
Building a Resilient Food System in Plymouth County

Public Informational Meeting
Wednesday, June 25, 2025, virtual



OLD COLONY
PLANNING COUNCIL



Beth Israel Lahey Health
Beth Israel Deaconess Plymouth





Welcome

- **The Goal:** A more resilient, locally rooted food system that benefits families, businesses, and communities throughout Plymouth County
- **Funding Partners:** Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program, Plymouth County, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Plymouth, HarborOne Bank Foundation
- **Delivery Partners:**
 - *Old Colony Planning Council:* regional planning agency supporting 17 municipalities in the greater Brockton and Plymouth areas with their community planning needs
 - *Plymouth County:* provides a variety of services to residents in its 27 municipalities, including 4-H extension services, and holds several historically significant properties
 - *The Marion Institute:* a nonprofit organization (501c3) engaging individuals and communities in root cause solutions that elevate health, food, and environmental equity
 - *And you*



Today's Meeting

Purpose

- Share more about the project
- Describe participation opportunities
- Answer questions
- Invite discussion about the project

Agenda

1. Project Overview
2. The Marion Institute and the CARAT Process
3. Ways to Participate
4. Q&A and Open Discussion
5. Next Steps and Closing

What's this project all about?

Project purpose: to gain a deeper understanding of the region's food-related challenges and develop a comprehensive plan to address them

Goal 1

Strengthen the collaborative capacity of participants in the local and regional food system to adapt to a changing climate, strengthen the local food economy, and reduce food insecurity

Goal 2

Develop a data-driven, participatory Regional Food Action Plan that will address vulnerabilities over the next ten years

Why It Matters



Food prices and supply chains are more unpredictable than ever



Some families and communities face real barriers to healthy, affordable food



Our region has local farms, businesses, and people ready to help—but they need support



A strong local food system supports, public health, emergency preparedness, job creation, and local control

B



One in three Massachusetts families don't have enough to eat, study finds

The Greater Boston Food Bank found that hunger isn't getting worse, but isn't getting better, either.



Dave Kress, who farms corn and soy, stands outside his barn and fields just north of Dayton, Ohio. He is one of many farmers across the region who are feeling the squeeze from shortages and soaring supply costs. ANDREA KRAMAR/USA TODAY

Inflation, supply issues grow risks for farmers

Factors range from Russia to hurricane-affected US ports

Sarah Bowman
USA TODAY

Outside Evansville, near the corner of Indiana where it meets with Kentucky and Illinois, Randy Kron farms about 2,200 acres of corn and soy-



FARMERS ARE FORCED TO CHANGE GROWING METHODS AMID A SEVERE DROUGHT

STORMTEAM 5



Project Area

- All of Plymouth County, plus Stoughton, Easton, and Cohasset
- Spans three regional planning agencies (OCPC, MAPC, and SRPEDD)
- Two watersheds (Taunton and South Coastal)

Legend

RPA Boundaries

MAPC & OCPC

METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL (MAPC)

