



Monthly News  
March 2025 Edition

## Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

### Welcoming New NMCOG Staff

#### Michelle Zelenka, Regional Energy Manager

Michelle joined our team in February serving as Regional Energy Manager and serving the towns of Dunstable, Littleton, Pepperell, and Townsend. She will be working on a range of local and regional projects, including energy reduction and efficiency planning, capital planning, and climate resiliency planning. She holds a bachelor's in history from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas and a Masters in Applied Geography in Resource and Environmental Studies from Texas State University. Her research primarily focused on the Environmental Justice Movement in Austin, and she hopes to utilize this knowledge in her role at NMCOG to assist in creating equitable energy outcomes for all communities. Prior to joining NMCOG, she worked as a Research Associate, providing quantitative and qualitative research assessing energy efficiency programs throughout the Northeast. She also has prior experience working as an environmental and sustainability intern for the City of San Marcos, TX and the Comal County Engineer's Office. She is also a certified HERS rater and has experience performing energy audits in residential buildings. In her free time, she enjoys practicing film photography, reading, and hiking around the Boston area.

### News

#### Healey-Driscoll Administration Releases State's First Ever Comprehensive Housing Plan and Strategies to Unlock Housing Production

In February, the Commonwealth released two critical planning documents designed to address the state's housing shortage:

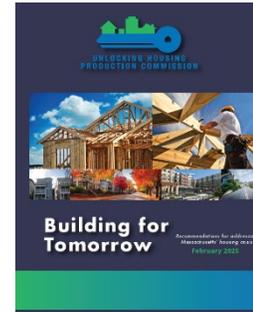


“A Home for Everyone: A Comprehensive Housing Plan for Massachusetts”, Massachusetts’ first comprehensive statewide housing plan, is a plan to increase housing production, meet the unique needs of communities and lower costs across the state.

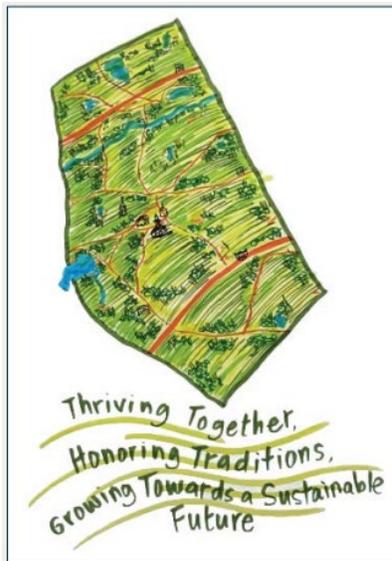
[Read the press release.](#)

[Build for Tomorrow](#), developed by the State's Unlocking Housing Production Commission, provides over 50 recommendations to increase the supply of housing and lower costs for Massachusetts residents. [Read the press release](#)

Both documents closely relate to the goals and strategies described in the [At Home in Greater Lowell](#), the housing strategy for the NMCOG region.



## Events and Opportunities



### Westford Adopts Strategic Plan

Congratulations to the Town of Westford for creating and adopting their first Strategic Plan to chart the future of the Town. NMCOG helped the Town of Westford develop the *Commitment to Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action* strategic outcome area section. Staff designed and facilitated two workshops in partnership with and for Town leaders to consider, prioritize, and determine how to measure progress and implement climate resiliency actions. The full plan was prepared by Raftelis. [Check it out.](#)



**GREATER LOWELL  
STRONGER TOGETHER**  
2025-2030 COMPREHENSIVE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## Register Today for the Greater Lowell Stronger Together Economic Summit

Registration is open for the **Greater Lowell Economic Summit!** We invite all who live, work, or are a stakeholder in the NMCOG region to join and learn about opportunities, share priorities, and network with peers across the region.

**Date:** Thursday, March 20

**Time:** Choose one or more sessions taking place from 8 AM – 7 PM

**Place:** UKG at Crosspoint Towers (900 Chelmsford St, Lowell)

**Register:** [nmcog.org/summit](https://nmcog.org/summit).

The summit consists of three two-hour sessions on critical topics, a networking lunch, an outdoor walking tour, and a "happy hour" discussion on regional collaboration. Attend as few or as many sessions as you'd like—each one is self-contained. Registrants will receive full meeting details, including parking, accessibility, and information we've learned about each of the topics. [Register today!](#)

This discussion will guide strategy formation for **Greater Lowell Stronger Together, the 2025-2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**. More information can be found at [nmcog.org/ced](https://nmcog.org/ced). The Greater Lowell 2025-2030 CEDS is facilitated by the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) and funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and other local and state sources. [Fourth Economy Consulting](#) is assisting with this plan.

