Metro Future

MAKING A GREATER BOSTON REGION

From Plan to Action: A MetroFuture Summary

JUNE 2009

Acknowledgements

More than 5,000 people from across Metropolitan Boston dedicated countless hours and energy to shape MetroFuture and to plan for positive change in the region. This document is a testament to their wisdom, aspirations, and commitment.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), which adopted this bold and wide-ranging vision for the region in December 2008, is especially grateful to members of our volunteer committees: the **MAPC Executive Committee**, the **MetroFuture Steering Committee**, **Inter-Issue Task Force**, **Implementation Task Force**, and the **Process Design Team**. We applaud our volunteers' diverse perspectives, wide-ranging expertise, and willingness to "hash it out" with their counterparts.

Our project partners have been the **Boston College Citizen Seminars**, **The Boston Foundation**, the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, the **Orton Family Foundation**, and the **University of Massachusetts Boston**. Their support of MetroFuture over the last several years has been invaluable.

Our project funders have included **The Boston Foundation**, the **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**, **Citizens Bank of Massachusetts**, the **Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust**, the **Garfield Foundation**, the **cities and towns of Greater Boston**, and **The Barr Foundation**. Without their support, MetroFuture and its critical conversations about the region's future would not have been possible.

Particular thanks are due to **MAPC's current and former staff**, whose hard work and dedication have shaped this project through its planning phase, and who will continue to push to ensure MetroFuture's goals are met.

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About MAPC and MetroFuture

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of the metropolitan Boston area. Created by an act of the Legislature in 1963, it serves as an independent public body of the Commonwealth within which state and local officials can address issues of regional importance. MetroFuture is our effort to create a regional plan for both growth and preservation in Metro Boston. The project has relied on community involvement at every step along the way, from development of the vision for a Greater Boston Region to creation of alternative scenarios, selection of the preferred alternative, and the design of implementation steps. Public engagement will continue throughout the implementation of the plan.

The study area for the MetroFuture project (164 cities and towns) is somewhat larger than the MAPC region to account for trends that do not recognize regional boundaries and to ensure compatibility with the Regional Transportation Plan being developed concurrently by the Boston Region MPO.

For more information, visit www.metrofuture.org.

What people are saying about MetroFuture:

"MetroFuture is built on a solid foundation of research and public participation. I was impressed to see the range of opinions being expressed in public meetings and how they have all come together in a cohesive vision for the region."

— Representative Mary Grant, Beverly

"The MetroFuture scenario for growth and development has great promise for all who work and live in the region. Action for Regional Equity looks forward to working with MetroFuture for an equitable, healthy, sustainable, and prosperous future for all."

— Paul Deare, Director, Action for Regional Equity

"MetroFuture underscores the importance of regional economic development with an understanding of the long-term vitality of area institutions. Continued collaborative transit planning will help to bring the region's workforce to the 40,000 jobs in the Longwood Medical and Academic Area."

— Marilyn Swartz-Lloyd, President and CEO, Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization

"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."

— Mayor Carolyn Kirk, Gloucester

The MetroFuture Vision

Be responsible stewards of our resources, passing on an environmentally, financially, and socially sustainable region to our children.

Build safe, healthy, and welcoming communities.

Give people affordable and convenient options for where they live, work, and play.

Thousands of people worked together to develop a vision of the future we want for Greater Boston.

Between now and 2030, we will:

Involve more people in making the decisions that shape their lives.

Ensure that all residents fairly share the costs and benefits of the region's growth.

Create a world-class region that is vibrant, competitive, and connected.

The MetroFuture Plan

MetroFuture is a bold and achievable plan to make a Greater Boston Region — to better the lives of the people who live and work in Metropolitan Boston between now and 2030. It capitalizes on the region's most important assets: its diverse people and landscape, a history of innovation, and a commitment to education and civic engagement. MetroFuture is a vision of a region where growth is focused in areas where it already exists and linked by an efficient transportation system; our land and natural resources are conserved; we invest in our residents by improving their health and education; opportunities are available to all residents of the region, regardless of race or ethnicity; and expanding prosperity benefits all of us.

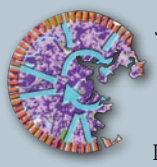
This plan was developed with the extensive participation of thousands of "plan builders": residents, municipal officials, state agencies, businesses, community-based organizations, and institutional partners throughout the region. They shared their visions for the future of the region, evaluated alternative scenarios for our future using data and sophisticated computer models, and had difficult conversations about the region's priorities. The process concluded with the transformative MetroFuture Regional Plan that was formally adopted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in 2008.

Through this process, MAPC has created demographic and economic projections of the region's future; a set of 65 specific goals for the year 2030, as well as objectives and indicators we will use to measure progress toward achieving these goals; 13 implementation strategies containing hundreds of recommendations for actions needed to achieve our goals; and a constituency of "plan builders" poised to make our vision a reality. More information on all of these — which, collectively, make up the "MetroFuture plan" — can be found at www.metrofuture.org.

In the following pages, you will find concrete expressions of the MetroFuture vision and how this vision can be achieved. First, we will outline what residents of different places around the region can expect if current trends continue, and how that differs from the future if the MetroFuture vision is realized. This is followed by a description of the strategies MAPC believes are needed to achieve that vision. Finally, we outline next steps for both MAPC and people across the region to take in our effort to make MetroFuture a reality.

MetroFuture Growth and Preservation Areas

Metropolitan Core



Job growth built around medical and educational institutions, and other major industries

