



## Metro Regional Coalition Agenda

**October 12, 2021  
Noon to 1:30 pm  
Via ZOOM Conferencing**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85676857436>

Webinar ID: 856 7685 7436, or call 646.558.8656

Note: At the direction of the GPCOG Executive Committee, PACTS and GPCOG are holding all committee meetings via [Zoom conferencing technology](#) due to the continuing pandemic. We remain committed to full public participation in our meetings through remote access during the COVID-19 crisis. Remote meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of [LD 32, 2021 Public Law 290](#) and [1 MRSA Chapter 13, Subchapter 1](#).

**Participants are reminded that this meeting will be recorded and posted on the GPCOG website.**

### **1. Welcome and introductions (5 minutes)**

Chair Amy Kuhn will call the meeting to order and ask attendees to briefly introduce themselves.

### **2. Acceptance of minutes from the September 14, 2021 meeting (Attachment A)**

### **3. Public Comment (3 minutes per person)**

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

### **4. COVID-19 Roundtable (15 minutes)**

**Staff report:** This standing agenda item is intended to provide a forum for MRC members to share with each other their pandemic-related questions, learning, and community updates.

**Action:** Information exchange.

### **5. MRC Priorities for 2021-2022 (Attachment B) (30 minutes)**

**Staff report:** Based on MRC member input, staff have drafted a set of proposed MRC priorities divided into 'action' and 'education' items (see Attachment B). Members will review and finalize MRC priorities for 2021-2022 including the following:

#### Action and Advocacy Priorities

- COVID-19
- Homelessness
- Housing Choices

#### Education Priorities

- Racial Equity
- Climate Resilience
- Roux Institute
- Workforce
- Electrification

**Action:** Set MRC priorities.

## **6. Cumberland County ARPA update (20 minutes)**

**Staff report:** Cumberland County Commissioners have recently outlined their approach to distributing available ARPA funds. Members will receive an update (see accompanying pdf slides) and have an opportunity to discuss alignment between the County's process and priorities, and MRC priorities including regional homelessness strategies and expanding housing choice efforts.

**Action:** Information and discussion of possible partnership opportunities with Cumberland County.

## **7. Other Updates**

**Staff report:** As time allows.

## **8. Adjourn**

## **Upcoming Meetings**

All meetings from Noon to 1:30 pm on Zoom

November 9, 2021  
December 14, 2021  
January 11, 2022  
February 8, 2022  
March 8, 2022  
April 12, 2022  
May 10, 2022  
June 14, 2022

## Attachment A



# DRAFT Metro Regional Coalition Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2021

### In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Amy Kuhn, Chair	Falmouth
Nathan Poore	Falmouth
Scott Morelli	South Portland
Jeremy Gabrielson	Cape Elizabeth
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Virginia Wilder-Cross	Gorham
Ephrem Paraschak	Gorham
Anne McGuire	Portland
Michael Foley	Westbrook
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Jim Gailey	Cumberland County
<b>For GPCOG:</b>	Kristina Egan, Chris Hall, Vanessa Farr, Rick Harbison, Zoe Miller,

### 1. Welcome and introductions

Amy Kuhn called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm and welcomed everyone.

### 2. Acceptance of the May 11, 2021, meeting minutes

Michael Foley moved acceptance of the minutes from the May 11, 2021, MRC meeting, seconded by Virginia Wilder-Cross. The motion passed by roll call vote with all in favor except Scott Morelli abstaining.

### 3. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

#### 4. Presentation and Input on Connect 2045

GPCOG Senior Planner Rick Harbison and Director of Community Engagement Zoe Miller briefed members on [Connect 2045](#), GPCOG's regional long-range transportation plan which launched earlier this summer. Members also had the opportunity to share their transportation questions and priorities through an interactive exercise. Rick and Zoe's slides are attached to these minutes.

Rick began by explaining that Connect 2045 is a long range transportation plan for our region. The planning process includes multiple public engagement efforts, and is designed to identify current and future transportation needs in the region. The plan will consider all modes of transportation, and all users.

Connect 2045 is structured to meet federal requirements, including incorporation of a set of planning factors that define a wide range of transportation outcomes. Please see the slides for more detail.

Rick explained how public engagement and ideas will be the foundation for building the plan over an 18 month period (6/21 to 12/22). A 30 member Advisory Committee, broadly representing the region's transportation stakeholders, will work with staff to refine public input and shape the final draft of the plan, which will then be shared for public comment, and reviewed and approved both by PACTS and the federal government.

Members were encouraged to visit the Connect 2045 [website](#) and share the planning process with their networks.

Zoe Miller presented the 'Question Campaign,' Connect 2045's initial public engagement effort. Zoe described the outreach work as beginning of a regional conversation with the public about the future of transportation. By using questions, the project managers receive the widest range of ideas and concerns. Zoe explained that public input would be refined by the project Advisory Committee and focused through workshops into proposed action steps.

