

# GPCOG Executive Committee

## AGENDA

**Amended Version: 3/8/21 6 p.m.**

**Wednesday, March 10, 2021**

**Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

Click below to join the meeting by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83280526656?pwd=UVJ4T2xQbmJROFNlbnVhNytNaHdXUT09>

Passcode: 376167

Or join by phone by calling: +13017158592

Webinar ID: 1 301 715 8592

Note: As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 PACTS and GPCOG is holding all committee meetings via [Zoom conferencing technology](#). We remain committed to full public access and participation in our meetings through remote access during the COVID-19 crisis. Remote meetings will be held in accordance with the requirements of [LD 2167, Public Law Chapter 618](#).

- 1. Welcome and Introductions – Nat Tupper, President**
- 2. Acceptance of 2/10/21 Minutes (Attachment A)**
- 3. Public Comment**

Residents of the region are invited to share up to 3 minutes of comment on any topic, including items on the agenda.

**4. Executive Director’s Report (Attachments B & C) – 5 min.**

**5. Spotlight: Sustainability – 10 min.**

This month’s project spotlight will be presented by Sara Mills-Knapp, Sustainability Program Manager.

**6. Authorization for Direct Recipient Application to the Federal Transit Administration (Attachment D) – 5 min.**

Staff Report:

GPCOG wrote and received a grant for Human Services Coordinated Research, funded through Section 5312 Federal Transit Administration funding. This project, called *Mobility Solutions for Maine: Building a Multi-Sector Network to Drive Improved Coordination and Access*, is a statewide effort to support better demand-response transit for older adults, People with Disabilities, and rural residents. The funding is most easily administered directly to GPCOG, but GPCOG was not eligible because it is not a “direct recipient” of federal transit funding. As it sounds, a direct recipient can receive funds directly from the Federal Transit Administration. To get started on the grant work, MaineDOT agreed to be the grant administrator until GPCOG applied for and was approved as a direct recipient.

Becoming a direct recipient will simplify the administration of the current grant, while also providing the opportunity to become a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration funding for future grants, whether through Section 5312 or other FTA programs. The PACTS Policy Committee passed a resolution authorizing GPCOG to apply for Urbanized Area Formula assistance on behalf of the PACTS MPO.

In order to complete GPCOG’s application to FTA, the GPCOG Executive Committee must vote to approve the resolution included as Attachment D.

Recommended Action:

Vote to approve the attached resolution authorizing GPCOG to become a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration funding.

**7. FY22 Priorities - 20 min.**

Staff Report:

GPCOG's Executive Committee will set its FY22 priorities to feed into the FY22 budget development process.

The majority of GPCOG's work is grant- and contract-funded. This work includes transportation planning and allocating funds, land use planning, economic development planning, brownfields redevelopment, clean fuels and vehicles, and small business loans. Member dues provide the local match for most of this foundational work we do, but dues also provide more flexible resources that allow GPCOG to respond to member needs and requests and allow us to generally just do more. GPCOG also has the ability to shift its focus over time by aligning grants-seeking with priorities.

While the bulk of the FY22 workplan will be determined by existing grant and contract obligations, this discussion will focus on how to best focus unrestricted resources and grants development, based on the Executive Committee's priorities for the region, our members, and the agency.

For reference, below are last year's FY21 priorities. Note the Executive Committee set these two days before Maine shut-down due to the pandemic. The Executive Committee worked with staff over this entirety of this past year to ensure GPCOG pivoted to addressing the impact of the pandemic and its economic fall-out in our region.

### **Adopted FY21 Priorities**

- Further enhance member services by:
  - aggregating specific, targeted technical assistance services,
  - finding opportunities for municipalities to share and enhance services, equipment and staff,
  - providing technical assistance on sustainability, and
  - exploring the possibility of providing grant-writing services for municipalities or groups of municipalities.
- Build regional, public support for expanding resources for transportation investments.
- Work with municipalities to expand housing choices at priority centers served by public transit.
- Catalyze cooperation amongst transit agencies, with a focus on improving the customer experience.