Improved schools, safety, parks attract families and retirees

Build on role as the "hub" of the regional transportation network

Regional Hubs

Rebirth of industrial cities and downtowns

Focused growth in major suburban economic centers

Best prospects for new transit outside of Metro Core

Suburban Centers

Maximize potential of major town centers and existing transit

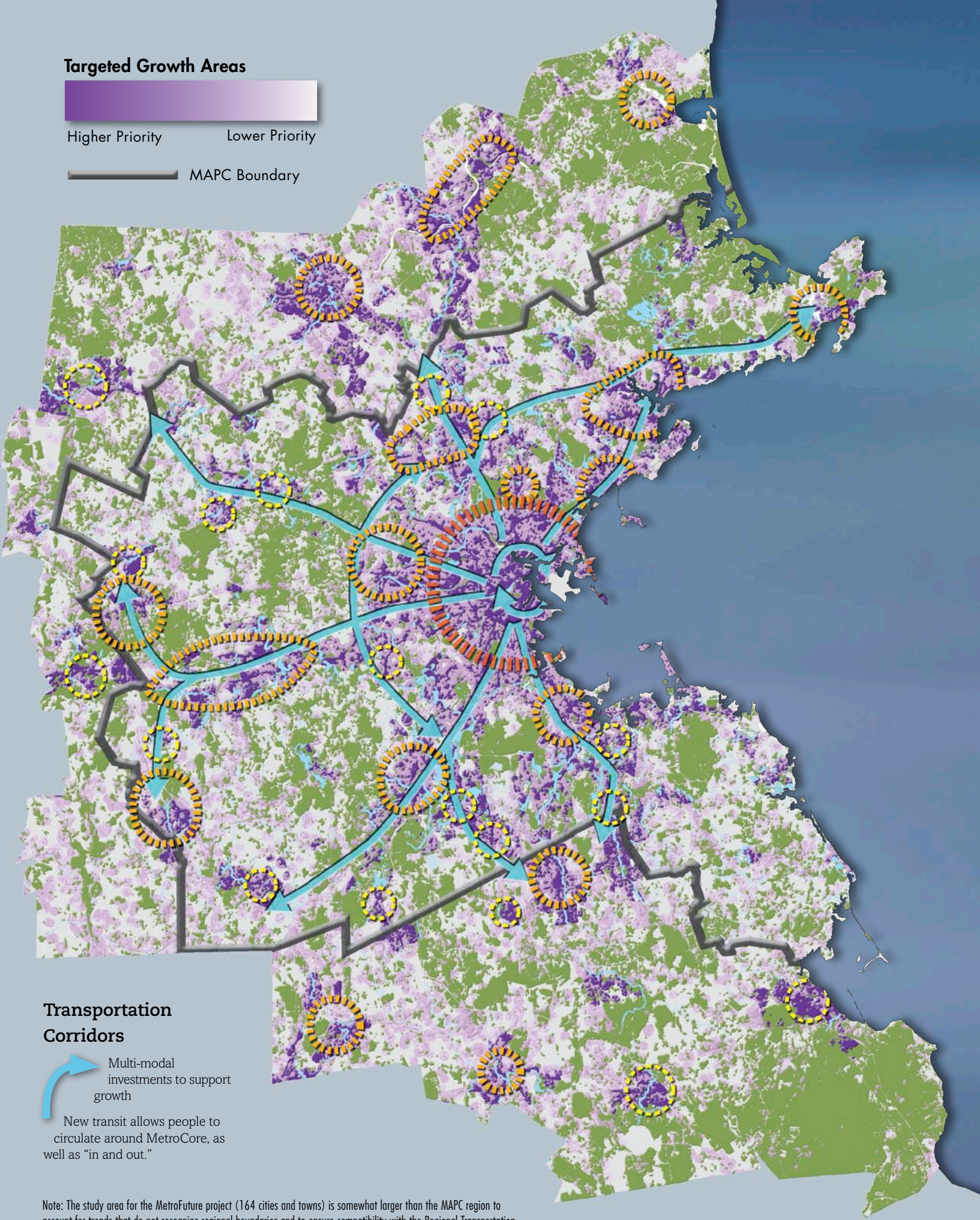
Mixed-use growth expands housing choice and tax revenue

New local bus connections and bike/pedestrian paths

Priority Conservation Areas

Areas with significant natural, scenic, agricultural, and recreational values

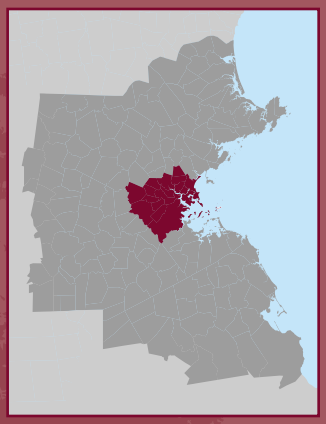
For more information on the MetroFuture process, goals, and implementation strategies, visit **www.metrofuture.org.**



Note: The study area for the MetroFuture project (164 cities and towns) is somewhat larger than the MAPC region to account for trends that do not recognize regional boundaries and to ensure compatibility with the Regional Transportation Plan being developed concurrently by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The Inner Core:
vital, diverse cities

Residents of the cities at the heart of the region enjoy the vibrancy and activity of their neighborhoods. They typically live in close proximity to shops, jobs, and cultural institutions, and to each other. Many places are easy to reach on foot, bicycle, and by public transit. These communities tend to include more affordable housing options, particularly rentals, and many neighborhoods are racially and ethnically diverse. Mixing residential and commercial uses, they are the largest economic engine of the region, home to much of the region's knowledge economy. The base of universities, hospitals, and high-tech industries in these communities provide the region with many good, stable jobs. Over the last several years, these and other amenities have led to these communities' increased popularity, bringing a resurgence of population and investment. These communities are not without their challenges, however. Residents in some of these areas struggle with crime rates four times higher than those in suburban communities. Many lack access to green space recreation, and most public schools perform at a lower level than their suburban counterparts.



Inner Core

INNER CORE COMMUNITIES OVER TIME		
	Current Trends to 2030	MetroFuture to 2030
Rate of population growth, 2000-2030	5%	8%
Rate of job growth, 2000-2030	6%	13%
New housing units created on currently developed land	54,985	94,765
New jobs in mixed-use units	2,128	5,367

MetroFuture Goal #3: Brownfields and other polluted sites will be cleaned up and re-used for parks or development

As of 2002, over 650 projects have received funding or assistance as a result of the Brownfields Act in Massachusetts.

In MetroFuture, all currently identified brownfields sites will be cleaned and reused by 2030, and all newly identified sites will be cleaned and reused within 10 years of their identification.

If current trends continue, growth in these urban communities will be substantially slower than the region as a whole, despite the recent up-tick in their popularity. They will experience some job growth, but many of these jobs will offer low wages with few benefits and limited opportunity for career advancement. Far more of the region's new jobs will be located in the suburbs than the Inner Core. Housing will remain a challenge for many residents, not only because sale prices and rents will be relatively high, but also because most of the housing built will be apartments with two or fewer bedrooms, ill-suited to the needs of most families. Inner Core schools will continue to underperform, which will further discourage many families from settling in these areas. As these cities fail to draw as many new businesses and wealthier residents, their tax bases will fall, providing less money for investment in public safety, school quality, and urban greenery than they need.

Only selected goals are featured in the following pages. All 65 goals can be found in greater detail at www.metrofuture.org.

On the other hand, **if the MetroFuture vision is realized**, these communities will build on the things that make them exciting to live in – affordability, cultural richness, proximity to entertainment and good jobs – while making real investments in improving their residents' quality of life. Most new growth will occur in already developed areas, with particular attention to redeveloping areas like previously used industrial sites as parks, homes, or businesses. The knowledge economy will continue to grow, including faster job creation in the high-tech sector. Racial and ethnic integration will continue to advance, in part because a wider variety of housing options will be produced and the revitalization of struggling urban neighborhoods will make them more attractive to young professionals, working families, and senior citizens seeking smaller homes. This revitalization will come about through public investment in urban quality of life issues, like public safety, access to parks and green spaces, and public education.

Realizing the MetroFuture vision for the Inner Core will not be easy. It will take action that is not only bold and transformative, but also coordinated among many different sectors. Making these communities appealing and livable for a diverse population, including a highly skilled and educated workforce, will continue to strengthen their economic and cultural base. Finally, strategically improving upon existing infrastructure, both modernizing it and making sure that it meets the needs of residents, will ensure that the Inner Core is well-linked to the rest of the region and the world.

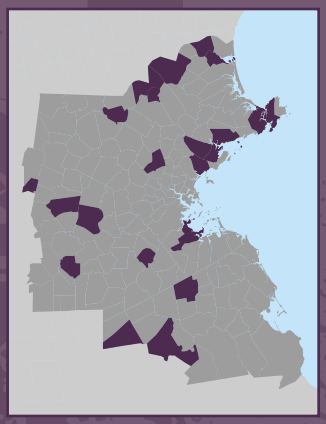
MetroFuture Goal #21: All communities will be safe, including areas currently afflicted by high rates of violent crime

Currently, regional crime rates are 4.4 violent crimes and 23.3 property crimes per 1,000 residents.

