

MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING

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American Planning Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

Winter 2024



2023 APA-MA Planning Awards *page 3*

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Cover: One of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Wayfinding elements (photo courtesy of the Town of Acton Planning Department).

From the President

Happy New Year! I can't be the only one in awe that it's somehow 2024.

This will be a big year for APA-MA, but before we dive into this year's excitement – let's review 2023's highlights! We joined together at Concord's historic Colonial Inn to celebrate our 2023 Planning Awards. Read on for information about each of our awardees. We were thrilled to recognize these outstanding projects and people and please give them your congratulations as you run into them in the coming weeks and months. Projects and individuals honored crisscross the state – from tiny Westhampton to Cambodia Town in Lowell to the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority to Barnstable to Somerville's Davis Square to Revere and Manchester-by-the-Sea. Great working is happening across the state and we always enjoy the opportunity to pause to celebrate each other and all we've accomplished. It's never too early to start thinking about this year's awards – if you have a project or individual you'd like to nominate, let us know!

We are looking forward to another year of social and educational events. We have several already in the works – keep an eye on your email for dates and registration events. As always, let us know if you have a suggestion or want to host an event.

We're already gearing up for SNEAPA 2024 in Springfield on November 7-8. There's always space on the conference committee for more volunteers – please let us know if you want to work with us to bring this year's conference to life. Even if you don't want to volunteer for the conference committee, mark your calendars now!

Welcome to our new Board members and thank you to our outgoing Board members. Feel free to reach out to any member of the Board with questions and suggestions. All of our committees are actively recruiting new members, we'd love to have you!

Alison

Alison LeFlore, AICP
president@apa-ma.org



Alison LeFlore (left) and Kenneth Comia (right) presents the Comprehensive Plan Award to the team from Resilient Westhampton at APA-MA's awards celebration on December 8, 2023.

APA-MA Annual Planning Awards

The APA-MA awards recognize outstanding planning projects, individuals, and organizations across Massachusetts for significant contributions to the field of planning.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AWARD

Resilient Westhampton

In 2021, Westhampton initiated a simultaneous Master Planning project alongside an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update. They retained Weston & Sampson's Planning Team to oversee the analysis, engagement, and writing, to draw on their expertise in utilizing climate resilience data and techniques to help integrate the resilience planning considerations and solutions throughout the plan as well as familiarity with innovative public engagement techniques. What resulted was the 2023 Resilient Westhampton Master Plan. It is the Town's first Master Plan, a collective vision for the future and includes strategies and actions for the Town over the next 10-20 years. At the foundation of the plan is a vision for a resilient, equitable, and sustainable Westhampton. Aligning the Resilient Master Plan process with the OSRP ensured that its strategies for open space and recreation would relate directly to the vision for land use, natural resources, and other elements in the Master Plan.

The plan defines resilience principles at the outset, a new approach to shaping the themes within a Master Plan. The planning process was innovative in its commitment to integrating matters of equity and social justice throughout the process as well as the goals, policies, and strategies. The plan includes a section on the role of

equity for each element, and the second chapter of the Plan is unique in that it focuses specifically on social and community resilience. At the beginning of the process, the Town hired Human in Common, an organization that specializes in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training to host a public workshop offering residents an understanding of what diversity, equity, and inclusion means and to build communication skills supporting effective dialogue around differences.

This Plan heavily emphasized the importance of public participation. Hundreds of community members, many Town staff, and several key responsible agencies were involved in the process, which generated palpable energy for implementation throughout the process.

Comprehensive and master plans are constantly evolving and incorporating novel approaches to encourage public participation and review of these plans. Many touch on sustainability, resilience, and equity, but few highlight these as fundamental principles in the way that the Resilient Westhampton Master Plan does. This Plan serves as an example for other communities, projects, and planners to recognize that even often controversial topics can be resolved if the public has an opportunity to voice their opinion.



Cambodia Town Neighborhood Plan

The Cambodia Town Neighborhood Plan is the result of a three-year partnership between the Lowell Department of Planning (DPD), Lowell Community Health Center (Lowell CHC), Lowell Community Health Center’s REACH LoWELL Program (Lowell CHC REACH LoWELL), and the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA). This three-year engagement process and the resulting plan was funded through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) (via Lowell CHC REACH LoWELL) aimed at reducing health disparities in Southeast Asian and Hispanic/LatinX communities. The planning team first approached this initiative through a lens of increasing physical activity by addressing mobility challenges in Cambodia Town, but through the community

engagement process it became clear that mobility was not the only built environment factor contributing to negative health outcomes. The project evolved into this Neighborhood Plan addressing four intertwined focus areas:

- Mobility & Connectivity
- Cultural Identity
- Environment & Sustainability
- Economic Development

This Plan captures the concerns and aspirations of the diverse Cambodia Town Community. Community engagement was not just a box that was checked off, but the foundation that the Plan was built on. The engagement strategy incorporated an array of accessible, multilingual activities. The planning team made every effort to reduce barriers to participating in engagement by offering both digital (remote) and analog (in-person) engagement platforms, translating all materials and offering live translations, bringing public meetings to where people



already were by hosting “pop-ups” at various locations and events, and offering child-friendly activities and engagement opportunities.

The City of Lowell has already implemented several recommendations from the Action Plan and is committed to expanding investment and civic engagement in the Cambodia Town neighborhood over the next decade.

An aerial photograph of a city street with buildings, trees, and a church steeple in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing the Environmental Partners logo and text. The logo consists of a stylized 'EP' in a blue square. Below the logo, the text reads 'ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERS' in large white letters, followed by '— An Apex Company —' in smaller white letters. At the bottom of the box, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, along with the website address 'envpartners.com'. The entire graphic is set against a background of a city street with buildings and trees, and is framed by orange and blue geometric shapes.

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SRTA Bus Stop Design Guidelines

The Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) operates a network of 26 bus routes that serve more than 1,100 bus stops in seven different communities on the south coast of Massachusetts. Few stops have shelters, and of those that do, many are outdated and often underutilized by passengers due to poor placement and poor design. In the urban cores of the network, stops are very closely spaced and have inadequate curb space for passengers to safely board and alight.

Working closely with SRTA, Nelson/Nygaard (with support from McMahon, a Bowman Company) led a systemwide bus stop improvement program to improve rider mobility, increase operating efficiencies, and prioritize future infrastructure investments. New Bus Stop Design Guidelines include standards for bus stop spacing, consolidation, and prioritization.

The Design Guidelines will be a helpful tool for all involved in bus stop planning and design throughout the state, including planners, engineers, landscape architects, municipalities, state and regional agencies, consultants, and developers.