- Be a technical resource and implementation partner to our members and the state on transportation and climate.
- Be a technical resource and implementation partner to our members and the state on expanding digital access.

In this meeting, staff will briefly review our progress against the FY21 goals and how the work changed in this most unusual of years. Staff will present draft priorities focused on how GPCOG should continue to address the pandemic and build resilience in the region.

Recommended Action: Set GPCOG’s FY22 priorities.

## **8. Performance Goals for Executive Director (Attachment E) – 20 min.**

Staff Report:

Nat Tupper worked with the GPCOG and PACTS officers to develop performance goals for Kristina for consideration by GPCOG’s Executive Committee. These can be found in Attachment E.

Recommended Action:

Set the annual performance goals for the Executive Director.

## **9. Next Strategic Plan - 5 min.**

Staff Report:

At our last meeting, the Executive Committee decided GPCOG should update its [5-year strategic plan](#), which was adopted in May 2017 and expires in May 2022, and directed staff to develop a scope and budget for the update for the FY22 budget.

While we are in the waning months of the pandemic, there remains an extraordinary uncertainty about what lies ahead. Over the last year, GPCOG has had to ramp up its services and its capacity. It remains unclear whether and how long the demand for and the resources for GPCOG’s work to address the pandemic and related impacts will sustain. An update with a shorter time horizon might be more useful than a full, five-year update.

Recommended Action:

Decide on a time horizon for the strategic plan update.

## **10. Executive Session: Executive Director’s Annual Performance Evaluation - 20 min.**

Pursuant to [1 MRS §405\(6\)\(A\)](#), the Executive Committee will enter executive session to conduct the annual performance review of GPCOG’s Executive Director.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Agenda Items**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| April 14: | FY22 Budget – First Draft   |
| May 12:   | FY22 Budget – Final Recommendation to General Assembly<br>FY22 Officers and Executive Committee Nominations<br>Adoption of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update<br>FY22 Meeting Calendar<br>Investment Policy |
| May 26:   | General Assembly and Summit   |

**Attachment A**

**GPCOG Executive Committee  
MINUTES**

**February 10, 2021**

**In Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Jarrold Maxfield	Windham
Sandy Carder	Gray
Justin Poirier	Chebeague Island
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Carmen Lone	Bridgton
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Kristina Egan, Tony Plante, Chris Hall, and Rick Harbison	GPCOG Staff

**Welcome**

Nat Tupper, President, opened the meeting, which was held via Zoom.

**Acceptance of 1/13/21 Minutes**

Sue Witonis moved approval of the 1/13/21 meeting minutes. Sandy Carder seconded. The roll was called. Matt, Justin, and Kate abstained. The remaining members were in favor.

**Public Comment**

No public comment was provided.

**Executive Director's Report**

Chris Hall updated the committee about the meeting with the staff of Senators Susan Collins and Angus King which Nat, Sandy, and Matt also attended. The federal delegation staff heard organizational

priorities, regional member voices on ongoing challenges, and staff views of how GPCOG can assist the region. Follow up items include providing information about the stimulus projects submitted to GPCOG by members and providing feedback on existing federal programs that could be improved to better serve Maine. The federal staff requested a follow up meeting in a few weeks. Sandy added that a stimulus bill provide state and federal funding is needed, match money for federal funding is sometimes challenging, and funding for engineering and planning is essential for shovel ready projects.

Commissioner Witonis is working to set up a meeting requested by the Metro Regional Coalition to discuss the County's potential role in addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Sue added that all the commissioners are engaging in conversations about this topic and intend to have a workshop style format. Kristina mentioned that the City of Portland convened a large group of stakeholders who are planning for another group of asylees arriving in Maine.

GPCOG will hire a grant manager/foundation liaison to help raise funds for regional priorities. Sue asked how this position will be funded. It will be through the administrative line item and will be a position with a limited term, to allow for testing the value of the position. Carmen asked if the grant writer will seek private funding and compete with local nonprofits. Kristina said that the position could do that, although the intention is to augment the amount of resources for the region, not to compete.