Under MetroFuture, an emphasis on community policing and youth violence prevention will lead to a decline in the rates of violent and property crimes. Disparities in crime rates across community types in the region will also decline.

Regional Urban Centers:
small, historic economic centers

The urban centers outside of the Inner Core are a diverse group, including historic settlements like Salem and Gloucester, as well as more densely settled suburbs like Framingham and Norwood. They offer residents many urban amenities at a relatively small scale: compact downtown commercial centers, a mix of homes and businesses, and a high proportion of rental and multi-family housing. Lower-density single family homes, open space, and recreational opportunities can also be found in these communities, including developable land and redevelopment opportunities. These cities and towns generally have significant populations of immigrants and people of color. Their diverse populations living in close proximity to one another create liveliness and cultural richness. These communities may also have higher incidences of crime, underperforming schools, limited access to green space, and other factors that contribute to poorer health outcomes for their residents. Many also have the additional burden of struggling economies, as mills and factories close and residents struggle to fill the economic gap left in their wake.



Regional Urban Centers

REGION URBAN CENTERS OVER TIME		
	Current Trends to 2030	MetroFuture to 2030
Rate of population growth, 2000-2030	9%	12%
Rate of job growth, 2000-2030	6%	8%
Number of new single family housing units	21,360	11,106
New housing units in mixed-use developments	17,212	24,806

MetroFuture Goal #15: There will be less regional segregation as all municipalities increasingly reflect Metro Boston's growing diversity

The non-white share of the region's population will grow from 18% to 30% by 2030; most of these people will settle in a handful of largely urban cities and towns if current trends continue.

Under MetroFuture, the non-white population of individual communities will more closely reflect the non-white population of the region as a whole.

If current trends continue, people and jobs will continue to choose locations in the less-developed areas at the region's periphery. In the Regional Urban Centers, some jobs and housing will be produced, but not in sufficient quantity or quality to meet the need in these communities. This will cause a continuing decline in tax and other revenues, which will negatively impact municipal services. These areas will also experience increasing numbers of high school dropouts, reaching a third of the working-age Black and Hispanic populations by the year 2030, more than twice the rate for the population as a whole. This problem will be exacerbated by the fact that many of the new jobs that will be created in the region require not only a high school diploma, but also some higher education or job training.

On the other hand, **if the MetroFuture vision is realized**, Regional Urban Centers will experience a robust share of the region's job and population growth. More than half of their growth will be near transit, which will give residents more transportation options and reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. These areas will maintain their unique characteristics through preservation efforts that include good design and a conscientious approach to planning. Most new housing in these cities and towns will be townhouses, multi-family homes, and single-family homes on smaller lots, in a wide variety of sizes and price ranges to provide good options for the full diversity of their residents. Education and workforce access will improve, and the vast majority of working-age adults of all races and ethnicities will graduate from high school and go on to a 2- or 4-year college. Greater public and private commitment to increased educational attainment will boost labor force participation, particularly among Blacks and Hispanics.

To ensure that the MetroFuture vision is realized in these Regional Urban Centers, legislators, state and local officials, individuals, businesses, and institutions must all work together. Reusing their existing infrastructure productively, and evolving their economies to embrace small businesses and local entrepreneurship will build on these communities' historic strengths while preparing them for modern challenges. Additionally, improving transportation linkages will improve access to these communities from the Inner Core and other parts of the region.

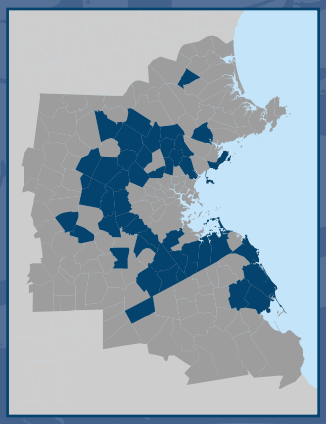
MetroFuture Goal #39: More workers will participate in the labor force, earning a living wage through secure employment

If current trends continue, the number of low skill workers will exceed available jobs, and labor force participation will generally decline, from 79% to 76% of all working age adults.

Under MetroFuture, 41,000 new people will join the labor force, and participation rates will particularly increase for Blacks and Hispanics. The gap in workforce participation between these groups and the population as a whole will substantially decrease.

Maturing Suburbs:
spacious, connected towns

These communities are generally located along Route 128 or south of Boston, and most are within fairly easy reach of the Inner Core and other job centers. Residents enjoy the feel of these places: the sense of community, safety, high-quality schools, and access to open space. They are mostly residential, made up primarily of single-family homes with good-sized yards in traditional neighborhoods. Although many of these communities have some old and new multi-family housing, their supply of moderately-priced homes is generally quite limited. Many of their houses are larger and in desirable settings, and tend not to be affordable for many of the region's residents. Most Maturing Suburbs have downtowns or villages that are job centers, and some incorporate office parks and malls along the highways. Still, most require a drive to other cities or towns for work. Although some of these communities have transit service, many lack convenient options, and also lack sidewalks and bicycle paths outside of their town and village centers. In recent years, some of these communities have been redeveloping their historic town and village centers.



Maturing Suburbs

MATURING SUBURBS OVER TIME		
	Current Trends to 2030	MetroFuture to 2030
Rate of population growth, 2000-2030	12%	14%
Rate of job growth, 2000-2030	15%	15%
New housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households	11,943	15,196
New housing units created on currently developed land	37,486	68,353

MetroFuture Goal #4: In suburban municipalities, most new growth will occur near village and town centers

If current trends continue, two-thirds of new suburban development will occur far outside of town centers or existing commercial or industrial areas.

MetroFuture will lead Maturing Suburbs to locate 67% of all housing growth near town centers. Job growth will also be more concentrated, with 64% occurring near existing employment centers.

If current trends continue, these communities will grow mainly by producing single-family homes on previously undeveloped land, rapidly using up their dwindling supplies of vacant parcels. As developers produce predominantly this one type of housing, there will be an increasing housing shortage and fewer choices available to meet local and regional needs. This will make it more difficult to find appropriate, affordable housing, not only for lower-income families, but also for the seniors who want to retire on fixed incomes and for young families who want to settle down in these communities. Spread-out growth and continuing increases in average house and lot sizes will affect not only affordability but will also make it harder to get around without a car and will reduce the amount of open space available for parks, farms and habitat.

On the other hand, **if the MetroFuture vision is realized**, these suburban communities will provide more housing options in multifamily buildings or townhouses. Producing more housing options will ensure that all members of their workforce, as well as low-income households, will find appropriate and affordable places to live. Through zoning for greater density and focusing housing in areas already served by infrastructure, two-thirds of these new units will be built near town or village centers, existing commercial areas and transit. Focusing both residential and commercial growth in centers of existing development will also allow more land to be kept as open space for recreation and farming. High-quality design standards will ensure that they contribute to, rather than detract from, each community's uniqueness and sense of character. This concentrated growth, and a shift in transportation funding priorities, will make it easier to get around these communities on foot and by bicycle.

Major changes in policy and action on all levels are required for the Maturing Suburbs to achieve the MetroFuture goals. Improvements in transit, bike, and pedestrian access will allow for more alternatives to driving. Increasing the number of homes and businesses in town and village centers will allow these communities to grow, while relieving some of the pressure on their relatively limited open space. More diverse housing types will serve people with a variety of needs.