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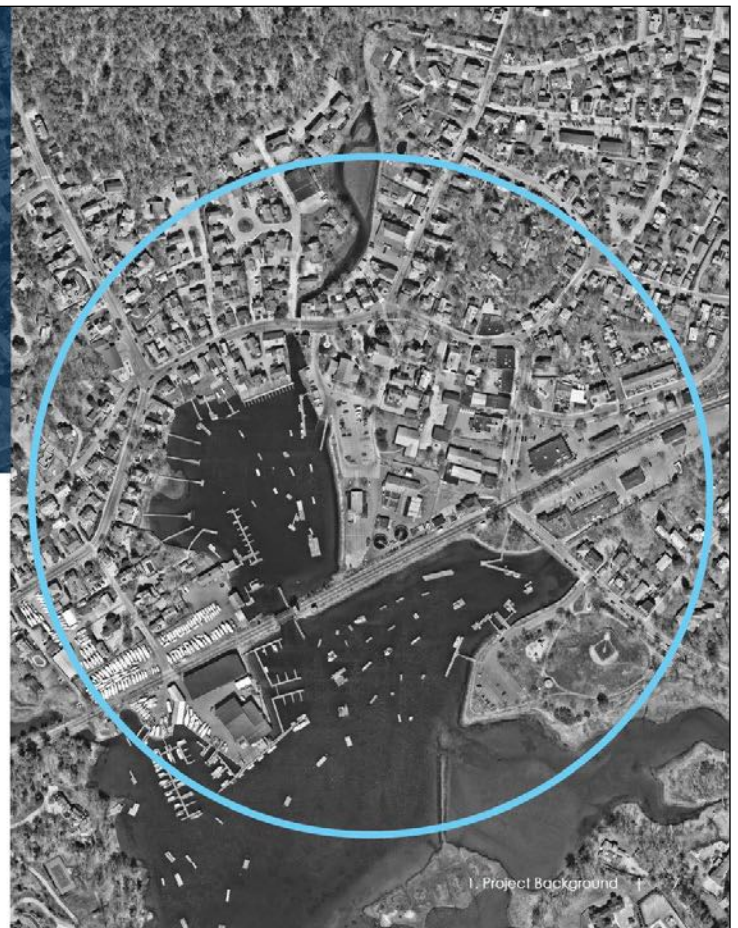
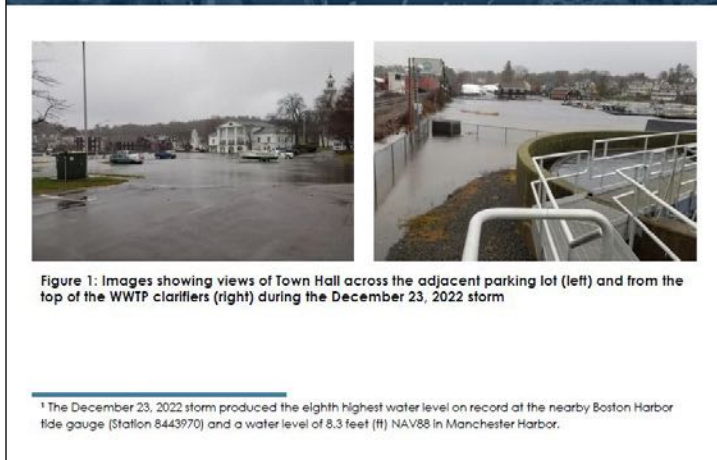
Manchester by the Sea Coastal Vulnerability Action Plan

The Coastal Vulnerability Action Plan represents a first of its kind plan for Manchester. The plan builds upon several past studies by incorporating a refined and updated vulnerability assessment and narrowing the focus of the plan to the heart of Manchester-by-the-Sea – the downtown and inner harbor. Through a series of planning scenarios, the plan was developed as a conceptual roadmap for Manchester to reduce coastal flood risks and increase coastal resilience by establishing targeted, action-oriented mitigation measures at the site- and neighborhood-scale for short-, medium-, and long-term planning scenarios. These scenarios included the incorporation of common techniques for coastal flood risk reduction (e.g., dry floodproofing and elevation of critical municipal infrastructure) to address near-term vulnerabilities – along with more novel actions, including:

- A remotely deployable flood barrier along a low-lying road
- Transition to a floodable park to act as a sponge for coastal inundation
- The potential future elevation of the MBTA rail line to provide more area-wide risk reduction downtown (when combined with a flood gate at the mouth of the inner harbor)

Manchester’s Coastal Vulnerability Action Plan showcases excellence by not only leveraging the unique thought leadership of the diverse consultant team from Fuss & O’Neill and Woods Hole Group, but also the local expertise and experience of the project Steering Committee, which was comprised of members from the Downtown Improvement Committee, Harbor Advisory Committee, Historic District Commission, Select Board, Stream Team, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Salem Sound Coast Watch.

While the plan – and the related scenarios and recommended actions – are unique to Manchester-by-the-Sea, it also stands as an example for how other Cape Ann and Massachusetts coastal communities may consider developing their own roadmaps for coastal flood risk reduction, as many communities are facing similar issues. The plan also serves as a good example to other planners as to how to develop and co-create an actionable plan for addressing coastal flood risks with meaningful input from the local community.



COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Town of Barnstable, Village of Hyannis,
Downtown Rezoning**

The rezoning of Downtown Hyannis is an evolution of the zoning code for the Town of Barnstable that opens the door to a year-round economy. As the largest town on Cape Cod both in population and land area, it was important to address the stagnant growth on Main Street Hyannis. Over the years many once-thriving hotels/motels and restaurants have boarded their windows, citing a lack of year-round income.

The City took on a three-year planning process that sought to consolidate and better define the zoning districts, updated their dimensional standards, and incorporate form-based zoning techniques that would foster a more predictable built outcome and produce a high-quality public realm and lively main street.

Since its adoption in February of 2023, the predictable path to permitting has resulted in a win-win for the Town and property owners and their respective development team. In the course of six months the Town has received proposals that have reimagined the Downtown corridor, resulting in the redevelopment of several abandoned or underutilized properties in to an array of uses such as a 120-unit mixed-income rental building from a once empty office building and bank, a 95-unit mixed use



building from a once boarded-up motel, conversion of an abandoned 7-Eleven into 12 apartments, several modest residential additions to existing first-floor retail, and even a beer garden, with many more to come.

Barnstable has become a leader in long-range planning and finding sound implementation strategies that make Cape Cod a great place to live, work, and play. This Downtown Hyannis rezoning is the culmination of a decade of planning studies, furthered by the Town's Housing Choice designation to create a vibrant, walkable, and sustainable place at the heart of Cape Cod, as well as produce housing in underutilized and abandoned properties in a Gateway City during a time when Massachusetts is in desperate need of housing.

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SOCIAL ADVOCACY AWARD

**Broadway Business District Engagement and Design Services,
Revere, Massachusetts**

This multidisciplinary initiative involved urban planners, architects, and a signage and wayfinding expert to work with small business owners to celebrate their unique brands and identities. Revere has always been a community of immigrants. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries people from European descent were drawn to its shores. Today, the vibrant community of nearly 55,000 is equally diverse, with many small-business owners and residents hailing from Central and South America. This remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity is especially on display along historic Broadway, Revere’s mile-long commercial corridor where businesses highlight their products, cuisine, and services in a manner consistent with their culture but unlike a traditional, historic “New England” colonial village.

The City of Revere’s Department of Planning and Development (the DPCD) has been active in trying to support local, independently owned small businesses. Initiatives have included city-sponsored small business grants, webinars, and assistance with outdoor dining activations. Broadway has struggled to capture local visits and dollars from consumers living and working within a one-mile radius of the area. Revere’s DPCD sought to improve the storefront exteriors and signage along the Broadway corridor through implementation of “context-sensitive” design concepts, and to develop district wayfinding to enhance the physical environment of the corridor to generate sustained visits to this commercial district.

Of the 160 small businesses along Broadway, nearly a third are Hispanic or Latino. However, when English is a second or third language, navigating the public process to apply for economic assistance can be daunting. To address this challenge, the City established a process of working directly with qualified business owners in a workshop environment for planning and

design assistance in the business owner’s native language. To engender trust and “meet people where they are,” the design collaborations took place on the premises of the business owners before or during normal business hours. The City’s engagement efforts to celebrate the unique characteristics of the businesses and recommend upgrades to storefronts and building facades has resulted in an increase in sales, customer visits, and foot traffic along the corridor.

Consultants Gamble Associates and Omloop supported this award-winning project.



Laurie Muncy

Over the course of her career, Laurie has served as mentor and trainer to dozens of people in the field of planning. Whether it's junior planners, students interested in urban planning, or those transitioning from another career, Laurie's guidance and training have helped them all gain a better grasp of planning principles and processes.

Laurie's work at the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) has not only supported but significantly advanced the goals of the organization and the diverse municipalities it serves. Her impact is quantifiable; during her tenure, she played a pivotal role in the successful adoption of multiple crucial planning initiatives.

