

MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING

A publication of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association



American Planning Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

Spring 2024



Storefronts and Façades: The Secret Sauce of Personality of Place

page 3

Plus: *Chapter Asks Court to Expedite Milton Decision...8 | Somerville Passes Green Roof Legislation...9 | Massachusetts Distinguished Planner Lecture...10 | APA-MA Planners Meet on the Ice for Active Networking...11 | News From CPM...12 | The PDO Corner...16 | Legislative and Policy Report...17 | Compassionate Acceptance...18*



2024-2025 APA-MA Chapter Committees and Liaisons

Click on any name below to reach our board members by email.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President | Alison LeFlore, AICP
Vice President | Kenneth Comia, AICP
Immediate Past President | Peter Lowitt, FAICP
Secretary | Jim Robbins
Treasurer | Lee Pouliot, AICP, ASLA
Legislative and Policy Officer | Ralph R. Willmer, FAICP
Professional Development Officer | Bill Nemser, AICP, LEED AP

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Northeast Region | Brian Creamer, AICP, SITES AP
Southeast Region | Shayne M. Trimbell, AICP
Central Region | Trish Settles, AICP
Western Region | Tate Coleman
At-Large Rep | Sarah L. Raposa, AICP
Greater Boston Region | Claire V. Ricker

CHAPTER SUBCOMMITTEES

APA-MA Chapter Manager
 Brian Currie, AICP
Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) Liaison
 Jacquie McPherson, AICP
Community Development & Housing Committee Chair
 Judi Barrett
Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities
 Elaine Wijnja, AICP
Economic Development Committee Chair
 Kathy McCabe, FAICP
Consulting Planners of Massachusetts (CPM) Liaison
 Kathy McCabe, FAICP
Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors Liaison
 Kristina Johnson, AICP
Massachusetts Planning Editor
 Peter Lowitt, FAICP
Social Coordinators
 Alyssa Sandoval, AICP
 Melisa Tintocalis
Sustainable Development Committee Chair
 Jeanette Tozer, AICP
 Brian Creamer, AICP, SITES AP
Transportation Committee Chair
 Travis Pollack, AICP

Massachusetts Planning is published quarterly by the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-MA). © 2024 APA-MA. Contributions are encouraged. Please send submissions, letters, questions, and high praise to editor Peter Lowitt, AICP, at peterlowitt1@gmail.com. Advertising inquiries: jmcommunications@comcast.net.

www.apa-ma.org • Follow us on X at @APA_MASS and on LinkedIn (click to launch in browser)

Cover: Improvements at Medford Brewing Company, including gooseneck lighting, blade sign, wall sign, and wall murals, contribute to economic development and a sense of place.

From the President

Welcome, Spring! I'm hesitant to get excited about this good weather we've been having because it's still March, after all, but my early daffodils are beginning to bud and I have to say that I do love that later sunset. The winter fog is beginning to lift and I can see the light at the end of the cold and windy tunnel. In this edition of *Massachusetts Planning*, you can read about the fun we had at our last winter social event—ice skating in Boston—and learn about the events we have coming up. We've got several Movie and Meetup events planned and our social coordinators are hard at work planning our spring and summer outings. If you have any suggestions, please get in touch! We always want to make sure we're planning and hosting events that appeal to our members. In particular, we're looking for a small movie theater in Western Massachusetts that might be willing to host a Movie and Meetup similar to those we host at the Capitol Theatre in Arlington. Events do not have to be for CM—we love doing purely social events as well!

April will be a busy month for us. We're kicking it off with the 2nd Annual Distinguished Planner lecture to be hosted by UMass Boston on April 4th. APA-MA Legislative Policy Officer and APA Ethics Officer, Ralph Willmer, is the honored guest. He'll share highlights from his career, giving the rest of us insight and advice as we continue to move our field forward. Following Ralph's lecture, many of us will be heading to Minneapolis for the National Planning Conference. Please make sure to say hello if you're there! Lastly, we wanted to wish Tufts UEP (Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning) a very happy 50th birthday!

As always, send any ideas or suggestions my way!

Alison

Alison LeFlore, AICP
president@apa-ma.org



Providing Expertise for Communities
 Supporting Private Sector Planners
 Directory of Planning Consultants

www.consultingplanners.org

Storefronts and Façades: The Secret Sauce of Personality of Place

by Mark Favermann

A storefront is the first point of contact a shopper may have with a business and can impact a shopper's decision to actually enter a store and make a purchase. It is a strategic first impression. At its best, a storefront can be both a narrative poem about local commerce and a magnet to shoppers. Its scale, signs, windows, and entrance are all parts of the rhythmic structural stanzas and focused messaging.

Old, worn storefronts portray everything from fading history to tradition to decay to even indifference. Recent international studies have shown that 35% of shoppers avoid poorly maintained storefronts. Having a well maintained, designed, and properly signed storefront can act as a visual and psychological gateway to increased sales and local commerce.

The secret sauce of personality of place adds to the local commercial appeal. Going to the undistinguished mall has been replaced by convenience and the ability to park or walk to a nearby store, not travel to and through a massive, long walk parking lot. Parking in front and near

a store certainly has its appeal. In a different context, a great effort is made in Europe regarding storefront curb and sidewalk appeal. This acts as a wonderful tourist-attractive ingredient.

