Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy

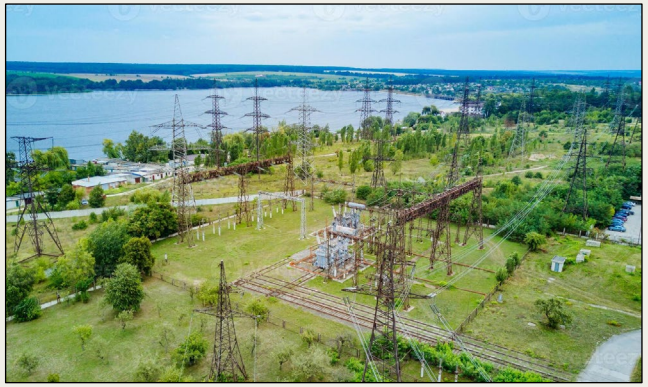
A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

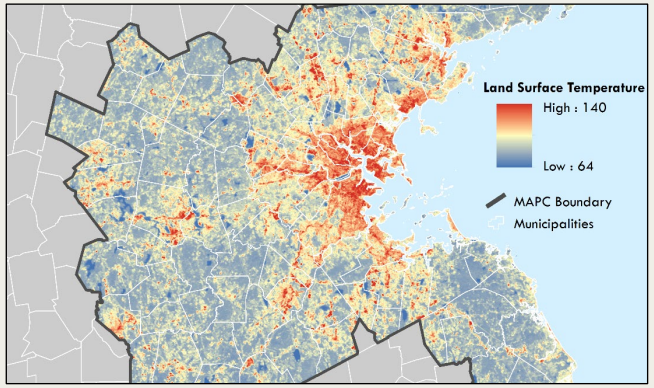
January 16, 2026

THE PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

Uncoordinated land use contributes to:

- Congestion, excess driving and transportation emissions
- Loss and degradation of natural & working lands and habitat
- Elevated risk from climate and other environmental hazards
- Housing scarcity
- Inefficient, costly infrastructure
- Inequitable health and economic outcomes

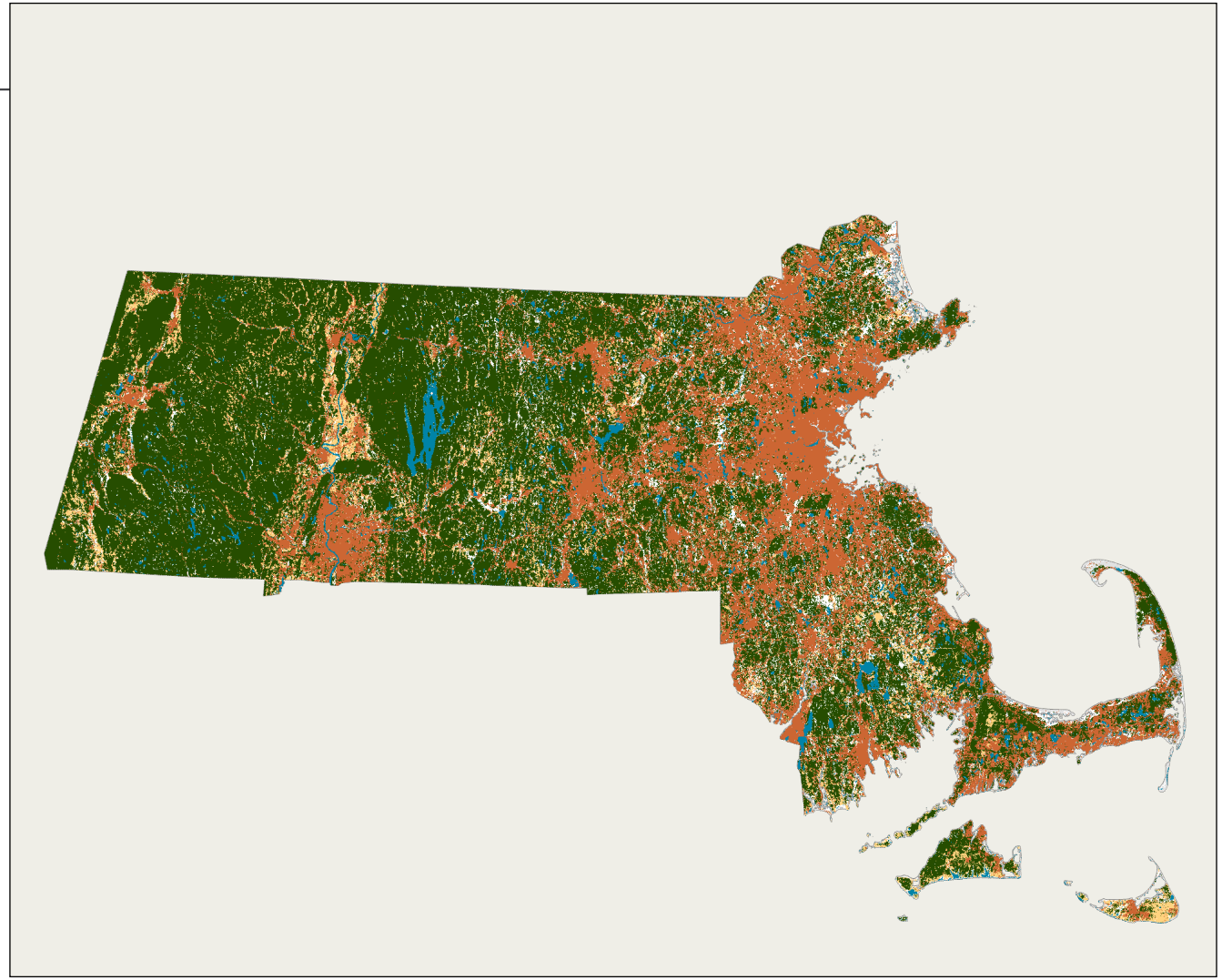




THE PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth must coordinate land use to meet its ambitious goals:

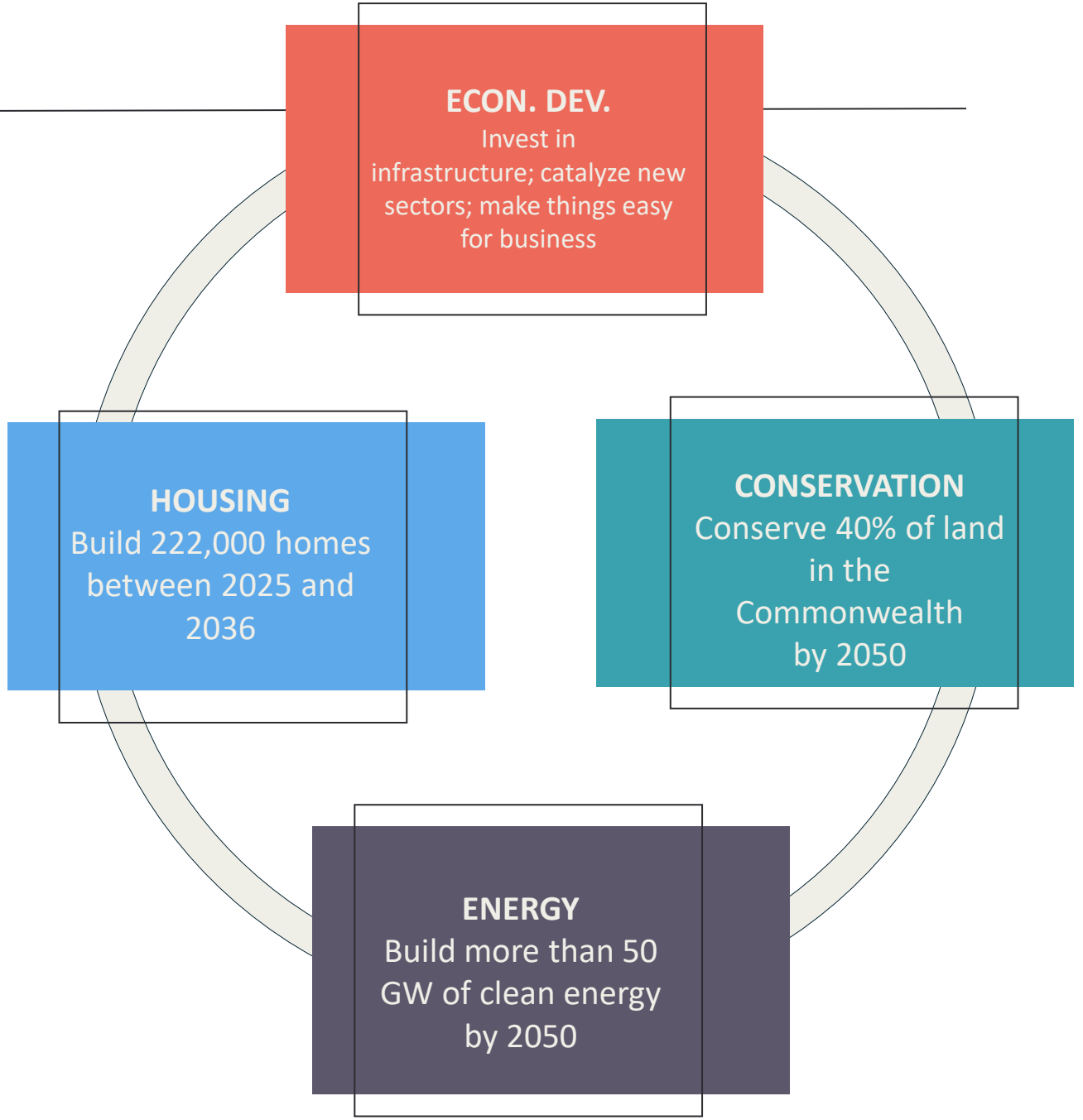
- Housing abundance
- Clean energy and net zero greenhouse gas emissions
- Conservation of natural & working lands
- Growth that centers equity, affordability, & competitiveness



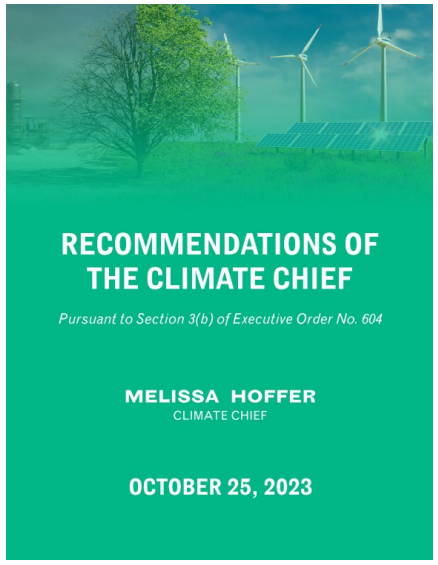
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

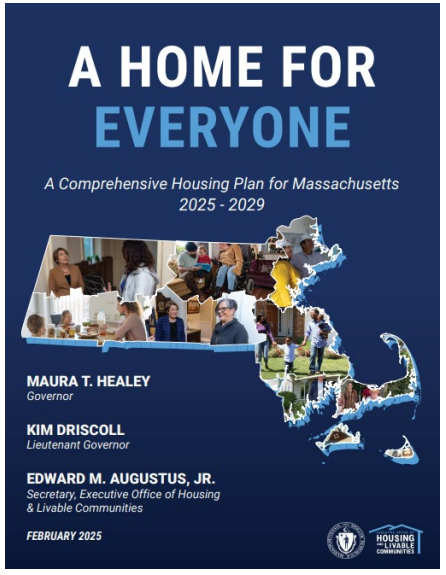
The MA Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS) is a coordinated, proactive effort to balance key land use priorities.

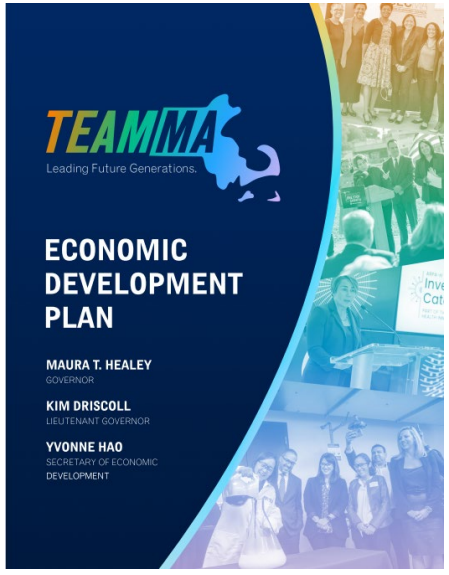
1. Ensure coordination across agencies
2. Engage agencies to reconcile potential conflicts between land use objectives
3. Develop consensus on preferred locations for various land use priorities
4. Establish commitments by state agencies to implement the consensus land use priorities (and enabling infrastructure) through specific policies and programs

