



## Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

### Reminder: NMCOG is Moving!

As of December 1, 2023, NMCOG offices will be at **Wannalancit Mills**, 672 Suffolk Street, in Lowell. Watch for an invitation to our housewarming celebration in January of 2024!



The new home of Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

### Events and Opportunities

#### Fall Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Schedule Announced *NMCOG sponsoring workshop in December*

The Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) has released its fall workshop series, with trainings scheduled for topics ranging from overlay zoning to fair housing laws. All workshops are held remotely via Zoom, and are designed for elected and volunteer board members, local planners, and community organizations. Registration fees are \$35 and payable upon registration or via mail.

1. **Zoning with Overlay Districts:** Saturday, November 18, 2023, 9:00 AM
2. **Special Permits & Variances:** Monday, November 27, 2023, 5:30 PM
3. **Creating Master Plans:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023, 5:30 PM
4. **Roles & Responsibilities of PB & ZBA Boards:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 5:30 PM
5. **Planning with Community Support:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 5:30 PM
6. **Writing Reasonable & Defensible Decisions:** Thursday, December 14, 2023, 5:30 PM
7. **Site Plan Review:** Monday, December 18, 2023, 6:00 PM
8. **Planning with Community Support:** Thursday, January 4, 2024, 6:00 PM
9. **Adopting & Revising Rules & Regs of Boards:** Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 6:00 PM
10. **Fair Housing Laws:** Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 6:00 PM

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## 12/8 MA Select Board Association Leadership Conference

*Housing and Livable Communities Secretary providing keynote;  
NMCOG leading a grants workshop*

On Thursday, December 8, the Massachusetts Select Board Association will host its annual Leadership Conference in Stowe, MA. The conference will begin with an MMA legislative update, followed by a workshop on seeking and administering grants, led by NMCOG Executive Director Jennifer Raitt and Hudson Planning and Community Development Director Kristina Johnson. Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus will be the keynote speaker, and two additional workshops on public engagement and property tax programs for low-income homeowners will follow.

Learn more about the program and find registration information on the [Mass Municipal Association website](#)

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## Get involved in the Metro Boston Regional Climate Action Plan Newsletter

NMCOG is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) and five other regional planning agencies in the Boston Metropolitan Statistical Area to develop a region-wide Climate Action Plan under the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. The project will result in:

- A region-wide greenhouse gas inventory and emission reduction scenarios;
- A Priority Climate Action Plan with a focus on energy systems, buildings, and transportation (by March 1, 2024); and
- A Comprehensive Climate Action Plan across all sectors (by August 2025).

To learn more and get involved, visit the [Metro Boston Climate Action Plan website](#), and [sign up for the project newsletter](#) to get news and updates about the planning process.

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## MassTrails Grant Application Period Now Open!

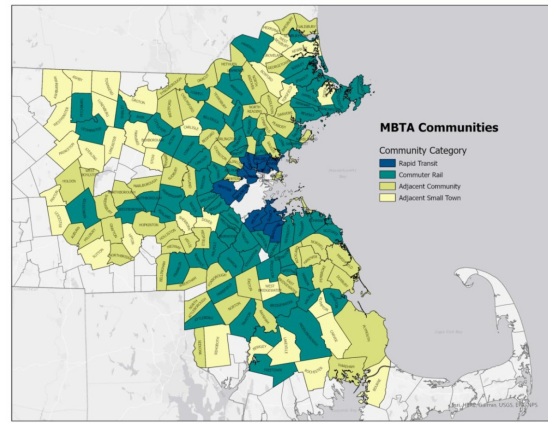
The MassTrails program provides grants to support recreational trail and shared-use pathway projects across the Commonwealth. Awards range from grants for project development and design through permitting, construction, and maintenance, and are funded through the state's annual Capital Investment Plan and the US DOT Federal Highway Administration. Applications are due February 1, 2024. Learn more, watch the MassTrails Grant Application Webinar, and apply for funding at [mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants](https://mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants).

### NMCOG News

#### NMCOG Communities Take Action Toward MBTA Communities Compliance

Seven communities in the Greater Lowell region

are required to comply with MGL Ch. 40A, Section 3A, otherwise known as “MBTA Communities Law”, by creating one or more zoning districts where multifamily housing will be allowed by right. NMCOG is providing a range of technical assistance in this work, ranging from developing and testing compliance models to assisting with community outreach and drafting zoning language.



- Billerica: following an October open house, the Town is working with NMCOG and the Planning Board to draft zoning bylaw language and select final districts. [Learn more.](#)
- Chelmsford: The Planning Board has selected two districts; Town staff and NMCOG are finalizing zoning bylaw language and submitting for state review by the end of November. [Learn more.](#)
- Dracut: NMCOG will be assisting the Community Development Department in an in-depth outreach and engagement process, beginning with a joint meeting of the Select Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Bylaw Review Committee in December. [Learn more.](#)
- Lowell: The City Council voted to approve Lowell’s Multi-Family Overlay – High Rise (MFOH), Multi-Family Overlay – Mid-Rise (MFOM), and Multi-Family Overlay—Neighborhood (MFON) districts on October 25, 2023, which will next be reviewed by the state for compliance. [View the ordinance.](#)
- Tewksbury: After a series of public meetings, surveys, and community outreach, the Town has selected final districts and is drafting the zoning for Select Board review prior to submission for state review later this month. NMCOG has provided technical assistance with the Town’s compliance model. [Learn more.](#)
- Tyngsborough: NMCOG is supporting Town staff in working with the Zoning Review Committee to finalize scenarios, lead public meetings, and finalize draft zoning language before it is submitted to the state for review this December. [Learn more.](#)
- Westford: Town staff, with the Town's MBTA Communities Multi-family Housing Advisory Committee, have lead a planning and engagement process throughout the summer and fall to select districts and create zoning. NMCOG has provided technical assistance with the Town’s compliance model. [Learn more.](#)

With the exception of Lowell, which has already approved MBTA Communities zoning, the communities above are working to bring zoning amendments to their respective Town Meetings next spring or fall. More information about MBTA Communities can be found at [mass.gov/mbtacomunities](https://mass.gov/mbtacomunities).

## Employment Opportunities at NMCOG

Come join our talented team!

Full job descriptions for our open positions are available on our website.

## Sustainability Planner I or II

Visit our  
Website



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