American local commercial history can be seen in distinct cycles. Main Streets dominated American retail for over 150 years. But by the early 1960s, malls eroded and sometimes even erased Main Streets and national chains eliminated countless Mom and Pops. Now, e-commerce has eaten into national chains, and the most efficient forms are hybrids. But the best of Bricks and Mortar still strongly connect with customers one on one.

In an expanding number of large and small Massachusetts cities and towns, there have been concerted efforts to preserve and improve historic façades and storefronts. It's a strategic way to increase the vitality of commercial districts and local businesses, it underscores the notion of the more welcoming the front of a business, the more likely it will be successful. The best municipal-sponsored specifications and guidelines are well-illustrated.

continued next page

Signs

Business signage is a very critical element to the storefront. Not only does it provide a first impression to customers, but it also helps convey the business' brand and character.

Signs should clearly communicate the business name, but not be overwhelming. The average person can only process four to seven words while passing by.

Therefore keeping text and graphics to a minimum will make the most impact.



City Ordinance/Regulation:

Section 12-54(n) of the City Ordinance further regulates the number and size of signs. See Technical Requirements for more information.

Everett Signage Guidelines

One of the oldest programs (started in the late 1970s), ReStore Boston, offers design services, grants for primary signs as well as matching grants for exterior design and renovation of the outside of commercial buildings in Boston's neighborhoods. These include repairing and replacing storefront windows and doors, adding lighting for the building or signs, removing solid, roll-down grates, and putting in place exterior awnings.

Part of the Office of Small Business Development and Boston's Main Streets Program, they have a dedicated Design Services unit for business and property owners. Services includes access to architects and graphic designers. The Design Services unit supports businesses with concept development as well as assistance with graphic elements that will help them to brand themselves.

The City of Worcester's program differs a bit from Boston's in its approach to financial assistance with a façade and awning incentive grant program, microloans, Creative Economy Deferred Loan Programs, HUD Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program and Economic Development Incentives Program.

Worcester's focus is to leverage private investment in the physical and aesthetic improvement of commercial

properties. This is done by designing and renovating first-floor/street-level storefronts and by underscoring the attractiveness of targeted areas within the City of Worcester. Eligible activities include awnings, complete façade renovations, doors, entryways, lighting, painting, signage and windows.

In more suburban Bedford, MA, the emphasis is on helping to improve the design quality of Bedford's retail districts, assisting to attract customers to the area and encourage economic revitalization. Section 7.5.2.2 "Design Standards in the Limited Business District and General Business District" of Bedford Zoning Bylaws solicits for the design of buildings that "enhance the visual character of Bedford's Business Districts and respect and reflect traditional New England heritage of the area." Architectural standards are stated in their illustrated guidelines. Bedford wholeheartedly wishes to preserve and enhance the New England character of its commercial centers and thoroughfares.

The City of Everett's approach was different. Working under the premise that the character of storefronts and window displays, as well as the streetscape experience defines the feel, perception and positive environment of a neighborhood, Everett's methodology was to

continued next page

Project: 27 Main Street

Existing Building



Proposed Improvements

- Full storefront expansion to align with upper story
- New wall & blade signs
- New white lap siding, windows/shutters & decorative trim
- New planters
- New storefront door
- New metal awning

Alternative 1

Full Storefront Expansion

Side View



Proposed improvements for a project in Sterling, MA (pop. 8,400), which focuses on individual site-specific façade and storefront renovations and improvements.

