



Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

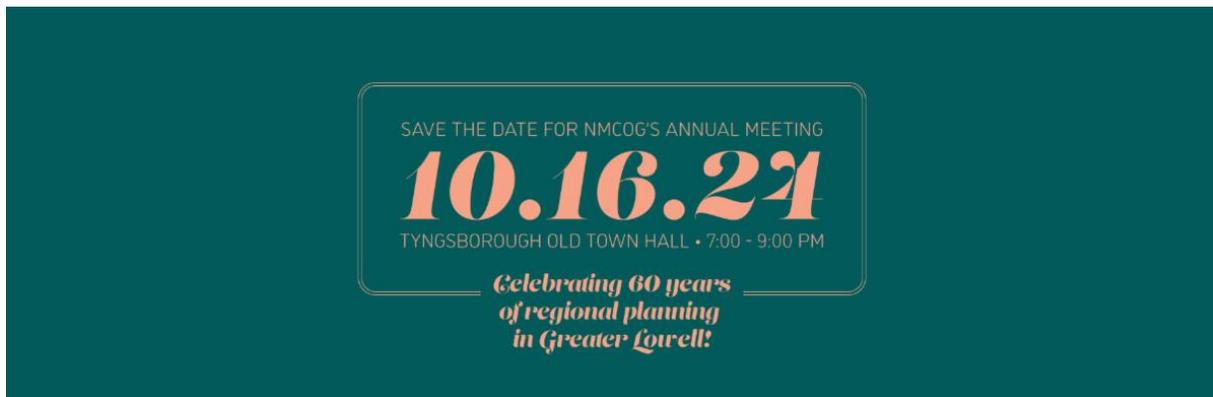
Events and Opportunities

RSVP Deadline Fast Approaching!

Register Today to Celebrate 60 Years of NMCOG!

This week is your last chance to register for the NMCOG Annual Meeting, where we'll be celebrating more than 60 years of regional planning in the region. The meeting is open to all next week on **October 16 from 7:00 – 9:00pm** at Old Town Hall, 10 Kendall Road, Tyngsborough. The event will include a panel of state and regional leaders discussing the importance and impact of economic development, workforce, and housing across the Greater Lowell region, and how current and upcoming will impact NMCOG's next Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is kicking off this fall. Visit nmcog.org/calendar for more information.

Please RSVP to NMCOGAdmin@nmcog.org by Friday, October 11.



MA EJ Flood Vulnerability Survey Deadline Extended to October 18

Calling all municipal staff and community partners who live and/or work in state-designated Environmental Justice (EJ) communities: your participation in the Massachusetts Flood Vulnerability Assessment is crucial to ensuring that the voices of those most impacted by flooding are heard, and that effective, equitable solutions are developed. To gather valuable information from your community, [please complete this brief survey before it closes on October 18](#).

Save the Date: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Workshop, October 22

NMCOG and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) are hosting an Electric Vehicle Workshop via Zoom on **October 22 from 10:00 to 11:00am**. This workshop will foster a regional dialogue on communities' shared experiences in advancing electric vehicle initiatives and offer first steps for those looking to get started.

The initiative, funded by the MA Department of Energy Resources, provides technical assistance to agencies involved in the Green Communities Program, advancing clean energy

projects in under-resourced municipalities.

To gather input in advance and facilitate meaningful discussion, please take our pre-meeting survey. Your responses will help us tailor the resources and guidance to the specific needs of our regions. [Click here to take the survey](#), which closes on **Monday, October 14 at 5:00pm**.

We look forward to hosting this workshop and supporting communities as they move towards electrifying their region. Contact Meghan Tenhoff, Sustainability Planner II, mtenhoff@nmcog.org for questions and to RSVP.

CHAPA to Hold Annual Regional Housing Meeting on October 23 *Event includes options for virtual or in-person participation*

NMCOG is co-sponsoring the Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) Annual Regional Housing Meeting on **October 23 from 10:00am to 12:00pm**, where they will discuss our shared housing challenges and policy opportunities for a better future for all regions of the Commonwealth.

The meeting will kick off together before breaking into regional focus groups to share and learn about each region's unique challenges and opportunities. At the end of the meeting, participants will reconvene for a larger discussion and feedback on CHAPA's policy goals and priorities.

[Click here to register!](#) Attendees should only register for one session. Seats for the in person sessions are limited.

