

Phases and Provisional Themes

Metropolitan Area Planning Council Regional Plan Update

June 21, 2018

Phases

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) adopted its current regional plan, “MetroFuture: Making a Greater Boston Region,” in 2008. One decade later, we are now preparing to embark on the development of a new regional plan. MAPC’s two-and-a-half year Regional Plan Update (RPU) will reflect ten years of regional change and anticipate future events and scenarios. Five interdependent, roughly six-month phases will pace the planning process, leading us to robust and achievable implementation recommendations to plan out to 2050. These phases are as follows:

Where do we want to go?

Phase 1: Visioning and groundwork.

This phase will focus on engaging the public to create and affirm an updated vision of MetroFuture for the new regional plan, including 5 – 6 major themes into which the plan will be organized. During this phase, we will also build an RPU digital hub, analyze local comprehensive plans for themes and priorities, and establish baseline data for our region relating to regional challenges and opportunities of each RPU theme. Research addressing policy recommendations for these challenges and opportunities will also begin.

What might help us to achieve our vision or prevent us from reaching it?

Phase 2: Strategic Challenges/Opportunities and Driving Forces.

This phase will focus on talking to the public about the challenges/opportunities the region is experiencing, solutions and interventions that could be used to address them, and driving “disruptive” forces that could impact the region over the next 30 years.

How can we reach the vision?

Phase 3: Scenario modeling.

This phase will take the regional challenges, opportunities, and driving forces, model their potential impacts and the effect of various solutions and interventions out to 2030 and 2050, and engage the public to ascertain what tradeoffs they are willing to make to achieve the vision laid out at the beginning of the process.

What policy recommendations will achieve the vision?

Phase 4: Recommendation Selection.

This phase will propose policy recommendations, test them with the public, and result in a final plan outlining steps to achieve a regional vision that will be submitted to the MAPC Council for adoption and formally released to the public.

Phase 5: Plan assembly and public release.

This phase will focus on the release of the plan to the public and beginning implementation steps.

Themes

The public engagement around the vision, combined with the local planning priorities, will result in 5-6 themes for the RPU. We will structure each theme to include a set of regional strategic challenges and opportunities that will be critical to address over the next 30 years. The provisional themes coming out the process design are as follows, although they may well change during the planning process:

1. ***Economic mobility***: Creating the conditions so that all residents have the opportunity for upward economic mobility, with a key goal of reducing racial disparities. This challenge exists at the intersection of education, workforce development, neighborhood development, public safety, economic development, and transportation systems.
2. ***Climate mitigation and adaptation***: Advancing the region toward a net zero carbon future for all residents based on clean energy and healthy built and natural systems, while protecting human health and property in the face of increased flooding and climate extremes. This theme involves energy supply, building efficiency, transportation sector emissions and technologies, green infrastructure, emergency response and recovery planning, infrastructure resiliency, and risk assessments.
3. ***Homes for all***: Rectifying the legal, economic, and political challenges that lead to a shortage of housing in the region and an unaffordable housing market. Under this theme, we will explore land use policy, housing finance, incentives and taxation, renter protections, and design.
4. ***Smart planning***: Coordinating land use and infrastructure decisions to create a sustainable, livable, and equitable region. This theme entails issues related to zoning, transportation investments and operations, other infrastructure investments, incentives and taxation, and design.
5. ***Dynamic government***: Empowering local and regional governments to meet demographic, fiscal, and governance challenges by becoming more dynamic, inclusive and collaborative, across borders and with partners in other sectors. This theme will involve municipal finance, political systems, civic technology, regionalization, and workforce development.