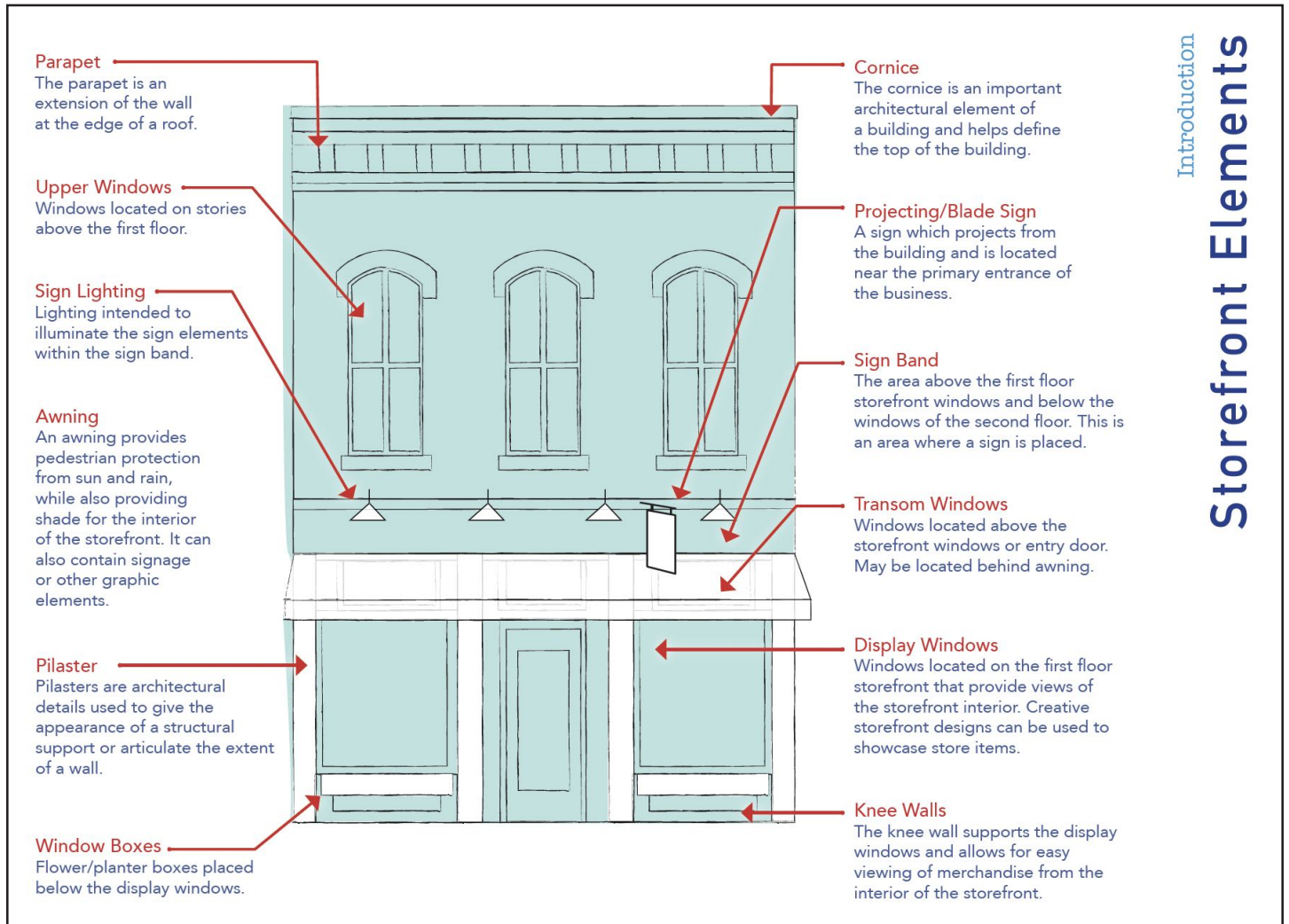
create greater design harmony by better lighting, signs, awnings, etc. Everett's main theme was to make storefronts more uniform, less of a hodge-podge. To do this, a set of strategic Storefront Guidelines was created to deal with all aspects of design elements and details. Additionally, during COVID-19, Everett took on the task of taking on the sign code regulations of the zoning regulations and applying them to the city's Building Code. Changing the arcane language to clear English was a great step forward.

By looking at specific buildings, complexes and stores, tiny Sterling, MA (pop. 8,400) had a different method that focused on individual site-specific façade and storefront renovations and improvements.

During 2022 and 2023, the City of Medford engaged in a different approach. Twenty-three Medford small

continued next page

The City of Medford (right and below) recently awarded grants for exterior storefront improvements to 23 small businesses and property owners, who also gained assistance from a city-designated urban design consultant. The City then commissioned new storefront design guidelines using "best practices" derived from the grant program.





Everett's main theme was to make storefronts more uniform, less of a hodge-podge. To do this, a set of strategic Storefront Guidelines was created to deal with all aspects of design elements and details. Above: Everett Square, existing and proposed.

businesses and property owners received two rounds of grant funding through the city's Small Business Façade Improvement Program. The program provided matching funding up to \$5,000 to recipients for exterior storefront improvements. Grant recipients also received design and construction management assistance from a city-designated urban design consultant.

Storefront improvement grants were given to a variety of stores, services, and food businesses. Following the individual storefront improvement grants, Medford

commissioned the creation of new storefront design guidelines for businesses and commercial property owners. The "best practices" guidelines were based on designs created for individual Medford grantees.

Good first impressions reinforced, indeed!

— Mark Favermann is principal of Boston-based Favermann Design, a creative urban design and planning practice involved in community branding, wayfinding, strategic placemaking, storefront and façade enhancement, streetscapes, and public art.



J M GOLDSON

EMPOWERING PEOPLE. CREATING COMMUNITY.

HOW CAN YOU BE SURE TO:

HAVE A TRULY INCLUSIVE PLANNING PROCESS THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER AROUND A SHARED VISION?

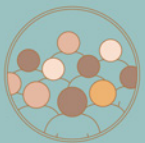
RESHAPE YOUR LOCAL LAND USE POLICIES TO PROMOTE GREATER EQUITY?

FOSTER A SUSTAINABLE BALANCE BETWEEN GROWTH AND PRESERVATION?

CONTACT JM GOLDSON

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.

Let's make positive change together!



INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



COMPREHENSIVE &
LONG-RANGE PLANNING



LAND USE PLANNING
AND ZONING

Established 2006 | Boston, MA | www.jmgoldson.com

Tighe&Bond

Supporting communities today by planning for the future.

Comprehensive Planning
Urban Design & Planning
Landscape Architecture
Structural Engineering
Environmental Science
Transportation Planning
Public Engagement



Local Comprehensive Planning, Brewster, MA

Supporting the town's strategic visioning, GIS mapping of critical resources, stakeholder engagement to build public consensus, development of a targeted action plan.

www.tighebond.com



Design That Solves Problems

Building Design
Feasibility Studies
Master Planning



GIENAPP
ARCHITECTS

Begin Here. Finish Well.



