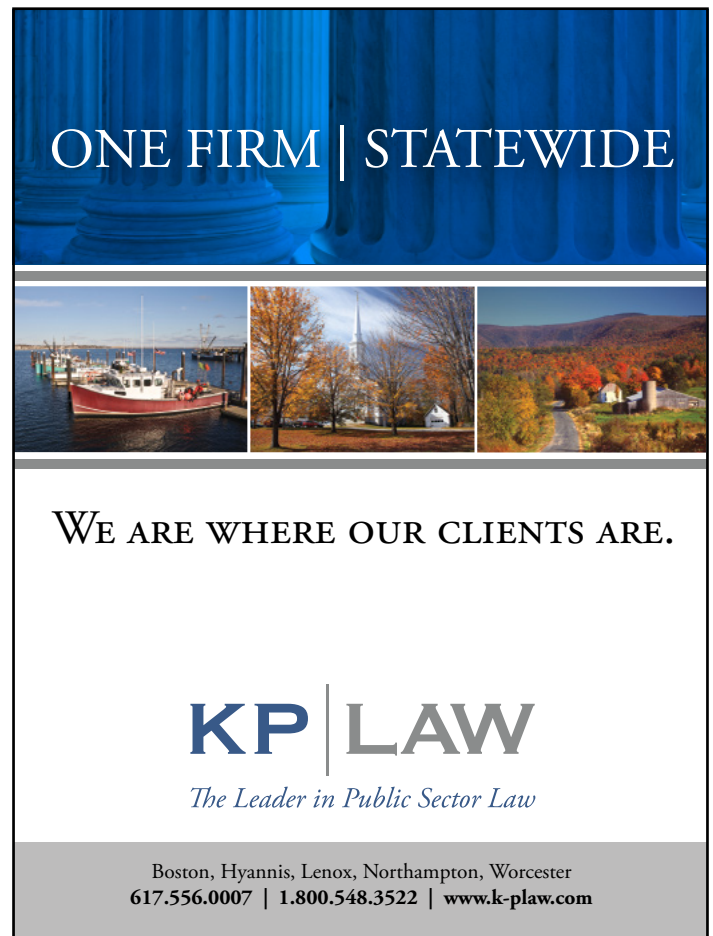
— Karin Brandt is CEO and Founder of [coUrbanize](#). You can [access the full survey report here](#).



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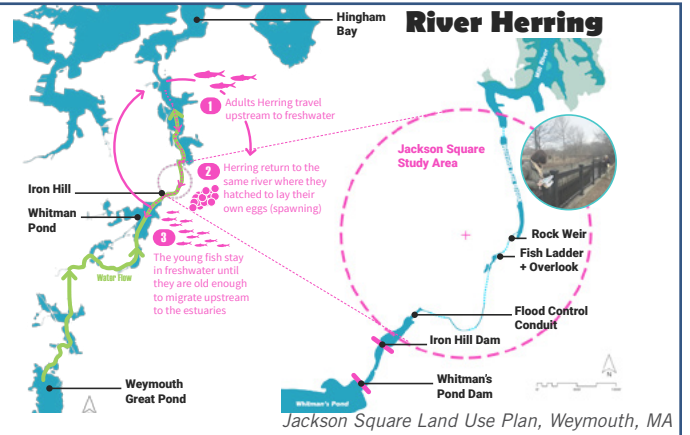
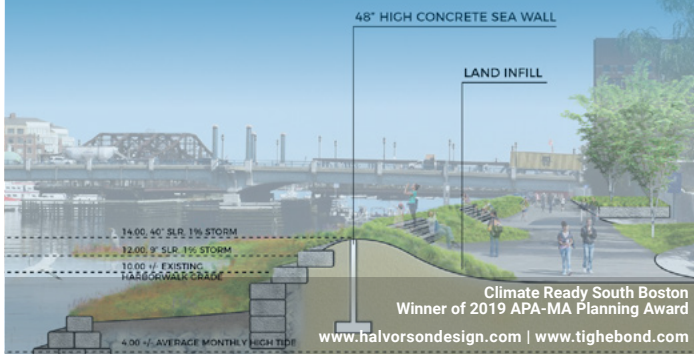
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NEWS FROM MassACP | Consulting Planners' Perspective

This quarter, the *Massachusetts Association of Consulting Planners* is highlighting two upcoming programs. Consulting planners offer a depth and range of expertise and can augment your efforts and take on special projects. The directory of consulting planners can be found at www.macponline.org. Please send us your RFP and RFQ announcements, which we post at no charge.

King Tides, Wildfires, Hurricanes, and Derechos

What do the ferocious wildfires burning millions of acres in the West, five simultaneous named hurricanes in the Atlantic, the recent derechos that swept through Iowa and devastated crops, farmland and communities, and King Tides have in common? Climate change. Extreme weather events, including our summer-time high temperatures in Massachusetts, wide spread drought, and rising waters are manifestations of our changing climate.

