

Massachusetts Association of Consulting Planners
20 Harrison Street
Brookline, MA 02446

June 3 2008

Louis Martin, Deputy Associate Director
Division of Community Services
Department of Housing and Community Development
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Martin:

On behalf of the MACP and our colleagues from APA, MARPA, and CHAPA who met with you, Alana Murphy and Carol Wolfe to discuss reinvigorating funding for planning, I am forwarding our understanding of the meeting highlights and next steps to undertake.

Steve Sadwick, President of the Massachusetts Chapter of APA, identified the context for this meeting by noting that a "White Paper on Six Key Recommendations for Achieving Sustainable Growth in the Commonwealth" was presented by the assembled planning organizations to the gubernatorial candidates in October 2006 and discussed this past year in meetings with Gregory Bialecki. Funding for planning, strengthening local capacity, and reinstating a Master Vendor List and Service Agreement were identified early on as important and achievable next steps.

We discussed five guidelines for reinstating the Master Vendor List, as identified in the meeting agenda (attached). Together we noted the desire to have this list cover relevant grant programs sponsored by DHCD and four other agencies, including EOEEA and the Division of Local Services. We also concurred that the use of the List by cities and towns for comparable planning initiatives would leverage their efforts to fund or match State resources.

Second, there was broad agreement that additional State resources are needed immediately in support of planning to achieve the state's economic development, housing, energy and environmental goals and priorities. Aaron Gornstein identified a number of possible current funding sources for planning including SHARP repayment and the Housing Bond Bill.

We also noted that new legislation was required to address funding for the range of planning concerns. The representatives of the planning community will begin to explore the potential for new legislation to fund planning as well as the availability of recapture funds.

New funding sources could encourage planning both within and outside Growth Districts for a variety of planning activities. Support for basic planning has been limited due to an exclusive focus on the preparation of specific housing or economic development activities, many of which are not adequately developed. Available planning resources should be considered for supporting a broader planning agenda including comprehensive plans and background studies comparable to the Municipal Incentive/Strategic Planning program that was funded for some 20 years.

Third, there seemed to be agreement that many locally-issued planning RFPs are not well drafted and often require funding far in excess of the budget available for the requested scope of services, appropriation or grant. We are hopeful that with the establishment of the Master Services Agreement, the problems with 30B can be overcome and we could work with you on educational initiatives for town planners that would lead to scopes for planning services that are more in line with the budgets available.

Given the importance to the Commonwealth of the preceding activities to help advance regional and local planning in support of a broad set of development, energy, and resource protection activities, we agreed that we would talk again within the next eight weeks. At that time we look forward to learning the results of our mutual efforts to clarify and identify available funding for planning, to advance draft legislation, and to reinstitute the Master Vendor List.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss and resolve these important issues of mutual concern for the Commonwealth and the professionals charged with providing the needed growth management planning services.

Sincerely,

Larry Koff, AICP
President, MACP

Attachment

May 9, 2008
Agenda
Reinvigorate Funding for Planning in Massachusetts

Attendance

DHCD: Sandra Hawes, Assistant Director of Community Services
Alana Murphy, Policy Director
Carol Wolfe, Manager of DHCD Community Assistance Programs
MACP: Larry Koff, President (Larry Koff & Associates)
Ken Buckland, Vice President (The Cecil Group)
Larry Bluestone (Bluestone Planning Group)
APA: Steve Sadwick, President, Massachusetts Chapter
MARPA: Mark Racicot, Representative
CHAPA: Aaron Gornstein, Executive Director

I. Introductions

II. Goals

- A. Help the Commonwealth advance state, regional, and local planning in economic development, housing, equity, energy, and environmental quality**
- B. Reinvigorate DHCD's Role in Municipal and Regional Planning and building municipal capacity**
- C. Obtain consensus on how to best utilize professional consultants in the provision of planning services**

III. Reinstitute the Master Services Agreement (MSA) Consultant List under DHCD'S leadership

A. Guidelines

- 1. Make list available for retaining services under a limited number of grant programs funded by five agencies (DHCD, EOEEA, DBD, EOAF, and EOT)**
- 2. Allow list to be utilized for contracting with towns and cities for broader planning services (housing, open space, relevant components of master plan)**
- 3. Simplify and clarify application requirements (electronic filing and posting of quals)**
- 4. Minimize reporting requirements**
- 5. Determine appropriate role of RPAs for regional projects, shared service initiatives and role in program administration**

B. Resolve any conflicts with Central Procurement Office and Inspector General over the 30B process

D. Form committee to identify how to establish list (include MACP, APA, and MARPA)

IV. Fund Growth District/Strategic Planning Programs

- A. Re-institute comparable Strategic Planning Technical Assistance Grants to promote planning within and outside of Growth Districts**
- B. Use repayment from SHARP and other sources for funding**

V. Guidance for the RFP Process

- A. MACP to work with DHCD to provide unified format for preparing a RFP**
- B. MACP to educate towns on the RFP process**
- C. MACP to work with DHCD on realistic budgets/Scopes of Work so the two match.**

VI. Next Steps

FY08 Commonwealth Capital Programs

Commonwealth Capital explicitly endorses planning and zoning measures that are in accord with Administration policy and encourages municipalities to implement them by linking the following state spending programs to municipal land use practices:

- [Public Works Economic Development Program](#) (EOT)
- [Transit Oriented Development Bond Program](#) (EOT)
- [Community Development Action Grant Program](#) (DHCD)
- [State Revolving Fund](#) (EOEEA – DEP)
- [Self-Help Program](#) (EOEEA- DCS)
- [Urban Self-Help Program](#) (EOEEA - DCS)
- [Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program](#) (EOEEA)
- [Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grant Program](#) (EOEEA - CZM)
- [Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant Program](#) (EOEEA – CZM)
- Off-Street Parking Program (EOAF)
- [Smart Growth/Smart Energy Technical Assistance Program](#) (EOEEA)