Serving Eastern MA and Southern NH | Established 2000 | GienappArchitects.com | 978-750-9062

Chapter Asks Court to Expedite Milton Decision

The MBTA Communities Act has created many complexities for our communities in mass-transit corridors, and now a lawsuit has created uncertainty about the statutory requirements. On behalf of our members and cities and towns that are tasked with meeting statutory deadlines, we urged the State Supreme Judicial Court to address this matter as swiftly as possible. On March 18, the Supreme Judicial Court announced it would accept the case, with oral arguments scheduled for October.



March 15, 2024

Hon. Serge Georges
c/o Stephen Cronin, Second Assistant Clerk
Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County
John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, Suite 1-300
Boston, MA 02108

Re: No. SJ-2024-78

Dear Hon. Serge Georges,

We are writing as the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-MA) on behalf of our Board of Directors and membership. APA-MA is a 1,000-plus member organization of professional planners and planning officials who serve Massachusetts communities in many ways, in all levels of government, as private sector planners, and at non-profit organizations.

We are writing to strongly urge you to report Docket Number SJ-2024-78 to the full Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) to hear arguments in the case during your May sitting (i.e. the week of May 6, 2024). It is imperative that this case is heard with the utmost expedience as it directly impacts the work of almost 130 communities who are working to comply with the MBTA Communities Act by December 31, 2024.

Our members are actively engaged and responsible for the work of drafting zoning, reviewing zoning bylaw and ordinance changes, and shepherding these changes through the municipal approval process. In many Massachusetts communities, this means presenting zoning changes at a Town Meeting. There are numerous statutory requirements that require significant lead-up time to zoning being presented at a Town Meeting. Spring Town Meeting season is already upon us, but a September decision in this case will allow the time municipalities need to have Special Town Meetings by the end of the year. A timely decision from the SJC on this case will ensure that the Commonwealth's cities and towns are able to comply with both the MBTA Communities Act and the statutory timelines required for municipal approval of zoning changes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison LeFlore".

Alison LeFlore, AICP
President
APA-MA Chapter

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ralph Willmer".

Ralph Willmer, FAICP
Legislative Policy Officer
APA-MA Chapter

Somerville Passes Green Roof Legislation

The City of Somerville, Massachusetts recently passed mandatory green roof legislation for new buildings and significant renovations, forging a path towards creating more sustainable buildings. This legislation is a great start toward creating a greener city for Somerville residents and will gradually help future-proof the community against climate change extremes. The legislation will require 80% coverage of green roofs on new buildings and significant renovations.

“We applaud the leadership of the local council members for implementing this initiative,” said Pete Ellis, Community Organizer and Manager, Recover Green Roofs. Construction of a new principal building or the substantial renovation of an existing principal building with a flat roof in the Mid-Rise, High-Rise, Assembly Square Mixed-Use, or Commercial zoning districts, except development subject to the Affordable Housing overlay district, must include a vegetated roof for eighty percent (80%) of the available roof area.

Somerville has also updated the existing Green Score Policy and made changes to the point system. The Green Score is a metric that assesses a building’s positive environmental impact, assigning it a score based on the areas of green space associated with different factors such as having trees, rain gardens, bioswale, vegetated walls, green roofs, and more. When new developments or major retrofits are planned, developers are required to meet a green space target, and can achieve this through a mix of the different green infrastructure approaches until they reach the green space target. Previously, Somerville passed a Native Planting Ordinance that establishes minimum requirements for native plants and trees to be planted in city-owned parks, open spaces, and streets.

“In a City as dense as Somerville, it is a real challenge to find ways to create meaningful new green space,” says Somerville Ward 3 City Councilor Ben Ewen-Campen. “Green roofs are a great tool to help us solve this problem—and people love them.”



Green roof on the [Cala](#) building in West Somerville.

“Green Factor policies like Somerville’s Green Score are a great way to provide developers and designers with flexibility while also raising the overall level of green infrastructure in a community over time,” said Steven Peck, GRP, Founder and President, Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. “Some jurisdictions are even requiring that the area of green infrastructure exceed the area of the footprint of the building and site, resulting in an overall net gain of green infrastructure from each project” he added.

This legislation will help promote biodiversity, address the urban heat island effect, and help to create recreational spaces for residents to use. To learn more, click [here](#).

To read more about the green roof policy and programs of other jurisdictions across North America please see [Green Roofs for Healthy Cities’ Policy Guide](#) or listen to the proceedings from the [2023 Policy Symposium](#).

Massachusetts Distinguished Planner Lecture on April 4th

by Justin Hollander, FAICP, Professor, Tufts University & Ken Reardon, Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston

The 2nd Annual Massachusetts Distinguished Planner Annual Lecture will take place on April 4, 2024 at 4 p.m. at UMass Boston, jointly hosted by APA-MA and the Massachusetts planning schools (BU, Harvard, MIT, Northeastern, UMass/Boston, UMass/Amherst, and Tufts).

After a long career, most planners have a lot to say to the next generation and we have launched this lecture to provide a forum for one planner in the state every year to reflect on their practice and speak openly and frankly about their experience in the profession. The speaker will deliver remarks that offer words of wisdom for emerging practitioners and reflections that even the most accomplished among us will be able to appreciate. All Massachusetts planners and planning students are invited to attend.