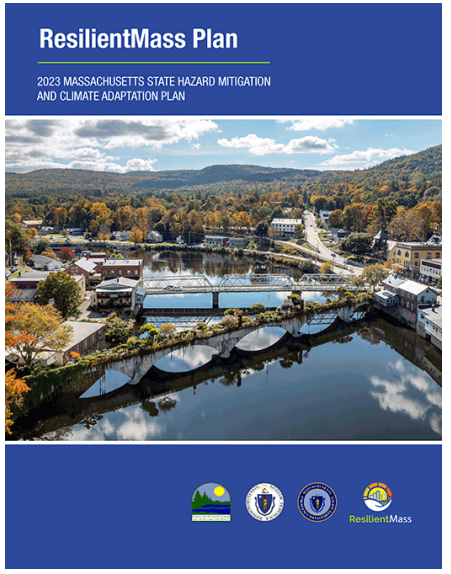


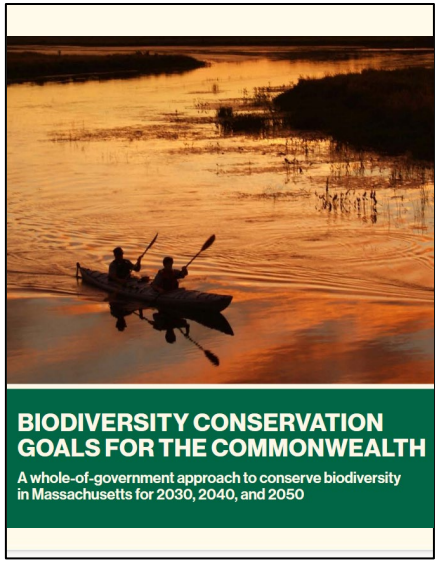
INCORPORATE EXISTING STATE INITIATIVES

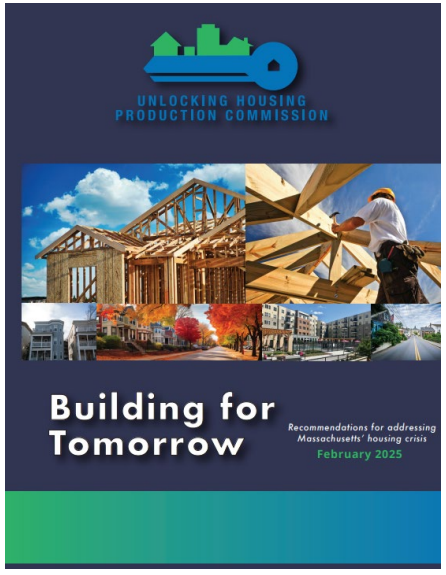


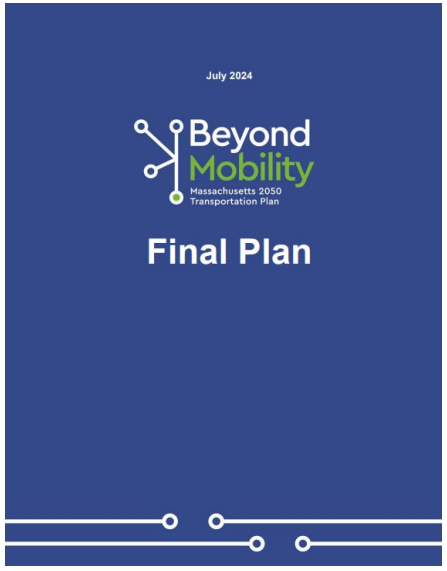


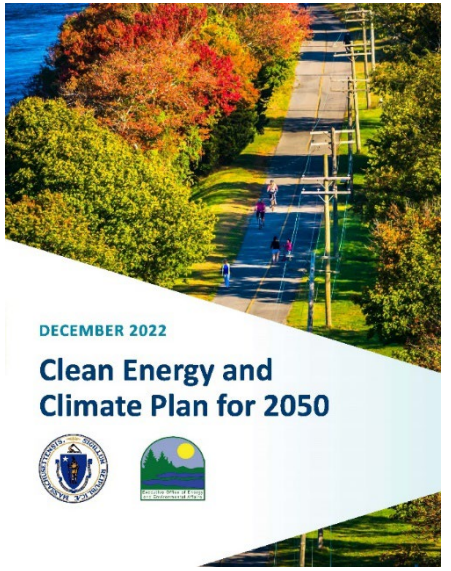










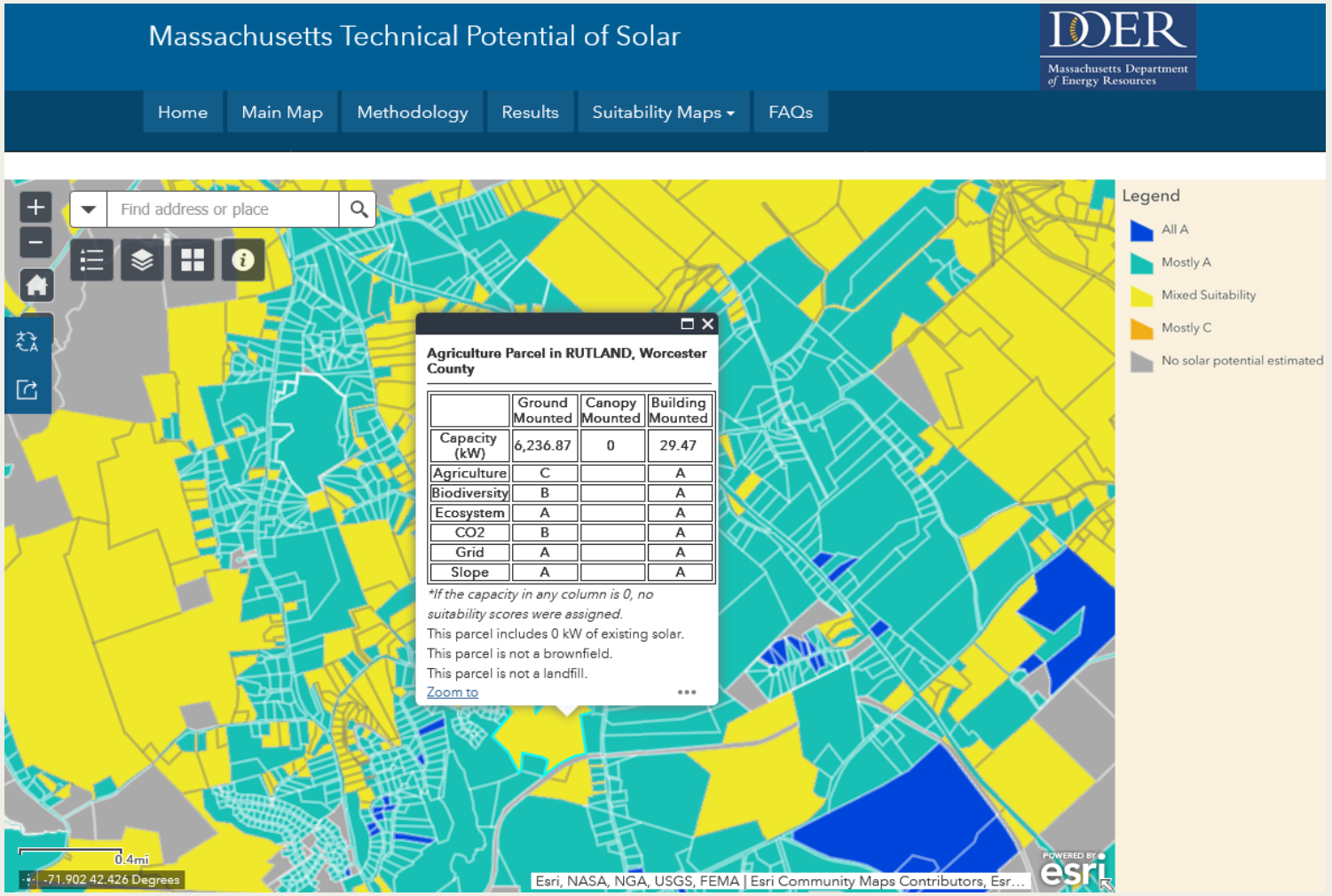


ALIGN EXISTING PLANS & EFFORTS

Including but not limited to:

- Clean Energy and Climate Plans
- Recommendations of the Climate Chief
- A Home for Everyone
- ResilientMass
- Team Massachusetts
- Beyond Mobility
- Building for Tomorrow
- Climatetech Economic Development Strategy & Implementation Plan
- Resilient Lands Initiative
- Biodiversity Conservation Goals for the Commonwealth

INCORPORATING EXISTING STATE INITIATIVES



BUILD ON EXISTING EFFORTS

Examples:

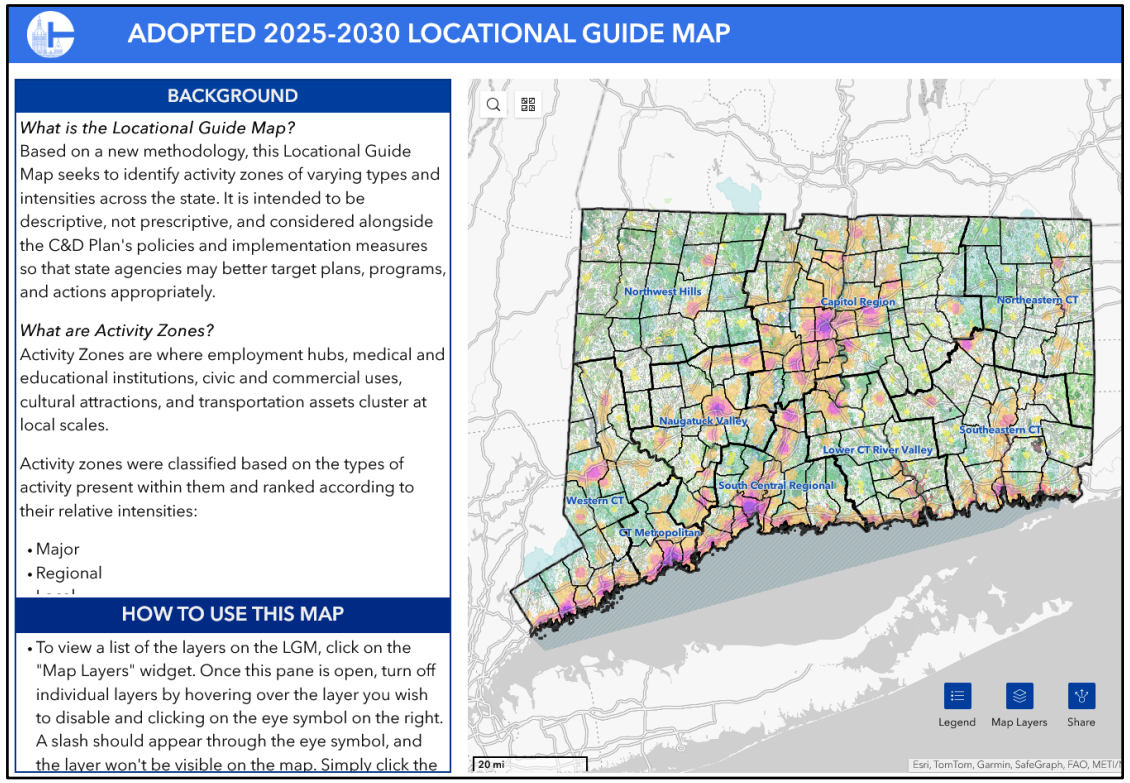
- Technical Potential of Solar Study (DOER) and energy siting and permitting reforms (2024 Climate Act)
- RMAT Resilient Design Standards Tool

ALIGN FRAMEOWKRS

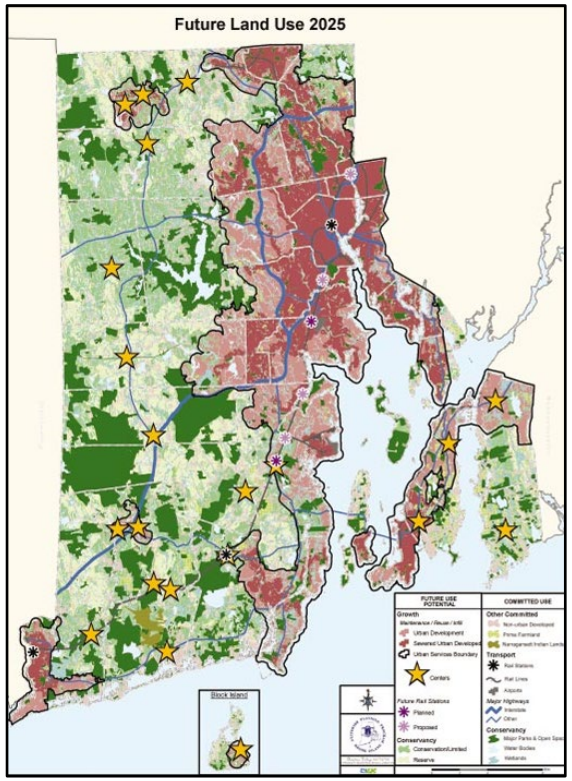
- Integrate current data and best practices into a unified GIS framework
- Apply proven processes from past initiatives to streamline policy adoption and funding

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

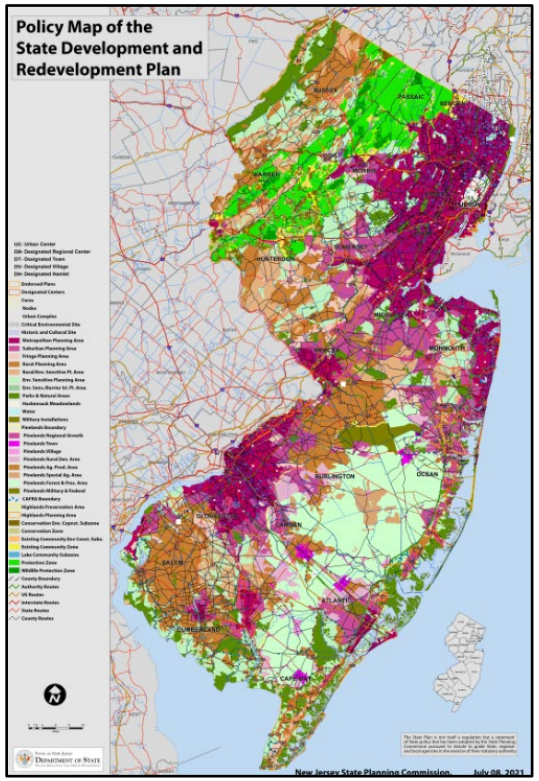
At least a dozen states have plans that are instruments of state policy intended to guide coordinated land use actions and investments



Connecticut Locational Guide Map (pictured) and Connecticut Conservation & Development Policies Plan



