



# Boston, MA: *MetroFuture*

## Making a Greater Boston Region

With a network of historic communities and open spaces, nationally-recognized universities, and a well-educated workforce, Metropolitan Boston is a thriving home to nearly 3 million residents. However, the region is faced with challenges that include increasingly unaffordable housing coupled with high transportation costs, as well as high racial and economic segregation.

To address these concerns, more than 5,000 residents came together to create *MetroFuture*, a blueprint for the region's future. According to Carolyn Kirk, Mayor of the City of Gloucester, "*MetroFuture* provides solid strategies for promoting the long-term health and livability of our communities. As a municipal leader, I'm looking forward to putting these strategies into action to ensure my city flourishes in the years ahead." Seeking to do just that, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and a consortium that now includes over 160 partners, received a HUD Regional Planning Grant to catalyze implementation of *MetroFuture*.

**"This grant allows us to put dollars on the ground and turn the *MetroFuture* vision into a reality.**

**Communities are benefiting in everyday ways, whether connecting housing to jobs, reducing infrastructure spending, or seeing new economic activity."**

—Marc Draisen, MPAC Executive Director

## Place-based Prosperity

At the heart of their work is an investment in place-based projects, creating a foundation of best practices throughout the region. Large cities and urban centers, for example, require new transit financing and housing strategies to ensure all residents share in the region's prosperity. A Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Finance Summit held in Boston in March 2012 kicked off their TOD financing work to develop strategies to put housing closer to transit and to jobs.

In addition to increasing suburbs' economic well-being, the Consortium is also investing strategies that encourage long-term environmental health. In Littleton, for example, HUD funding assisted in the development of new zoning to support agricultural jobs and protect farmland. According to Keith Bergman, Littleton Town Administrator, "Littleton is committed to economic development consistent with

## Description

Equipped with a Regional Planning Grant, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is implementing their groundbreaking blueprint for regional reinvestment in the cities, towns, and suburbs of Metropolitan Boston.

## Federal Assistance

2010 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant: \$4,000,000

## Local Partner Commitments

- Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC): \$2.5 million
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation: \$1.2 million
- MA Smart Growth Alliance: \$806,000
- Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization: \$1.9 million
- Emerson College: \$250,000
- Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation: \$250,000
- Northeastern University: \$150,000

## Partners

In addition to dozens of municipalities, partners include the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, Health Resources in Action, the Immigrant Learning Center, the Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, and many others.

## Benefits

- 20 new place-based projects to date, totaling nearly \$1 million in investment
- Launch of a Leadership Institute on Equity and Development
- Creation of new, regional funding mechanisms for transit-oriented development

## For more information visit:

<http://mapc.org/metrofuture/sustainable-communities>



# HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative

## Cultivating Vital, High Opportunity Places

community character. We're host to IBM's largest software development lab in North America, but we're also a rural community with a rich agricultural tradition, active farms, and even a town-owned orchard. We want to help our farmers keep their land in agricultural uses by expanding ancillary uses, so we're big on green, as well as Big Blue [IBM]."

### Creating quality job opportunities

In the City of Lynn, where small businesses are vital to downtown revitalization, MAPC is working with community-based partners like the Immigrant Learning Center to develop training and resources to support entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, in the Town of Framingham, MAPC and partners are assessing how to redevelop job centers to increase employment opportunities that are accessible by public transportation – especially important for the low-income, minority, and immigrant populations who live in many of the region's cities and urban centers.



### Investing in residents and in the future

Facing low but steady population growth, the region relies both on attracting new residents and on retaining existing residents. Its population growth in the last decade was driven by the growth of the region's immigrant population, and, to deepen the connection that all residents feel to their region, MAPC has used its HUD Sustainable Communities funding to engage them in planning for their future. This includes projects like Community PlanIt, an online social media game, and the MBTA Budget Calculator, which allows residents to come up with their own budget proposals for the Metro Boston Transit Authority.

These are some of the ways that MAPC and partners are changing the planning process by empowering the region's diverse residents to make decisions about their future. "Because we're funding projects in a broad collection of communities, people are really invested in shaping the region's future in a way that they weren't before," says Amy Cotter, the project's director at MAPC. "We're seeing nonprofits, businesses, and others working together where they never would have before. This kind of collaboration is exactly what needs to happen for our region to remain a great place to live, work, and play in the next 20 years."

## OTHER HUD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES IN MASSACHUSETTS

### Community Challenge Grants

**Boston's** \$1,865,160 grant from 2011, for example, will increase the number of affordable homes, businesses and jobs near transit stops along the Fairmount Line, a 9.2 mile commuter rail corridor. In **Somerville**, a 2010 grant of \$1,800,000 will similarly prepare for new transit stations through new zoning and the creation of a land bank to ensure there is affordable, transit-oriented housing. The **Montachusett Regional Planning Commission's** 2010 grant of \$129,500 will support smart growth planning to take advantage of a planned passenger rail station in Fitchburg. The **City of Worcester** was awarded \$930,000 in 2011 to catalyze revitalization and economic development in Main South, a neighborhood still recovering from factory closures decades ago.

### Regional Planning Grants

The **Franklin Regional Council of Governments of Greenfield** was awarded \$425,000 in 2010 to develop an integrated plan for development, with a focus on the area's four largest employment centers. The **Berkshire Regional Planning Commission of Pittsfield** was also a recipient of HUD Sustainable Communities funding in 2010, and has been using its \$590,700 to address economic decline in traditional industries while fostering renewed interest in the historic, natural, and cultural resources that support tourism and local food production. Finally, the **Knowledge Corridor Consortium**, spanning jurisdictions in both Massachusetts and Connecticut, is using their \$4.2 million grant to create a foundation of opportunity as they manage more than \$1.5 billion in new transit investment over the next ten years.