This year's Distinguished Planner is **Ralph Willmer, FAICP**. Ralph has a long and impressive record as a planner, most recently with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. In retirement, he has been volunteering for the American Institute of Certified Planners as the **AICP Ethics Officer**.

We hope to make this lecture a permanent part of the Massachusetts planning community calendar, so we are seeking contributions from planners to help endow a fund that would provide financial resources to run this program in perpetuity. To help support this endowment fund, tax-deductible contributions are welcomed.



Ralph Willmer, FAICP



BSC GROUP
BUILD | SUPPORT | CONNECT



Master Planning	Climate Resilience
Site & Civil Engineering	Land Surveying &
Regulatory Compliance	Spatial Services
& Permitting	Transportation
Landscape Architecture	Planning & Engineering
GIS, Technology &	Traffic Impacts &
Custom Software	Circulation Studies
Ecological Sciences	Structural Engineering

www.bscgroup.com



DOBE™ Certified
Accessibility Consultants



We specialize in:

- » Comprehensive Accessibility Master Planning.
- » Audits of Public Right-of-Way.
- » Review of Architectural Plans for Accessibility Compliance.
- » Detailed Facility Accessibility Audits.



(617) 518-5313 Boston, MA
info@directaccessgroup.com
www.directaccessgroup.com

MASSACHUSETTS
STATEWIDE CONTRACT
PRTD Management Consultants Program
Coordinators and Planners Services

A Gatherink! APA-MA Planners Meet on the Ice for Active Networking



In Boston's ever-evolving Fenway area, planners and planning professionals recently gathered at 401 Park, an outdoor rink, for an evening of ice skating and connection. This gathering marked the third installment in a series of seasonal social events hosted by the American Planning Association's Massachusetts chapter.

Organized by Alyssa Sandoval and Melisa Tinto-calis, the Chapter's social co-chairs, the event reflected

their approach to networking — something they have coined "active networking." This blend of place, activity, and social connectedness allows planners to foster new experiences together and build meaningful relationships. "These events set the stage for us to get outside and interact with one another as we learn more about the built and natural environments in our backyard," shared Sandoval.

continued on page 19

NEWS FROM CPM | Consulting Planners' Perspective

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



CPM members recently participated in a class discussion on master planning and master plan implementation with aspiring planners at UMass Boston. The questions articulated by students serve as a useful reminder of some of the key issues that all of us should be thinking about when our communities develop, update, and implement a master plan. We share some of the questions to help us all in better plan-making and implementation.

Goals and Priorities. *Who is really setting the goals and priorities? How about involving regular people in goals and priorities, including implementation priorities? Are the goals and priorities of the previous master plan revisited or changed when a master plan is updated?*

Public Engagement. *Public engagement seems optional for master plans. Are there mandates for public engagement?*

Although public engagement is a hallmark of good planning, there are few mandates for public engagement in master planning in Massachusetts. State grant applications often inquire about public engagement and may score the issue. Public participation is part of environmental justice requirements for brownfields remediation and MEPA reviews. Public participation is required in federal transportation planning. Ironically, urban renewal plans explicitly require public engagement in MA, but Chapter 41, §81D, MGL merely states that "Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals."

The nature and extent of public participation in master plans varies, with budget and funding being a key consideration, as well as leadership by the Planning Board and the municipality. As a planning community, we need to advocate for resources for meaningful and authentic public engagement throughout the master planning process.

Public Engagement Requires Trust. *How do you measure trust? How do you know as a planner you have people's trust?*

continued next page

Why Trust in Planning is Important

- The planning profession provides unique value. Planning reduces impacts, joins-up decisions for the future, saves costs and enhances the living and working life of cities and towns. But, to be effective planners need to be trusted.
- Trust, reinforced by strong community and stakeholder participation, lends authority to planning decisions. It allows the planning process to be accepted as a valid means for making difficult trade-offs and determining land use decisions in the public interest.
- Stakeholders and the public are reacting to the impacts of rapid urban growth and change on their property, neighborhood or lifestyle in increasingly vocal fashion. Not surprisingly, the impacts of planning decisions are visible in all media.
- When planning outcomes are linked to private benefit or an overtly political agenda, the community regards ostensibly independent planners as not being in control of the outcome. This is the case when the built form expected from the community's involvement in strategic planning differs from what is actually approved. In these cases, communities believe they have not been heard, and view planning as unsupportive or irrelevant. The result is that they are less willing to engage in future.

— Planning Institute of Australia



News from CPM *cont'd*

Trust is not typically an explicit part of the planner's lexicon but is necessary for good community planning and implementation. Trust is at the heart of community engagement. One measure of whether as a planner you know if you have people's trust is whether or not they are willing to talk with you. Is it worth a person's time to have a conversation with a planner? If a citizen believes something is inevitable or "pre-baked," the willingness to engage is less.

Two-thirds (67%) of Americans have confidence in local government according to Gallup's 2023 annual governance poll. Americans have a higher confidence in local government than at other level or branch of government according to both Gallup and the Pew Research Center. Although trust in local government (and others) is down approximately ten points since the 1970s.