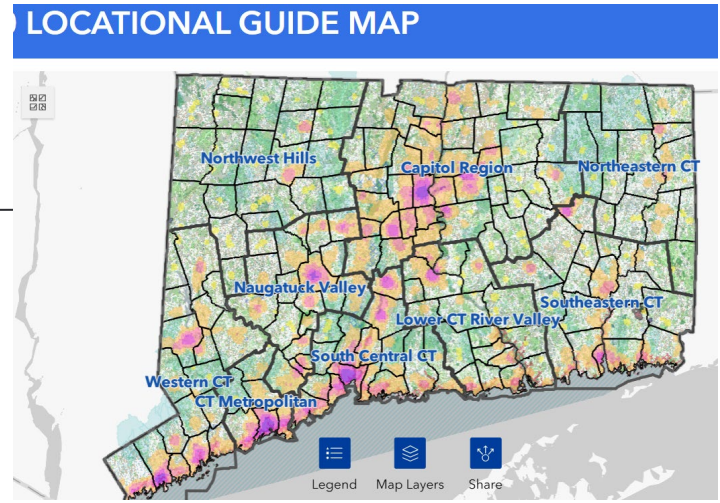
Rhode Island State Land Use Policies and Plan

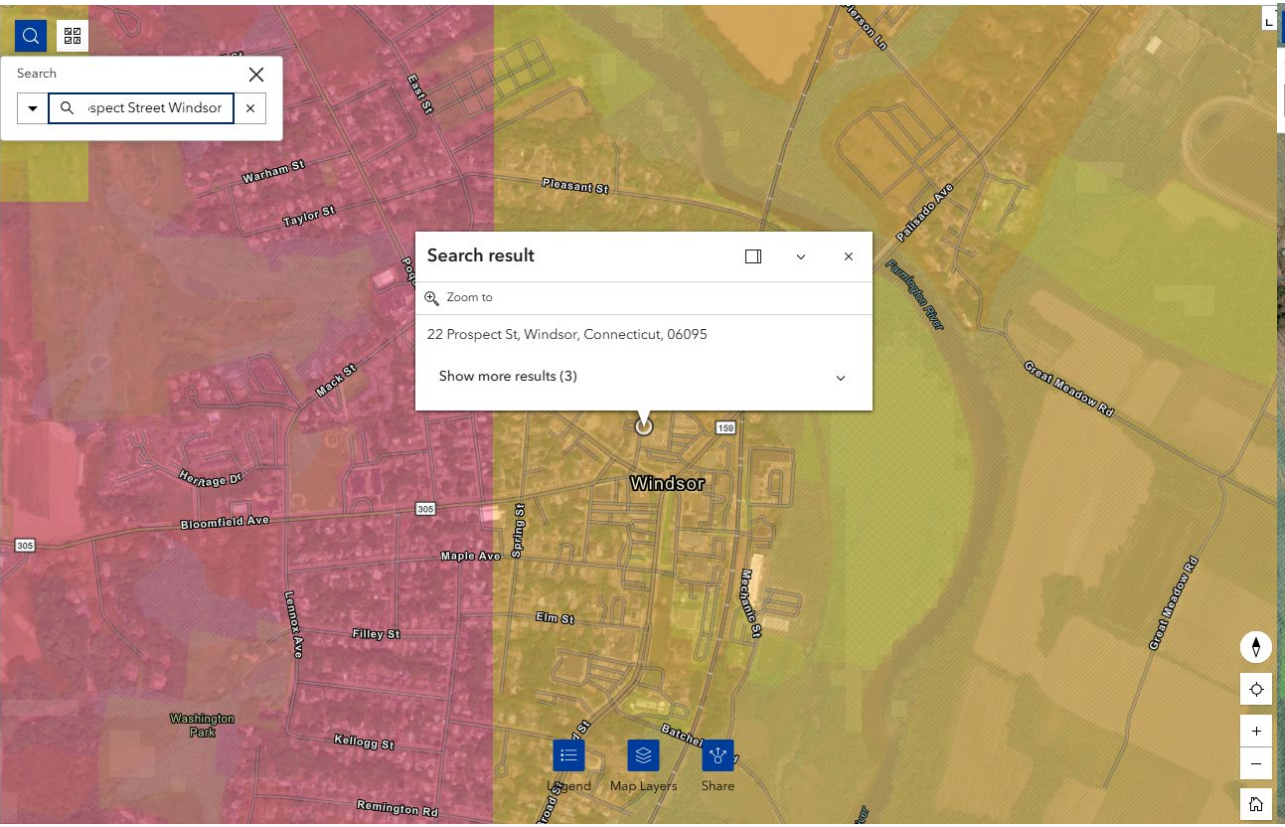


New Jersey State Development Plan

EXAMPLES FROM OTHER STATES

Connecticut Locational Guide Map





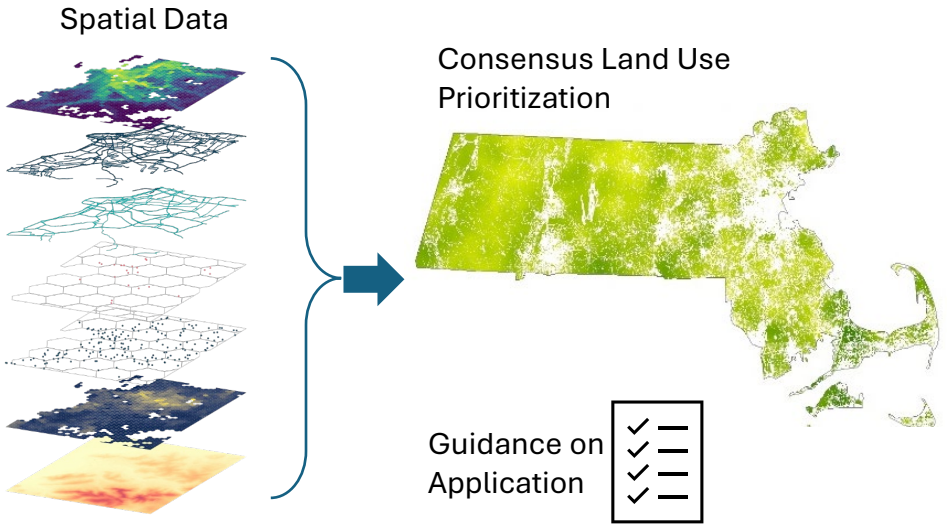
PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Strategy & Map:

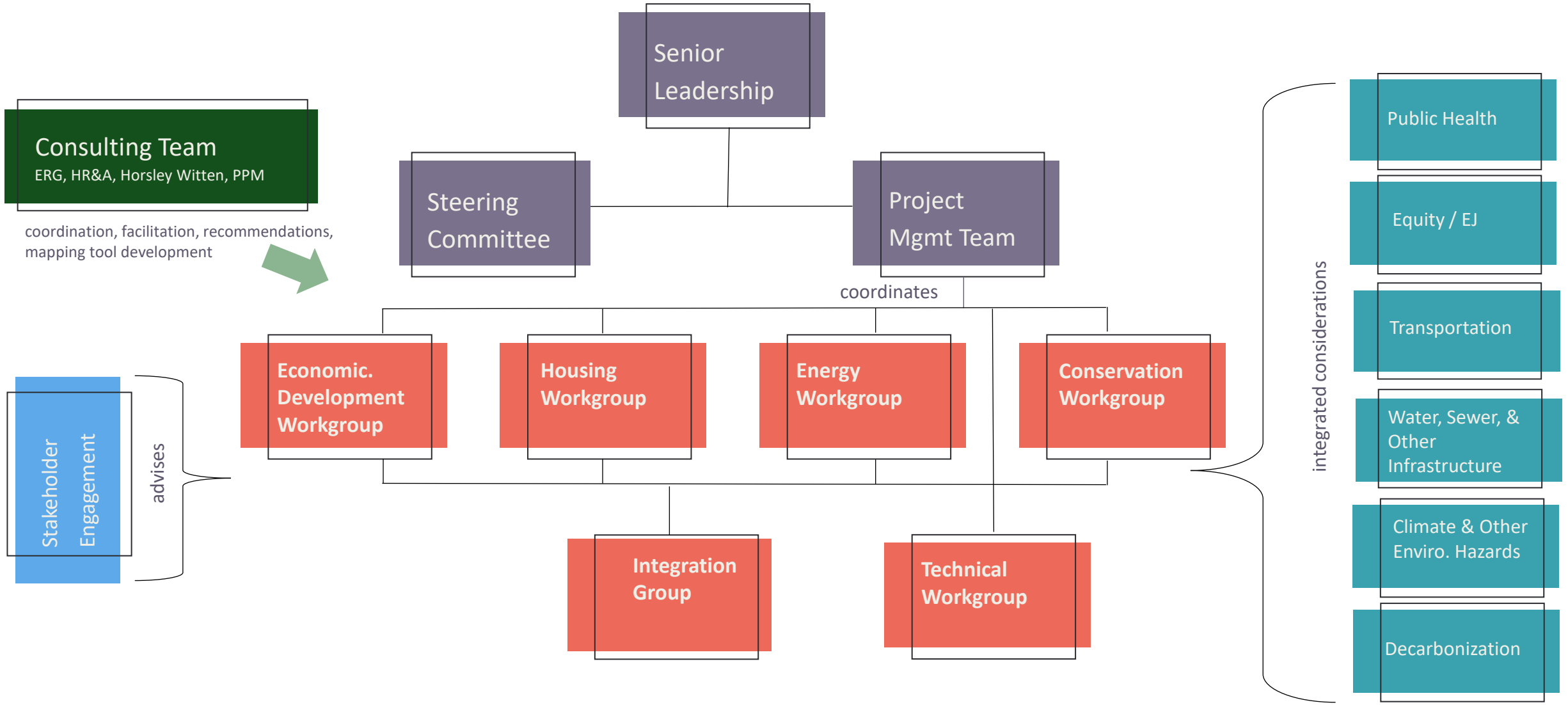
- Interagency agreement on preferred future land uses
- Guide for interagency policy, permitting, and funding decisions

GIS Planning Tool:

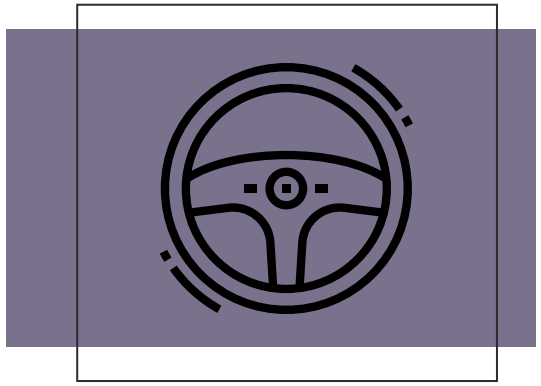
- Interactive geospatial tool for consistent land use decision-making across agencies



PROJECT ORGANIZATION

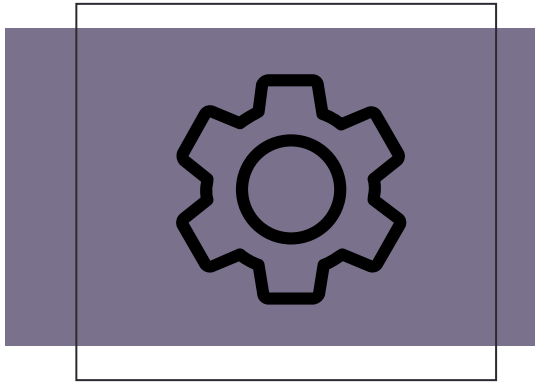


CORE PROJECT TEAMS



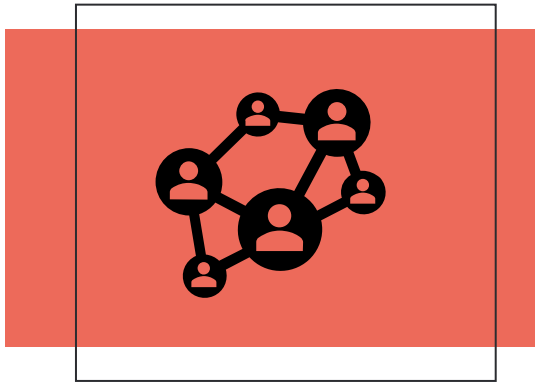
Steering Committee

Provides leadership, sets strategic direction, ensures interagency coordination, and resolves challenging policy questions about land use tradeoffs.



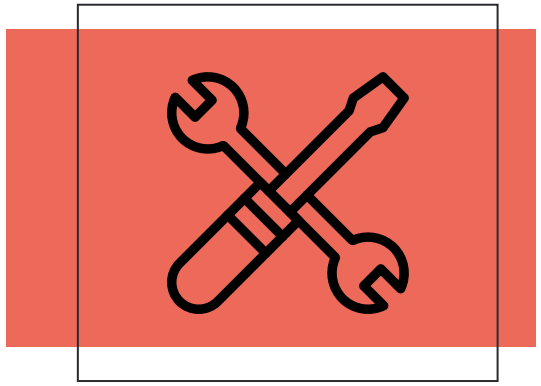
Project Management Team

Manages initiative operations, including coordination of consultants, workgroups, steering committee, and engagement efforts. Identifies key decision-points to bring to the steering committee.



Integration Group

Brings together representatives from other workgroups to coordinate work, address cross-cutting considerations, and try to resolve conflicting priorities.



Technical Workgroup

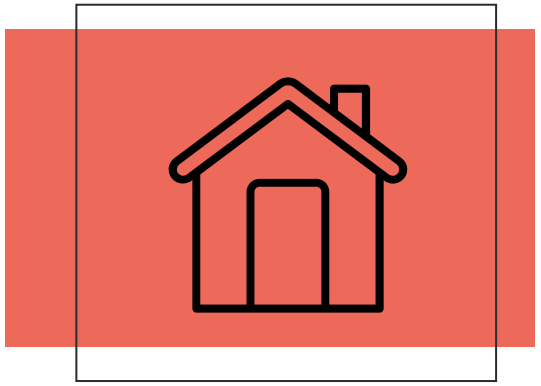
Guides design and development of the MILUS GIS mapping tools. Helps identify, assemble, and review data addressing land use and location priorities.

