

# MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING

A publication of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association



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Massachusetts Chapter

*Creating Great Communities for All*

**Spring 2023**

## Age- and Dementia-Friendly Design

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## From the President

Welcome back to *Massachusetts Planning!*

We finally hosted a screening of *Museum Town* that was originally scheduled for April 2020. It felt great to be back at the Capitol Theatre in Arlington! We had almost 40 attendees and look forward to seeing you at the next Movie and Meetup event (see event pics below). Send us your planning movie suggestions, we're always adding new titles to our list for future screenings.

This month, we're welcoming three new members to the Board! Alyssa Sandoval ([asandoval@newtonma.gov](mailto:asandoval@newtonma.gov)) and Melisa Tintocalis ([mtintocalis@burlington.org](mailto:mtintocalis@burlington.org)) are stepping into the Social Coordinator role and will be working together to bring us a variety of purely social events. Reach out to them with ideas or to volunteer! We're also welcoming Travis Pollack ([TPollack@mapc.org](mailto:TPollack@mapc.org)) as the new Transportation Committee Chair. Alison Felix served in this position for many years, we will miss her terribly but wish her luck as she moves on to her next adventure!

We are still always looking for committee volunteers and have a few vacancies on the Board of Directors. Please also send your ideas and suggestions. I'd love to hear from you: [alison.leflore@stantec.com](mailto:alison.leflore@stantec.com).

Alison

Alison LeFlore, AICP  
[president@apa-ma.org](mailto:president@apa-ma.org)



Movie and Meet-Up Event  
March 2, 2023  
Capitol Theater, Arlington

# Making Communities Friendly for Aging in Place: The Important Role of Planning and Design

by James Fuccione, Patty Sullivan, and Pam MacLeod

An increasing body of research is drawing a direct line between the built environment and mental health. Much of the [same research](#) proves the physical aspects of a community that most people value – mixed-use neighborhoods, greater park space, and public transit access, along with community centers and public spaces in good condition – are all associated with a reduced risk of dementia and cognitive decline.

A state workgroup created a resource to help communities realize these connections while clarifying how we define age- and dementia-friendly design.

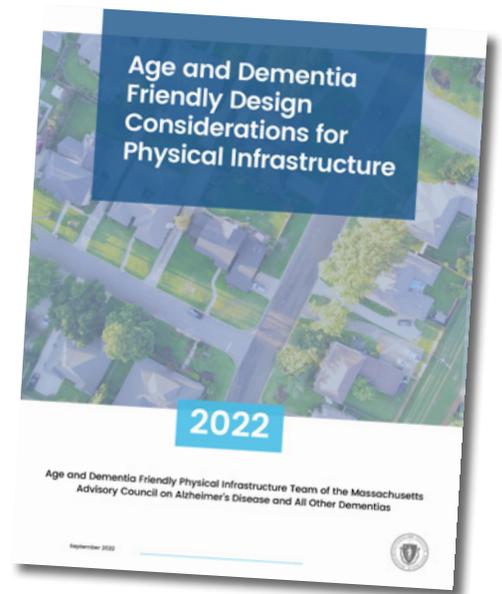
The built environment plays a principal role in impacting the health and wellbeing of older adults of all abilities. Thoughtful and inclusive design of physical spaces not only promotes independence and social connectedness among older adults, but makes all public spaces more enjoyable and accessible to everyone.

The Massachusetts Advisory

Council on Alzheimer’s Disease and All Other Dementias, established in state law in Chapter 220 of the Acts of 2018, included a workgroup on physical infrastructure. Coordinated by the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative and Massachusetts Councils on Aging Association, and stocked with local and regional planners and architects, the workgroup recently released “[Age and Dementia Friendly Design Considerations for Physical Infrastructure.](#)”

Thanks to a movement that promotes inclusive age- and dementia-friendly communities, there is plenty of guidance on age-friendly planning and design. This resource builds on top of that clarity on concepts that support people living with dementia.

