

REPORT OF THE OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL

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

As your representatives to the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), we are pleased to present this report on behalf of the Council for 2025.

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 Aging & Independence (AGE) 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. Learn more about OCPC in our [2024-2025 Annual Report here](#).

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 for all.

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 Agency on Aging Department Contributions:

In 2025, the Old Colony Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with assistance and guidance from the Executive Office of Aging and Independence and our AAA Advisory committee members, continued ongoing administration of the Older Americans Act and other Federal and State funding for older adult services in our region. During that time, the AAA funded over \$2 million in services for adults aged 60 and over and adults with disabilities.

This funding occurred mainly through collaborations with community partner service providers such as Old Colony Elder Services, South Coastal Counties Legal Services, local Councils on Aging, and other private non-profit organizations, which provided programs and services for Nutrition, Legal Assistance, Transportation, and Family Caregiving for more than 12,000 of the 100,000 older adults in the Old Colony region during 2025. The OCPC, Area Agency on Aging, also provided an Older Americans Act grant to a provider, Buzzards Bay Speech Therapy, which funded a Cognitive Wellness program for older adults served by the Whitman Council on Aging in 2025.

OCPC's AAA completed our region's new *Area Plan on Aging*, which is a four-year blueprint of priorities for older adult services established by federal, state, and local authorities using current Needs Assessment responses from Older Adults and Caregivers in the region. The new Old Colony - [*Area Plan on Aging FFY 2026 – 2029*](#), was published in September of 2025 on our website at [here](#) or on the AAA webpage: <https://oldcolonyplanning.org/aaa/>, where you can also find access to the [AAA Needs Assessment](#).

In 2025, the **OCPC-AAA Ombudsman Program** provided bi-weekly advocacy for residents of 27 Nursing and Rest Homes, which offer Long-Term Care services in our region. Our staff and volunteers made over 500 visits and resolved more than 100 cases over the past year.

Also, during 2025, OCPC remained one of only four agencies in the state that extended Ombudsman services to Assisted Living Residences (ALRs). On a quarterly basis, OCPC's ALR Program Director and volunteers visited over 60 residences, make over 250 visits and resolved over 60 cases, including those in our normal catchment area, as well as others from the Cape and the Islands, and the Bristol, Coastline, Hessco, and South Shore areas.

For more information on AAA initiatives, contact David Klein at dklein@ocpcrpa.org.

OCPC Transportation Department Contributions:

In 2025, the **FFY 2026-2030 Old Colony Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** was prepared serving as a prioritized listing of highway, bridge, and transit projects for implementation during the next five (5) federal fiscal years that reflect the needs of the regional transportation system. Funding for the implementation and construction of the following projects in Whitman is included in the TIP:

- \$17,209,274 for the Improvements on South Avenue (613643)

The Transportation Department prepared the **FFY 2026 Old Colony Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** which 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.

Forty-eight (48) hour automatic traffic recorder vehicle counts (vehicle volumes, vehicle speeds, and vehicle classifications) were conducted at several locations in Whitman. From this data, estimates of the number, speed, and type of vehicles that traveled each segment of road and daily vehicle miles traveled for specific groups of facilities and vehicle types are calculated.

OCPC and BETA Group prepared the **Safe Street for All (SS4A) Regional Action Plan**. The purpose of an Action Plan is to provide a holistic, well-defined strategy to prevent roadway injuries and serious injuries. Focusing on reducing and eliminating serious-injury and fatal crashes affecting all roadway users, the Action Plan utilizes data analysis to characterize roadway safety problems and strengthen a community's approach through projects and strategies that address the most significant safety risks. With the SS4A Regional Action Plan in place, communities can apply for Implementation Grants as well as Planning and Demonstration Grants through the USDOT.

Additionally, the Transportation Department conducted parking utilization counts during April and October at the MBTA Commuter Rail - Whitman Station. These utilization counts inform the transportation planning process and assist in the determination of travel demand.

For more information on Transportation projects, contact Charles Kilmer at ckilmer@ocpcrpa.org.

OCPC GIS Department Contributions:

The GIS Department works with all departments to assist in data collection and map creation for projects and reports. In contribution to the MassGIS Statewide Trails Initiative, staff reviewed and revised nearly 2 miles of mapped trails. For our Regional Commercial & Industrial Site Inventory, GIS staff identified and compiled attributes about industrial parks.

For more information on GIS projects, contact Andrew Vidal at avidal@ocpcrpa.org.

OCPC Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability Department Contributions:

Within Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability (CPS), our goal is to create a welcoming sense of place with diverse housing options, connectivity, vibrant spaces, amenities, and jobs that support a robust economy. The CPS department does this through technical assistance to our member communities through the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. This competitive grant program matches community cash investments to complete projects within the focus area. Projects can include Comprehensive Master Planning, Housing Production Plans, MBTA Communities compliance, Age- and Dementia-Friendly Action Plans, Facilitation and Public Engagement, Grant Assistance and Project Management, Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, Open Space and Recreation Plans, Climate Action Planning, and Zoning and Land Use Technical Assistance. Our mission is to meet the current needs of all people and the natural environment without compromising the ability to meet future needs.