As a planner, Laurie possesses the many skills necessary to have a lasting impact



in the communities she serves. Her knowledge of planning principles, theories, and practices enable her to offer valuable insights and guidance. When mentoring junior planners, Laurie is patient and understands that people learn at different paces. She is generous with her time, working with junior planners and student interns at their speed of comfort. Laurie supports her mentees in building their professional network and encourages them to attend conferences, join professional organizations, and connect with other experienced planners.

The work is undeniable, and her contribution to growing the field of planning through her support of junior planners is impressive. For these reasons, we are pleased to present the Faye Siegfriedt Award to Laurie Muncy.

As a planner, Laurie possesses the many skills necessary to have a lasting impact in the communities she serves. Her knowledge of planning principles, theories, and practices enable her to offer valuable insights and guidance.

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Together, we can create an inclusive community planning process and promote just local policies that provide open and equitable access. It's about creating a world where all people live in healthy, sustainable, and safe communities.

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Congratulates Private Planners Working on the
2023 MA-APA Award-Winning Plans

Weston & Sampson: *Resilient Westhampton Master Plan*
Nelson Nygaard and McMahon Associates:
Bus Stop Design Guidelines for SRTA
Fuss & O'Neil and Woods Hole Group:
Manchester-by-the-Sea Coastal Vulnerability Action Plan
Gamble Associates and Omloop:
Broadway Business District & Design Services, Revere

And we celebrate **Larry Koff**, recipient of the *Carol Thomas Award for Lifetime Achievement*

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Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning
 “Walk this Way: A Conditions and Needs Assessment of Davis Square”

“Walk This Way” is a community-driven report that utilized a mixed methods approach to arrive at a series of recommendations to enhance safety, livability, and accessibility of Davis Square, Somerville.

The Spring 2023 Field Project team partnered with local advocacy group Somerville Alliance for Safe Streets to examine questions of safety, accessibility, and pedestrianization in the context of Davis Square. A critical component of the project was an assessment of current conditions and needs of Davis Square’s streetscape and identifying how a proposed pedestrianization scheme in the area creates a more desirable, safe, and accessible location for the Square’s users.

Qualitative and quantitative methods ranging from surveys and focus groups to GIS analysis and traffic counts were utilized to conduct this research and inform conclusions. Data collection relied on community participation, as the team utilized qualitative methods such as surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. This blending of methods allowed for a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the needs and conditions of the Square, as well as providing a blueprint for future engagement-focused student projects. Major conclusions included:

1. The majority of surveyed community members see pedestrian safety and accessibility in Davis Square as a priority.



Maps created during the participatory mapping section of a virtual focus group. Respondents indicated areas they feel are safe, convenient, unsafe, or inconvenient, and described why.



Planning students from Tufts University discuss the pros and cons of pedestrianization of Davis Square with Somerville residents.

2. Elm Street and the Square’s central intersection are hot spots of congestion and vehicular incidents, with many community members considering these corridors as inconvenient and unsafe for pedestrians.
3. While surveyed community members had divided opinions on closing Elm Street to cars, the literature review found that pedestrianization could be beneficial if gradually implemented with good communication and community buy-in.

The project included the following policy recommendations:

1. Increase pedestrian accessibility by improving physical infrastructure in Davis Square.
2. Foster safe and efficient traffic flow for all users of the Square by reprogramming traffic and crossing signals, increasing the number of loading spaces, and constructing bike lanes.
3. Develop a pilot program for temporary weekend closures of Elm Street to vehicular traffic.

Though the semester-long student project and has concluded, the work is being carried forward by the student team, who are continuing to present their findings to the community at available opportunities. Advocates are using the results of the project in conversations with city officials to encourage them to move quickly on making the recommended improvements and to assure the city that the community is in support.

David Mark

Citizen planners are invaluable to developing and advancing plans in their communities. They give generously of their time, volunteering countless hours at meetings and events held at night and on weekends. They do the work not for pay or notoriety, but solely for the benefit of their community. Citizen planners are the lifeblood of planning and David Mark of Maynard exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated volunteer.

David has long been an institution in the Town of Maynard, having authored numerous articles on Maynard, even publishing an expansive history of the town to commemorate its 150th anniversary. David's volunteer efforts include extensive work on the creation of the Assabet River Trail, coordinating ongoing maintenance that cannot be funded by the town. David was instrumental in the dedication of the Marble Farm Historic Site, a multi-year process to convert an 18th century home foundation on town property into a historic site and park.

Working with the Maynard Historical Society, David produced a program and lecture about Digital Equipment Corporation, which was founded in 1957 and made Maynard the minicomputer capital of the world. The lecture includes images that span the origin, rise, and decline of Digital Equipment Corporation, highlighting



David Mark (rear center) led a community planning effort to convert a notable 18th-century home foundation on town property into an historic site and park. Marble Farm Historic Site was dedicated on May 2, 2023.

the work experience of women and the commitment of the company to diversity training.

For the Town of Maynard, David Mark has been a dedicated voice preserving the distant and not so distant past of the town's history. For these reasons, we are proud to award David Mark of Maynard the 2023 Citizen Planner Award.


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Emily Sullivan, AICP

For the last five and a half years, Emily Sullivan, AICP, has worked tirelessly to advance environmental planning projects including sustainability, conservation, and hazard mitigation in Massachusetts. Ms. Sullivan has worked effectively on a wide range of topics and projects all committed to furthering the environmental and climate mitigation goals of both the Commonwealth and of localities she has worked in as well. Her experience includes:

- Serving as the Environmental Planner & Conservation Agent for the Town of Arlington, where she coordinated a range of sustainability and environmental planning and policy efforts. Ms. Sullivan also worked with the Conservation Commission in its administration and enforcement of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Arlington Bylaw for Wetlands Protection, and management of property under Conservation Commission control.
- Working for the Town of Hingham, as the Conservation Director for the Department of Conservation. In her role as liaison with the Conservation Commission,



Ms. Sullivan helped oversee the protection of wetlands, waterbodies, waterways, floodplains, buffer zones, and riverfront areas for the protection of natural resources and enjoyment of Hingham residents.

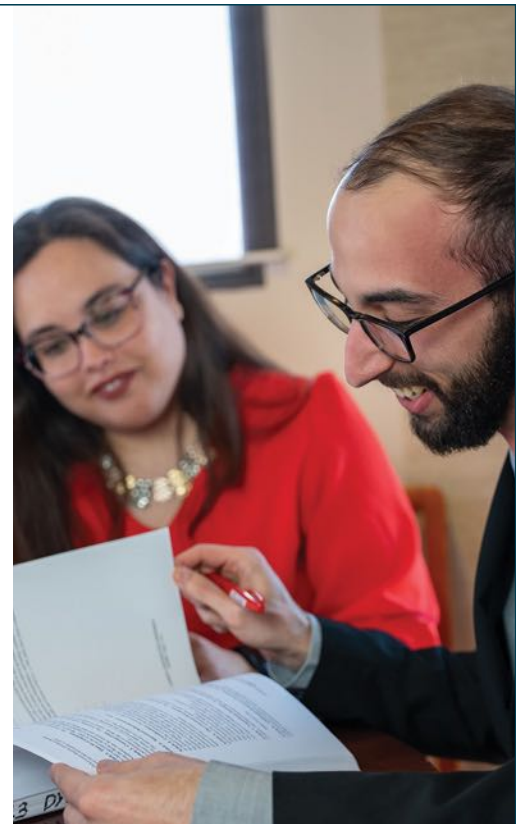
- Currently Ms. Sullivan serves the City of Somerville as the Climate Change Program Manager. The City of Somerville is one of the leading cities on climate change in Massachusetts and the country, pioneering new approaches to climate action planning, clean energy and resilience programs, and community engagement. As the Climate Change Program Manager in the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), Emily Sullivan represents the best of what planning has to offer. In this role, Ms. Sullivan leads long-range climate change planning efforts and serves as the internal and external spokesperson for the City's climate priorities as well as the technical expert on greenhouse gas reductions and resilience.