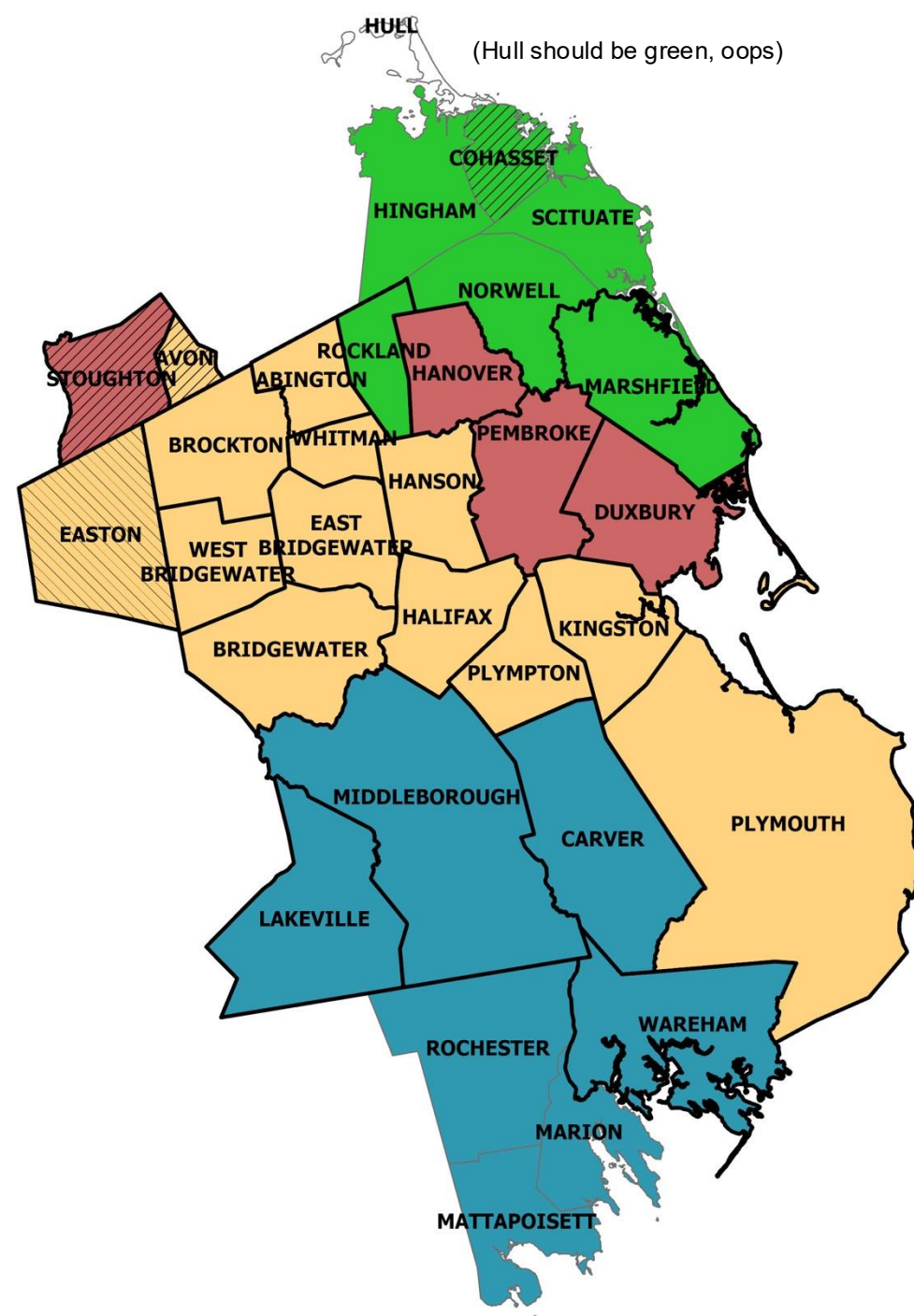
OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL (OCPC)

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (SRPEDD)