A recent *Harvard Business Review* article by Reichheld and Dunlop identified four trust indicators—capability, reliability, transparency, and humanity. As planners when we work on development and implementation of all plans, including master plans, we need to address how we as planners and how the city or town can execute in a more trustworthy manner, demonstrating—capability, reliability, transparency, and humanity.

Housing. *The Boston Foundation's 2023 report card on housing in Greater Boston described housing as a crisis. Housing is a right. How did we get here? How do master plans help solve the housing crisis?*

Many communities have developed housing production plans in addition to the housing element of a master plan. Municipalities need partners to produce housing, but also need to set the table by adopting regulations that enable more types of housing. Historically, many towns have cited school budget and cost/benefit analysis as to local real estate taxes as a

continued next page

Inundation District

Consulting Planners of MA, along with the APA-MA chapter and MA Assoc. of Planning Professionals (MAPP) are hosting a screening of *Inundation District* on Thursday, March 28 at the Capitol Theater in Arlington as part of the Planners' Meetup and Film series.

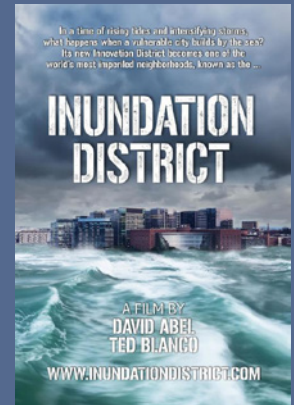
Inundation District is a feature film that investigates the impacts of climate change on a major new development area in one of North America's more vulnerable cities, namely Boston's Seaport and "Innovation" District. This film explores why a new "neighborhood" complete with glass buildings was built well after scientists were warning about sea level rise and climate change in a city which has some of the most high-tide flooding in the United States.

The film is directed by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Abel, with Ted Blanco. David Abel covers climate change for the *Boston Globe*. David is also a professor of practice at Boston University. Abel's work has won an Edward R. Murrow Award, the Ernie Pyle Award from the Scripps Howard Foundation, and the Sigma Delta Chi Award for Feature Reporting. Blanco is an editor, animator, cinematographer, licensed drone pilot, producer, and director, who has spent years trying to educate the public about climate change.

Film director David Abel will facilitate the discussion following the film and will be joined by CPM member Darrin Punchard, FAICP, CFM of Punchard Consulting. Darrin has worked on the local, state, and federal levels, served as a state hazard mitigation officer, and developed over 700 hazard mitigation plans.

The event has been approved for 1 Sustainability CM and 1 general CM for AICP continuing education.

While the event is currently SOLD OUT, you can **register on EventBrite** to join the waiting list. We also encourage you to look for other area showings of the thought-provoking *Inundation District* film. Find more information: www.inundationdistrict.com/screenings.



Translating vision and design to process and action.



Newburyport, MA | www.innesassocltd.com
info@innesassocltd.com

WHAT COULD
WE CREATE IF WE
WORKED TOGETHER?

News from CPM *cont'd*

rationale for not building housing. Updating master plans provides local planners an opportunity to re-set old assumptions with facts about today's housing reality. As the state's population ages, most school enrollments are declining. Cities and towns need to roll out the welcome mat for younger families. Implementation of housing production recommendations is a generational issue, which younger people, including many younger planners, are demanding.

Partners: *What is the role of land trusts and other NGOs in master plans? Is the municipality the only entity "responsible"? What is the role of MPOs with master planning? Shouldn't the federal government play more of a role?*

Implementation of master plans often needs partnerships with non-profits and other levels of government. Listing resources is a useful first step. Plan implementation requires partnership – whether it is funding, or a partnering agency taking the lead in land conservation or housing production. The master plan process is an opportunity to introduce organizations and foster partnerships for better implementation.



Nitsch Engineering

Integrating
**sustainable
& resilient**
strategies
with **planning
& design**

Building better communities with you

Planning | Civil Engineering | Transportation Engineering
Structural Engineering | Land Surveying | Green Infrastructure | GIS

www.nitscheng.com

508.366.0560 | bealsandthomas.com | southborough + plymouth

YOUR VISION, OUR EXPERTISE

We are a multi-disciplinary, collaborative team that provides a thoughtful and comprehensive approach for our clients.

- civil engineering
- landscape architecture
- land surveying
- land use permitting
- environmental planning
- wetland science

solving challenges and thinking creatively
to turn our clients' visions into reality



BEALS + THOMAS





Engineers
Scientists
Planners
Designers

Planning + Design

With offices along the East Coast, we transform ideas into solutions that unite people under a vision of a more sustainable and equitable community.

www.vhb.com/planning-and-design



Woburn, MA
781.935.6889

Lakeville, MA
508.923.1010

Manchester, NH
603.627.5500

Land Survey, Civil Engineering, and Landscape Architecture Services



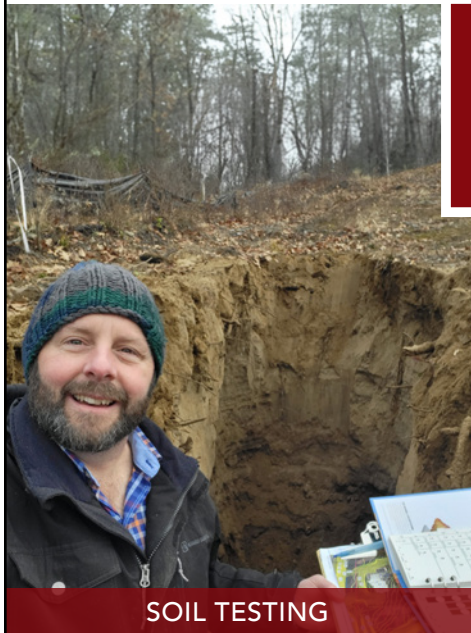
Comprehensive Support Services for Community Planning and Development Including Project Planning, Programming, and Project Delivery.