GPCOG recently received approval of a \$50,000 grant from Maine Community Foundation for broadband work and for a \$50,000 grant from the Maine Office of Tourism to promote winter dining in Maine.

### **Spotlight: Transit Tomorrow**

Rick Harbison, Senior Planner, has been managing [Transit Tomorrow](#), the long range transit plan. Rick presented the four main recommendations: make transit easier, create frequent connections, improve rapid transit, and support land use and our ability to create transit friendly places. The public comment period for the plan resulted in a lot of input. The next step is to review all the public comments. The final plan will be adopted in March. This plan is only as good as the people who champion it, therefore it needs the support from the region.

Justin reminded the group that Auburn is doing a holistic evaluation of transit routes and asked if there were any thoughts about interconnection with other COGs. Kristina mentioned that the next plan, Transit Together, will take a fresh look at the whole network in the region. Sandy appreciated how the plan included Gray, encouraging the expansion of ridership outside the downtown center. Kate added that the transit committee in South Portland is excited about the possibility of rapid transit and local circulators. She noted that zoning is driving the transit decisions and cautioned the plan to go deeply

into the details to be sure to value what's already happening on the ground (like green spaces and dense population).

## **FY22 Member Dues**

GPCOG is beginning the budget process for fiscal year 2022. Because of the pandemic, FY21 offered members a 20% credit resulting in \$100,000 reduction of GPCOG member dues. Kristina asked the Executive Committee what dues credit, if any, should be offered to members this next year. In response to a question about whether staff had a recommendation, Kristina said that at the time at which the decision was made for FY21, the revenue impact was expected to be a 20% reduction in municipal revenues. While the data isn't conclusive yet, the revenue impact seems not to be as dire as projected. Staff is also optimistic about federal aid through stimulus packages, so a 10% reduction of might be a reasonable level to provide relief.

Matt moved approval of a 10% member dues credit for FY22, and Sandy seconded. The roll was called, and all were in favor.

## **Multifamily Housing, Zoning and Transit**

Chris Hall pointed to the [Multifamily Housing and Land Use Regulation](#) report and summarized the key components of how to align ordinances and practices in order to expand housing choices and enhance transit mobility options. Jeff Levine was commissioned to look at the seven Metro Regional Coalition communities and map out the multifamily housing potential. In the report, Jeff gave a description of the communities and their likelihood of developing multifamily housing, informed by zoning, infrastructure, ordinances and other factors. Overlaid with Rick's work to identify transit centers in Transit Tomorrow, Jeff found that progress has been made in current projects, as well as opportunities to do more.

Jeff's work will be expanded to Cumberland, Saco, Biddeford, Yarmouth, Windham and Freeport, encouraging PACTS to do more transit oriented developing planning. This will move the plan into action in the context of local realities and create options that reinforce villages and support public transportation.

Carmen encouraged GPCOG to talk with Linda LaCroix, Bridgton's community development director, who is developing housing options while considering essential services like wastewater infrastructure. Bridgton is a home for young professionals and should be considered in these plans. Jerre offered comments on the transit-oriented planning in terms of growth, and that Westbrook is on board. Nat wished for a deeper dive into examples, like a representative case study. Jarrod offered that in

Windham, officials have enacted permit caps on growth to curb duplex development in areas that do not support smart growth.