Boston was ranked the world's eighth most vulnerable to floods among 136 coastal cities globally in a [2013 study](#) by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Come witness what's happening with climate change on Monday, October 19th when we observe a King Tide in Boston's Seaport Area along with lunch. MassACP is organizing an outdoor walk and program (with social distancing) to witness the rising tides and examine how we can better respond to climate change. Jim Riordan and Weston & Sampson will also be sharing their work on climate change planning. Watch for details and sign up. In the event of torrential rains, the King Tide tour will occur on November 16, 2020.

Celebrating Human Rights Day

Join in the worldwide celebration of Human Rights Day on December 10, 2020. The Mass Association of Consulting Planners as part of the global observance will be hosting an online screening of the film *I Am Not Your Negro*, along with a discussion of the film. We will explore how the film's themes touch on contemporary struggles for human rights, especially Black Lives Matter, and how planners can engage, support and advance race equity and human rights.

I Am Not Your Negro is a film by Haitian-born filmmaker Raoul Peck about the life of James Baldwin. The film is inspired by Baldwin's unfinished manuscript, *Remember this House*, about his friendship with three civil rights leaders – Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr, who were all murdered within five years of each other. In the film, Peck examines the

civil rights movement and American culture's resistance to it.

The murders this year of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Daniel Prude make viewing this award-winning documentary film especially poignant. The civil rights movement is marching on with the Black Lives Movement.

I Am Not Your Negro film was selected by the International Literature Festival for worldwide screening as part of commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. The UDHR asserts that all human beings are born free and equal and advances many of the principles embodied in the Bill of Rights, the U.S. Constitution as well as the AICP Code of Ethics. Human Rights Day celebrates the UDHR. Join us in learning more and reflecting on the work we still need to do to advance human rights and race equity in our communities and world.

MassACP will be publishing details on the December 10 film viewing and discussion. Stay tuned. In the meantime, read a copy of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (see excerpt below).

— Kathleen McCabe, FAICP, Vice President
Massachusetts Association of Consulting Planners

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (an excerpt)

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Eleanor Roosevelt holding the English language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after it was adopted by the U.N. in 1948.



Make Sure Everyone Is Counted!

by Kathleen "Kathy" McCabe, FAICP

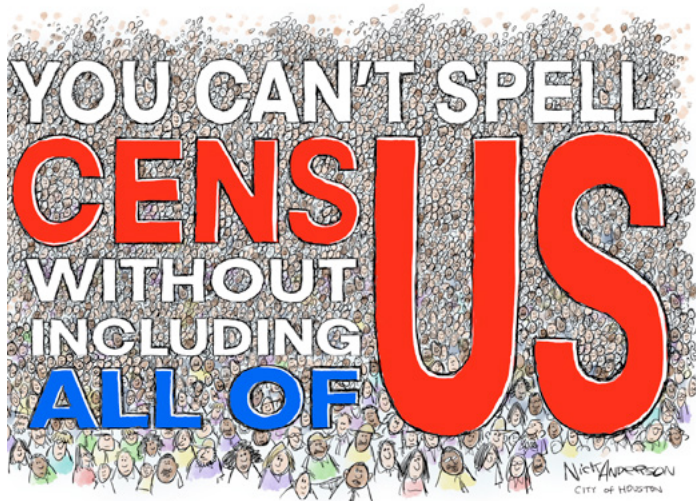
In less than two weeks, the count of persons by the 2020 decennial Census closes. Ensuring a complete count is important to local communities and states is critical.

The results of the 2020 Census count drives funding from over 325 federal programs which distributes over \$900 billion annually. These include CDBG; Workforce Innovation Opportunity (WIO) Act dollars for workforce training; funding formulas for transportation (roads and transit); eligibility for business loans from USDA/FmHA; nutrition funding for seniors and newborns. Schools also receive funding that is informed by the Census, including Title I funding for local education agencies (LEAs), special education grants to the states, vocational rehabilitation grants, and career and technical education grants.

For every person not counted, a state and locality will be losing approximately \$1,800 per person (exact amount varies by state). An undercount can cost your community and our state millions of dollars.

As planners, we all use Census data. Even if you rely on third-party products such as ESRI, it is all derived from U.S. Census data. We need to make sure we have a high quality, strong foundation for Census data, and that means a full and complete count for the decennial census.

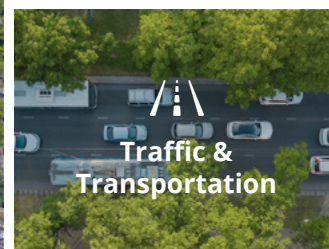
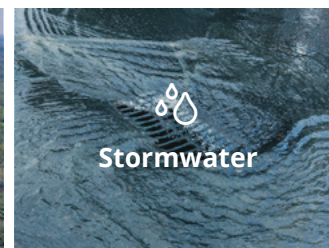
Responding to the 2020 Census is easy. It can be



done online, by phone (English or Spanish), or by mail. The counting ends September 30, 2020. Getting the word out that the Census is important, safe, and confidential is crucial! Responses to the Census are not available to federal, state, and local law enforcement or immigration authorities. It is safe for all people to respond to the 2020 Census. The Census form online is available in 13 different languages.

continued next page

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You can find your local city and town (down to the Census Tract level) response rate at <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>.