www.allenmajor.com

SPRING PLANNING SHOULD START WITH

HANCOCK ASSOCIATES

Surveyors | Engineers | Scientists



SOIL TESTING



WETLANDS

massDOT

Prequalified – Survey & Wetlands



SURVEYING

Infrastructure Design | Landscape Planning | Pedestrian and Bike Travel
Rail Trails and Riverwalks | Public Spaces | Urban Design | Roadway & Bridge Surveys

978-777-3050 | HancockAssociates.com | Established 1978 | [f](#) [in](#) [v](#) [@](#)

Boston, Chelmsford, Danvers, Marlborough, Newburyport, Palmer and Princeton, MA | Concord, NH

The PDO Corner

by Bill Nemser, AICP, MA Chapter PDO

One of the things that initially attracted me to the planning profession was the variety of potential work environments. I don't think I would be going too far out on a limb by saying that's the case with many of my fellow planners. I mean, how many of you out there have friends or colleagues that do exactly what you do?

Of course, that appeal also makes it likely that you will at least occasionally change positions. With that change may come new priorities, roles, and responsibilities—which can be challenging if you have found yourself somewhat siloed in your current position. Maybe it has been a while since you have thought about topics outside of your little acre. Will the core of your work always be transportation? Historic preservation? Economic development? Environmental planning? Community advocacy? Even affordable housing, for that matter? Probably not.

Let's face it: it is important for planning professionals to be well-rounded and have an up-to-date mindset. Keeping your skill set sharpened is a terrific way to make sure you're always a step up on the learning curve—whether in your current position or when the next big opportunity comes along.



Luckily, APA-MA gives you a number of outstanding options where you can delve into topics you may just need some brushing up on or may not be familiar with at all. One easy way to take advantage of this is through the “[Planner Webinar Series](#).” This weekly program allows attendees to learn about a wide range of topics, and is **free** for Chapter members! To learn more about the Friday course offerings click on the link above.

Speaking of learning opportunities, APA-MA has lined up an impressive series of programming for the spring, ranging from some great events with our affiliate organizations, including CPM and MAPP, to chapter-sponsored outdoor events. Make sure you keep track of the educational opportunities by regularly visiting the Chapter website.

A reminder, the May 2024 AICP Exam registration window opens on Monday April 1st and closes on April 30th. AICP has prepared a useful [Certification Guide](#) that will take you through the process. For more information on the One Path to AICP program, visit www.planning.org/certification.

We continue to need your help to set up quality programs. I'm asking all members to please contribute any ideas for speakers and programs for our members.

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions to pdo@apa-ma.org.



HORSLEY WITTEN GROUP

LISTEN • EXCHANGE • ENVISION

horsleywitten.com | 508-833-6600



Legislative and Policy Report

by Ralph R. Wilmer, FAICP, Legislative & Policy Officer



The MA Chapter is tracking a number of bills affecting our work as planners and I wanted to provide a quick update. As I mentioned in the last issue, former Chapter President Kristin Kassner, who serves as the Representative from the 2nd Essex District, is a sponsor or co-sponsor of several pieces of legislation of interest to APA-MA. Slowly, but surely, we are making progress on several of our priorities.

- **H.3551 – An Act Facilitating Site Plan Review:** This bill would codify site plan review under MGL c. 40A. APA is in favor of this legislation and is working with other allied organizations to clarify and improve upon the original draft language. The bill was reported favorably by the Committee on Housing and referred to the Committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling.
- **H.3553 – An Act Regarding Mandatory Land Use Board Training:** This bill would require that Planning and Zoning Boards meet and maintain minimum training requirements.

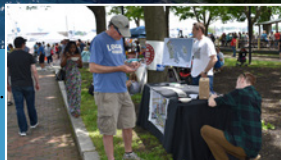
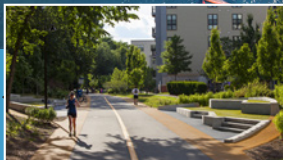
The bill was reported favorably by the Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and referred to the Committee on House Ways and Means.

- **H.3555 – An Act Relative to Local Option for Associate Members of Planning Boards:** This bill would codify what numerous cities and towns have done for years – appointing associate members to their planning boards. The bill is advancing and should be considered later in the session.
- We are also reviewing and tracking the **Municipal Empowerment legislation (H.4460)** that includes provisions for permitting outdoor dining and the **Housing Bond Bill (H.4138)**.

Finally, I am continuing to recruit interested members to join the Legislative and Policy Committee. If you are interested in participating, and if you would like to comment on pending legislation, please reach out to me at ralphwillmer.apa@gmail.com.