### **Next Strategic Plan**

The major priorities of the current strategic plan are to strengthen cities and towns, lead the region to prosperity, and operate with excellence. With the pandemic, a lot has changed externally resulting in a lot of change internally. Staff has been struggling with the increased requests for services and projects. Kristina asked if GPCOG should dedicate resources to renew strategic plan sooner than summer 2022. Matt thinks it would be wise to look at an update with input from both internal and external members of GPCOG. Sandy concurred. Nat offered guidance on thinking more broadly, incorporating the how the democratic process has shifted, and how that affects local governance. Staff will bring back a specific proposal for budget and timeline in the FY22 workplan and budget.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Agenda Items**

The Maine Clean Communities program needs the Executive Committee to individually email their approval for a new electric vehicle lease agreement. Kate Lewis was excited that the incentive program allows for such savings for municipalities. Kristina offered a trial of this new EV to the executive committee and all councilors and elected officials who are interested. Sandy moved approval of the proposed lease agreement for the Kia Niro, and Kate seconded. Nat called roll and all were in favor.

Kristina asked the Executive Committee for agenda items for the next committee meeting. Nat reminded the Committee to provide feedback for Kristina's annual performance review.

### **Adjourn**

Jarrod moved to adjourn, and Susan seconded. All agreed.

## Attachment B

# Executive Director's Report

### Strategic Priority – Serve our Members

- **Regional Voice.**
  - In early February, Nat, Sandy, and Matt met with the staff of Senators King and Collins. As follow-up, GPCOG staff met again with staff to share thoughts on how to enhance and tweak existing federal programs to benefit the region.
  - GPCOG is in the process of coordinating a letter from the state's MPOs and transit agencies in favor of the \$30B in transit funding in the House of Representatives' American Rescue Plan Act.
  - GPCOG testified to the Maine Legislature in favor of LD 446, *An Act to Reestablish the State Planning Office*. Our oral testimony focused on the need for state leadership to coordinate transportation, economic development, housing and environment decisions, and that could happen through a State Planning Office 2.0 or a myriad of other ways. The written testimony is included in Attachment C.
- **Chairs in a Circle.** This peer gathering of Chairs and Vice Chairs was facilitated by Craig Freshley and focused on how to lead your community to set budget priorities. It was attended by 11 Chairs and Vice Chairs from 9 member communities.
- **Upcoming events:**
  - **3/24 10:30 a.m.: Transit Tomorrow Release.** The final long-range public transportation plan will be released at a close-out event with Commissioner Van Note.
  - **4/29 6 p.m. (tentative): Attracting New Civic Leaders.** This event will feature diverse elected officials, talking about why they ran for office and why its important for young people, People of Color, and other under-represented residents to step into civic leadership roles in our communities.

## Strategic Priority – Lead the Region Toward Sustainable Prosperity

- **Transit Tomorrow.** The region’s long range plan was adopted by PACTS. To read it in full, click [here](#).

## Strategic Priority – Operate with Excellence

- **Grants & Contracts development.** Below is an inventory of the grants received for FY21 and pending grants that have been submitted since the start of FY21.

