

FY27 Planning Assistance Grant Awards

Grantee	Project Title	Award	Project Description
Cape Cod Commission	Advancing a Regional Open Space Plan for Cape Cod	\$246,659	This project will develop elements of a regional open space plan, as well as tools for municipalities to help prioritize the protection of open space on Cape Cod, while considering new housing and wastewater infrastructure priorities. The proposed work will help define the economic value of resource areas to build support for the preservation of ecologically sensitive lands, undeveloped lands within coastal floodplains, current and future public water supply lands, and passive recreational sites. This work will lay the groundwork for identifying sending and receiving areas as part of a regional TDR program (anticipated future project) to help redirect development away from sensitive resource lands and towards activity centers and other locations with the infrastructure to support new housing. The work will also develop a Cape Cod Open Space and Recreation Plan template, and a Communications Toolkit to assist with engaging the community around open space protection.
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	Town of Lee Farmland Protection Plan and Zoning Implementation	\$50,000	In 2024, the town of Lee completed a new master plan and an open space and recreation plan project. The town is actively pursuing opportunities to implement these plans through multiple lenses. This proposal addresses several aspects of these plans with the goals of protecting farmland through analysis of data and policy, and removing barriers to the redevelopment, adaptive re-use, and infill of previously developed lands. This work will be accomplished through two components: 1) Creating a farmland protection plan, and 2) Continuing efforts to modernize the town's zoning bylaw.
Dedham	East St Corridor Plan	\$ 50,000	The Town of Dedham seeks to undertake a community visioning process for East Street, which serves as a key thoroughfare for crosstown connections and access to Route 128/I95 and two MBTA Commuter Rail stations. To achieve a future vision for East Street, zoning recommendations and design guidelines will be developed with a consultant to promote the types of improvements desired in the corridor.
Franklin Regional Council of Governments	Zoning for Resilient Floodplains and River Corridors in Franklin County	\$50,000	To provide direct technical assistance to Franklin County municipalities needing to update their floodplain regulations to include adoption of the 2020 MA Model Floodplain Bylaw and of the upcoming new FEMA Flood Hazard Data maps, provide assistance with incorporating mapped river corridors into zoning bylaws, and conducting public education and outreach about climate-resilient river corridors and floodplains.

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Goshen	Town of Goshen Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulations Update	\$45,500	The Town of Goshen seeks to incorporate climate resilience planning and zoning tools to advance sustainable development in our small community as part of a comprehensive zoning bylaw revision of our Town's 1970's-era zoning bylaw, and to secure planning assistance to concurrently update Goshen's outdated Subdivision Rules and Regulations to reflect current best practices in sustainable land use, infrastructure design, stormwater management and climate resilience. This project will support planning, legal and technical assistance as well as community engagement activities to implement a key priority of our MVP 2.0 Planning Process, which is incorporating planning and zoning to better support sustainable development, advance housing availability and guide future growth in a sustainable and resilient manner. It will allow us to fully implement recommendations of our comprehensive zoning bylaw review and to include a review of existing decades old subdivision regulations.
Haverhill	Water Neutral Growth Planning Project	\$50,000	The City of Haverhill would develop a Water Neutral Growth planning framework to enable housing and economic development while maintaining sustainable water use within the City's 7.10 mgd Water Management Act permitted withdrawal limit. Four integrated tasks would deliver: a water demand baseline analysis by sector and season; an audit of zoning bylaws, subdivision regulations, and stormwater standards; a Water Neutral Growth strategy including a Water Use Mitigation Program requiring new development to offset projected demand; and a public-facing implementation report with prioritized policy recommendations presented to City Council. At least four public engagement sessions would be conducted in English and Spanish across Haverhill neighborhoods including Environmental Justice communities. The project directly implements recommendations from the City's 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness plan, modeled on Ipswich's successful 2019 Water Neutral Growth study.
Medford	Medford Residential Zoning Climate Impact Study	\$50,000	The project would involve retaining a consultant to study the existing characteristics of the natural and built environment in Medford's residential neighborhoods to inform the City's decision-making and updates to the outdated zoning in those neighborhoods and enable the City to balance the need for additional housing against the potential climate impacts that may be created by new development.