Norfolk County

Bristol County

OCPC and AAA Communities



How We're Doing It

Steering Committee

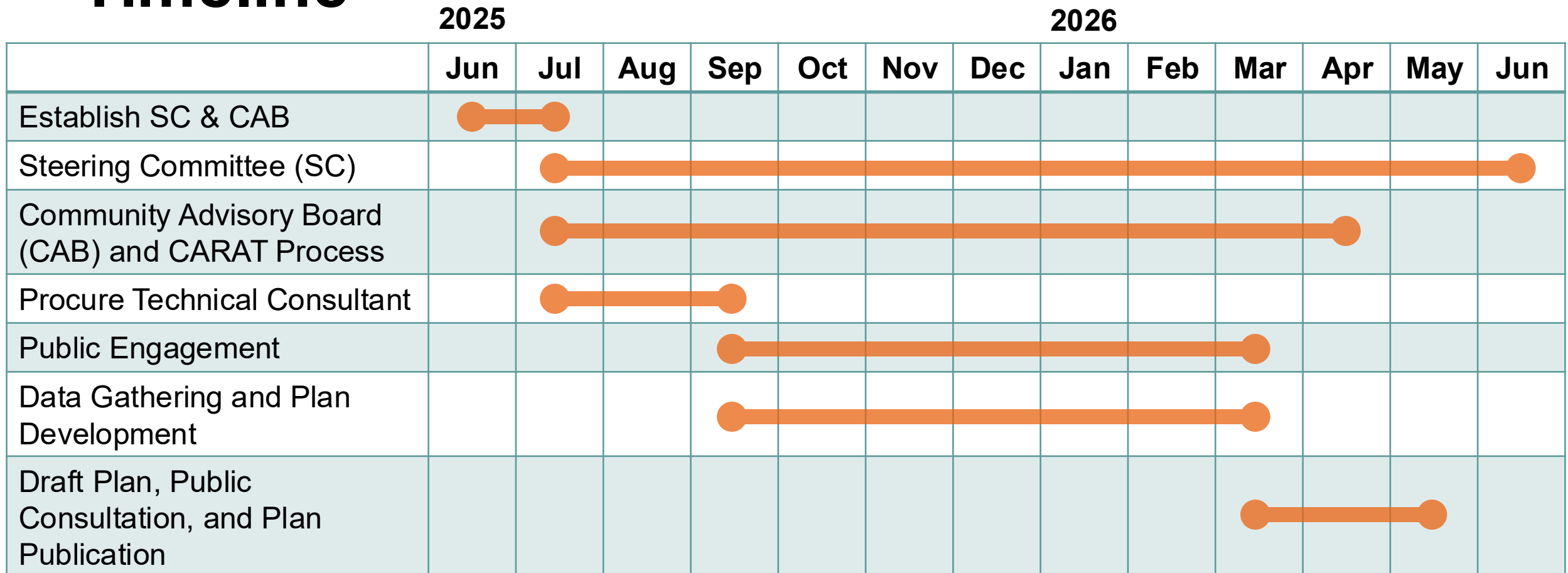
Public
Engage-
ment:

Focus
groups,
interviews,
survey,
etc.