According to the National Institute on Aging, “Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning (thinking, remembering, and reasoning) and behavioral abilities to such an extent that it interferes with a person’s daily life and activities.” Although dementia has many causes, Alzheimer’s



disease is the most common cause and the vast majority of people who develop dementia are age 65 or older. Although dementia is not a normal part of aging, there are about 130,000 people in Massachusetts diagnosed with dementia and this number is growing rapidly. For a variety of reasons, dementia often goes underdiagnosed. It is estimated that there are as many people living with undiagnosed dementia as there are individuals living with a dementia diagnosis. More than three-quarters of people living with dementia live at home and can thrive by remaining socially engaged with other community members. In the United States, Alzheimer’s and dementia-related disorders disproportionately impact people of color who are more likely to develop dementia than their white counterparts.

Inclusive Design is age- and dementia-friendly. It builds on Universal Design principles that account for individual needs and address a wide range of capacities and functional needs across the lifespan. In contrast to a one-size fits-all approach, inclusive design goes further by working with individuals to

*continued next page*



consider how the built environment will function for those individuals. For example, age- and dementia-friendly housing can encourage aging in place through accessibility and maintenance of social connections in the community. Age- and dementia-friendly buildings feature barrier-free design and will not require major adaptations to make them usable to people with various levels of functional needs. Age- and dementia friendly public outdoor spaces facilitate safe and enjoyable use of outdoor spaces for people of all ages. Age- and dementia-friendly public transport enables older adults to get around and enhances mobility.

The physical environment plays a critical role in promoting quality of life for people living with dementia by partially compensating for lost abilities. When physical infrastructure includes design elements that are “dementia friendly,” and communities spread dementia awareness among its residents, people living with dementia and their families experience numerous benefits. Those benefits include reduced agitation and distress, improved safety, greater independence, opportunities for social engagement, and an overall improved ability to engage in activities of daily life. Programs that promote dementia awareness

**The built environment plays a principal role in impacting the health and wellbeing of older adults of all abilities. Thoughtful and inclusive design of physical spaces not only promotes independence and social connectedness among older adults, but makes all public spaces more enjoyable and accessible to everyone.**

among community residents, such as those provided as part of Dementia Friendly Massachusetts, are an important complement to age- and dementia-friendly physical infrastructure. This includes the Dementia Friendly MA program that has educated more than 12,000 Dementia Friends across the Commonwealth. For example, the Dementia Friendly Transportation Training program offers drivers the tools to recognize signs of dementia and serve riders whose disabilities might not be immediately apparent. For additional information about Alzheimer’s Disease and other Dementias, contact the Alzheimer’s Association.

Commonly accepted physical traits of age- and dementia friendly

communities focus on design principles that incorporate:

- Inclusive design that considers many aspects of human diversity affecting a person’s ability to use the environment, such as ability, gender, age, and culture.
- Easily recognizable design features that are unambiguous and meet people’s expectations in terms of appearance, size, and usability.
- Design that clearly designates the purpose for which the place is intended, and uses color, contrast, and clear signage to provide clues to orientation and wayfinding.

Autonomy is fundamental to our dignity as we age. We can plan and build communities that promote physical and mental health—and address many of the risk factors for developing dementia—while also creating inclusive communities for people living with dementia and supporting caregivers.

If you have any questions or interest in using the resource, please contact James Fuccione at the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative ([James.Fuccione@mahealthyaging.org](mailto:James.Fuccione@mahealthyaging.org)) and Patty Sullivan from the Massachusetts Councils on Aging and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts. ([patty@mcoaonline.com](mailto:patty@mcoaonline.com)).

### About the authors:

**James Fuccione** is Director of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative (MHAC), a statewide, cross-sector network of communities and stakeholders advancing inclusive age- and dementia friendly communities. Supported by Point32Health Foundation, MHAC works with a range of partners, including local and regional planners, that support a statewide age- and dementia friendly initiative along with more than 200 communities working to become more age- and dementia friendly.