Ms. Sullivan has excelled in leadership roles and increased the impact of planning in public decision-making in every municipality she has worked in. It is no exaggeration to say there are few who are as committed to the cause of climate change mitigation in the public sector as Ms. Sullivan. Ms. Sullivan has exhibited excellence in the field of environmental planning and truly is a rising star in her field who will continue to achieve great things in Massachusetts in the years to come.



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illuminating the Path: Municipal Planners and Light Pollution in Massachusetts

by Leo Smith, DarkSky International

Massachusetts boasts a rich history, picturesque and biodiverse landscapes, and vibrant city and town centers. However, development, energy incentives and the increasing use of more and brighter artificial light at night across the state have given rise to a new and concerning issue: light pollution and its many adverse consequences. As awareness grows about the detrimental impacts of excessive night-time artificial illumination on human health, wildlife, and the environment, municipal planners in Massachusetts may be looking for ways to combat the problem. In this article, we will explore the important role of municipal planners in formulating effective light pollution control policies and the strides being made towards creating a more sustainable and safer nocturnal environment in the state for residents as well as for wildlife and plant life.

Understanding Light Pollution and its Adverse Consequences

Before delving into municipal planners' efforts, it is essential to grasp the concept of light pollution and light trespass with respect to Massachusetts's applicable laws and regulations. As a first principle, outdoor lighting should only be used where and when it is needed. Light pollution refers to "excessive, misdirected, or poorly designed artificial lighting," which disrupts natural darkness and obscures celestial views. It adversely affects human sleep patterns, and circadian rhythms, damages ecosystems, disorients species like insects, bats, and migratory birds, and wastes energy. In 2009 and 2016 the American Medical Association recognized light pollution as "a probable carcinogen" and adopted new policies recommending that outdoor lights be shielded and that the color temperature of LED lights not exceed 3000 degrees Kelvin. The lower the Kelvin the better, and 2000-3000k is considered a "warm white." This color recommendation stems from the availability of many LED lights with high levels of blue wavelength light over 3000K, with increasingly negative impacts on ecosystems and human health. Recognizing these negative consequences, some municipalities in Massachusetts have started to actively develop and implement solutions to control light pollution.

As awareness grows about the detrimental impacts of excessive night-time artificial illumination on human health, wildlife, and the environment, municipal planners in Massachusetts may be looking for ways to combat the problem.

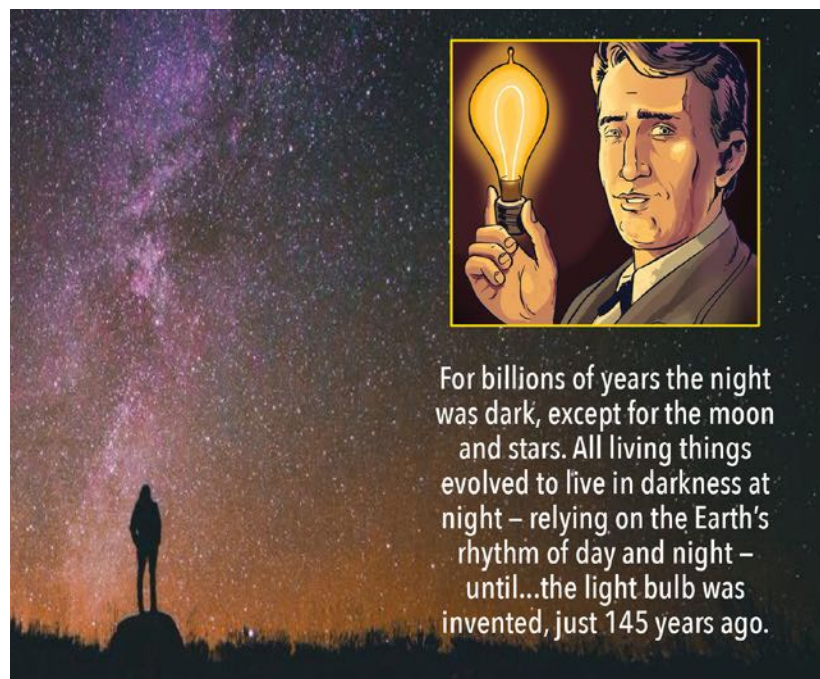
Massachusetts Building Code Rules on Light Pollution

For new buildings and renovations, the International Energy Conservation Code requires all landscape and façade lighting to be extinguished one hour after the close of business. Some municipalities in Massachusetts focus lighting regulations on the basics: Shielding, Light Trespass restrictions and Glare limits. More comprehensive regulations are now coming to the fore, including the submission of a lighting plan at the time of permit application and using lights that emit warmer colors, under 3000K.

Five Principles for Dark Sky Compliant Lighting

The Illuminating Engineering Society and DarkSky International jointly have adopted five principles to control light pollution caused by outdoor lighting. The principles can be used

continued next page



For billions of years the night was dark, except for the moon and stars. All living things evolved to live in darkness at night – relying on the Earth's rhythm of day and night – until...the light bulb was invented, just 145 years ago.

to guide municipal planners in developing light pollution control standards.

Municipal Planners as Catalysts for Change

Municipal planners play a pivotal role in shaping the physical, social, and environmental development of our communities. Massachusetts planners can become catalysts for change by incorporating strategies and promoting local regulations that prioritize responsible outdoor lighting, to combat light pollution and its widely recognized harms. This is already happening in several towns and cities that have passed regulations to control light pollution. As the negative impacts of light pollution become more understood, municipal planners should collaborate with stakeholders, such as local government agencies, businesses, and community groups, to evaluate existing lighting practices in their

LIGHT TO PROTECT THE NIGHT		IES	Illuminating ENGINEERING SOCIETY	IDA
USEFUL		ALL LIGHT SHOULD HAVE A CLEAR PURPOSE	Before installing or replacing a light, determine if light is needed. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and the environment. Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs, curbs, and steps to reduce the need for permanently installed outdoor lighting.	
TARGETED		LIGHT SHOULD BE DIRECTED ONLY TO WHERE NEEDED	Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.	
LOW LIGHT LEVELS		LIGHT SHOULD BE NO BRIGHTER THAN NECESSARY	Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended.	
CONTROLLED		LIGHT SHOULD BE USED ONLY WHEN IT IS USEFUL	Use controls such as timers or motion detectors to ensure that light is available when it is needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.	
COLOR		USE WARMER COLOR LIGHTS WHERE POSSIBLE	Limit the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light to the least amount needed.	

towns or cities, identify areas for improvement, and develop comprehensive policies for light-pollution control. Planners play a key role in public education as well.

Encouraging Sustainable Outdoor Lighting Practices

Effective policies aim to promote sustainable outdoor lighting practices that reduce light pollution

continued next page

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Illuminating the Path *cont'd*

and light trespass, while maintaining safety and security. Municipal planners can encourage the use of motion sensors and timers and require shielded fixtures that direct light downward to illuminate specific areas rather than dispersing it in all directions. By adopting energy-efficient technologies like LED lights at the lowest Kelvin rating possible and implementing smart lighting controls and motion-activated lighting, municipal policies can set the standard for significantly controlling light pollution and light trespass while also protecting the community and lowering their energy costs and carbon footprint.

An effective enforcement mechanism is to simply require that any building permit application be accompanied by a detailed lighting plan that shows the location of all outdoor lighting fixtures, and the cut-off classification, lumen output and correlated color temperature for each.

The state's municipalities can also work together and learn from one another's experiences to develop best practices for managing light pollution.