## FY21 Grants and Contracts Development

July 2020 through June 2021

Approved	Fiscal Agent	Amount
<b>U.S. Economic Development Administration:</b> To help fund pandemic recovery and resiliency work in the GPCOG region through expanding the loan programs, growing the new Greater Portland Resilience Exchange, and helping communities expand broadband	GPCOG	\$ 400,000
<b>Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant Program:</b> To fund a regional COVID-19 relief loan program	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 300,000
<b>City of South Portland MicroLoan Program:</b> To facilitate the city's microloan program	GPCOG	\$ 60,000
<b>Town of Yarmouth MicroLoan Program:</b> To facilitate the town's microloan program	GPCOG	\$ 100,000
<b>CARES Act Transit Planning:</b> To fund assessment to improve the efficiency of the transit network and to lead a regional communications campaign to recover transit ridership	GPCOG	\$ 640,000
<b>Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps):</b> To launch the Resilience Corps	GPCOG	\$ 217,000
<b>Brownfields RLF Supplemental FY21-FY23:</b> To provide loans and limited subgrants for cleanup of areas designated as brownfields	GPCOG	\$ 200,000
<b>Maine Technology Institute:</b> To launch the Digital Infrastructure Frontiers Series with Maine Broadband Coalition	GPCOG	\$ 20,000
<b>Department of Transportation - Rural TA:</b> To provide transportation technical assistance to municipalities outside the PACTS region	GPCOG	\$ 84,500
<b>Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry - General:</b> To provide land use planning technical assistance to inland municipalities	GPCOG	\$ 15,130
<b>Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry - Coastal:</b> To provide land use planning technical assistance to coastal communities and to fulfill the tasks outlined in the Coastal Work Plan	GPCOG	\$ 33,157
<b>US Department of Energy Clean Cities:</b> To support Maine Clean Communities program	GPCOG	\$ 90,000
<b>Maine Community Foundation:</b> To fund GPCOG efforts to provide racial equity training and resources to local municipalities	GPCOG	\$ 6,000
<b>Combined proposal to 4 funding sources (Connect Maine, Maine Community Foundation, Island Institute, Northern Forest Center):</b> To launch a statewide data collection initiative to assess broadband speeds	GPCOG	\$ 52,000
<b>Maine Department of Economic Development:</b> To support WinterDine	GPCOG	\$ 50,000
Submitted	Fiscal Agent	Amount
<b>Brownfields RLF Supplemental Funding Request:</b> To provide loans for brownfields clean-up. Open to current RLF grantees having committed at least 75% of all RLF funds; GPCOG has committed over 85%.	GPCOG	\$ 500,000
<b>National Endowment of the Arts Our Town Program:</b> To support a second round of "Creative Shelters" installations celebrating diversity through original art on bus shelters in Greater Portland	Creative Portland	\$ 100,000
<b>EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant FY21:</b> To fund identification, environmental site assessment, and remediation planning for contaminated sites to assist in redevelopment	GPCOG	\$ 300,000

## Attachment C

### Testimony on LD 446

March 3, 2021

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Senate Chair  
Representative Ann Matlack, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Re: LD 446, *An Act To Reestablish the State Planning Office*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee;

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in support of LD 446, *An Act To Reestablish the State Planning Office*. We are grateful that Rep. Bailey has given us all an opportunity to take a new look at how well-resourced planning can advance Maine's economic and community priorities.

GPCOG serves 30 municipal members, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, and the County of Cumberland. We also staff the Metropolitan Planning Organization which allocates federal transportation funds to roads and public transportation, which extends our service territory into York County, including Saco and Biddeford.

GPCOG is the Portland region's Economic Development District, as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and we support numerous programs like Maine Clean Communities and the Maine Broadband Coalition.

Based on our experience working with municipalities in our region, we believe regional implementation of state policy goals gives Maine the best chance for success, especially in the areas of economic recovery and sustainability.

We have a keen appreciation of the need for regional support for individual municipalities who do not have the resources themselves to implement state goals. We also see the increased efficiency and effectiveness that regional action provides, as compared to relying on individual communities acting independently.

Effective regional planning to implement state goals requires resources that are not currently available. We know from our experience as a Metropolitan Planning Organization that does the long-range transportation planning for our area, and as an economic development district, that effective regional action must be appropriately funded.

If it would be useful to the committee, we would be pleased to provide you with more information for your work session about regional planning successes as an illustration of what is possible when communities work together to achieve things they cannot do individually on their own.

As you work toward structuring local, regional, state, and federal partnerships to improve our economy, support our infrastructure, and safeguard our future, we urge you to consider using this bill as a vehicle for exploring how to align government efforts at every level, and properly fund the work needed to create jobs and expand infrastructure investments in Maine.

For all these reasons we ask you to support LD 446. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of this bill and please let me know if I can do anything else to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Kristina Egan

Executive Director

Greater Portland Council of Governments

## Attachment D

### Resolution to File Application as Direct Recipient

Resolution authorizing the filing of applications with the Federal Transit Administration, an operating administration of the United States Department of Transportation, for federal transportation assistance authorized by 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53; title 23, United States Code, or other federal statutes administered by the Federal Transit Administration.