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## Attend the Greater Boston Climate Action Plan Workshop

Help shape the Greater Boston Climate Action Plan at an interactive workshop on Thursday, March 27 at Dunstable Town Hall. Your input will guide regional policies on clean energy, sustainable agriculture, transit, and more. Join us to make an impact on your community's future! \_



**Date:** Thursday, March 27

**Time:** 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

**Location:** Dunstable Town Hall

**RSVP:** [Register here](#)

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## Northern Massachusetts Brownfields Roundable Announced

*Join planners, developers, engineers, and others on May 20 to discuss redevelopment opportunities*

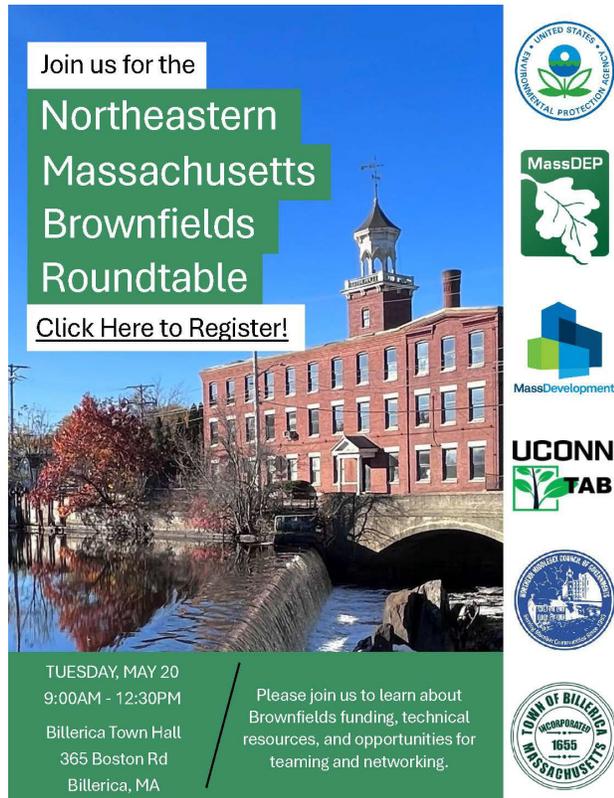
NMCOG is partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to host the Northern Massachusetts Brownfields Roundtable on Tuesday May 20, 2025, from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM at the Billerica Town Hall, 365 Boston Road in Billerica. This is a great learning and networking opportunity for municipal staff including city/ town managers, economic development and planning staff, elected officials, and lenders, financiers, designers, engineers, developers, and environmental consultants to hear about funding and technical resources to address brownfields.

**Date:** Tuesday, May 20

**Time:** 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

**Location:** Billerica Town Hall, 365 Boston Road, Billerica

**RSVP:** [Click here to register today!](#)



Join us for the  
**Northeastern  
Massachusetts  
Brownfields  
Roundtable**

[Click Here to Register!](#)

TUESDAY, MAY 20  
9:00AM - 12:30PM  
Billerica Town Hall  
365 Boston Rd  
Billerica, MA

Please join us to learn about Brownfields funding, technical resources, and opportunities for teaming and networking.

Logos on the right: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, MassDEP, MassDevelopment, UCONN TAB, and Town of Billerica Massachusetts.

## Massachusetts Housing Partnership Virtual Training Series: Strengthening local boards to support affordable housing

What roles do municipalities; state agencies and developers play in supporting affordable housing? What are the roles and responsibilities of local boards and commissions that influence housing development? How can public engagement support affordable housing



development and preservation? Sponsored in part by the Eastern Bank Foundation, MHP's new virtual series will train key local boards that touch the housing development process and people engaged, or interested in becoming engaged, in supporting affordable housing.

register and learn more about the three modules [here](#).

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## **NMCOG Kicks Off Greater Lowell Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with Toole Design**

*Apply to serve on the Advisory Committee!*

NMCOG's transportation team internally kicked off the Greater Lowell Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in late February with project consultant, Toole Design Group. This initiative is focused on enhancing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, improving safety, and creating a more connected active transportation network across the nine municipalities comprising Greater Lowell.

Sign up for the plan's email distribution list to stay in the loop on upcoming events. Additionally, NMCOG is currently seeking community members who live, work, or commute through Greater Lowell to serve on the Advisory Committee for the plan. The committee will meet six times between April, 2025 and February 2026, and members will serve as first reviewers on plan deliverables, advise community engagement activities, and help develop the plan's vision for a regional cycling and pedestrian network.

[Visit the project page to sign up to stay informed about upcoming events, news, and volunteering opportunities, and apply to be an Advisory Committee member!](#)

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Community One Stop for Growth Portal**

The Community One Stop for Growth is now open through March 26 through this [application portal](#). One Stop provides a streamlined process for municipalities and organizations to apply for 12 State economic development grant programs for housing and economic development projects related to community activation and placemaking, planning and zoning, site preparation, building construction, and infrastructure.

Applicants can submit an optional Expression of Interest and receive guidance on priority projects from the State before submitting a full application. The MA Executive Office of Economic Development will accept full application submissions from May 5 through June 4. Awards will be announced this fall.

Learn more at [www.mass.gov/onestop](http://www.mass.gov/onestop).

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## Community Compact Municipal Fiber Grant Program

The [Municipal Fiber Grant Program](#) is a competitive, matching grant program to assist municipalities with the construction of municipal fiber broadband infrastructure and related projects and expenditures. The application period is open now through April 10 at 12:00 PM. [Learn more and apply!](#)

## Learn More about NMCOG and our Communities: Attend a Board or Council Meeting!

### NMCOG Council Meeting

The NMCOG Council meets the third Wednesday of each month via Zoom and in person at NMCOG's offices.

Date: March 19, 2025

Time: 7:00pm

Location: online via Zoom or in person at 672 Suffolk Street, Lowell, MA 01854

[View meeting details.](#)

### NMMPO Meeting

The Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO) meets the fourth Wednesday of each month via Zoom and in person at NMCOG's office.

Date: March 26, 2025

Time: 2:00pm

Location: online via Zoom or in person at 672 Suffolk Street, Lowell, MA 01854

[View meeting details.](#)

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

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