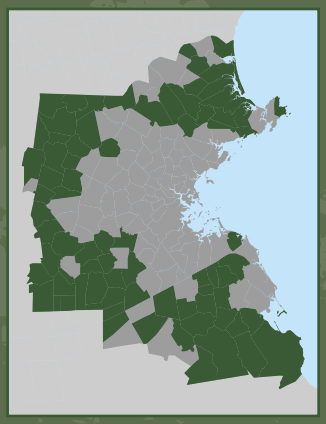
MetroFuture Goal #47: Most people will choose to walk or bike for short trips

Currently, 66% of the region's streets and roads have no sidewalks, and 69% of the region's population lives more than 1 mile away from a bike path.

Under MetroFuture, building more homes and businesses near each other along with a more extensive network of sidewalks and trails will lead to more walking and biking. The number of trips taken on foot and by bicycle will increase 68% from the year 2000 to the year 2030.

Developing Suburbs:
green, residential towns

Residents of the less-developed towns along I-495 and on the North and South shores enjoy the large amount of open space and rustic qualities of their communities, which can feel more distant from cities than they are. These places have been growing rapidly, however, because lots of open space is available for development, and because high housing prices forced many families to move further out to qualify for a mortgage. They are primarily residential, with most of housing made up of single family homes on large lots of land. Some of these communities have traditional village or town centers with shops and small homes, but many lack substantial business or retail development. This means that daily needs are frequently distant; a third of Greater Boston's population – primarily in the Developing Suburbs – drives more than half an hour a day getting to work.



Developing Suburbs

DEVELOPING SUBURBS OVER TIME		
	Current Trends to 2030	MetroFuture to 2030
Rate of population growth, 2000-2030	19%	10%
Rate of job growth, 2000-2030	17%	12%
Acres of undeveloped land newly converted to developed uses	92,180	22,132
Number of municipalities where water demand exceeds Water Management Act permitted withdrawals	29	5

MetroFuture Goal #65: A robust network of protected open spaces, farms, parks, and greenways will provide wildlife habitat, ecological benefits, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty

If current trends continue, the region will lose the opportunity to create these corridors as almost 45% of the land along them will be developed.

Under MetroFuture, 139,000 acres of land identified as high priority by the statewide land preservation map will be preserved, and no more than 5,000 acres of farmland will be lost.

If current trends continue, these are the communities that would experience the most substantial growth, seeing large influxes of people and jobs, along with increasing traffic and congestion. Most of this new growth will be in conventional low-density subdivisions. As a result of this spread-out growth, Developing Suburbs will lose over 90,000 acres of open space, bringing the total lost in the region to 140,000 acres. This will have detrimental environmental impacts, including threats to the region's biodiversity and encroachment upon its wetlands. Also damaging to the region's environment, as well as its economic development and quality of life, will be the rapidly increasing traffic. A rapidly growing population in the Developing Suburbs, where the relative distance from jobs and lack of transit options already means long drives to work and to run errands, will lead to particularly worsened traffic in these communities.

If the MetroFuture vision is realized, these communities' growth will slow down, returning to a more historic pace. Traffic will remain lower because there will be fewer additional cars on the road, as well as more support for commuters who seek alternatives – carpooling connections, an increase in transit options, and telecommuting support, among others. Almost half of the new development that does occur in these communities will be in village and town centers, and most housing will be on lots well under an acre in size. An increasing supply of multifamily housing will supplement these homes in existing centers. Slower, more compact growth will help to preserve natural resources, allowing ecologically, historically, and recreationally important lands to be preserved. Very few acres of undeveloped land will be lost to development, and none of the Developing Suburbs' agricultural land will be lost. These communities will continue to provide a rural feel and a great deal of open space while providing housing and job opportunities to an increasingly diverse population.

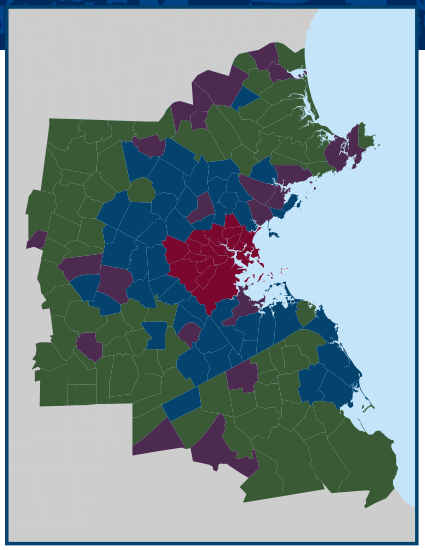
For the Developing Suburbs to achieve their goals under MetroFuture, local, state, business, and other leaders must coordinate policy and action to effect the desired change. Clustered housing, near town and village centers, will reduce the need for costly infrastructure expansions and reduce pressure to develop ecologically important land. Policies encouraging more moderate growth will facilitate this open space preservation, as well as slowing increases in traffic congestion.

MetroFuture Goal #49: Outlying areas will see little increase in traffic congestion

If current trends continue, traffic congestion will worsen in the region as a whole, with the Developing Suburbs particularly impacted because of high growth rates and spread-out development.

Under MetroFuture, average congestion levels in Developing Suburbs will be 4% lower than under current trends.

What would MetroFuture mean for my **region?**



Prosperity.
Greater Boston has transformed itself from an economy based primarily on traditional manufacturing to one based on innovation. We are leaders in the development and commercial application of new technologies in diverse fields such as health, education and professional services. Under MetroFuture, a skilled workforce, developed within the region and attracted from elsewhere, will be well-matched to the needs of business and institutional employers, attracting more jobs to the region. Our extensive and well-maintained transportation network will also be a draw, as appropriate funding and diversification of our transportation system will be a priority. The public sector will play a lead role, engaging the private sector in making development policies consistent and predictable, supporting small businesses and micro-entrepreneurs, and providing the region's residents with access to high-quality education and training to meet their needs in the 21st century economy.

MetroFuture Goal #33: The region will be globally competitive in the knowledge economy

If current trends continue, the region will experience slower growth in business and professional services and education and health services, mostly because of a lack of high-skill workers with 2- and 4-year college degrees.

MetroFuture will lead to total employment in the region growing by 11% by 2030, with faster than average growth in highly skilled sectors. Greater Boston will continue to be a leader in innovation and research and development.

Equity.
While Greater Boston is an increasingly diverse region, not all of its residents have had access to the same opportunities. Under MetroFuture, all people who live and work in the region will be able to participate and prosper. Racial and ethnic segregation will decrease, in part because a wider diversity of housing types will be built in all of the region's communities. The region's populations of color and immigrant communities will be healthier, as well, with improved access to medical care, increased access to healthy food and green space, and improved air quality in the region, particularly in urban areas. Healthy and convenient transportation options will be available throughout the region, particularly in traditionally underserved areas. A greater emphasis on education and workforce preparedness will ensure that people of color and immigrants are equipped with all of the tools they need to succeed in today's economy, and supports for small businesses and first-time homeowners will help many in these communities to build wealth for future generations.

For more information on the MetroFuture process, goals, and implementation strategies, visit **www.metrofuture.org.**

We are residents of our communities, but also of Greater Boston, and we share many similar hopes for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our region. These hopes cross disciplines and geographic barriers, and touch on every aspect of life in Greater Boston.