TOPICAL WORKGROUPS

Energy Infrastructure Workgroup

Identifies optimal locations to build or upgrade energy infrastructure, considering priorities like:

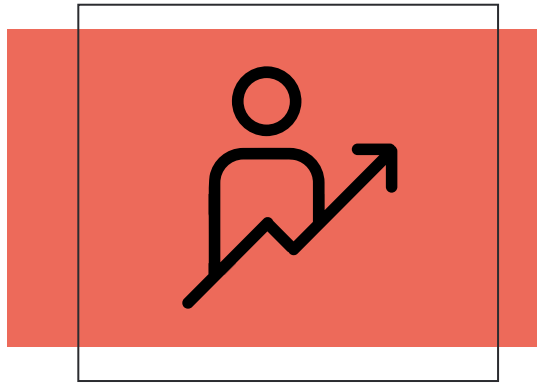
- Anticipated load growth
- Clean generation needs
- Environmental impacts



Housing Workgroup

Identifies optimal locations for housing growth, considering priorities like:

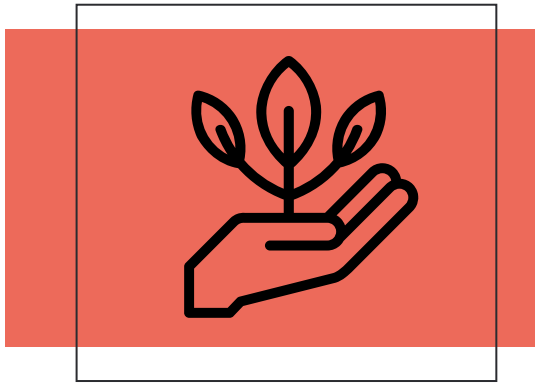
- Infrastructure
- Access to jobs and services
- Environmental impacts
- Climate resilience



Economic Development Workgroup

Identifies optimal locations for development, considering priorities like:

- Infrastructure
- Access to business needs
- Environmental impacts
- Climate resilience

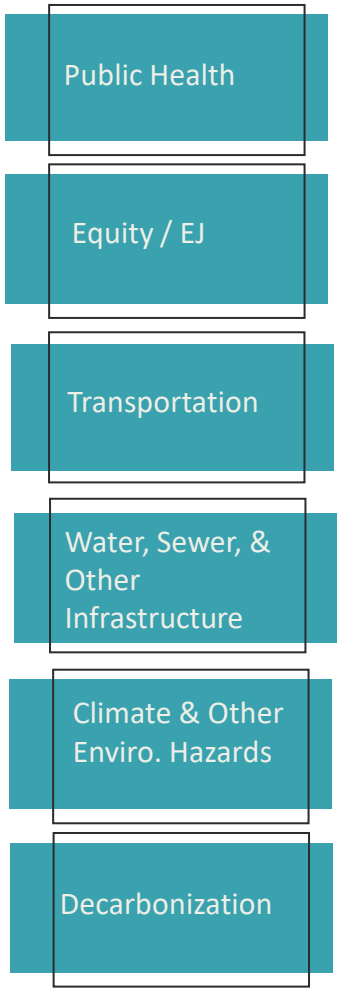


Conservation Workgroup

Identifies the most important land and environmental resources to protect from development or degradation, considering priorities like:

- Habitat and biodiversity
- Carbon storage
- Water supply protection

INTEGRATED CONSIDERATIONS (select examples)



Environmental Justice and Equity

- How can different types of development be sited in areas with existing environmental burdens and vulnerable populations (e.g., especially Gateway Cities) in a manner that benefits rather than further burdens these communities?

Transportation

- What areas are currently well-served by clean transportation options and could accommodate new development with good accessibility?
- What transportation improvements could be implemented to facilitate growth, offer better accessibility, and provide clean transportation options in areas that are well-suited for development?

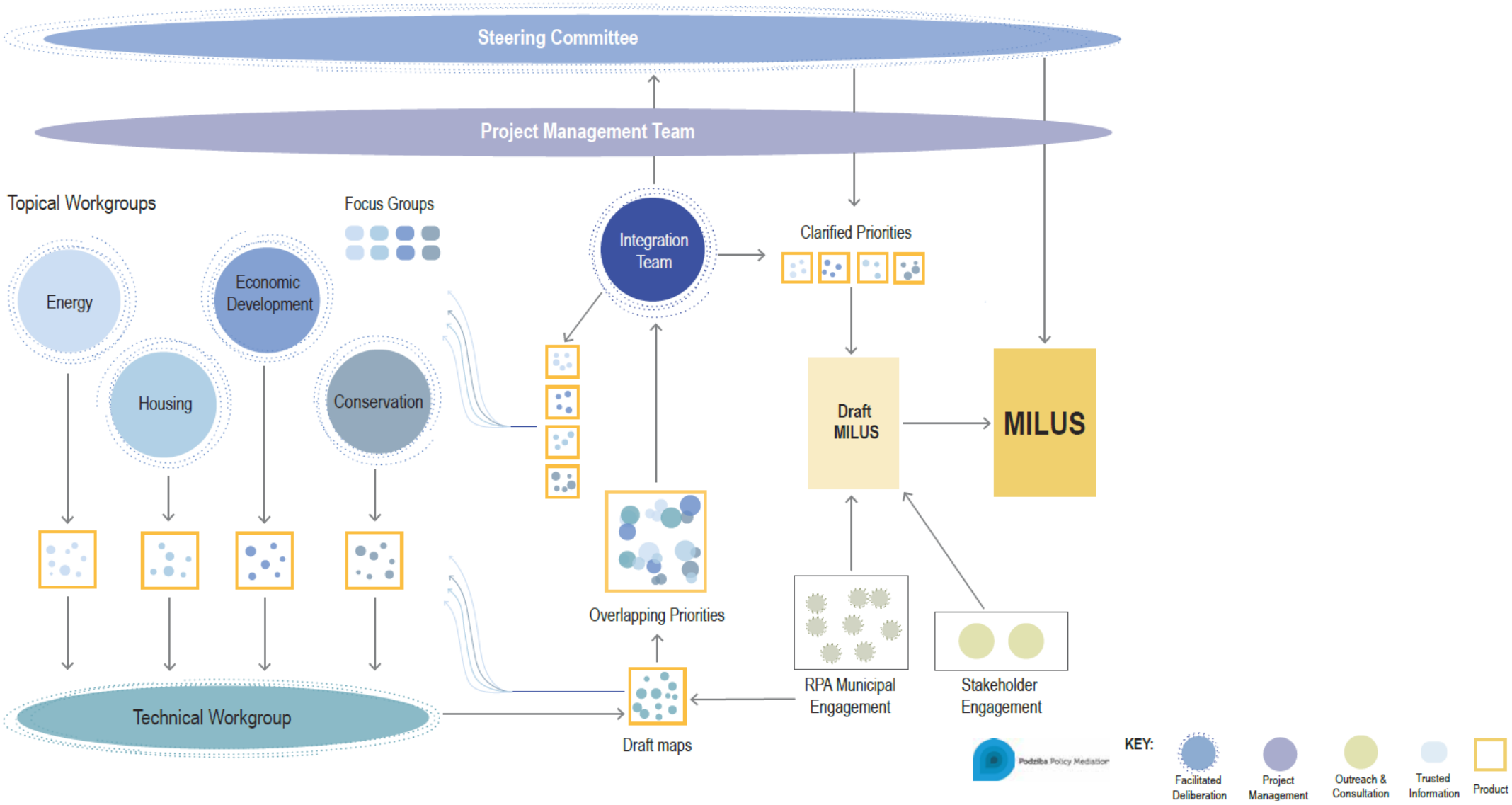
Climate and Environmental Hazards

- Where should new development and infrastructure investments be avoided to enhance resilience and minimize environmental hazards like flooding?