Sessions:

- Berkshires
- Cape & Islands
- Greater Boston (virtual)
- Greater Boston (in person @ MetroHousing|Boston)
- MetroWest
- North Shore/Merrimack Valley
- South Shore
- Western MA (virtual)
- Western MA (in person @ Way Finders)
- Worcester/Central MA

If you have any questions about this event or require interpretation services or other accommodations for this meeting, please contact Whitney Demetrius at wdemetrius@chapa.org.

Upcoming Webinar for Residential Retrofit Program

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is seeking operators of public and affordable housing properties in Massachusetts to participate in the Residential Retrofit Program.

Early this year, MBI launched the [Residential Retrofit Program](#), allowing eligible public and affordable housing properties to improve broadband infrastructure, enabling residents to engage in essential daily activities such as working remotely, pursuing educational opportunities and accessing healthcare from home.

On **October 23 at 1:00pm**, MBI will host an informational webinar for housing operators interested in participating in the Residential Retrofit Program. This webinar will cover an overview of the program, who is eligible to participate, program goals and more. [Click here to register for the webinar](#).



At Home in Greater Lowell

a housing strategy for the greater lowell region

Register Today for Ideas to Action: *At Home in Greater Lowell* Fall Housing Summit

On **November 7**, NMCOG will host “Ideas to Action,” the fall summit for *At Home in Greater Lowell*, featuring Ed Augustus, Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities as keynote speaker. Experts from the Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation will discuss municipal financial impacts of housing production, and community engagement specialists from CHAPA will speak about fair housing and engagement. This third summit will include the results of the year-long process to create a housing strategy for the Greater Lowell region and a discussion about working together on the next steps.

[Register today!](#) Networking at 5:30 pm, program begins at 6:00 pm. Additional event details will be posted to the [NMCOG event calendar](#) and shared via the [At Home in Greater Lowell mailing list](#).

This project is led by NMCOG and funded by a MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Assistance Grant, the District Local Technical Assistance Program, and the Greater Lowell Community Foundation.

Grant Opportunities & Resources

Application Window Open for Community Transit Grant Program

Transit authorities, municipalities, Councils on Aging, non-profit organizations, and private operators of public transit (shared-ride) services are invited to apply for funding through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Community Transit Grant Program for an operating or mobility management project to expand mobility. The Community Transit Grant Program is an annual, competitive grant program to expand mobility for older adults and people with disabilities. Eligible activities include operating transportation services, support for mobility management initiatives, or purchasing wheelchair-accessible vehicles. The FY25 Operating and Mobility Management cycle opened September 16, with **applications due on November 1**. [Learn more and apply](#).

Plans and Resources

Protect Homeownership: Adopt HUD's Two-Foot Freeboard Rule to Keep Communities Safe

HUD recently implemented an important update to its Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS), which directly impacts communities across the country. One of the key components of this new rule is a two-foot freeboard requirement for new construction in Special Flood Hazard Areas and insured under FHA single family mortgage insurance programs. If a community does not have a similar two-foot freeboard requirement in its floodplain regulations, it risks severely limiting homeownership opportunities, as homebuyers may no longer be able to access HUD-financed homes in these areas.

[Learn more about how this rule affects your community and what you can do to ensure compliance.](#)

Six Greater Lowell Communities Secure Transportation Safety Grants

On September 25 the Healey-Driscoll Administration allocated over \$12.4 million in federal traffic safety funds to enhance road safety throughout Massachusetts. This funding, provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and administered by the Office of Grants and Research (OGR), supports three key programs: the Municipal Road Safety Grant Program, the State Agency Traffic Safety Grant Program, and the newly launched Underserved Communities Traffic Safety Grant Program.

Congratulations to the following NMCOG member communities for securing funding: Billerica (\$59,580), Chelmsford (\$26,651), Lowell (\$60,000), Tewksbury (\$39,447), Tyngsborough (\$24,803), and Westford (\$18,656). These grants aim to improve road conditions, address community-specific safety needs, and promote safer transportation for all residents across the state. [Click here to read the full press release.](#)

Chelmsford Community Gathers at Planning Social to Co-create Chelmsford's Future

The Chelmsford Planning Social event on September 18 was a huge success, bringing together diverse community members to engage with planners and discuss the future of Chelmsford. Attendees enjoyed an ice cream social, participated in table discussions about key planning initiatives, and provided valuable feedback on topics like the Strategic Plan and Open Space & Recreation Plan. Children were also able to get involved with fun activities like rock painting, making the event a family-friendly opportunity for everyone to contribute to Chelmsford's future.