Sustainability.

As in other parts of the country and the world, Greater Boston is increasingly being confronted by the consequences of unsustainable behaviors. We are burning fossil fuels to heat large houses and drive on long commutes, removing more water from our lakes and rivers than rainfall can replenish, and turning our farms and forests into new developments. Under MetroFuture, we will use our resources with an eye to passing them on to future generations. New development patterns will decrease our demand for water and open space, while opening up more alternatives to driving. Changing funding priorities will ensure that more alternatives to driving exist, including an expanded transit system and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. We will build a green economy, by focusing on developing and delivering new sources of green energy, and by preserving the landscape's distinctive green spaces and working farms.

Community.

A strong region requires the active participation of its residents, businesses, and institutions in their communities, large and small. Under MetroFuture, planning and financial processes at all levels of government will be reformed so that they are as transparent and inclusive as possible, and residents of all ages and cultures will participate fully in civic life and planning. Rejuvenated downtowns and village and town centers will provide increased opportunities for people to meet their neighbors, as will safe and well-maintained parks and common green spaces. As the region grows increasingly diverse, it will be a place where different cultures are celebrated. The artistic and cultural resources of the region will be nourished and continue to grow.

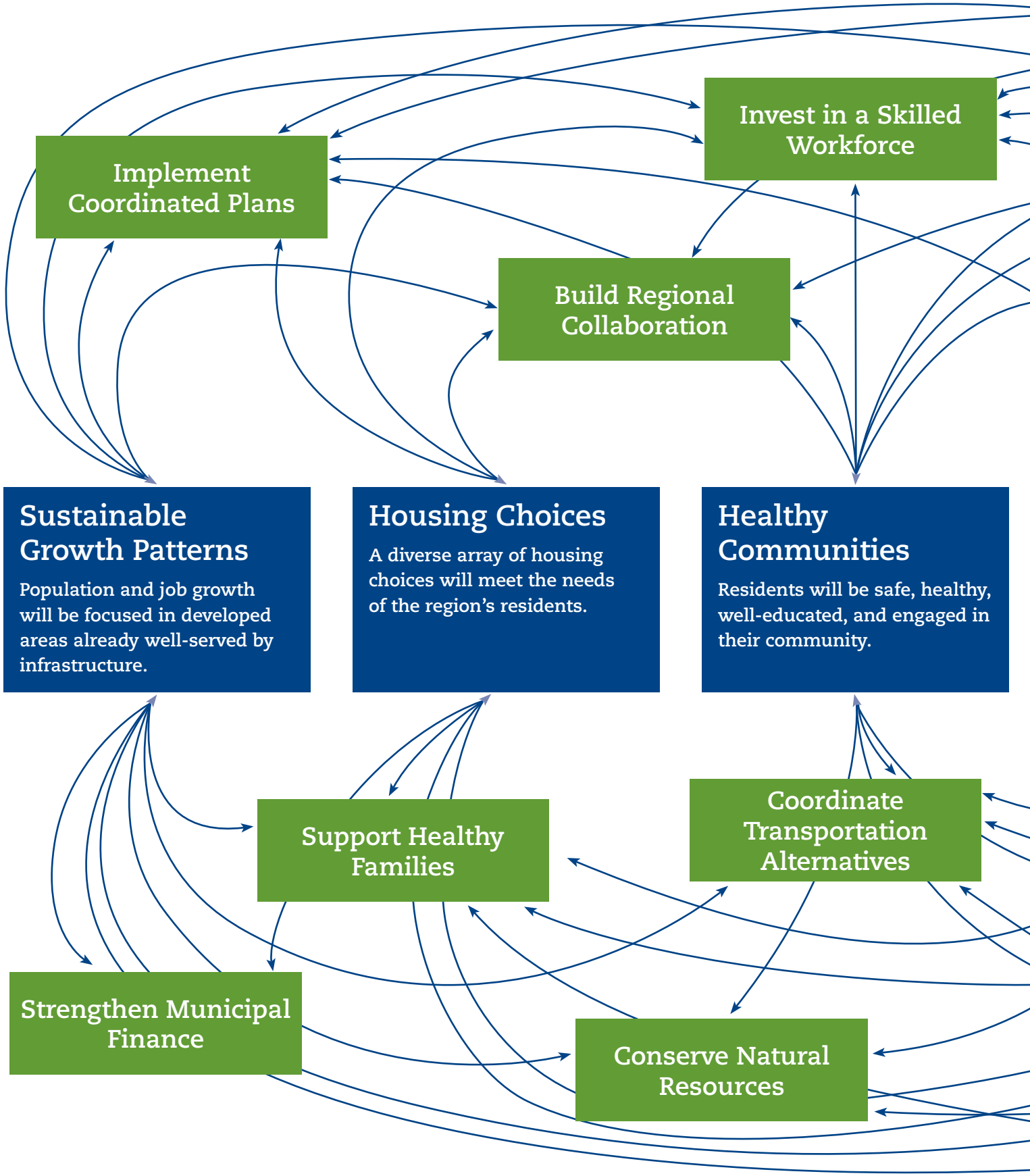
MetroFuture Goal #57: The region will use progressively less energy for electricity, heating, cooling, and transportation

If current trends continue, the region will use significantly more energy for transportation and heating and cooling larger homes.

Under MetroFuture, total energy demand for new residential development would be 12% less than if current trends continue, and per capita residential energy demand will decline by 38% from 2000-2030. Per capita energy demand for transportation will fall by the same percentage.

