
GPCOG Executive Committee Annual Retreat AGENDA

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Noon – 2 p.m.

Click below to join the meeting by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83280526656?pwd=UVJ4T2xQbmJROFNlbWFpNytNaHdXUT09>

Passcode: 376167

Or join by phone by calling: +13017158592

Webinar ID: 1 301 715 8592

Note: As of March 31st, 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 9/9/20 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. Spotlight: Recovery Dashboard – 10 min.**

Chris Hall and Abe Dailey will present a new data dashboard to help the region track economic indicators and our progress toward recovery.

- 5. GPCOG’s Role in the Region - 90 min.**

Staff Report:

We will begin our discussion with a brief overview of GPCOG’s work and organizational structure. Our core work is providing regionalized member services and planning for our

transportation, land use and economic future. But, this has been an extraordinary year. We'll discuss FY20's shifting priorities and which pieces of the standing portfolio of work continue, and which are shifting to meet this moment. (For a deeper dive before the meeting, you can peruse GPCOG's FY21 workplan, included as Attachment B.)

Members will then discuss GPCOG's role. The strategic plan calls on GPCOG to be a convenor, a catalyst, and a conduit for funds. These roles will be discussed, particularly in light of the wide variety of issues and initiatives with which GPCOG is engaged or being asked to engage in.

Items for Next Agenda - 5 min.

Executive Committee members will share ideas for upcoming agenda items.

Upcoming Meetings

- November 11
- January 13, 2021
- February 10
- March 10
- April 14
- May 12
- May 26, 2020 – General Assembly and Summit

Attachment A

GPCOG Executive Committee MINUTES

September 9, 2020

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Jarrold Maxfield	Windham
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Claude Morgan	South Portland
Sandy Carder	Gray
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Kristina Egan, Andrew Butcher, Tony Plante, Chris Hall, Chris Chop	GPCOG Staff

Welcome

Nat Tupper, President, opened the meeting, which was held via Zoom. He welcomed Susan Witonis and Jarrod Maxfield as new Executive Committee members. Chris Chop is the new Transportation Director of GPCOG, and was introduced to the group.

Acceptance of 5/13/20 Minutes

Claude Morgan moved approval of the 5/13/20 meeting minutes. Matthew Sturgis seconded. The roll was called. All were in favor.

Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Executive Director's Report

GPCOG has been asked by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to help determine eligibility for and distribute COVID-19 funding relief to small businesses and non-profits. 3,720 applications were received statewide and \$200 million is available. To date, GPCOG has received 750 applications, with the deadline being close of business 9/9. Claude asked if GPCOG was satisfied with the grant application numbers. Kristina answered that GPCOG had anticipated greater demand.

Marcel Ntagora, GPCOG's Outreach Associate, is providing direct support to immigrant-owned businesses at the Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center to help with outreach.

GPCOG partnered with Creative Portland and METRO on new art installations at three bus shelters. Funding came from the National Endowment for the Arts. PACTS is currently scoping a follow-on study to Transit Tomorrow called "Transit Together." This will explore opportunities for transit agencies to better align routes and will be funded with \$380,000 CARES Act transit funds.

Nat asked about the source of funding for the \$30M match for the \$15M broadband bond approved in July. Andrew said the match will come from private sources.

Tony explained the cable franchise fee audit, and that Spectrum owed \$165,000 to the nine local towns who participated in the audit.

Spotlight: Resilience Corps

Andrew Butcher presented a new project in collaboration with Volunteer Maine and AmeriCorps. GPCOG was awarded the equivalent of \$270,000 to support fourteen AmeriCorps members starting this October. Resilience Corps members will work in cohorts to advance regional priorities and municipal projects, at no cost to members for FY21.

Sandy said Gray's interest was piqued. Nat asked if all the potential projects have been selected or if there were more community partnerships needed. Andrew answered that proposals are still welcome from member communities.

Andrew said GPCOG is offering Corps support to other organizations, too, like transit agencies and environmental organizations. Matt asked whether Corps members could help with elections. Tony said that is likely unallowable as AmeriCorps prohibits voter registration and contact.