The MA Chapter is tracking a number of bills affecting our work as planners.

transform your environment



Jim Riordan, AICP, LEED®AP (Certified MVP Provider)
800.SAMPSON · westonandsampson.com
Offices in MA, CT, and along the East Coast

an employee-owned company

Weston & SampsonSM

improving the communities where you live, work & play

- strategic, comprehensive, and master planning
- land use, zoning, and environmental management policy
- hazard mitigation and climate resiliency planning
- stormwater, wastewater, watershed, and environmental planning
- community outreach and inclusive engagement
- conservation and open space planning
- neighborhood and district area planning
- corridor, small-area, and transportation planning
- historic preservation planning
- research, mapping, and data visualization
- grant and funding assistance
- peer review
- permitting assistance

Compassionate Acceptance

by Nick Kiser, City of Chicopee

The efficacy of DEI does depend on Compassionate Acceptance and the work that we do to better interrelate and cooperate.

Well, we made it through another winter! Something about winter (in the Northern Hemisphere at least) reminds us of the resilience of nature and the human spirit throughout our relatively short history on this planet.



Nick Kiser

That in mind, the season is a global experience, with celebrations and activities being rendered to societal nuances. It has also been a time of reflection for many of us.

I am currently reflecting on the portion of our global community that may not agree with what I have posited. Whether that is due to human indecency and atrocities, or personal tragedies, there are members of our global family that may not be sharing the celebratory spirit.

I'm sure no one wants to be accused of "bringing down the mood" or whatever other

insensitive pressures are placed upon people's self-expression and agency; but people should neither be made to suffer in silence, *nor* to suffer amongst the sound of others' joy. Suffering despite the joy will happen, but there is a way forward that enables both the celebration and Compassionate Acceptance in concern for others' suffering.

Compassionate Acceptance starts with acknowledgment of visibility. It is simply not enough to make someone aware that they are seen, but it must be known that they are seen and accepted. It is the difference between understanding and comprehending, sympathizing and empathizing, witnessing and experiencing. Being an active listener and compassionately accepting others are at the root of Inclusion.

DEI is an initiative launched in an attempt to address and mitigate the effects of widespread, systemic inequities. When looking at our world from that altitude, it is easy to forget that systems rely on smaller components. In this case,

continued next page



**COMMUNITY PLANNING
& NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
ZONING & REGULATORY REFORM
HOUSING POLICY & PLANNING
DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ANALYSIS
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

BARRETT PLANNING GROUP LLC | 350 LINCOLN STREET, SUITE 2503 | HINGHAM, MA 02043 | 781.934.0073
WWW.BARRETTPLANNINGLLC.COM

Compassionate Acceptance *cont'd*

systemic inequity inherently consists of personal and relative experiences. So, the efficacy of DEI does depend on Compassionate Acceptance and the work that we do to better interrelate and cooperate.

As we enter spring, as with all seasons, I want to work on being compassionately accepting to everyone. Taking a first step, I would like to say, in advance, that I see and hear everyone. I will work hard to understand others' situations and comprehend their feelings. I wish everyone warmth, joy, and acceptance, and implore you to continue the work of Compassionate Acceptance on the road to equitable inclusion.

— Nick Kiser is Associate Planner for the City of Chicopee. His approach to planning has been heavily shaped by both his academic background and his experiences, especially those of his living and working in various urban environments in the U.S. from coast to coast and in between. Due to his own intersectional background, he has grown a strong passion for diversity and inclusion, advocating for the understanding of the concept of equity as a tool to achieve DEI goals.

Gatherink! *cont'd*

Tintocalis added, "We want people not just to network but to find enjoyment through the activity of a shared experience."

On February 15th, the "Let's Skate!" event drew over 45 regional and municipal planners for an evening of gliding (and falling gracefully!) across the ice, ending with a taste of Time Out's food hall offerings and Trillum beverages. The location is multi-functional, with a rink in the winter and a garden in the warmer months. Samuel and Associates redeveloped the site, which prominently features the ice rink and is an example of the activation created through a "POP" — privately owned public space.

As the season turns, consider joining the next outing, the "Spring Fling" on May 16th—a bike ride along the Mystic River with DCR officials sharing their story and a social gathering at Assembly Row. Looking further ahead, a water activity event in the western part of the state may be in store to add to your summertime adventures.

If you have additional ideas or are interested in volunteering, please reach out to mtintocalis@burlington.org and asandoval@newtonma.gov.

Until next time, happy planning!

Save the date of May 16 for our "Spring Fling" bike ride along the Mystic River!

ONE FIRM | STATEWIDE



WE ARE WHERE OUR CLIENTS ARE.

KP | LAW

The Leader in Public Sector Law

Boston, Hyannis, Lenox, Northampton, Worcester
617.556.0007 | 1.800.548.3522 | www.k-plaw.com

Free Listing of RFQs and RFPs

Looking to get the word out about a Request for Quotes or an RFP? Consulting Planners of Massachusetts will list your announcement for free on its website and send it out in our regular monthly email to consulting planners. If you have an RFQ or RFP, please send it to: TreasurerCPM@aol.com.

Become an Advertising Supporter!



THIS SPACE COULD BE YOURS!

Support your local APA Chapter and reach more than 1,100 planning professionals with your branded message! See the [rate sheet](#) for more information or contact Jeff Mills at jmcommunications@comcast.net or (860) 454-8922 with any questions.