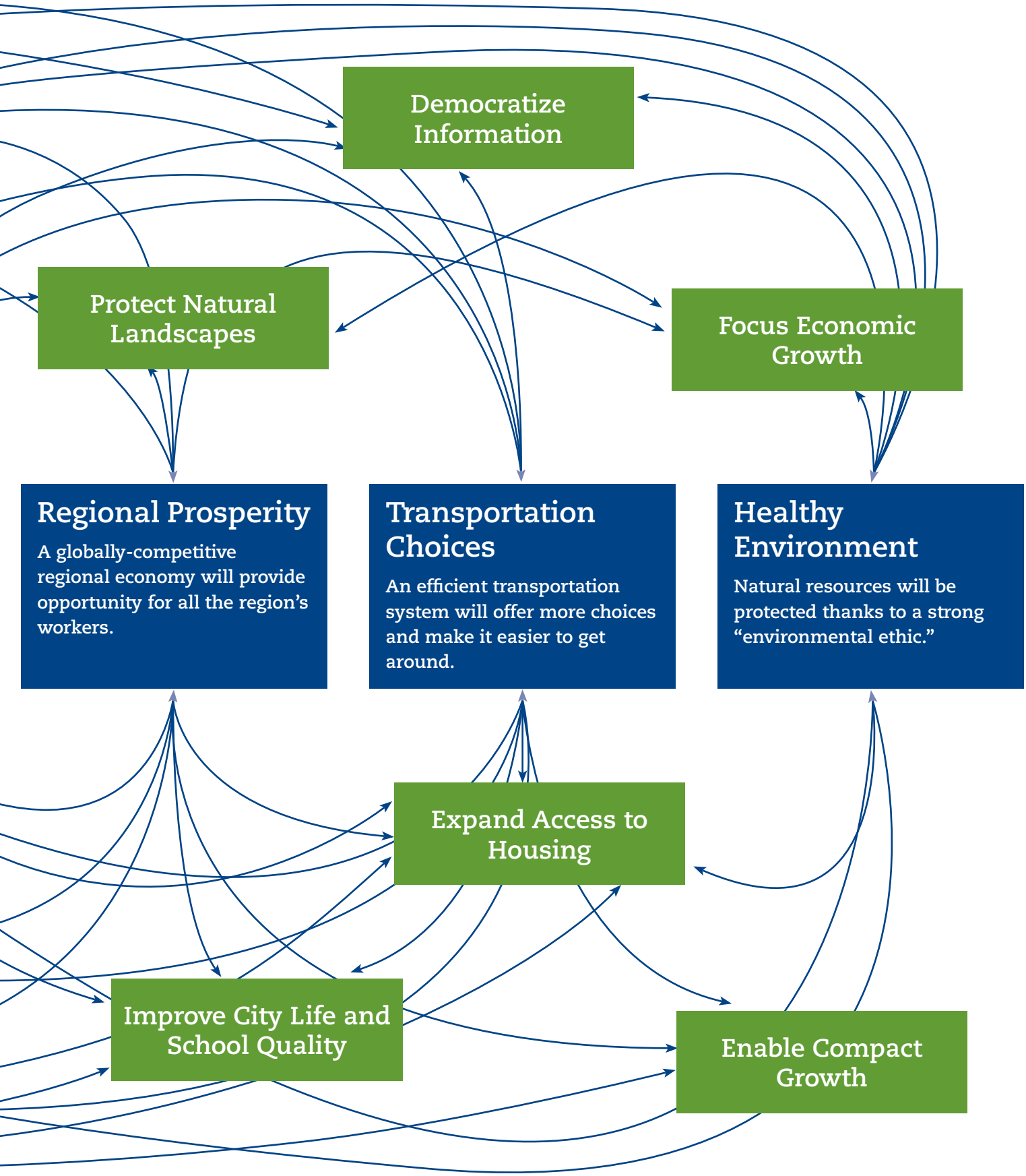
Making our goals . . .

The MetroFuture plan includes 65 specific **GOALS** in 6 general categories:

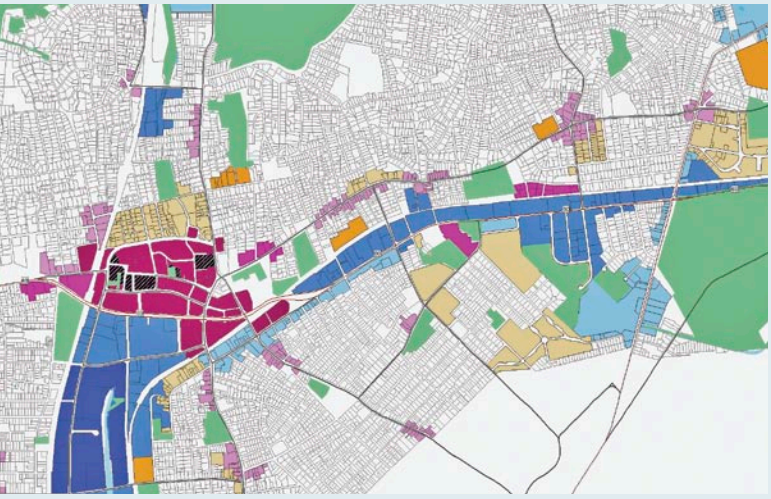


. . . a reality

These goals will be achieved by the recommendations contained in MetroFuture's 13 implementation **STRATEGIES**:



MetroFuture Implementation Strategies



1. Implement Coordinated Plans

Greater coordination across all sectors will help to harness efforts toward a common purpose. A proactive approach to growth and preservation will help Greater Boston to use its scarce resources more efficiently and to achieve the long-term goals of the MetroFuture plan.

This strategy calls for significant changes to many aspects of Greater Boston's development process—the way residents engage in planning decisions, the support and guidance the state provides municipalities for planning, the priorities that private entities use when selecting a location and deciding how to build. Without a strong framework of coordination, all the other policies recommended by MetroFuture will be inefficient at best, and conflicting at worst.

To make these changes, Strategy 1 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Increase municipal planning capacity
- Modernize planning and development tools
- Establish consistency of plans across all levels
- Coordinate sustainable state policies and programs
- Foster private sector demand for sustainable development

2. Democratize Information

In order to develop a coordinated and proactive approach to development, Greater Boston needs greater capacity to use data and information in decision making at the local, regional, and state level. The first step is to align data collection and research to support key policy issues. Ensuring access to and the utility of data will require a strong "information infrastructure" (both technical and institutional) and the widespread application of advanced tools to support citizen and business engagement.

Greater Boston is well-positioned to pilot a new approach to regional data collection. Local, regional, and state actors can act now to share data sources and services to create flexibility, save money, enhance access, and foster collaboration across state agencies and the public.

To make these changes, Strategy 2 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Align data collection and policymaking
- Improve state and local capacity to utilize planning and decision support tools
- Support State and Regional data intermediaries
- Build and maintain a strong "information infrastructure"

For more information on the MetroFuture process, goals, and implementation strategies, visit **www.metrofuture.org.**

Making our MetroFuture goals a reality will require a comprehensive approach to bringing about change in the region. The changes we must make will take time and require new priorities, but they are necessary steps toward attaining the region we want to leave to future generations.

The strategies listed on the following pages include recommendations for short- and long-term planning, policy and spending changes at every level of government, and steps that can be taken by the private sector and even by individual households across the region. Together, they will serve as a critical guide for achieving the MetroFuture goals by 2030.

3. Strengthen Municipal Finance

For municipalities to make sustainable and equitable land use decisions, the Commonwealth must reevaluate and rationalize our flawed system of municipal finance and governance.

MetroFuture recommends providing municipalities with a more stable financial foundation by allowing them to work together to provide goods and services more efficiently, and by diversifying the number of revenue generation options municipal officials have at their disposal.

To make these changes, Strategy 3 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Modernize municipal governance structures and practices
- Control municipalities' fixed costs: health care, pensions, and debt
- Enable more cost-effective service delivery
- Ensure that state assistance to local government is sufficient and predictable
- Provide cities and towns with flexibility to raise local revenues
- Reduce the burden of education funding

4. Build Regional Collaboration

Collaboration and cooperation across municipal boundaries are essential for our cities and towns to realize MetroFuture goals for the financial stability, sustainability, and safety of the region, among other things.

MetroFuture recommends establishing or strengthening institutions, laws, and programs to build a more robust system to aid municipal collaboration. Greater support and fewer barriers will help municipalities work together on joint purchasing and service delivery, planning on a regional basis, public health and safety, and managing the costs and benefits of development.

To make these changes, Strategy 4 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Strengthen MAPC as a regional resource
- Support regional collaboration, purchasing, and service delivery
- Work together to make a safer region
- Plan together for regional development
- Share costs and benefits of development

5. Enable Compact Growth

MetroFuture calls for a return to more historic growth patterns, which are considerably more compact than what would occur if current trends continue. By focusing growth in city and town centers, near transit and infrastructure, the region will help to preserve both environmental and financial resources that would be lost to sprawling, low density development.