Earlier in the summer, the Census Bureau announced their intent to extend the September 30 deadline to the end of October, but the proposed extension was rolled back. A federal judge in California extended a temporary injunction ordering the Census Bureau to stop winding down the count. The national injunction was continued until September 24. The judge is waiting for a response from the government and could make a final decision prior to September 24 on advocates' request to reinstate the end-of-October deadline. Although advocates hope to prevail in court and obtain an extension, it is unknown whether that extension will be granted. Planners should recognize that September 30 is the real deadline and urge people to respond accordingly.

How you can help to make sure there is a full and complete count for the 2020 Census?

1. Spread the word, encourage people to complete the Census form whether online, phone or by mail by September 30th.

2. Complete the Census yourself – it takes less than five minutes.
3. Encourage your friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers to complete the Census.
4. Add a message to your email signature line.
5. Post it on your website with the link to respond.
6. Reach out to community organizations, churches, schools to spread the word and encourage people to respond to the Census before the deadline.
7. Use social media to spread the word, be counted, respond to the 2020 Census.
8. Use public service announcements in your community on local radio and television as well as public access TV.
9. Announce the need to respond to the 2020 Census and the September 30 deadline at local public meetings, webinars – whether in person or online.
10. Check your community's Census response rate and challenge a neighboring city or town and see who can increase their response rate the most in these final days.

The Massachusetts Chapter of APA sponsored a program on **Completing the Count** as part of the Region 1 webinar series. Visit the chapter's [web page](#) to hear the webinar and for updates on Completing the Count.

— *Kathy McCabe, FAICP is principal of McCabe Enterprises, vice president of MassACP, and co-chair of APA-MA's Economic Development Committee.*



Speeding Up Slow Street Projects


You and your neighbors have most likely started walking, biking, and dining outdoors more since the unexpected arrival of social distancing and emptier streets. Even with limited resources, municipalities are finding ways to adapt to these new demands swiftly and creatively while also considering how they can be achieved effectively and potentially shift the future of local transportation. On July 1, the MA-APA Transportation Committee hosted a webinar, **Speeding Up Slow Street Projects**, to discuss these changes in more detail.

Attendees heard how three municipalities are responding to these demands by fast-tracking slow street projects to improve safety, equitably advance access, and support local economies during the era of social distancing and beyond:

- Arlington, Massachusetts – Shared Streets Pilot Project
- East Providence, Rhode Island – Watchemoket Square
- Milan, Italy – Open Streets Adaptation Strategy

HOST
Whitney Burdge
 Transportation Planner
 Stantec


SPEAKERS




Johanna Walczak
Senior Planner
City of East Providence




Chris Martin
Executive Director,
East Providence
Waterfront
Commission



Arek Galle
Senior Associate,
BETA Group, Inc.



Daniel Amstutz
Senior
Transportation
Planner
Town of Arlington, MA



Paolo Beria
Associate Professor
Politecnico di Milano
Milan, Italy

Speeding Up Slow Street Projects webinar, July 1

Transportation planners involved with the planning and implementation for each case study discussed context-specific street design approaches applied for accommodating new uses as well as approaches for decision-making and outreach. Each case study addressed funding options, how to prioritize pilots equitably and thoughtfully, and best practice recommendations for project monitoring. Most importantly, attendees heard about lessons learned on the ground and what long-term impacts these fast-tracked projects may have on our future road networks and communities.

Almost 230 participants nationwide viewed the webinar, with the majority from Massachusetts. You can check out the recording and presentations anytime!

Webinar Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6wTtidMQBY>



Slide deck: http://www.ohioplanning.org/aws/APAOH/asset_manager/get_file/471014/07.01.20_pdf.pdf

MANY thanks to the APA-MA Transportation Committee for putting this webinar together and to the Ohio Chapter's Webcast Series for hosting the webinar. If you are interested in joining the MA-APA Transportation Committee, please contact Alison Felix at afelix@mapc.org.



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The PDO Corner

by Amanda Chisholm, APA-MA Professional Development Officer

I hope that everyone is and well and finding safe ways to continue to interact with family, friends, and colleagues at this time. At APA-MA we are continuing to do our best to offer professional development opportunities that

can be enjoyed from the comfort of your own home. We are especially looking forward to Virtual Southern New England Planning Association Conference on October 29-30. APA-MA and APA-RI have teamed up to offer an AICP Prep session as part of the conference. I hope to see many of you at our presentation!

If you are planning to take the AICP exam in November, reduced fee scholarships are available. The AICP Exam Fee Scholarship program was established to offer assistance to individuals who may defer taking or are unable to take the AICP exam because of the cost. APA-MA administers this scholarship on behalf of APA National. APA National and APA-MA encourage APA members with financial barriers interested in becoming AICP members to apply for this scholarship. More information and the scholarship application are available [here](#).

Applications are due October 1, 2020 for the November 2020 testing window.

You can find many other upcoming virtual opportunities to earn CM credits at the [APA National Calendar of approved events](#). And, as always, please reach out to me with any professional development questions.

— Amanda Chisholm can be reached at amanda.chisholm.nd@gmail.com

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