After a 30-year career on Capitol Hill, **Patty Sullivan** now directs the Dementia-Friendly MA (DFM) program at the MA Councils on Aging. The DFM initiative joined with the Age-Friendly community program based at AARP to create more than 200 Age- and Dementia-Friendly communities across the Commonwealth, with many more seeking designation.



For over 30 years, **Pam MacLeod** has been involved in developing state government policies and programs throughout Massachusetts. In her current role at both the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, she is Project Director for the Massachusetts Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Disease and All Other Dementias. Through her role in coordinating the work of the Council’s numerous workgroups, including the Age- and Dementia-Friendly Physical Infrastructure Team, Ms. MacLeod leads the state’s efforts to develop sound government policies, programs, and practices designed to improve the lives of Massachusetts residents living with dementia.

# Mobility Hubs Toolkit

TransitMatters is proud to introduce its Mobility Hubs Toolkit, a handbook for municipalities, non-profits, and other community leaders to bring Mobility Hubs into their neighborhoods.

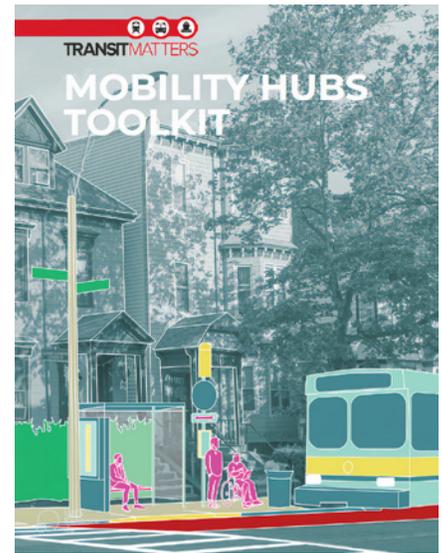
Mobility Hubs are places that connect different modes of transportation and make transfers between them easy and convenient. Whether someone is walking or taking public transit to their final destination, Mobility Hubs offer infrastructure that is accessible and user-friendly, improving the transit experience with elements such as bus shelters and information displays. Mobility Hubs are necessary for a well-functioning transit system; they empower people with information and connections to move around freely.

The Mobility Hubs Toolkit, created by TransitMatters's strong volunteer network, is for folks on the ground. It's educational and

engaging, using accessible writing, broad coverage, and technical basics and considerations. Often, Mobility Hubs documents target planners and technical experts, but TransitMatters wanted to try something different. They chose this ground-up approach because some of the best street interventions are bottom-up, community-informed ones.

Released in January 2023, the Toolkit describes each element of a Mobility Hub, what it does, the benefits they bring, and anything that needs to be considered, such as costs, jurisdiction, and equity considerations. The guide also highlights the benefits of Mobility Hubs through various characters' experiences with new Mobility Hubs in their neighborhoods.

The Toolkit details how to advocate for building great Mobility Hubs in any neighborhood. While TransitMatters is a Massachusetts-based organization, the Toolkit



uses worldwide examples to integrate Mobility Hubs easily anywhere to create people-centric, transit-oriented design throughout our built environment.

Head to the [website](#) (or click on the image above) to download the Mobility Hubs Toolkit, or inquire about a physical copy [here](#). Please email [media@transitmatters.org](mailto:media@transitmatters.org) with additional inquiries.

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*Monarch chrysalis and caterpillar (esri.com) / Monarch butterfly (usgs.gov)*

# Integrating Pollinator Habitats Into Land Development Projects

by Elizabeth Clark, with Regan Andreola and Stacy Minihane / Beals + Thomas

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has placed the monarch butterfly on its Red List of Threatened Species due to sizable population declines observed over the past two decades. Similarly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has determined that this iconic butterfly warrants listing under the Endangered Species Act, but that the agency is currently precluded from doing so due to other higher priority listing actions. Therefore, the butterfly is considered a candidate species whose status will be reviewed each year until a proposal to list it can be developed. Loss of breeding and overwintering habitat, widespread pesticide use, and effects of climate change have contributed to the population decrease of the Monarch Butterfly, estimated at a staggering 20%-90%.