These compact patterns of growth can only be achieved if the region's communities have the tools and resources to plan and support that growth. The recommendations here will help municipalities to focus growth by making it easier to locate and build development that meets community and regional needs.

To make these changes, Strategy 5 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Plan for compact growth to serve community needs
- Ensure good design and access
- Encourage market response to district plans
- Remove barriers to development
- Increase the vitality of existing centers

6. Improve City Life and School Quality

Urban communities in Massachusetts offer a wealth of history, diversity, convenience, and infrastructure and are critical to the success of MetroFuture's land use and economic goals. Housing and job growth in urban areas will benefit from existing infrastructure, bring new amenities to existing residents, and reduce the pressure for development elsewhere in the region.

In order to foster revitalized interest in urban living and a trend of growth in urban communities, the region must address underperforming schools, expand crime prevention and youth violence programs, and reinvest in urban quality of life and place. This reinvestment will also help to ensure that all of the region's residents benefit from the same access to its resources.

To make these changes, Strategy 6 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Ensure high quality educational opportunities in urban communities
- Improve urban public safety
- Foster sustainable neighborhood redevelopment
- Improve urban services, maintenance, and accessibility
- Foster urban vitality: arts, culture, shops, and services
- Improve urban parks and the urban environment

7. Protect Natural Landscapes

Greater Boston benefits from diverse regional landscapes that include cities, suburban neighborhoods, town centers, and undeveloped farms, forests, and wetlands. The MetroFuture plan seeks to reinforce this by focusing growth in town centers and urban areas, while protecting valuable and sensitive undeveloped landscapes.

The diversity of landscapes requires a similarly diverse approach to landscape protection. This strategy includes three broad approaches to protecting natural landscapes: expansion of land conservation efforts (both public and private); increasing the economic viability of local farms so they can resist development pressure; and ensuring appropriate development and high quality design in more rural areas.

To make these changes, Strategy 7 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Plan for land preservation on a state and regional basis
- Increase funding for priority land conservation
- Support private sector conservation initiatives
- Create a new generation of farmers through training, technical assistance, and access to capital
- Build a stronger market for local agricultural products
- Remove regulatory and labor-related barriers to agricultural expansion/diversification
- Adopt sustainable land use controls in natural landscapes
- Increase the use and impact of Open Space Residential Design

8. Expand Access to Housing

Greater Boston will need to develop 349,000 new housing units from 2000-2030 in order to accommodate the projected population increase and continued declines in household size. Simply building a certain number of units will not be sufficient to meet the region's housing needs, as low and moderate income residents, seniors, non-traditional households, and others make the region increasingly diverse.

Local, state, and regional housing policies must address these diverse needs by promoting a range of housing types and affordability, by expanding programs that connect residents with housing opportunities, and by ensuring equitable access to these opportunities for all of the region's residents.

To make these changes, Strategy 8 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Develop coordinated regional and local plans for diverse housing production
- Increase affordable housing production in appropriate locations
- Diversify overall housing supply and affordability
- Connect residents to housing opportunities
- Ensure fair and accessible housing
- Preserve, maintain, and upgrade existing affordable housing stock

9. Support Healthy Families

Many who choose to live in Greater Boston do so because of the high quality of life already enjoyed here. Ensuring that all of the region's families are supported in their universal goals to be healthy, happy, and provide their children with all the advantages will go a long way toward creating a brighter future for all residents.

Maintaining good health for the residents of the region means that Greater Boston's communities must ensure universal access to healthy foods and healthy lifestyles, and freedom from environmental hazards like lead paint and asthma-causing particulates.

To make these changes, Strategy 9 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Link health and planning
- Broaden universal early education and care
- Improve access to after-school and out-of-school programs
- Use school-based programs to help children establish healthy lifestyles
- Ensure access to healthy food
- Reduce exposure to environmental contaminants
- Ensure equitable access to quality health care
- Coordinate policies to create an elder-friendly region

10. Invest in a Skilled Workforce

In order to achieve the MetroFuture vision, the region will have to address a significant shortage of skilled workers that is projected through 2030, and enhance equitable access to the region's economic opportunities.

The region's ability to provide opportunity and to achieve robust and sustainable economic growth will depend on its ability to increase access to education, training, and economic opportunities. The region needs to aggressively expand the level of education and skills training available to the current and future workforce, and remove the barriers to economic opportunity for those currently underserved in Greater Boston.

To make these changes, Strategy 10 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Increase capacity and sustainability of public higher education
- Broaden access to public higher education
- Coordinate and align public higher education curricula
- Adopt new strategies to improve student performance, graduation rates, and employment outcomes
- Remove barriers to labor force participation
- Position immigrants as key assets in the region's economy
- Support older workers and lifelong productivity
- Support individual asset building and financial literacy

11. Focus Economic Growth

MetroFuture recommends the preconditions for robust economic growth and the characteristics of appropriate locations for that growth in the region.

Greater Boston can become a more prosperous, competitive region by pursuing strategies including streamlined and more predictable permitting, and more collaboration between government and the region's many world-class medical and educational institutions. It also needs to build on its historic strength of innovation by investing in support for the region's many small businesses and creative industries.

To make these changes, Strategy 11 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Create jobs in MetroFuture-consistent locations
- Capitalize on existing medical and educational institutions
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurs

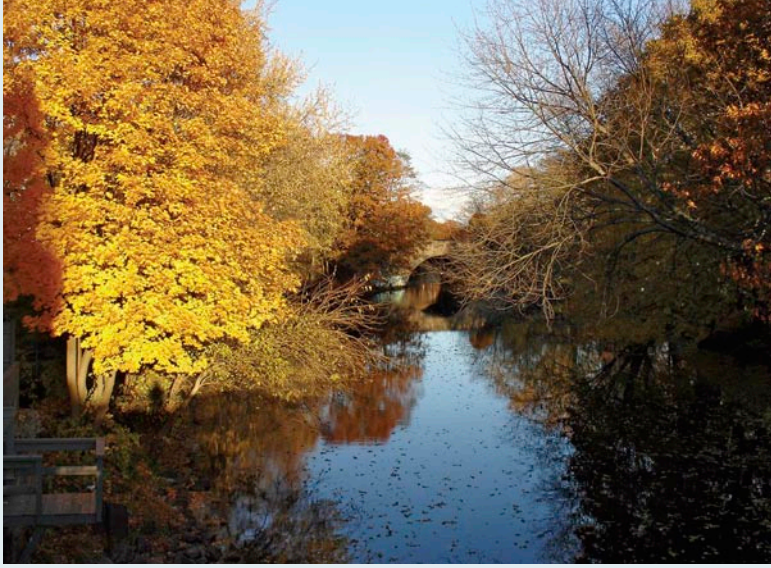
12. Coordinate Transportation Alternatives

A healthy, competitive region with a high quality of life demands an efficient and affordable transportation network – one with the flexibility to meet ever-changing needs. Greater Boston can achieve this vision by coordinating land use with the creation of new transportation choices.

Greater Boston must find a way to re-evaluate its transportation investments and fund the prompt execution of those that are critical to the region's mobility and economic advantage. Most importantly, the region must make land use and mobility goals the master of transportation improvements, and not the other way around.