Balancing Safety and Aesthetics

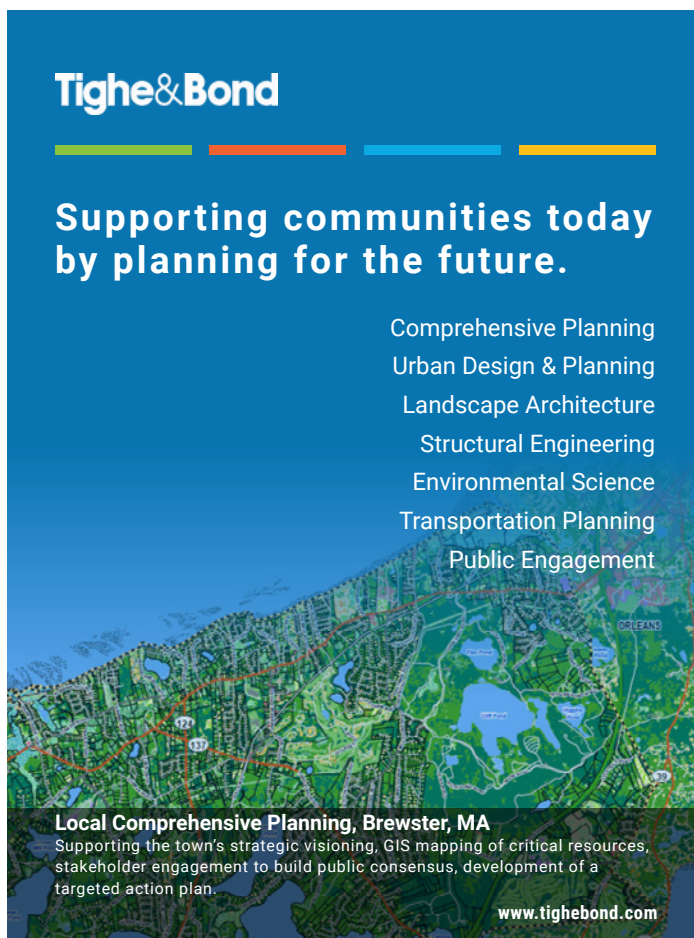
While addressing light pollution, Massachusetts municipal planners can recognize the importance of balancing safety and aesthetics. Adequate outdoor lighting ensures public safety, enhances visibility in critical areas, and reduces the risk of accidents. However, planners can strive consistently for lighting designs that are mindful of surroundings and minimize glare, light trespass, and skyglow. This delicate balance ensures safe environments while preserving the tranquil beauty of Massachusetts's night skies. Simply being a good role model will help disseminate these principles to

the general public. Nobody would recommend turning off all lights at night. That is not a safe approach to municipal lighting. The right approach is to use modern technologies and available science to install nighttime lighting only where, when, and in the minimum amount needed.

Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Municipal planners may also realize that addressing light pollution requires collective efforts. They may engage in public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and community involvement programs to foster a better understanding of the problems from light pollution and gain public support. The municipal website is a useful place to provide information even if the municipality does not have a light pollution control policy in place. By actively involving citizens, planners create a shared vision for

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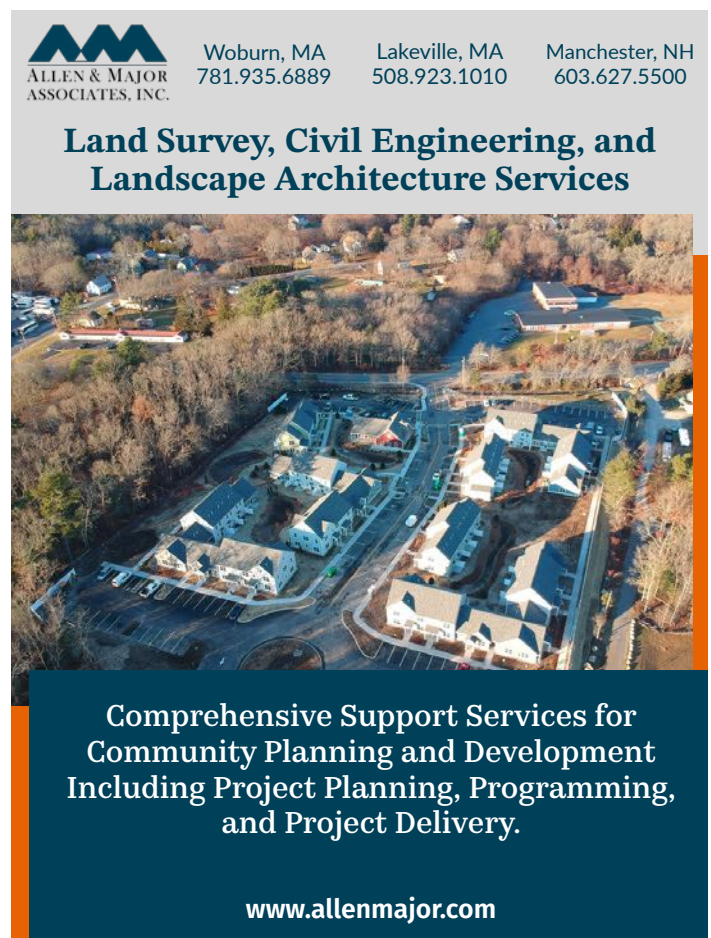
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Illuminating the Path *cont'd*

sustainable outdoor lighting, encouraging residents and businesses to adopt responsible lighting practices.

Collaboration and Best Practices

The state's municipalities can also work together and learn from one another's experiences to develop best practices for managing light pollution. Networking platforms, conferences, and workshops facilitate collaboration between planners and conservation organizations. These shared resources help create a framework for comprehensive policies that consider the diverse needs and unique characteristics of each community. Massachusetts towns with outdoor lighting ordinances are online [here](#).

Conclusion

Some municipal planners in Massachusetts have started taking significant steps to address light pollution by participating in DarkSky zoning changes and recognizing

light pollution's impact on the environment, wildlife, and human wellbeing. By promoting sustainable outdoor lighting practices, engaging the public, and collaborating with various stakeholders, they are instrumental in shaping policies that strike a balance between functionality and preserving the beauty of the night sky.

As efforts to minimize light pollution and its harms move forward, there is an important role to be played by municipal planners in creating a future where our nights are not only safer and more beautiful for people but also where are our birds

and other nocturnal creatures are able to use darkness for navigation and safety. A vision for the future is one where the night sky is filled with the enchantment of natural darkness.

— Leo Smith is Northeast Regional Director for DarkSky International; he was a voting member of the Model Outdoor Lighting Task Force. He received the President's Award from the Illuminating Engineering Society and the Lifetime Achievement Award from DarkSky International. He can be reached at leo@smith.net.

Resources

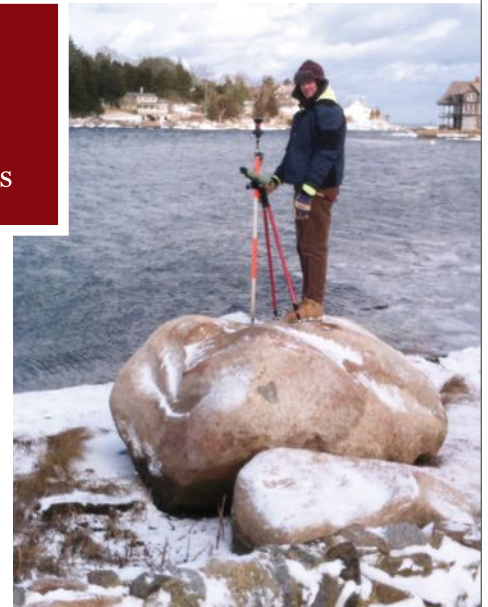
DarkSky Massachusetts Chapter (<https://darksnymass.org>): **Chapter Chair James Lowenthal** — jamesastron@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DarkSkyMA

DarkSky International: www.darksky.org

DarkSky Massachusetts – 10-Point Checklist for Dark Sky Compliant Lighting: <https://darksnymass.org/resources/checklist-for-dark-sky-compliant-municipal-lighting/>

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Happy Trails to You: Rail Trails, Pathways and Cultural Corridors

by Mark Favermann

“Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.
Happy trails to you,
Keep smiling until then.”