Technical consultant for plan
development

Community Advisory
Board, Marion Institute,
and the CARAT Tool

Timeline



CARAT

Community and Agriculture Resilience Audit Tool

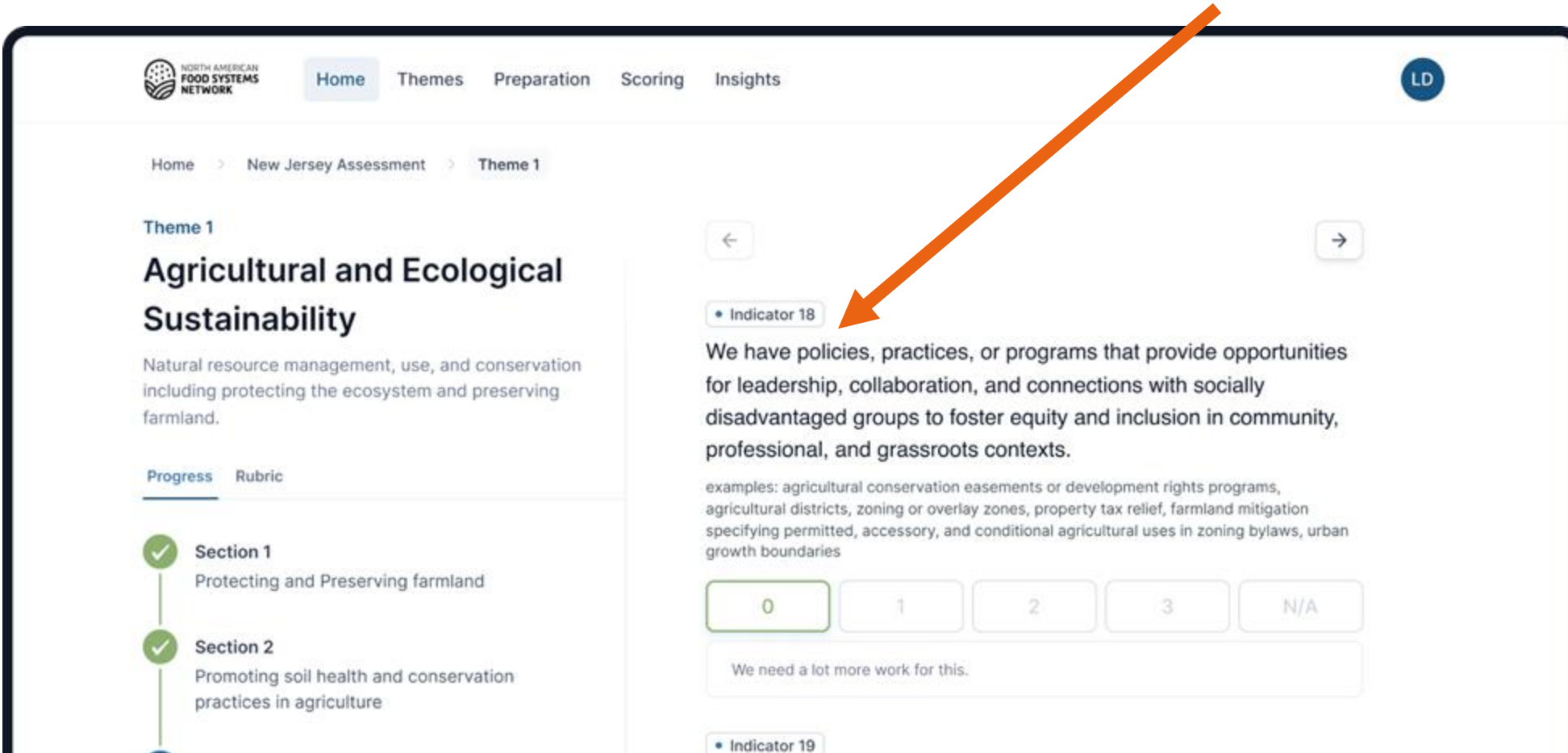
101 Indicators in 7 Core Themes

1. Natural Resource Management, Use, Conservation, and Preservation of Ecosystems and Farmland
2. Community Health and Well-Being
3. Community Self-Reliance in Food
4. Distributed and Democratic Leadership
5. Focus on Local Farmers, Food Processors, and Food Distributors
6. Food Sovereignty
7. Place-Based Economics

CARAT utilizes these themes to catalogue the policies, programs, projects, people and organizations within in a community that build resilience in the food system

What is an Indicator?

101 statements similar to this.
To be answered by a diverse group of community members.



The screenshot shows the North American Food Systems Network assessment interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Themes', 'Preparation', 'Scoring', and 'Insights'. The user is logged in as 'LD'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home > New Jersey Assessment > Theme 1'. The main heading is 'Theme 1: Agricultural and Ecological Sustainability', with a subtext: 'Natural resource management, use, and conservation including protecting the ecosystem and preserving farmland.' Below this, there are tabs for 'Progress' and 'Rubric'. The 'Progress' tab shows two sections: 'Section 1: Protecting and Preserving farmland' and 'Section 2: Promoting soil health and conservation practices in agriculture', both marked with green checkmarks. The main content area displays 'Indicator 18' with a statement: 'We have policies, practices, or programs that provide opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and connections with socially disadvantaged groups to foster equity and inclusion in community, professional, and grassroots contexts.' Below the statement are examples: 'examples: agricultural conservation easements or development rights programs, agricultural districts, zoning or overlay zones, property tax relief, farmland mitigation specifying permitted, accessory, and conditional agricultural uses in zoning bylaws, urban growth boundaries'. A rating scale is shown with buttons for 0, 1, 2, 3, and N/A. The '0' button is selected, and a text box below it contains the response: 'We need a lot more work for this.' Below the rating scale is 'Indicator 19'.

Ways to Participate

	Steering Committee	Community Advisory Board	Other Ways
Who	Anyone 18+	Anyone 18+	Anyone
Meetings	Virtual Monthly for 1 hour Weekdays, TBD	Virtual Monthly for 1.5 hours Weekdays, TBD	Zero to one-time only, likely between Sep. '25 and May '26 and likely in-person
Attendance	Required at every meeting, as possible	Encouraged at every meeting, but more flexible	Up to one time
Purpose	Strategic guidance and project oversight	Collaboratively assess the local and regional food system	Provide relevant data or insights, or support public engagement efforts
How			Participate in a focus group or survey, help spread the word, help plan or volunteer at public engagement activities

Q&A & Discussion

NEXT STEPS

The Steering Committee and Community Advisory Board will begin meeting in July.

Visit the project webpage at
<https://oldcolonyplanning.org/foodresiliency>

Express your interest in participating by completing the interest form at the link above.

PROJECT CONTACTS:

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