Round Robin on GPCOG Priorities

Kristina briefed the group on GPCOG's strategic priorities: to serve members, lead the region, and operate with excellence. Executive Committee members offered the following comments:

- Structural racism is a big challenge, particularly policing. Pairing social workers and other specialists with police can reduce use of force. One of Gray's Councilors, Ann Gass, has been sharing information on how this has been achieved in other parts of the country. GPCOG may want to facilitate a process with police forces throughout the region to develop a common set of protocols on use of force and mutual aid agreements that recognize the protocols in the host municipality.
- The region doesn't have strong public health infrastructure. This includes health inspections as well as broader work to protect and enhance public health. A regional approach may be necessary if there isn't a rebuilding of state public health infrastructure.

- The region continues to face growth and development challenges. Explosive, uncontrolled growth is harmful. Convening planners and electeds focused on these challenges could create more regional approaches and actions to enhance housing choices and preserve natural areas. Our region's planners used to convene, and we should revive that regular conversation. As many comprehensive plans are about to expire, we should look at them all together and work to regionalize the planning process. This could also help to harmonize the categories of zoning.
- Our public transit system remains fragmented, and it is important for GPCOG to continue to support our transit agencies in collaborating to improve the customer experience.
- Strengthening broadband is an issue throughout the GPCOG region, not just in rural areas.

These priorities will be further discussed at next month's annual retreat.

Economic Recovery Priorities

This agenda item was skipped due to time constraints.

Advocacy Priorities

Claude said he supported the advocacy priorities as presented. In addition to those priorities listed in the agenda packet, Chris proposed GPCOG support funding for a regional homeless shelter.

Both Maine senators are reaching out to GPCOG to discuss the need for additional pandemic recovery federal aid. Nat asked about whether there was need to support the Roux Institute and USM professional studies with advocacy. Chris responded that the University of Maine Foundation is fundraising and that David Roux's circle of private supporters are supporting the Roux Institute. GPCOG will be supportive as needed.

Matt moved to adopt the advocacy priorities, with the addition of funding for new homelessness shelter. Sandy seconded. The roll was called, and all those present voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m..

Attachment B

FY21 GPCOG & PACTS Workplan

Background

GPCOG's 5-year Strategic Plan was adopted in May of 2017, laying out a path to strengthen cities and towns by providing responsive member services, leading the region toward sustainable prosperity, and operating with excellence. FY18 and FY19 marked the first two years of the plan's implementation. FY20 was to be a continuation of the work in FY18 and FY19, further refining and strengthening programs and systems, and being an effective vehicle and voice for the region. FY20's annual workplan goals were accomplished, but in unexpected ways due to the global SARS-CoV-2 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the pandemic's immediate and ongoing economic fallout, and civil unrest following the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis.

This document starts with a high-level discussion of what we accomplished in FY18 and FY19, how our priorities for FY20 shifted and how we responded, our plans for FY21, and a look ahead to the remaining year of the strategic plan. We expect both FY21 and FY22 to be different than we expected! We aim to be forward-looking and intentional in addressing the existing and emerging needs and challenges for our region, but also have to be prepared to respond as those needs and challenges change.

Accomplishments and Priorities

In FY18, GPCOG focused on putting in place building blocks essential to *operating with excellence*. We:

1. Built a stronger staff team, bringing on a new Finance Manager and Transportation Director, and creating a leadership team.
2. Fixed the agency's financial management challenges, including creating a healthy cash flow.
3. Integrated with PACTS, entering an agreement with PACTS to immediately integrate staff and to move the two organizations toward a full merger.
4. Led a process to boost PACTS' effectiveness, which resulted in PACTS reforms recommendations adopted by PACTS members.
5. Established two important new internal systems - performance management for staff and grants and contracts development.

While management spent a lot of time inwardly-focused, the agency still *served our members*. Our cooperative purchasing program generated savings. We provided planning and data services, and won a statewide award for a neighborhood plan for South Portland. The biggest FY18 accomplishments in *leading the region toward prosperity* were completing the first phase of the regional transit plan, *Moving Southern Maine Forward*, and revamping the gpcog.org website.