— by Foy Willing, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans (1951)

In a philosophical and practical sense, our life journey goes along many paths. In a thoughtfully structured way, we now have paths for recreation and communing with nature, pathways to learn and celebrate history, and even cultural routes that engage us in a physical and visual conversation about literature, visual arts, music, and even ethnicity. In some cases, these trails overlap with aspects of natural surroundings, meaningful history, and cultural icons in pieces or in whole cloth. In the 21st century, creating and enhancing trails and pathways has become a strategic part of community planning.

Literally flowering over the last few decades as local railroads diminished, today rail trails have become almost expected phenomenon throughout Massachusetts. These trails are built upon old, unused train rights of ways. They encourage healthier, more physically active lifestyles by making possible free places to walk, bike, and commune with nature or by discovering hidden scenic aspects close to our everyday urbanism. They were certainly a well-used and even necessary respite to the awful restrictions during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Aside from their health benefits and reinforcing healthier economies by promoting tourism, local adjacent businesses, and perhaps even increasing property values, these reconfigured trails, pathways, and narrow corridors



Clipper City Rail Trail, Newburyport, MA. Image courtesy of Tripadvisor: Things to do in Newburyport.

probably also contribute to community-building, enhancing single and group experiences, and just adding overall to the quality of life.

Considered one of the best rail trails in North America, The Cape Cod Rail Trail, which runs for approximately 25 miles, provides an enthralling journey through Cape Cod. With most cyclists completing this trail in a day, among its highlights are the charming town of Chatham, the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the peaceful beauty of Nickerson State Park. This route underscores the Cape’s beauty.

North on Cape Ann, there are 42 stops with historical markers along a beautiful Gloucester Harbor Walk. For the best experience, a visitor can turn location services on with mobile devices to get directions from stop to stop on a digital map. Meanwhile, QR codes at the bottom of the map help explore local history and culture.

Completed in phases, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail will eventually track from Lowell to Framingham. The

continued next page

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WE CREATE IF WE
WORKED TOGETHER?**

Happy Trails to You *cont'd*

initial phase completed was from Lowell to Sudbury. Other communities have developed connections to it at different levels of completion. These include Chelmsford, Sudbury, Acton, Carlisle, Concord, Westford, and Framingham.

Specific destinations include the Lowell National Park, the Minuteman Historic Park, State Forests, and the Chelmsford Historical District. Besides walking and bicycling, secondary uses include skating, jogging, horseback riding, and even cross-country skiing and snowshoeing during the winter months.

The most recent phase to be completed was Acton and Concord. This part of the trail has been enhanced by a wonderful system of wayfinding signage elements that link the trail to nearby historic and commercial points of interest.

The Minuteman Bikeway, aka America's Revolutionary Rail Trail, passes through the historic area where the American Revolution began in April 1775. Today, the Minuteman Bikeway is one of the most popular and successful rail trails in the United States. In 2008, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy inducted the Minuteman Bikeway into the national Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.

The Minuteman Bikeway connects to the Alewife



Above: Mockup of self-guided mobile tour at Gloucester Harborwalk; Manhan Rail Trail mural, Easthampton. Left: Cape Cod Rail Trail.

"T" Station in Cambridge, so it provides an easy way for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel to and from subway and bus lines. It is collectively managed and maintained by the four communities it passes through—Bedford, Lexington, Arlington, and Cambridge.

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Left: Minuteman Bikeway, Arlington. Below: Freedom Trail medallion.



Adjacent trails include the Fitchburg Cutoff Bike Path, the Linear Park Path and Somerville Bikeway, the Alewife Connector and DCR Alewife Greenway Paths, and the Fresh Pond Paths in Cambridge. Additionally, the Charles River Bike Paths is a 14-mile loop through Boston, Cambridge, and Watertown set along the Charles River, starting at the Museum of Science and passing through the Boston Esplanade linear park.

In the Western part of the Commonwealth, there is a plethora of wonderful trails and paths. The list includes the 104-mile vision of the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail that aspirationally connects Northampton with Boston, its Norwottuck Branch connecting Belchertown, Hadley, and Amherst, the Northampton Rail Trail, the Manhattan Rail Trail, the Canal Side rail Trail in Turners Falls, Columbia Greenway/Southwick Rail Trail, Holyoke Range Mountain Bike Trails, and many more.

Started in the early 1950s, the grandparent of all historic trails is Boston's Freedom Trail. The Freedom Trail is much more than a collection of historic sites related to the American Revolution or a suggested itinerary connecting a few of Boston's unique neighborhoods. The route follows a crimson path on public sidewalks and pays tribute to the figures all school kids know, like Paul Revere, John Hancock, and Ben Franklin.

As Boston played a key role in the dramatic events

leading up to and beyond the American Revolution, many of the founding fathers called the city home. In one day, you can visit the site of the incendiary Boston Massacre and the Old North Church, where "one if by land and two if by sea" lanterns hung, as well as historic churches, graveyards, and other important sites.


Marked by a red line on the sidewalk made either of paint or brick, the Freedom Trail begins at Boston Common, winds through Downtown Boston, Government Center, the North End, and ends in Charlestown at the

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USS Constitution. Offshoots of the Freedom Trail are the Irish Heritage Trail and the Black Heritage Trail. Other smaller historic trails are being developed throughout the state, including one in the Town of Southbridge that was begun last Spring.

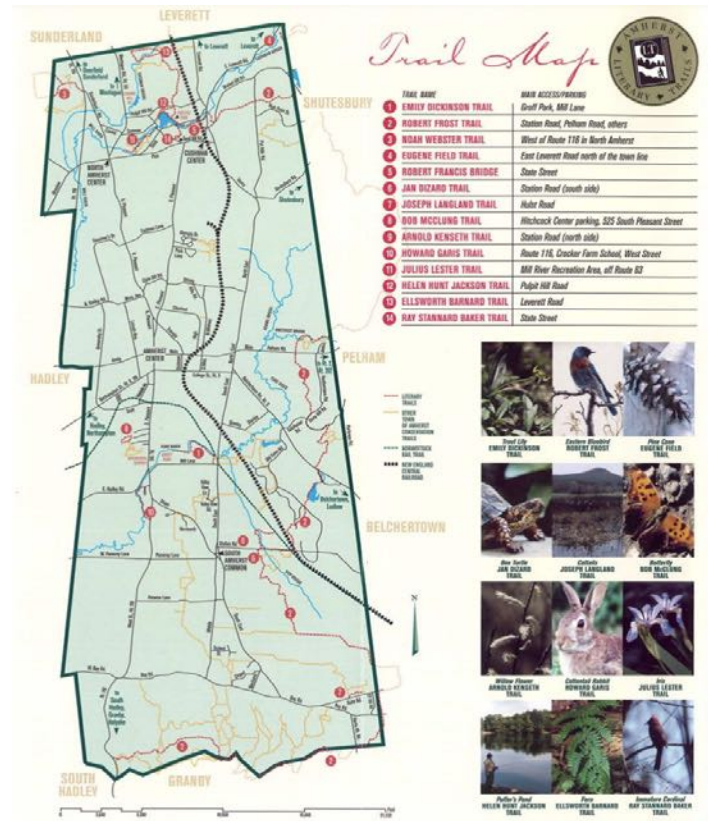
Arts trails can be seen in places like the Town of Amherst, with its Amherst Writers' Walk; Newburyport's Clipper Ship Rail Trail that circumnavigates the town with intermittent pieces of varying quality public art; and Concord and Walden Pond's less formal but quite enriching Transcendental Literary Tour. Not surprisingly, there is a Literary Trail of Greater Boston as well – a self-directed tour of three centuries of literary achievement spanning Cotton Mather to John Updike which underscores how the region was a magnet for writers like Edgar Allen Poe, Sylvia Plath, George V. Higgins, Dennis Lehane, Robert Lowell, and Robert Frost.