## What can we as designers do?

The addition of this flagship species to the Red List and identifying it as a candidate species by USFWS,



*Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) are a great opportunity to incorporate pollinator habitat. This rain garden at Fay School (Southborough, MA) not only addresses stormwater runoff, but also incorporates native plants to create a pocket of habitat.*

prompted us to reflect on how our designs can be enhanced to incorporate pollinator habitats, while achieving targeted project goals. The USFWS notes that even small actions can build positive momentum for a rebound of Monarch populations and benefit other pollinator species. The Monarch population that resides in the Eastern U.S. overwinters in Mexico, migrating over great distances crossing swaths of unsuitable habitat such as urban and industrial areas, or fields of mono-culture crops. Creating more green space or corridors of green chains provides refuge, food, and breeding grounds for the butterfly. Incorporating pollinator gardens into land development and redevelopment projects can preserve or even create habitat, increasing foraging opportunities and providing stop-over areas along the lengthy migration.

Both the USFWS and IUCN have acknowledged that transportation and utility projects can play an important part in restoring habitat. With a fairly low investment, these projects can create connected swaths of habitat while achieving their overarching service goals. Solar fields, rail trail projects, and park projects, for example, can also incorporate habitat creation as a best practice. Developments of all types and locations are challenged with balancing the project goals, and the needs of site users and the public, with habitat considerations in what is oftentimes a highly programmed environment. However, relatively small efforts can make a big difference to pollinators. For example, in the urban environment rain gardens, detention basin side slopes, as well as dedicated landscaped areas or even seasonal planters present opportunities to create pollinator habitats.

The monarch relies upon milkweed, where it lays eggs and larva feed on until metamorphosis. As adult butterflies, the monarch feeds upon the nectar from a variety of flowering plants throughout the growing season from spring to fall. If conditions are favorable, pollinator gardens should include milkweed and a variety of native flowering plants with different bloom times to support both the breeding and feeding of the butterfly.

*continued on page 7*

## Pollinator Habitats *cont'd*

A thoughtfully designed pollinator garden can provide benefits not only to the Monarch but also various species of native bees which are in decline in Massachusetts.

### Maintenance

It's important to note that the work doesn't end at designing and installing pollinator habitat areas. Approaches to maintenance have a large impact on success. For example, meadows should not be mowed until all the plants, including late-blooming species, go to seed. Additionally, annual mowing should be undertaken in a phased approach, such that the entire habitat area

is never mowed in its entirety in any given year. These methods ensure not only continued seed production, but also reduce impacts on stem-nesting pollinators.

### The Municipal Role

Amendments to municipal zoning, subdivision, site plan review, or special permit regulations could be made to require percentages of open space be dedicated to pollinator habitats, and where appropriate include native milkweed. Municipalities can lead by example by requiring the use of native plantings in their own projects and on municipal land. The City of Somerville has committed to do this with a first of its kind Native Plant Ordinance,

*continued on page 8*

## Translating vision and design to process and action.

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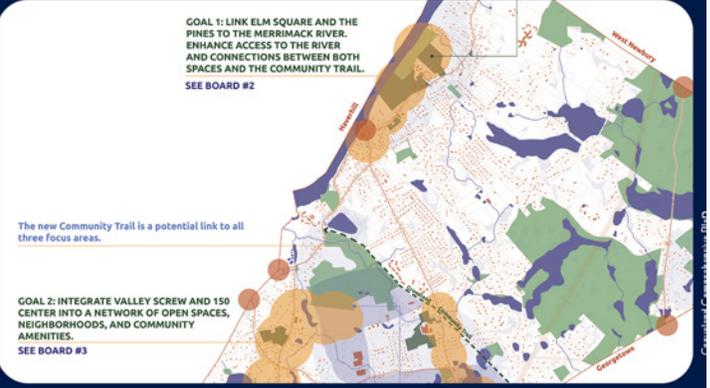
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The new Community Trail is a potential link to all three focus areas.

