

REPORT OF THE OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL

To the Honorable members of the Board of Selectmen and the residents of the Town of Halifax.

As your representative to the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), I am pleased to present this report on behalf of the Council for 2021.

The Old Colony Planning Council was established in 1967 by state statute and is authorized to prepare plans for the physical, social, and economic development of the seventeen-member district. OCPC is designated as; an Economic Development District by the U.S. Department of Commerce for the coordination of regional economic development activities, and the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs to plan, manage and coordinate elder services in a twenty-three-community service area. OCPC is the designated staff of the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization (OCMPO) to plan and program transportation and transit improvements for the region.

In addition to the above-designated responsibilities, the Council also assists its member municipalities with technical planning, grant application preparation and current local and regional socioeconomic information.

Our Mission

At Old Colony Planning Council, we assist cities and towns in planning for present and future needs, utilizing our local knowledge, technical expertise, and regional collaboration.

Our Vision

Our vision is that communities in the Old Colony region are:

- **Resilient**, using social, economic, and environmental resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations brought about by natural disasters or economic downturns.
- **Sustainable**, the needs of all people and the natural environment are met now without compromising the ability to meet those needs in the future.
- **Equitable**, social, economic, and environmental opportunities exist for all.
- **Connected**, everyone has accessible, affordable, and sustainable mobility choices.
- **Responsive**, planning efforts are inclusive and reflect the diverse needs of all.
- **Collaborative**, cooperating regionally to tackle common challenges.

Our Organizational Values

PLANNING FOR ALL

We strive to be fair, impartial, inclusive, and transparent in all we do. Celebrating diversity, we prioritize engaging those who may be underrepresented in planning efforts. We aim for authentic, empowered public participation.

THINKING AHEAD

We look to the future as we help address challenges and seize opportunities across the region. Whether it is a time-tested solution or innovative new approach, communities rely on our technical expertise and local knowledge to help develop solutions.

PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITIES

We highly value our partnership with the communities in our region. We are responsive to their needs and seek to facilitate regional cooperation and collaboration on shared issues within our region and with our neighboring regions.

SERVING WITH DEDICATION

We are passionate about the work we do in service to our communities, and we strive for excellence as we do it. We are motivated to help our region excel socially, economically, and environmentally.

OCPC Area on Agency Department Contributions:

The Old Colony Area Agency on Aging (AAA) during the past year, with assistance and guidance from member community advisory committee members, has continued the ongoing administration of Federal and State funding for elder services through the Older Americans Act. In federal fiscal year 2021 the total amount of that funding increased from \$1.5 to over \$2 million mainly due to supplemental funding through the federal CARES Act. OCPC's Area Agency on Aging collaborated with community partners such as Old Colony Elder Services, South Coastal Counties Legal Services, local Councils on Aging, and other private non-profit organizations to fund programs and services for among others: Nutrition, Legal Assistance, Transportation, and Family Caregiving for more than 100,000 people aged 60 and over in the region. Also in 2021, the AAA completed a Regional Elder Needs Assessment and a four-year Area Plan on Aging, to plan for federal fiscal years 2022 to 2025. Both the Regional Elder Needs Assessment and the Area Plan on Aging may be found at: <http://www.ocpcrpa.org/aaa.html>.

In Ombudsman news, the OCPC-AAA Ombudsman program is proud to have been selected as one of the 3 host agencies for the expansion of the State Assisted Living Residences (ALR) Ombudsman Program in 2021. The ALR Program Director started providing visitation to all the Assisted Living Residences in our 23 communities as well as 30 other communities which include the Cape and the Islands, as well as the Bristol, Coastline, and Hessco catchment area in September 2021. There are 64 Assisted Living Residences in this broader ALR catchment area.

The OCPC-AAA Long Term Care Ombudsman Program continued to provide services during COVID-19 despite the restrictions placed on visitations to our area nursing/rest and transitional care homes, which sidelined almost-all our Ombudsman volunteers beginning in March 2020. Although visitation resumed in person April 2021, there were numerous stops to these visits as COVID continued to enter and re-enter the homes. The program reports an increase in visitation from 2020 but the program has still not returned to meet its requirement of a visit at least every other week and in 'normal' times weekly visits. However, the calls received from family, friends, residents, and staff during the year continues to be considerably-up from previous years. Due to the acute situation in all our facilities this was often the sole means of communication that the State would allow, and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program took advantage of these calls to continue efforts investigating issues of concern from residents or families.

OCPC Transportation Department Contributions:

The Transportation Department prepared the **FFY 2022 Old Colony Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**. The UPWP is a one-year budget and planning document that lists the research projects, funds technical assistance, and other activities the transportation staff will undertake over the next federal fiscal year (FFY). These projects provide insight and recommendations to our

municipal and regional partners, generate new data, and help shape concepts for the region's transportation future.

The department prepared the following technical assistance study:

- Route 106 Left Turn Lane and Passing Zone Technical Assistance which was conducted in response to a request for technical assistance, staff provided information with regard to the assessing passing zones and the warrants for left turn lanes on Route 106.

A parking utilization counts during April and October were conducted at the MBTA Commuter Rail - Halifax Station. These utilization counts inform the transportation planning process and assist in the determination of travel demand.