Decarbonization

- How can land use and siting be used to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, preserve carbon sequestration capacity, reduce energy demand, and ease the transition to a low-carbon future, in alignment with the state's clean energy and climate plans?

MILUS Process Map



MILUS USE CASES (select examples)

User Type	Use Application	Expected Outcome
Senior policy makers and regulators (EEA, HLC, EOED, MassDOT, etc.)	Visualize geographic extents of land use priorities, policies, and law and potential application of policies; geographic distinctions to help apply different regulatory approaches and permitting conditions	More efficient and consistent regulatory decision-making
State agency program managers (EEA, HLC, EOED, MassDOT, etc.)	Evaluate grant proposals and investment programs (e.g., MassWorks, HousingWorks, state capital investments)	State investments decisions are better aligned with shared statewide land use priorities
Housing planners (HLC, OEJE, RPAs, developers, housing authorities, CPC Housing Trusts, CDCs)	Identify optimal sites for housing development (incl. new, preservation, redevelopment) to meet housing needs	More sustainable and equitable housing development; easier and streamlined permitting
Transportation planners (MassDOT, MBTA, MPOs/RPAs, RTAs, municipal)	Identify priorities for transportation capital/infrastructure project siting. Indicate where future transportation might be shaped by other land use/population changes	Sustainable, equitable housing development; coordinated siting & investment; transit that supports higher-density growth
Municipalities and local planners	Align spending, zoning, and plans with state objectives; develop competitive grant applications that align with state objectives	Stronger alignment with statewide priorities and funding success
Regional planners (RPAs, MPOs, MBTA/RTAs, MWRA etc.)	Integrate MILUS into regional land use strategies / planning; assist communities in doing same; prioritize transportation sector investments	Cohesive regional plans aligned with statewide goals
Real estate developers and **financiers**	Identify promising development locations; development and value opportunities; also areas to avoid or develop to withstand (e.g., flood hazards)	Development proposals aligned with MILUS, reducing risk; easier and streamlined/accelerated state-level permitting

ANTICIPATING CONCERNS & CHALLENGES

Anticipated Concern	Addressing Concerns
Coordinating across multiple agencies and data systems, with variety of data schemas	Incorporate existing agency initiatives, plans, studies, and tools
	Build extract-transform-load processes into development of GIS tool as necessary
Balancing multiple objectives (e.g., rapid housing development & land conservation)	Employ facilitated consensus-building to reconcile conflicting objectives
Developing an appropriate engagement strategy and securing stakeholder buy-in from local governments and private partners	Establish clear stakeholder engagement channels: working groups, focus groups, and public feedback
	Ensure sufficient outside engagement to ground outcome without delaying the effort
	Work closely with RPAs and identify municipal and private sector champions to drive local implementation

EXPECTED OUTCOMES & BENEFITS

Desired Outcome	Intended Impact
Agency leaders assess actions, plans, and regs against the Strategy & Tool for consistency. Policy choices as to where to incentivize econ. development, housing, conservation, & other land use outcomes are guided by the MILUS & GIS tool.	Land use going forward more often advances the objectives of multiple agencies (e.g., housing growth, land conservation, energy siting, etc.) and less frequently conflicts.
Stakeholders have a clear understanding of state land use goals and where their funding and other requests are likely to meet with success.	Plans, projects, regulations, investments, etc. become increasingly consistent with state goals.
	Development is more fiscally responsible, equitable, energy efficient, resilient, etc. and less land consumptive, polluting, etc.
	Permitting, investment, and other development related decisions are made more quickly, reducing costs.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Engaging Commonwealth Agencies

- Participation by leadership, program managers, and technical staff in steering committee, workgroups, and briefings
- Includes EEA, EOTSS, OCIR, HLC, EOED, MassDOT, DPH, MBTA, MassCEC, MassDevelopment, and more

Engaging External Stakeholders & Perspectives

Developing outreach and communications plan with project consultants to:

- **Obtain expert/stakeholder perspectives** from NGOs, municipal governments**,** private sector organizations, and subject matter experts
- **Facilitate targeted focus groups** to gather feedback on the Strategy & GIS Tool
- **Integrate feedback** to refine effort

Engaging Regional and Local Government

- Include regional planning agencies and municipal associations (e.g., MARPA, MMA) with briefings at key junctures
- Partnering with Regional Planning Agencies, including:
  - Participation in workgroups
  - Integration of regional land use planning perspective, and existing data and tools
  - Lead engagement with municipalities through regional gatherings to brief and receive input on MILUS prioritizations, maps, and tool

MILUS PROJECT TIMELINE

Spring '25

- Convene Project Management Team
- Convene Technical Workgroup
- Procure consultant

Summer '25

- Convene Steering Committee
- Complete initial ‘Wire frame’ conceptual design for GIS tools
- Onboard consultant

Fall '25

- Steering committee assessment and process design
- Reconvene Technical Workgroup
- Convene topical land use workgroups
- Develop stakeholder engagement plan

Winter '25/'26

- Draft MILUS strategy
- Create draft MILUS GIS mapping tools
- Stakeholder engagement

Spring '26

- Revise and refine draft MILUS strategy
- Revise and refine MILUS GIS mapping tool
- Stakeholder engagement

Summer ‘26

- Finalize draft MILUS strategy
- Finalize MILUS GIS mapping tool
- Begin outreach for MILUS launch
- Launch MILUS and begin integrating into agency decision-making

MILUS WORKGROUP TIMELINE

Q4 2025/early Q1 2026

Land Use Priorities & Draft Suitability Maps

Q1 2026

Map Refinement, Framework for Better Integration

Q2 2026

Map Integration, Tool Use-Case Testing

Q3 2026

Finalize and Launch Strategy and Tool

Topical Workgroup Initial Phase

Goal: Define priority land uses for each topic, establish locational suitability criteria for each use, and produce draft priority area map(s)

Table-Setting

MILUS Overview & Working Group Objectives

Priorities

Priority Land Uses & Suitability Criteria

Initial Priority Maps

Suitability Maps by Priority Land Uses by WG Topics

Refinement & Integration

Layering across Priority Maps & Cross-WG Integration

CALL TO ACTION / QUESTIONS?

Recap: A data-driven, collaborative framework for land use decisions that aligns state goals and priorities.

Next Steps: Get workgroups underway, engage in land use/location priority-setting, and develop use cases for the Strategy in agency decisions.

Thank You. We welcome your questions and look forward to your support.