NMCOG Communities Advance in MBTA Communities Compliance *New MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund to support housing and infrastructure in compliant communities*

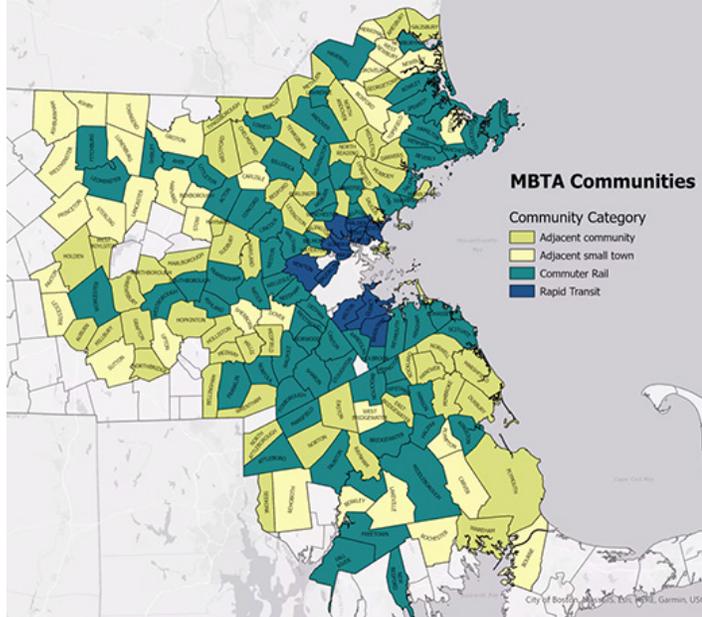
Three NMCOG communities—Lowell, Tyngsborough, and Westford—have recently received formal approval from the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) for their MBTA Communities zoning districts. This important milestone ensures these towns comply with state guidelines aimed at increasing housing near transit and encouraging sustainable, transit-oriented growth. By aligning with these goals, these three towns are helping to address regional housing shortages and improve access to transit, making it easier for residents to live and work within the region. These communities now have access to the new MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund, which provides financial support ranging from \$250,000 to \$1 million to compliant communities for housing and infrastructure projects.

Additionally, Dracut and Billerica are advancing zoning amendments at their upcoming Town Meetings this fall to comply with the MBTA Communities law. These efforts further regional progress toward more accessible, transit-focused development that promotes walkable neighborhoods and reduces car dependency. NMCOG remains committed to supporting all its communities in meeting state requirements, promoting sustainable growth, and enhancing the livability of the region.

As of October 7, 74 Massachusetts communities have approved MBTA Communities zoning and have either received or are awaiting EOHLC approval. Chelmsford Town Meeting has approved MBTA Communities zoning and planning to submit for EOHLC review this fall, along

with 19 other communities. To view the status, deadlines, and requirements of MBTA Communities law, visit mass.gov/mbtacomunities.

[Click here to learn more about the MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund.](#)



NMCOG Leads Outreach to Chelmsford High School Students on Open Space and Recreation Plan

On October 3, the Town of Chelmsford and NMCOG staff visited with Chelmsford High School students in the Career Center to share pizza, planning career information, and discuss the Town's Open Space and Recreation (OSRP) planning process. Students shared ideas and innovative ways the OSRP could better serve the town's youth and future generations.

Chelmsford Community Development Director, Evan Belansky and Planning Board member Paul McDougall joined NMCOG staff, Sustainability Planner II Meghan Tenhoff, Senior Planner, Housing & Land Use Michael Asciola, and Transportation Mobility Specialist Jessica Boulanger to meet with 16 student members of the Asian Student Organization (ASO), Black Student Union (BSU), Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA), and South Asian Student Association (SASA) for an hour and a half long event. The event also included a "trainer the trainer" model of facilitation to build student capacity and skills in meeting facilitation.

Work with Us!

NMCOG is Hiring!

Come work with us! We are seeking to fill the positions of Senior Sealer of Weights and Measures (40 hours per week) and Sealer of Weights and Measures (24-32 hours per week). Learn more and apply at nmcog.org/employment.

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments | 672 Suffolk Street Suite 100 | Lowell, MA 01854 US

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