The Town of Whitman hired OCPC to write the Town's **Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)** which is a Commonwealth of Massachusetts planning initiative to inventory, assess, and plan for future open space and recreation resources for individual municipalities. This process requires research, updating data and maps and community engagement.

OCPC is partnering with the Town of Whitman to pursue the creation of a **Smart Growth Overlay District (40R)**. This project seeks to align local land use regulations with community housing needs, economic development goals, and the Commonwealth's Smart Growth principles. The project is expected to be complete by mid-2026.

This past year, CPS worked with all 17 communities to complete an **Economic Development Administration Regional Water Plan** for the Old Colony Economic Development District to develop a regional plan to address Old Colony's sustainable, economically resilient public water supplies. This plan will help ensure municipalities and the region have affordable, safe, plentiful, and ecologically sustainable water supplies for generations. The council supports implementation over the coming year.

Old Colony Planning Council, in partnership with [Plymouth County](#) and the [Marion Institute](#), is leading a regional effort to strengthen the local food system through the development of a **Regional Food System Action Plan**. This project is in collaboration with municipalities, businesses, other organizations, and residents to gain a deeper understanding of the region's food-related challenges and develop a comprehensive plan to address them.

OCPC is working with the **Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation** to build a digital outdoor recreation database that highlights a wide range of activities paired with accessibility descriptions to promote recreation for all users in the region. For this ongoing project, OCPC is starting with Brockton, Abington, Whitman, and Plymouth.

The **Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA)** program seeks to augment municipal capacity to 1) participate in the Green Communities Designation and Grant Program and 2) advance clean energy projects in under-resourced municipalities. OCPC supports Pembroke under this program to submit Green Communities Annual Reports, present Annual Reports to municipal officials, and conduct regional capacity building and regional project implementation through May 2026.

For more information on Comprehensive Planning & Sustainability projects, contact Laurie Muncy at lmuncy@ocpcrpa.org.

OCPC Economic Development Department Contributions

The Town of Whitman has contracted with the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC) to develop a strategic framework that will guide **downtown revitalization and improvement efforts**, supported by an earmark authorized under Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022, enacted pursuant to the Massachusetts General Laws and funded through the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSFRF). Through this partnership, OCPC is providing project management and administrative services to help advance local economic development strategies and bring transformative improvements to the heart of the community. The final plan will be released by June of 2026.

The Economic Development (ED) Department continued to work closely with Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability to manage a \$470,000 **Economic Development Administration (EDA)** funding match for the **District-wide Regional Water Study** completed in mid-2025, see Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability section for more details on the Regional Water Study.

OCPC has continued work towards a **\$500,000 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Site Assessment Grant** received in 2023. This assistance is available **region-wide** to all communities in OCPC's district. The grant includes brownfield site assessment and planning for future cleanup and redevelopment over a 4-year project schedule. OCPC provided funding to conduct a Phase II assessment on the Regal Shoe site as well as draft Cleanup & Redevelopment Plan for the site.

The **\$150,000 EDA Regional Commercial & Industrial Site Inventory Project** was completed and is providing the region and communities with potential sites for development, redevelopment and expansion potential designed to position sites/areas for future EDA funds application both planning and construction projects in support of economic development i.e. private investment, jobs and tax benefits. GIS staff identified and compiled attributes about industrial parks while the Communications Department developed the web design of the final product.

OCPC received the third year of a 3-year funding cycle for the **EDA Annual Planning Grant** that provides economic development planning, project development, and other TA assistance to all the communities in the OCPC District. The grant allows OCPC to implement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), the region's economic development plan benefiting all seventeen communities in the District, including

the **Town of Whitman**. This 5-year plan was recently developed for 2025-2030 with the title “**A Strategic Regional Blueprint for Economic Development & Resilience**” and was approved by the CEDS committee in November with pending approval from the OCPC Council in January 2026.

For more information on Economic Development projects, contact Don Sullivan at dsullivan@ocpcrpa.org.

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.oldcolonyplanning.org. In 2025, the Council elected Pembroke Delegate, Rebecca Coletta, as President; Whitman Delegate, Noreen O’Toole, as Vice President, and At-Large Delegate, Christine Joy, as Treasurer. Mary Waldron serves as Executive Director of the Council.

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 John Stone and Vice-Chair Daniel Salvucci; Economic Development Commission (EDC) Chair Jonathan Jamoulis and Vice-Chair Alysha Siciliano-Perry, and the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Chair Julie Burke 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,

Noreen O’Toole, Delegate
Daniel Salvucci, Alternate