**GOAL 2: INTEGRATE VALLEY SCREW AND 150 CENTER INTO A NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES. SEE BOARD #3**



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## Pollinator Habitats *cont'd*

and the town of Kingston Conservation Department staff recently developed a seed mix containing plants native to southeastern Massachusetts specifically.

## Other Design Considerations

Reducing impervious area provides many benefits including lessening heat island effects, decreasing volumes of stormwater runoff, increasing natural groundwater recharge, and providing an opportunity for open space preservation and habitat creation. Through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program the Environmental Protection Agency is requiring jurisdictional communities in Massachusetts to evaluate their regulations related to required impervious area to promote efficiency. Normalizing practices such as demand based and/or shared parking, implementing reduced parking ratios, and incorporating sustainability considerations into parking, such as Shrewsbury is currently doing, can contribute to habitat goals.

## Where do we go from here?

Changing the status quo and normalizing the practice of incorporating pollinator habitats into land development projects can start with conversations with development teams. Educating team members and clients about the decline of the species, and outlining opportunities their specific projects may present, is one way designers

can help the Monarch and other pollinators. Enabling the built environment to knit together a series of stopovers, breeding areas, and food for pollinators is one strategy in a suite of efforts that may help this species rebound.

### About the authors:

**Elizabeth A. Clark, PE, ENV SP, SITES AP**, leads the Beals and Thomas Civil Engineering Discipline and specializes in urban redevelopment projects that feature low-impact development, green infrastructure, and stormwater reuse.

As Senior Landscape Architect, **Regan E. Andreola, RLA, LEED AP, SITES AP**, manages the design and permitting of various projects, bringing her expertise in land planning, sustainable site design, and horticulture to the B+T team.

**Stacy H. Minihane, PWS**, leads B+T's Planning and Environmental Services Discipline, and has extensive experience with local, state, and federal land use and environmental permitting processes, wetland science, and environmental research.



Elizabeth Clark



Regan Andreola



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# Sic Transit

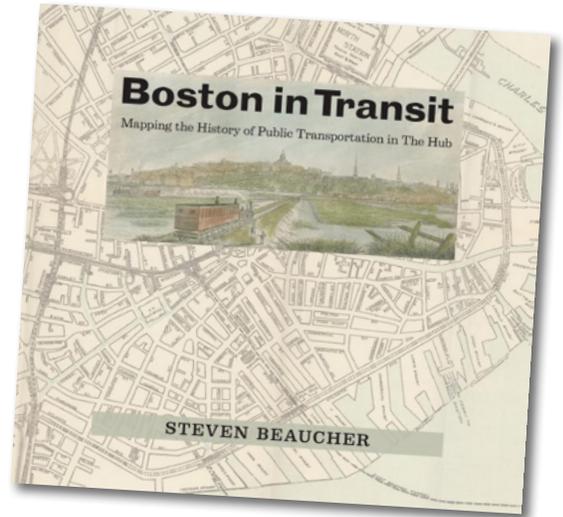
by Mark Favermann

A major focus of the previous Baker Administration was the notion of transit-oriented development (TOD). Now a state-mandated program, this program continues full bore in the Healy-led government as well. The Executive Office of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Community Development continue to offer financial support to design and construct TOD projects. Under very specific guidelines, project grants range from \$50,000 for design to \$500,000 for bike and pedestrian improvements to \$2.0 million for housing and parking projects. However, the laws governing the program mandating local zoning changes are now getting pushback.

The Commonwealth's program is called the Transit Oriented Development Infrastructure and Housing Support Program – TOD

Bond Program, for short. The TOD approach focuses land uses around a transit station or within a designated transit corridor. Typically, it is characterized by a mix of uses, local zoning changes resulting in moderate to high density, a pedestrian orientation with easy connectivity, transportation mode choices, reduced parking, and a preference for implementation of high-quality design. The most successful TOD occurs within one-quarter mile, or a five-to-seven-minute walk, of a transit station.

Successful TODs happen when there are supportive market conditions, a public and private commitment to public transit, political will at the state and local levels to support and encourage transit usage, a responsibility to quality service reflected in frequency, cleanliness,



safety, and reliability, pedestrian and bicycle-enhanced access to transit facilities, and parking policies to discourage the use of private automobiles. Integration of “green policies” need to be part of the design approach and overall implementation.