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Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Transit Oriented Development and Retail Strip District Planning Pilot	\$150,000	MAPC will lead a two-year planning and capacity-building pilot with Canton, Randolph, and Stoughton to advance transit-oriented development and retail strip district revitalization in three transit-served locations. Using the Rethinking the Retail Strip inventory, local zoning and parcel data, MassEnviroScreen Burdened Area mapping, and ResilientMass climate projections, the project will confirm one priority district in each community and prepare existing conditions profiles. MAPC will convene municipal staff and engage property owners, businesses, and community partners to develop district vision plans, zoning and policy actions, and a shared TOD and retail strip playbook. The work will support compact mixed-use reinvestment, safer access to transit, and district strategies for heat mitigation and stormwater management.
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting & Zoning in the Southwest Advisory Planning Committee Subregion of MAPC	\$105,000	By October 2026, Massachusetts municipalities will be required to adopt new siting and permitting processes for clean energy infrastructure (CEI). While local implementation of these regulations does not require bylaws, most municipalities lack zoning bylaws for battery energy storage and may seek to adopt permitting bylaws to implement the new regulations. Through this project, six communities in MAPC's Southwest Advisory Planning Committee Subregion (SWAP) will work with MAPC to comply with the regulations and develop zoning bylaw amendments for CEI to ensure the consolidated local process is implemented successfully and aligned with local land use priorities. These communities will collaborate to build capacity and share lessons learned to provide a more consistent, regional approach that facilitates streamlined CEI siting while addressing local concerns. MAPC will share findings and resources developed across its region to support other municipalities with CEI siting and zoning.

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Northern Middlesex Council of Governments	NMCOG Regional Growth Strategy	\$100,000	NMCOG proposes to undertake a regional scenario planning process to guide sustainable growth and strategic preservation across its nine-community region. Building on At Home in Greater Lowell, NMCOG's Regional Housing Strategy, and Greater Lowell Stronger Together, the region's five year CEDS, this effort will evaluate multiple growth scenarios incorporating housing need (9,000–20,000 units), economic development, open space, mobility, land use patterns, development density, mixed-use strategies, and affordability levels. The project will identify priority development and preservation areas while advancing more detailed, implementable strategies for housing production, economic development, and conservation. This work strategically leverages data collected through NMCOG's recent planning initiatives, while building upon the Commonwealth's Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS) by translating statewide goals into locally actionable, data-driven recommendations.
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	Hampshire County Flood Resilience	\$199,500	This work involves supporting flood resilience in Hampshire County municipalities through developing and adopting updated floodplain bylaws that meet the FEMA requirements, while also exploring options for additional flood resilience measures that exceed the minimum requirements. This work also involves continuing the ongoing community of practice on flood resilience, in partnership with FRCOG and the municipalities on the Connecticut River.
Reading	Design Guidelines & Zoning Assistance for the Eastern Gateway Mixed-Use Development District	\$50,000	Reading is actively working on re-envisioning the Eastern Gateway District Plan. This once-in-a-generation opportunity will reimagine future redevelopment potential for this 70-acre underutilized commercial and industrial area of town. The Town is planning to establish a mixed-use district that will create housing, increase green space and land use efficiencies, and generate a stronger commercial base for the community and region. This grant would provide funding for technical assistance in drafting of zoning language and the preparation of design guidelines that would support the mixed-use district. Funding will allow the town to maintain the ongoing momentum of the work that has been supported through grants since 2023. The town believes it can unlock significant development potential within the area, encourage sustainable land use regulations, provide diverse housing opportunities, stimulate mixed-use development, and create new public spaces.

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Southwick	Southwick's Zoning Bylaws Modernization Project	\$45,000	Project: The proposed project has three elements based on land use issues that were highlighted in the Town's recently adopted Master Plan: • The refinement of the Town's Business Restricted (BR) Zoning District bylaw – encouraging and ensuring that future business development in the district is done in a manageable and sustainable manner, adding additional by-right uses. • The development of a Town Center Overlay zoning district bylaw that encourages sustainable redevelopment and revitalization of the town's downtown area. • Development of a transitional zoning district bylaw that will result in an area of mixed-use development to allow for a better cohabitation between the town's general business districts and its residential and agriculture-zoned areas.
Warren	Town of Warren Zoning Bylaw Update Phase II	\$50,000	The Town of Warren will partner with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission to complete Phase II of its Zoning Bylaw Update to advance sustainability and climate resilience. This phase will develop environmentally focused zoning standards including Low Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure for stormwater management, Dark Sky lighting requirements, tree canopy retention and native landscaping standards, and smart parking provisions to reduce impervious surfaces. The project will also create a Village Zoning District to support compact, walkable, mixed-use town centers that support affordable housing development. Project work will include bylaw analysis, the mapping of sensitive areas, stakeholder engagement, and the drafting of new regulations.
Williamstown	Enabling Mixed Use Growth for Williamstown	\$49,960	The Town wishes to engage Innes Land Strategies Group, a Massachusetts based firm with deep experience in the Berkshires, to partner with RKG Associates on a market analysis and form based code case study for Williamstown. The partner firms will analyze the existing business and mixed use districts in Williamstown and determine current market needs and likely future growth direction. Innes will utilize this data in developing a by right form based case study to ease future mixed use and business development identified by the market study. The Town hopes to use this work to focus resources to attract a greater share of regional economic development in the future.

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Woburn	New Boston Street Zoning Implementation Project	\$50,000	This project will fund the next stage of work following completion of the New Boston Street Opportunity Analysis, which identified a series of land use and zoning recommendations for the corridor. Grant funding will support refinement of those recommendations into more detailed strategies, draft zoning concepts, and implementation steps to help advance sustainable redevelopment and future adoption.
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