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration has been delegated authority to award federal financial assistance for a transportation project;

WHEREAS, the grant or cooperative agreement for federal financial assistance will impose certain obligations upon the applicant, and may require the applicant to provide the local share of the project cost;

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certifications and assurances to the Federal Transit Administration required for the project;

WHEREAS the applicant is currently executing the scope of work in FTA award ME-2020-004-01 *Mobility Solutions for Maine: Building a Multi-Sector Network to Drive Improved Coordination and Access* funded with Human Services Coordinated Research (Section 5312);

WHEREAS the applicant in the future may seek FTA grants to support the region's or the state's transit networks and seeks to simplify grant administration and reduce administrative burdens on MaineDOT;

WHEREAS the applicant (the Greater Portland Council of Governments) has recently merged with the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System) and the MPO is a standing committee of GPCOG with the full authority granted to an MPO under federal law;

WHEREAS the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization authorized GPCOG to apply for urbanized area funding on behalf of PACTS on January 28, 2021;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)

1. That the Executive Director of the Greater Portland Council of Governments is authorized to execute and file an application as a direct recipient for federal assistance on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments with the Federal Transit Administration as authorized by 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, title 23, United States Code, or other federal statutes authorizing a project administered by the Federal Transit Administration. PACTS remains the designated recipient as defined by 49 U.S.C. 5307 (a)(2).

2. That the Executive Director of the Greater Portland Council of Governments is authorized to execute and file with its applications the annual certifications and assurances and other documents the Federal Transportation Administration requires before awarding a federal assistance grant or cooperative agreements.
3. That the Executive Director of the Greater Portland Council of Governments is authorized to execute grant and cooperative agreements with the Federal Transit Administration on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

#### CERTIFICATION

The undersigned duly qualified President of the Greater Portland Council of Governments, acting on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted a legally convened meeting of the Greater Portland Council of Governments held on March 10, 2021.

Nat Tupper

President, GPCOG

March 10, 2021

## Attachment E

### Draft Performance Goals for Executive Director

- I.A. Attract new and more resources to the region, with an FY22 focus on **encouraging the development of shovel ready and shovel worthy** projects from throughout the COG and PACTS municipalities.
- I.B. Provide/support a mechanism/collaborative process for advancing priority projects in transportation, housing, environment, public health, resilience, workforce development, substance abuse/mental /behavioral health, economic development, and/or arts/cultural/community development, etc. For transportation projects, develop a process for prioritizing these projects, distinct from but in alignment with PACTS' Funding Framework. Transportation projects may appear in either or both lists. PACTS lists are developed for formula or competitive submittal to a known or anticipated actual funding source. Priority shovel ready projects will be prioritized to (a) prepare for supplemental or special funding if it should become available, and (b) help demonstrate the need and readiness and pre-planning of the members municipalities and agencies in order to leverage supplemental or special funding, and (c) promote regional priorities and strategies, planning and cooperation.
- II. In FY22, support the rebuilding of post-pandemic ridership by facilitating, **supporting, and encouraging voluntary transit agency coordination and cooperation**, including but not limited to:
  - (a) Seamless, easy, convenient rider experience and services
  - (b) Better connected routes and schedules
  - (c) Capital and Operating cost efficiencies, improvements
  - (d) Shared and coordinated transit marketing and ridership promotion
  - (e) Developing for adoption TOD zoning and policies in communities.
- III. **Lead, guide, and support an update of the Strategic Plan for GPCOG focused on pandemic recovery and community resilience in this period of uncertainty and transition**, including consideration of, but not limited to the following:
  - (a) Staffing capacity and workload alignment and focus to strategic plans and priorities.
  - (b) Continue to strengthen/enhance member municipality/agency value including elected official and professional staff growth, training, mutual support/inspiration and collaborations,
  - (c) Identification and recommendation of action steps for COG and members for:
    - i. Economic recovery, including broadband expansion and improvements
    - ii. Sustainability, including sustainable/sensible land use and development and planning and climate action
    - iii. Social equity, including expanding economic opportunity and racial equity