On paper and in theory, these laws, policies, and programmatic directives seem well and good.

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**Sic Transit** *cont'd*

However, they are based on the notion of a healthy public transit system, a healthy, responsive MBTA. Unfortunately, this is not currently the case. Clearly, when the “T” doesn’t work, Boston doesn’t work. There is a disconnect between the foundation and the proposed structure.

Almost every day we see examples of how our beloved city and region that we left pre-pandemic doesn’t function as it is supposed to. The manic 800-pound gorilla in the room is that Boston – the economic engine of the whole state – cannot really bounce back until the T gets its house in order. When not operating at its highest level, public transportation, or the lack of it, affects everything from how low-wage workers get to work to the health of commercial districts and downtowns to how Boston and Massachusetts are viewed by major companies for future investment and growth.

And left unsaid is that other strategically vital state programs like

**Boston – the economic engine of the whole state – cannot really bounce back until the T gets its house in order.**



MA Office of Travel & Tourism/Flickr

local economic development initiatives and focused local commercial technical assistance have been diminished or even abrogated at the expense and expansiveness of transit-based development. And because TODs are based upon the foundation of a healthy vibrant public transit system, a very shaky even crumbling foundation makes everyone worry.

Already such divergent communities as Middleborough and Brookline are expressing very strong opposition to the legislative mandates regarding density zoning changes. The local resolutions will either be decided by town meetings or prolonged legal actions. Will the results culminate in a brave new world or just a bit of twilight through brooding clouds? With so much emphasis on TODs, there needs to be better balance and perspective, and state legislative and bureaucratic acceptance that one size doesn’t fit all.

Certainly, a major part of the answer is connected to the correcting of the viability and efficacy of our public transportation system, our much maligned, perhaps deserved criticized and seemingly systematically failing MBTA.

Perhaps we can learn from the past? To gain perspective, there is a recently published, rather spectacular history of Boston’s regional

*continued next page*

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## Sic Transit *cont'd*

transportation from which we can learn: *Boston in Transit: Mapping the History of Public Transportation in The Hub* by Steven Beaucher, MIT Press, March 7, 2023, \$70.00.

The remarkably illustrated coffee table book about the 400-year evolution of public transit in and around the City of Boston was published by MIT Press in early March. It shares a wealth of urban transportation planning and design history.

Beginning in 1630, Boston in Transit chronicles a comprehensive visual history of the various modes of transportation that have kept Beantown moving and expanding. Starting with a single ferry between Charlestown and the North End, it vividly describes how transportation became an intrinsic part of Boston's physical character and personality. Ground transportation started in Boston with a private stagecoach operation in 1793. Here horse-drawn coaches begat Omnibus and horse-pulled trams begat electric trolleys

and eventually commuter trains allowed subway suburbs to flower.

Chartered in 1853, the privately owned Cambridge Railroad was the first streetcar company in Massachusetts. It connected Boston's West End to Central Square and Harvard Square in Cambridge. Using horse-drawn streetcars, the Cambridge Railroad started running on March 26, 1856. Opened in 1897, the Boston subway system is the oldest in the United States.

Utilizing wonderful photographs, engineering drawings, brochures, guidebooks, timetables, and even tickets from his own extensive collection of Boston transit ephemera, Mr. Beaucher has created a richly compelling and detailed narrative of the everyday experience of The Hub's public transportation elements, experiments, and systems over the centuries.

Who would have thought that we would look at pre-2020 as a golden era of mass transit in Massachusetts? It was a time when

nearly 1.4 million riders journeyed weekdays on only a rarely disrupted MBTA. Today, we deserve much, much more than we are getting.

Those of us with roots to the city and the state almost always have family stories about how our ancestors and relatives reacted to the local, even parochial urban experience. I resemble this myself. When my paternal grandmother first arrived in Boston in 1904, family legend tells that she wrote a letter to her brothers left back in rural Latvia. She informed them, "Today I went into Hell." What was she referring to? Apparently, she had visited the below ground subway station at Park Street. Some things just don't ever seem to change.