As many Massachusetts cities and towns have shown, the appeal of rail trails, public pathways, and cultural corridors to communities can be appreciated by their total package of benefits. These strategic routes embrace public health, economic development, preservation of natural landscapes with minimal environmental impacts, celebration of history, arts, and culture, and transportation benefits – as well as the effect on community pride and identity.

These lovely lyrics were prophetic over 75 years ago, and still ring true today:

*Some trails are happy ones,
Others are blue.
It's the way you ride the trail that counts,
Here's a happy one for you.
Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.
Happy trails to you,
Keep smiling until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we're
together?
Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.
Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.*

Mark Faermann is principal of Boston-based Faermann Design, a creative urban design practice involved in community branding and wayfinding, strategic placemaking, civic branding, streetscapes, and public art.



Amherst Literary Trails.

New Podcast Highlights Efforts to Reimagine Aging

In October the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced the release of a podcast series on age- and dementia-friendly innovations across Massachusetts called **ReiMAGine Aging**. The series, produced in partnership with the **Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative**, tells the story of the age- and dementia-friendly movement taking place in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts joined the **AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities** in 2018 and released the **Age-Friendly Massachusetts Action Plan**, which defines tangible and measurable goals to advance Massachusetts as an **age- and dementia-friendly state**. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) leads the Commonwealth's work on these initiatives. EOEA envisions a state in which all 1.7 million older adults and their caregivers in Massachusetts have the tools, resources, and help they need to fully embrace the aging experience. The **ReiMAGine Aging** podcast highlights efforts across Massachusetts to reach this goal. Listen online, or wherever you find your podcasts.



Social Event Recap: Taking on the Charles – September 22, 2023

While it seems so far away, it was only two months ago that the APA-MA held a Kayak and Social Event celebrating the end of summer/beginning of fall on a balmy day in September in Boston. The event helped to bring a different awareness to our local gem, the Charles River, as well as great views of the Boston waterfront. Planners enjoyed hearing about the Community Boat House in Boston and its goals of bringing accessibility to sailing and water recreation. Melisa Tintocalis (Town of Burlington), Alyssa Sandoval (City of Newton), Gideon Schreiber (City of Watertown), and Tom Bott (Town of Carver) helped to kick off the event and guide kayakers along the way. There was a great mix of urban planners at all stages of their careers, including an outgoing group of planning graduate students from MIT, and more experienced planners. We had fun exchanging our experiences of planning and learning about the Charles River and kayaking. Many of those attending said it was their first time kayaking and it was a great way to be introduced to the sport in a low-key environment. Stay tuned for details on our next Bike and Social Event planned for May 2024!



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Get to Know Cambridge Crossing (CX) and Green Line Extension (GLX)

The APA-MA Transportation Committee organized an October tour of Cambridge Crossing (CX), a development adjacent to the new Lechmere Station on the Green Line Extension. On the site of a former rail yard, CX today is a mixed-use development with residential, retail, and office with multiple green space commons. The purpose of the tour was to understand the challenges, successes, and lessons learned about creating a new transit-oriented development in greater Boston.

The event began with a short presentation and overview of Cambridge Crossing at Divco West's offices that included views of the CX skyline and a scale model of the development. The group then did a walking tour of the 43-acre, 4.5 million-square-foot neighborhood in East Cambridge.

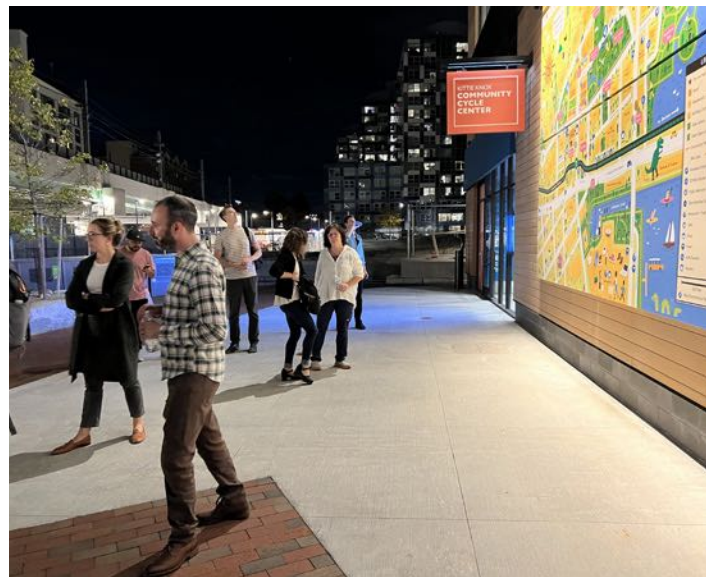
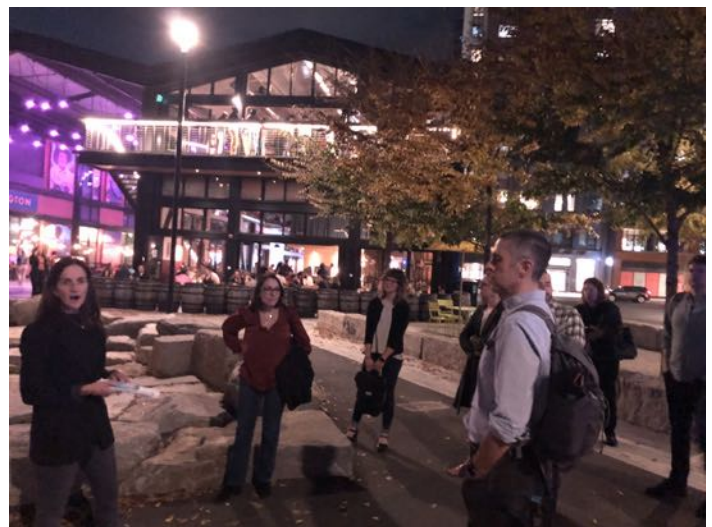
The tour included discussion on how Divco West worked with the three different municipalities where the development is located – Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville – even pointing out the differences in the façade on a building that straddles Cambridge and Somerville! The developers worked with the MBTA on how the new Lechmere Station allows for a more direct street connection to Kendall Square and partnered to create a community bike path through the site that connects to regional trails. Divco West also is a member of the Charles River Transportation Management Association and works with the EZ Ride shuttles.



The tour also included examples of how the developers worked with MassDOT on pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Gilmore Bridge to provide a direct link to the Community College Orange Line Station. Discussions also included the evolving parking, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian options that encourage transit, walking, and cycling (and discourage single-occupancy vehicle use), and commitments and monitoring on travel modes.

After the walking tour, participants rode the new GLX, with the evening ending with gathering at Lamplighter Brewery at CX.

A special thank you to Nicole LaBossiere, Development Director for Divco West, for leading the tour and presentation, and to Transportation Committee member Adam Shulman from the City of Cambridge for helping to organize the tour and discussing the design and approval process from a municipal perspective.



The PDO Corner

by Bill Nemser, AICP, MA Chapter PDO

The May 2024 AICP Exam registration window opens on Monday April 1st and closes on April 30. AICP has prepared a useful AICP Certification Guide that will take you through the process (www.planning.org/media/document/9227012). For more information on the One Path to AICP program, see www.planning.org/certification.

The MA Chapter website also has a lot of information on the AICP exam, as well as study resources for the exam at www.planning.org/certification/exam. This also includes materials and study materials from other APA Chapters – all of which can contribute to setting you up for success at exam time!