Additionally, the **Active Transportation Study (regionwide)** was developed. This study provides an analysis of the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network within a connectivity and safety context. The Active Transportation Study seeks to understand how the Old Colony region can improve the bicycle and pedestrian network to increase its utility for recreational and transportation purposes.

Lastly, the department prepared the **Climate Change Transportation Vulnerability Assessment Project (regionwide)**. The purpose of the Climate Change Vulnerability Transportation Assessment is to identify the impacts of Climate Change on the transportation system, examine them, and assess the vulnerability of the system resulting in strategies for management and mitigation. This study builds upon previous studies prepared by OCPC including Stormwater mapping and roadway drainage runoff, Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plans, an Old Colony Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and an Old Colony 2010 Climate Change Transportation Impact Study.

OCPC GIS Department Contributions:

The GIS Department provided maps of natural disaster risk in the town using HAZUS, a FEMA-developed software program that analyzes risk from earthquakes, flooding, and hurricanes. The maps and data were developed for the town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan and calculated damage costs, economic impact, and human safety impact.

Also prepared were maps of Bicycle and Pedestrian Levels of Service, a grade that measures the comfort and usability of a roadway for foot and bicycle traffic. High speeds, lack of spacing between vehicles and people, and presence of street parking are a few of the factors that can impact the level of service.

OCPC Community Planning & Economic Development Department (CPED) Contributions:

In October OCPC commenced a series of quarterly webinars:

1. Dr. Mark Melnick, Ph.D., presented Massachusetts Economic Growth and Challenges in the Age of COVID-19.
2. Secretary Juan Vega talking about the Community One Stop for Growth program.
3. Dr. Melnick returned to provide an update with One Year Later: Massachusetts Economic Growth and Challenges in the Age of COVID-19.

A Small Business Resource Guide was developed to help local economies and our regional economy recover and become more resilient to future shocks.

A Utility Rate Allowance data and reporting for the Halifax Housing Authority was also provided.

The CPED Team completed the Integrated Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town of Halifax. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Region 1 has completed its review of the Plan and found it meets the requirements of 44 CFR 201 pending adoption.

Technical assistance was also provided by staff to complete the Annual Report, Competitive Grant Application, Final Report, MassEnergyInsight (MEI) Assistance, and energy reduction planning to meet the requirements of the Green Communities Program. OCPC continues to partner with the Department of Energy Resources to seek technical assistance funding so that this important service can be provided to member communities. Hazard Mitigation Plans identify the natural hazards that impact communities, identify actions to reduce losses from those hazards, and establish a coordinated process to implement plans to eliminate and/or mitigate the impacts. This plan serves as a basis for the development of plans, public education programs, and responder training exercises, it also lays the foundation to bring mitigation efforts to minimize these identified potential threats. By completing an HMP (Hazard Mitigation Plan) municipalities become eligible for specific federal funding and allow potential funding sources to understand a community's priorities.

CPED Green Communities

2021's Competitive Grant Spring Round

Municipality	Grant Request	Grant Award
Abington	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
Brockton	\$196,881.00	\$196,881.00
Halifax	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00
Hanson	\$143,335.30	\$143,336.00
Kingston	\$100,000	---
Marshfield	\$198,225.00	\$140,589.00
Pembroke	\$167,722.00	---
Total:	\$1,206,163.30	\$880,806.00

OCPC was able to successfully get awards for 5 out of 7 of the communities applications were made for. This constitutes 73 percent of all award funds requested. Projects throughout the

awarded communities include everything from retrofitting buildings with LED lights, weatherization of buildings, to boiler controls as well.

REPA Grant 2021

OCPC recently applied for the Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) Grant Program to assist the following communities in designation, grant applications, annual reports, as well hosting a regional capacity building series to cover Transitioning to Electric Vehicles, EVs, Net Zero Planning Workshop, Renewable Energy, and fostering regional partnerships.

Name of municipality	GC Designation (\$7,500)	Adding regional schools to ERP (\$1,500)	Grant application (\$1,500)	Annual Report (\$1,500)	Capacity Building	Total
Abington			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Avon	\$2,990		\$3,000			
Brockton			\$3,000	\$3,000		
East Bridgewater			\$3,000	\$1,500		
Halifax			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Hanson			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Kingston			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Pembroke			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Plymouth			\$3,000	\$1,500		
Plympton			\$3,000	\$3,000		
Whitman			\$3,000	\$3,000		
TOTAL	\$2,990.00	0	\$33,000.00	\$27,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$82,990.00

One delegate and one alternate member represent each member community of the Council. The Council members establish policy, develop the work program, and employ and oversee the activities of the professional staff. The Council meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 6:00 PM in the OCPC offices located at 70 School Street, Brockton, MA. Our website is www.ocpcrpa.org. In 2021, the Council elected Christine Joy of Plympton as Council President; Doug Sylvestre of Stoughton as Council Treasurer; and Sandra Wright of Bridgewater as Council Secretary. Mary Waldron serves as Executive Director of the Council and serves on the Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel.

The Council gratefully acknowledges the generous support and cooperation of its member communities and the participation and involvement of the many individuals who participate as members of committees. Special thanks to the Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) Chair Noreen O'Toole; Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS) Chairs Maryellen Brett and, John Murray, the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Committee Chair Josephine Schofield for their commitment, dedication, and leadership during the past year. The Council also

recognizes the work of local boards and commissions and the government agencies, public and private institutions and individuals who assisted the Council in its efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley DiSesa, Delegate