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

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AT THE SPEED OF...

# YES

# Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan Wins Award



As part of its 2023 Professional Awards, the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects has awarded Reed Hildebrand (with offices in New Haven and Cambridge) with an Honor Award for its work on the Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan, an evidence-based, community-driven, and climate-forward response to decades of canopy loss. While tailored to Cambridge, the techniques, tools, and technologies could be applied in all cities.

Reed Hildebrand led a diverse team – from soils scientists and arborists to lawyers and data analysts – in detailed research to understand root causes behind canopy loss, and ultimately, to direct resources wisely. Their findings dispelled myths about the City’s mismanagement of its trees, identifying the varied decisions of private property owners as the primary cause of loss of urban trees.

The consultant team projected forward, exploring the impact of increasing temperature, new pests, droughts, and floods over a 50-year horizon and determining the most threatened species and horticultural conditions. They also modeled the cooling effect of increased canopy, demonstrating its impact as green infrastructure for all.

The consultants presented 50+ strategies ranging from policy initiatives to outreach tools and a five-year plan to deploy the most impactful options first. Envisioning a healthy and equitable urban forest, the plan prioritizes investment in neighborhoods with populations at greatest risk. Because much of the City’s canopy lies on private property, the plan also sought to galvanize residents citywide to become urban forest stewards.

While tailored to Cambridge, the techniques, tools, and technologies used in this community-driven and climate-forward response to decades of canopy loss could be applied in all cities.

The impacts are already being felt – from the planting of hundreds of bare root trees in the last year to an increasingly engaged public. Beyond Cambridge, this notable demonstration project resulted in open-source techniques and procedures that were published as a technical manual for other cities to replicate.

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## NEWS FROM CPM | Consulting Planners' Perspective

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



### Recommit to Downtowns and Town Centers

This month as we begin to embrace spring, downtown and town center advocates, planners, designers, and Main Street managers will be converging on Boston for the Main Street Now, the national Main Street conference. This will be an opportunity to network and learn about how other communities are revitalizing their downtowns and town centers.

Massachusetts has a long record of commitment to downtowns and town centers and innovative programs, starting with initial participation in the National Main Street Center's small town demonstration project with five downtowns, including Taunton and Norwood, in the late 1970s which became the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. Boston Main Streets, now serving 20 urban districts, was the first major city to scale the Main Street program in an urban setting based on the success of Roslindale's participation in the NMSC's urban demonstration program. Downtown Pittsfield was also an early urban site.

During the pandemic, the Commonwealth through the Mass Downtown Initiative launched the now widely praised and recognized Rapid Recovery Program which aided 125 town centers, downtowns, and commercial areas and developed a toolbox

of resources and guides to help communities and downtowns. This work now needs to be sustained and funded.

The adverse impacts of the pandemic on downtowns and town centers still lingers. Some businesses and restaurants have closed after hanging on during the pandemic. Walks through many town centers and downtowns reveal more empty storefronts and higher vacancy rates in communities of all sizes. Nationally, data on major downtowns like Boston and New York predict real estate tax shortfalls from downtowns, attributable in large part to increased office and storefront vacancies. Boston's downtown office vacancy rate is now 18%. Office leasing has slowed substantially and 50% fewer office leases were signed nationally in 2022. Downtowns and town centers often generate the most real estate taxes per acre in most communities. High vacancy rates lead to lower local tax revenues.

As planners, we need to work to support our local town centers and downtowns by enabling new uses, enhancing both market-rate and affordable housing and density in and around town centers, continuing outdoor dining, strengthening walkability and multi-modal access, and supporting

new entrepreneurs and existing businesses, including the many woman- and BIPOC-owned businesses that are often found downtown and in town centers.