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If you are interested in taking the AICP exam in 2024, the MA Chapter will again be offering our AICP Exam Prep Classes. Classes will be virtual and are scheduled for each Monday from 6-9 p.m. beginning on March 18 and will conclude on April 8. Class registration will open January 10 – at that point you can [register here](#) or on the chapter website. Applications for the American Planning Association’s 2024 AICP Diversity Scholarships will be accepted beginning January 8 and ending February 29 at 3 p.m. To learn more the scholarship program visit: www.planning.org/certification/scholarship.

As the incoming PDO, I’d like to thank my predecessor Ralph Willmer for all his tremendous work. These are impossible shoes for anybody to fill and it’s nice to know he’s always there if the wheels fall off!

One of the things I would like to really focus on as incoming PDO is to highlight the multitude of opportunities the MA Chapter and its partner organizations (Consulting Planners of MA and the MA Association of Planning Professionals) offer for continuing education. I think it would be hard to top the sheer number and variety of the educational opportunities offered to APA-MA members. But we continue to need your help to set up quality programs! I’m asking all members to contribute any ideas for speakers and programs they may have that they feel would be appropriate and would be willing to help arrange.

Please reach out with any questions to pdo@apa-ma.org.

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NEWS FROM CPM | Consulting Planners' Perspective

by Kathleen "Kathy" McCabe, FAICP, Vice-President, Consulting Planners of Massachusetts



Salute to Larry Koff

Larry Koff, AICP, has been a planner for over 40 years, both as a consultant in private practice heading up Larry Koff & Associates and in the public sector at the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Larry served as President of Consulting Planners of Massachusetts (formerly MA Association of Consulting Planners) for over a decade.



Consulting Planners of Massachusetts salutes Larry Koff, AICP, a planner with over 50 years of experience working as both a private consultant and the public sector. CPM awarded Mr. Koff the 2023 Carol Thomas Award for Lifetime Achievement at the APA-MA Annual Awards luncheon, which led to a standing ovation.

Larry's career as a planner began at the Boston Redevelopment Authority where he worked for 25 years, serving as Senior Development Planner & Chief of Institutional Planning, managing planning and development reviews, addressing institutional master plans throughout Boston and particularly in the Longwood Medical Area (now the City's center of employment), downtown, and urban renewal plan issues in the South End and North Station areas. Larry was responsible for the planning and implementation of the Hynes Auditorium expansion in Boston's Back Bay in 1986, a model of how to successfully integrate a convention center into a walkable neighborhood.

In 1994, Larry started Larry Koff & Associates, which provided economic development planning, master plans, EO418 plans, feasibility studies, growth management planning services to communities, large and small, throughout the Commonwealth, winning several planning awards. In addition to providing planning services, Larry mentored younger planning staff who now are contributing to the profession.

Larry served as President of the MA Association of Consulting



Mark Faeremman

Family and colleagues celebrate Larry Koff receiving the Carol Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award (clockwise from upper left): spouse Barbara Davis Smith Koff, Roberta Cameron, former colleague at Larry Koff & Associates, now Medford Community Preservation Act Coordinator; Larry Koff; son Daniel Koff, Malden Community Preservation Coordinator.



Mary Waldron

Larry Koff (center) receiving Carol Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award from Consulting Planners of Massachusetts (left: CPM President Leonardi Aray; right: CPM Vice President Kathleen "Kathy" McCabe) at the MA-APA Annual Awards luncheon.

Tunnel of Love Wins Golden Whisk Award

The Boston Society of Architects presented Leonardi Aray Architect, CPM Treasurer Anne McKinnon, AICP, and Jeffrey Ferris with the Golden Whisk Award in the Annual Gingerbread Design Competition for their entry, Tunnel Love: Urban Ring at Ruggles Station. This year's theme was transportation.



CPM Winter Party/Networking

Save the date: Thursday, February 29, 2024 for CPM's winter party and networking event. Details will be posted at www.consultingplanners.org.

Planners, now CPM, for over a decade. Larry not only advocated for private-sector planners, he also worked collaboratively with APA-MA, MAPD, MARPA, CHAPA, and MA Smart Growth Alliance to advocate for resources for planning for communities and better planning policies statewide, authoring a white paper with [six recommendations for sustainable growth in the Commonwealth](#).

In 2012, the Brookline Preservation Commission honored Larry for his successful work to create

continued on page 25



NEWS FROM MAPP

Hello Planning Friends and Colleagues!

Breaking news: MAPD has rebranded and will now be known as MAPP – the **Massachusetts Association of Planning Professionals!** Our organization welcomes all planning professionals and now our name is more reflective of our mission to provide education, advocacy, and networking for all planning practitioners on the front lines. Note that the name of the organization has not “officially changed,” so our W-9 form, email name, and other organization materials will still say “MAPD” (be patient). For those who are thinking about joining, what are you waiting for?!? For \$90 you get free lunch-n-learn workshops (AICP CM-eligible) and a discount on the annual conference, which we are planning to hold in 2024. See the [membership form](#). Thanks to all who have re-upped their dues or joined for the first time. Stay tuned for a survey regarding the annual conference! For any questions, feel free to email maplanningdirectors@gmail.com.

*Kristina Johnson, AICP
MAPD President*

News from CPM *cont'd*

the Lawrence Local Historic District in Brookline, a neighborhood of nineteenth century Victorian homes.

Consulting Planners of Massachusetts is pleased to present the Carol Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award to Larry Koff for his distinguished, long time professional planning career serving Boston and municipalities throughout the Commonwealth, his leadership and volunteer service supporting the planning community and advocating for better planning policies in his hometown and statewide.

Carol Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award is named after Carol Thomas who was a Massachusetts land use planner practitioner and educator, founder of CPM and a trail blazer planner serving as the President of the American Institute of Certified Planners, as well as Chair of the APA Private Practice Division, and APA Divisions Chair.

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Legislative and Policy Report

by Ralph R. Wilmer, FAICP.

I am taking on the role of the MA Chapter Legislative and Policy Officer and relinquishing the Professional Development Officer position to my esteemed colleague, Bill Nemser, AICP. My goal is to elevate MA APA's status as a resource to the MA Legislature and allied organizations on issues impacting the planning profession and the cities and towns that we serve.

There are a few things I wanted to mention as we gear up for the next legislative session. In what should be a promising sign, Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll reached out to the chapter to ask for our recommendations regarding ways in which the administration could assist municipalities. We responded with a number of planning and administrative legislative fixes including:

- Mandatory training for planning and zoning board members
- Codification of site plan review and associate board membership in MGL c. 40A
- Continued and expanded grant funding for planning related efforts
- Updating statutes regarding notification requirements for public meetings and hearings (for example, you may already know that printed newspapers have been disappearing yet the legal requirements have not been changed....)



We hope this will be a good starting point for regular communication with the administration on issues that are important to planners throughout Massachusetts.

In a similar vein, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities invited the Chapter Board to participate in a focus group regarding the upcoming regulations for starter homes formerly under the MGL 40R program (starter homes are now codified under MGL 40Y §3).

APA has been providing chapters with more support for statewide legislative efforts in recent years and has been conducting annual legislative summits for chapter legislative and policy officers. This includes grants to cover the travel expenses, so I was able to attend the summit last month in Des Moines (my first trip to Iowa). I found the two days of sessions to be very helpful and I look forward to APA's support for our work moving forward.

As we work to advance our goals related to legislation and planning policy in the Commonwealth, I have reached out to several chapter members who have been involved in these issues in the past. I have also met with former Chapter President Kristin Kassner, now a member of the House of Representatives in MA, who is sponsoring several important pieces of planning legislation that would be of interest to our members. Finally, I would like to re-establish a Legislative and Policy Committee. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to me at ralphwillmer.apa@gmail.com.

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