To make these changes, Strategy 12 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Integrate land use and transportation planning
- Prioritize transit and transportation alternatives
- Establish stable and sufficient funding for all modes
- Promote an efficient and transparent project delivery system
- Establish a comprehensive maintenance program for safety and future cost savings
- Improve the competitiveness of rail freight



13. Conserve Natural Resources

The MetroFuture plan envisions dramatic reductions in the use of energy and water, through conservation and the use of alternative sources. More efficient use of resources is critical to the local and global environment, as well as to the regional economy, and contributes to America's national security by reducing its dependence on foreign oil.

This strategy addresses the efficient use of our resources, the natural "green infrastructure" that supports existing communities and new development, and the natural heritage and ecology of wildlife habitats. The region must conserve energy, use renewable resources, better manage its water demand and treatment of its aquatic resources, and produce less solid waste to meet our ambitious goals.

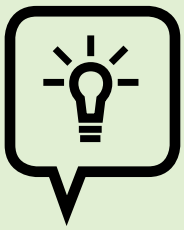
To make these changes, Strategy 13 recommends that the people who live and work in the region:

- Plan for sustainability
- Conserve energy
- Promote the use of renewable resources
- Manage water demand through education, pricing, technical assistance, and regulation
- Implement water/wastewater/stormwater "best practices" across the region
- Expand the use of reclaimed water and alternative supplies
- Use technical analysis to support more flexible regulatory mechanisms for water withdrawal
- Promote local treatment and recharge of stormwater and wastewater
- Protect the quality of water supplies through source controls and land use planning
- Increase waste reduction and recycling

Let's get started!

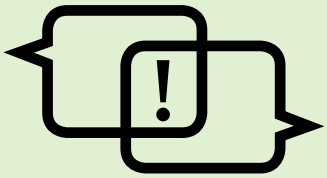
What can we do together?

Educate ourselves and each other



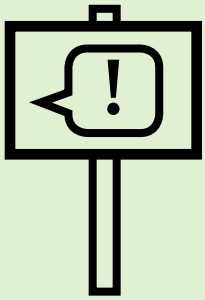
We can share the MetroFuture vision and participate in dialogue and activities with our friends, family, and co-workers. By learning about the region together, we can give all of its residents a better understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, our diversity and commonalities. Thousands of "plan builders" helped to shape the MetroFuture plan, but we need more hands and voices to ensure that the vision becomes a reality. Let's involve the people we know in making a Greater Boston region!

Collaborate



We can bring together disparate skills and perspectives to tackle common challenges and advance our common goals. Working across boundaries and disciplines won't lead us to agree in every respect, but it can forge new relationships and understanding, and lead to a stronger region. Let's work together to make the change we want to see!

Advocate for our priorities



We can work with leaders at the federal, state, and municipal levels, as well as in businesses and institutions, to offer our common vision for the region as a guide for decision making. We can contact our legislators, selectmen, or colleagues to tell them that we support change. Many of the decisions that affect our lives and our region are made at a local level. We can also get involved in our cities or towns by attending public meetings, volunteering for a committee or nonprofit, or running for elected office. Let's take action to make MetroFuture's goals a reality!

For more information on the MetroFuture process, goals, and implementation strategies, visit **www.metrofuture.org.**

What can you do?

Visit www.metrofuture.org

There are lots of ways to participate — learn more about MetroFuture's current campaigns, opportunities for involvement, and sign up for periodic email updates on our website.

Become a Friend of MetroFuture

Education, training, demonstration projects, and innovation require resources. We need your support to realize the MetroFuture vision – visit our website and become a *Friend of MetroFuture* today!

Make MetroFuture your own

If something in the plan grabs you, start working on it! Many groups around the region, large and small, are pursuing similar goals. Call MAPC for help connecting with them or starting your own!

What will MAPC do?

Coordinate implementation

MAPC will coordinate the implementation of MetroFuture by working with allies throughout the region and the state, by establishing coalitions and coordinating campaigns to enact elements of the plan's Implementation Strategies.

Build models

MAPC will create model bills, by-laws, ordinances and regulations, based on best practices throughout the country and beyond. We will collect and analyze data to help us better understand the different outcomes that can arise from making different decisions. We will continue to refine our software model for growth and preservation in the region, and we will share it with our allies.

Provide technical assistance

MAPC will work with municipalities, non-profits and state agencies to help them build demonstration projects, create new plans, change their zoning, and otherwise help them to achieve the goals of MetroFuture by better meeting the needs of all residents.

Help municipalities find efficiencies

MAPC will help municipalities save money by joining together to form purchasing consortiums, plan together for regional growth, and jointly provide services to their residents.

Measure and improve

MAPC will regularly monitor the progress of the region toward the MetroFuture goals to make sure that we – both as a region and as an agency – are on track to achieve a Greater Boston region by the year 2030.

Our Thanks To:

495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership • A Better City • Allston Brighton CDC • Asian CDC • Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce • American Planning Association-MA • Banker and Tradesman • Bedford League of Women Voters • Boston Area Community Health Centers • Boston Athenaeum • Boston Bar Association • Boston Building Materials Co-op • Boston City Council • Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization • Boston Rental Property Association • Boston Society of Architects • Chris Gabrieli and Staff • Citizens' Housing and Planning Association • City-Wide Dialogues • Codman Square Neighborhood Council• Commercial Investment Board • Commonwealth Legislative Seminar • Environmental Business Council • Environmental League of Massachusetts • Freedom House • Great Marsh Coalition • Harvard University Graduate School of Design • Immigrant Learning Center • Inner Core Committee • Institute for Asian American Studies at UMass Boston • Lynn Community Health Center • Mass Home Care • MA Affordable Housing Alliance • MA Association of CDCs • MA Association of Consulting Planners • MA Association of Planning Directors • MA Association of Realtors • MA Association of Regional Planning Agencies • MA Coalition for Adult Basic Education • MA Council on Aging • MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition • MA League of Community Health Centers • MA Partnership for Healthy Communities • MA Smart Growth Alliance • MassPort • Mauricio Gastón Institute at UMass Boston • MBTA Advisory Board • Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization • Metropolitan Mayors Coalition • MetroWest Growth Management Committee • MetroWest Leadership Academy • Minuteman Advisory Group on Inter-local Coordination • Move Massachusetts • National Forum for Black Public Administrators – Boston Chapter • Neighbor to Neighbor • Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce • New Ecology • North Sector Public Officials • North Shore Career Centers • North Shore Chamber of Commerce • North Shore Community College • North Shore Elder Services • North Shore Not-for-Profit CEOs • North Shore Task Force • North Shore Technology Council • North Suburban Planning Council • Office of Congressman John Tierney • Office of Representative Mary Grant • Operation Bootstrap • Pioneer Institute • Project Right • Public Higher Education Presidents & Chancellors • Randolph Chamber of Commerce • Roca • Roxbury Neighborhood Council • Salem State College • Somerville Non-Profit Development Network • South Sector Public Officials • South Shore Coalition • SouthWest Area Planning Committee • SuAsCo Watershed Community Council • Tax Executives Institute • Tellus Institute • The Food Project • Three Rivers Inter-local Council • Tufts University • Union Square Main Streets • United South End Settlements • United Way of Mass Bay • Urban Edge • Urban Land Institute • US Environmental Protection Agency • Wellspring House • Westwood Walpole League of Women Voters • William Monroe Trotter Institute at UMass Boston • YMCAs of MA

These are among the organizations that have contributed their perspectives and co-hosted MetroFuture discussions.

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