In this rising interest rate environment, state officials need to expand lower interest rate initiatives for housing and mixed-use development in downtowns and town centers, to facilitate not only housing but upgrades of commercial spaces and new uses. Cities and towns need to play a role with using the Economic Development Incentive Program, TIF, DIF, business improvement districts, and other initiatives to foster new investment and retain existing businesses in downtowns and town centers.

As the Main Street Now conference convenes in Massachusetts, let us all take the time to recommit to downtowns and town centers. Learn what other communities are doing. Spend some time and money in your downtown/town center this week and next. Remind your legislator, Mayor, and Select Board that downtown and town centers need support politically, legislatively, and financially. And work to advance planning initiatives that support downtowns and town centers.

### 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 periodical emailing to consulting planners. If you have an RFQ or RFP, please send it to: [anne.mckinnin@jacobs.com](mailto:anne.mckinnin@jacobs.com).

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## Save the Date: Public Access to Green Spaces Thursday, May 25th, Noon, Virtual

Many open space and master plans include lofty goals to increase or improve access to green spaces. But how do we achieve this as planners? What are the best approaches and methods? What data do we need to use or collect to measure access? What constitutes good, high-quality access?

As part of the Consulting Planners of Massachusetts speaker series, CPM has invited two Dutch researchers from Delft University of Technology – **Roos Teeuwan** and **Vasileios Milias** – to share their findings on access and use of urban green spaces and participate in an interactive virtual workshop on how do we provide universal safe, inclusive and accessible access to green and public spaces, an international goal for 2030.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable has established a specific target of providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities by 2030.

Teeuwan focuses studying urban greenspaces in a human-centered manner, with the overarching aim to inform design of healthier urban environments. She has explored how best to link quality spatial design with data as to perceptions and experiences of users to enhance well-being. Milias' work tackles the question of "easy access" – the seemingly simple to use term that is complex to define and measure. He is interested in developing methods and tools to inform the design of sustainable, equitable and healthy living environments.

Visit the CPM website, [consultingplanners.org](http://consultingplanners.org), to register.



Roos Teeuwan



Vasileios Milias

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## The PDO Corner

Anyone interested in taking the May 2023 AICP exam should note that the registration window opens April 3 and closes April 27 (the transfer deadline is May 25). The exam window is May 1-26. And once you have passed the exam, you can complete the Planning Experience Assessment and submit the information between June 5 and June 29. For more information, see [www.planning.org/certification](http://www.planning.org/certification).

The MA-APA AICP Exam Prep class continues in April (email [ralph.willmer@gmail.com](mailto:ralph.willmer@gmail.com) for more information). Upcoming Zoom sessions include:

**Tuesday, April 11, 2023 (6-9 p.m.)**

- Planning Law – **Gregor McGregor, Esq.**

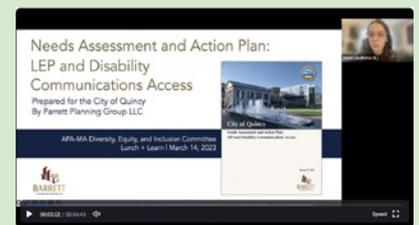
**Tuesday, April 25, 2023 (6-9 p.m.)**

- Public Participation, Advocacy Planning & Economic Development – **Judi Barrett**
- Recent Exam Takers Panel – **Lauren Lind, AICP and others**
- Exam Review – **Ralph Willmer, FAICP**

– *APA-MA PDO Ralph Willmer, FAICP, is the Technical Assistance Program Manager and Principal Planner at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.*

### APA-MA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Lunch & Learn

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our “Lunch N’ Learn” on February 21, 2023. **Alexis Lanzillotta** of the **Barrett Planning Group** presented the firm’s recently completed **Needs Assessment and Action Plan for LEP and Disability Communications Access for the City of Quincy, MA**. She discussed the strengths and limitations often experienced by organizations trying to improve their meaningful access to communications, and highlighted lessons learned and best practices. The Plan’s recommendations will enable the City to advance social justice, inclusion, and fairness for those with Limited English Proficiency and those with mobility, cognition, independent living, hearing, vision, and self-care disabilities. If you missed the presentation click the [video](#) here to watch the recording.




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