Zoe led a group exercise with MRC members that gave them the opportunity to share their priorities, questions, and concerns. That input will be included in the project's public engagement results.

In Q&A, members discussed connections between the project and climate action, including the potential to connect the work to other grants that GPCOG is seeking. Members agreed that the project's survey tools should clearly allow for input from members of the public who work in the region, but live outside it.

Rick and Zoe urged members to share the Connect 2045 [website](#) with their networks and help gather the greatest possible amount of public engagement.

#### 5. Housing Update

GPCOG Senior Planner Vanessa Farr shared an update on the work of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions ([Commission website](#)). Vanessa is attending the Commission meetings and reported that the group is planning on discussing

policy recommendations in their later meetings. Earlier Commission meetings, include one on racism and zoning, can be found on the Commission website.

Vanessa is participating as a member of the Maine Municipal Association advisory group on the Commission, where there is wide agreement that towns and cities will need technical assistance and funding for any required zoning changes recommended by the Commission.

On a related topic, Vanessa noted that she will be working later this fall to track progress on housing choice growth in the region, as well as best practices for effective zoning tools.

## **6. MRC Priorities for 2021-2022**

Members discussed last year's MRC priorities and considered MRC priorities the coming year.

COVID-19 remains a top concern for members, with an emphasis on information sharing on local decision (like remote or in-person meeting, mask requirements, and vaccine mandates) and discussion of how federal, state, county, and local resources are being used (including funds received under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)). Members agreed that pandemic information sharing will be a standing agenda item for MRC going forward.

Homelessness was recommended as a priority for this year, as it was last year. Members agreed the focus remains on finding a regional solution delivering homeless services.

Racial equity was also retained as a priority for this year, especially as an information action as GPCOG continues to expand its capacity to share diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices.

Housing choice expansion remained as a priority, particularly considering the legislative Commission's work.

Last year's priority of coordinating state and regional economic and climate action policies was removed as a priority for this year, but all acknowledged that the work would continue outside MRC's priority focus.

New priorities were suggested for further consideration.

- Climate action was proposed, especially regarding local vulnerability assessments, and GPCOG support for local response planning.
- Workforce growth and retention was suggested, particularly regarding municipal staffing challenges. Partnerships with chambers of commerce in the region were identified as one way to advance this priority.
- In-migration to the region was identified as a challenge for many related systems, including housing, transportation, and the economy.
- Electrification was put forward as a priority that will impact local governments as rapid growth in the non-carbon power sector continues.

Members agreed that the 2021-2022 MRC work plan should be divided into a simpler format with two categories of activities. Some priorities would be set up for an action outcome, while others would be set up as an informational outcome.

Staff will produce a draft work plan reflecting this input for MRC member discussion and finalization at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **7. Adjourn**

At 1:30 pm Amy Kuhn adjourned the meeting by acclamation.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

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## Attachment B

# Metro Regional Coalition 2021-2022 WORKPLAN *DRAFT*

Below is a draft summary of the Coalition's goals for fall 2021 through summer 2022 and its planned actions to achieve those goals.

### *Priorities for Action and Advocacy*

#### 1. COVID-19 Response

**Goals:**

- Provide a peer-to-peer exchange for sharing ideas and best practices to meet the response and recovery needs of coalition members.
- Maximize the value of municipal, county, state and federal resources through advocacy for resources and by aligning and aggregating funding for regional priorities.

**Actions:**

- Provide a standing agenda item at MRC meetings to allow members to share pandemic experiences and insights with each other.
- Identify regional and multi-municipal investments, and advocate for them.

#### 2. Homelessness

**Goal:** To house more people experiencing homelessness in the Greater Portland area through a regional strategy that distributes the costs of homeless services more equitably across communities.

**Action:** Advocate for a regional homeless services strategy and for state and other resources to implement that strategy.

#### 3. Housing Choices

**Goal:** To continue expanding housing choices and increasing the supply of workforce housing in MRC communities for low- and middle-income households in the region by 10% between 2020 and 2025.

**Actions:**

- Publish second annual report on member communities' progress in expanding housing choices.
- Advocate for state legislative housing policy changes that support local housing policy options, provide funding for regional and local technical assistance, and set achievable policy goals for municipalities advancing housing choice.

### *Education Priorities*

- **Racial Equity** - To continue to advance racial equity and anti-racism in our region, the MRC will share best practices to improve racial equity in their community.
- **Climate Resiliency** - GPCOG staff will share information about local and regional climate action, including a new climate vulnerability mapping tool.
- **Roux Institute** – To explore how municipalities can partner with the new Roux Institute, the MRC will host an exploratory discussion with Roux.
- **Workforce** – To grow and retain the region's workforce, the MRC will reach out to the region's chambers to learn more about ongoing efforts.
- **Electrification** – To prepare MRC members for managing the continued growth of non-carbon based energy generation and transmission, the MRC will develop and deliver an educational syllabus for MRC members.