In FY19, GPCOG began refocusing from inward-facing challenges to providing more outward-focused value. The agency received its first increment of the new dues increase and intensified its focus on delivering value to members. In FY19, we:

1. Further strengthened staff capacity with a new Director of Municipal Collaboration to serve members and a new Public Information Officer to communicate to the region. We also created a high-functioning leadership team.
2. Delivered new member services to strengthen the 25 cities and towns in GPCOG, including launching Regional Voice advocacy, providing sub-regions with assistance on technical challenges, such as stormwater permitting, providing technical assistance for transit-oriented development, and offering a leadership training for local elected officials.
3. Made substantial progress on implementing the new PACTS reforms, including launching an effort to create a short-list of priority investments for the region and providing shared recommendations on the Turnpike widening.
4. Catalyzed new capital investments in the region through PACTS support of \$6M in ferry funding and \$2M for electric buses and attracting \$800,000 in new brownfields funding and \$275,000 in small business loan funds.
5. Launched *Transit Tomorrow* and the implementation phase of the short-term transit improvements with active participation from all of the region's seven transit agencies and published the *Southern Maine Mobility Guide* to inform residents of transportation options.
6. Began providing timely, topical, and regular information to the region by creating data-rich community profiles, regularly publishing e-newsletters, and launching a social media presence.
7. Implemented internal systems to operate with excellence, including regular financial reporting to governing boards, an agency-wide workplan, and a system for tracking and managing our work.

In FY20, GPCOG received its second increment of new dues funding, which enabled the agency to respond to two major crises. The first was the summer of 2019 arrival of asylum seekers. We worked as a region to find temporary housing through the newly-created Host Homes program, as well as to find permanent housing. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, GPCOG quickly pivoted to helping members adapt to the pandemic, leading the region in getting up-and-running virtually, as well as making excellent use of the advocacy foundation laid in the previous year to communicate our municipalities' needs to the Governor and our Congressional delegation. In addition, GPCOG:

1. Added new issue expertise to our staff capacity with a new Director of Innovation and Resilience and a Sustainability Program Manager.
2. Augmented member services by introducing "Coffee with COG" events, identifying \$165,000 owed by Spectrum to 9 of our members, and offering more leadership trainings for elected officials.
3. Helped facilitate an agreement amongst three transit agencies to introduce unified fare payment and fare capping.

4. Allocated about \$20M in federal CARES recovery funds for public transportation to regional transit priorities.
5. Published an award-winning transit-oriented plan for the South Portland Mall.
6. Merged with PACTS.
7. Led and won a statewide bond issue for \$15M for broadband (right after the conclusion of the fiscal year).
8. Crafted climate mitigation and resiliency recommendations for the Maine Climate Council.
9. Created a cohort of 23 Community Transportation Leaders to advise on regional transportation decisions that affect the lives of people who depend on public transit.
10. Grew GPCOG's impact by growing its budget by more than 5%.

In FY21, GPCOG's overriding focus is to help the region economically recover from the pandemic. We will funnel federal recovery grants and loans to small businesses, deploy a Resilience Corps of young professionals, select economic recovery priorities with partners and advocate for them, and rebuild transit ridership. PACTS will complete *Transit Tomorrow*, a 30-year investment plan for public transportation and adopt a more objective, transparent, and multi-modal framework for prioritizing regional transportation investments. The agency will also do its part to lead the region toward greater racial equity.

In FY22, resources depending, GPCOG will add a new member service: project development for municipalities and the region. The objective will be to develop shovel-ready projects for grant applications and investments. In this last year of our 5-year strategic plan, we will review our progress and produce a new plan for the next 5 years.

Detailed FY21 Workplan

The spring of 2020 brought significant new challenges to our region, Maine and the nation. The outbreak of COVID-19 required all of us to focus on preventing the spread of the virus and quickly adapt to remote ways of working together. The economic recession, resulting from the pandemic, poses an existential threat to many of our region's businesses and is hurting the welfare of many of our residents. The pandemic and recession further deepened the region's pre-existing inequities, and catalyzed by the death of George Floyd, the region has been called to address long-standing institutional and structural racism.

We analyzed the threats and opportunities of this most extraordinary time, and identified actions GPCOG has the capacity to take to achieve meaningful economic, resiliency, and equity outcomes. While much of GPCOG's portfolio is determined by existing grants and contracts, we plan to flex some of our more flexible resources to support this urgent work. This work is detailed under the "lead the region" section of the below workplan.

This next section describes the whole of PACTS' and GPCOG's workplan, organized under three major strategies outlined in the GPCOG Strategic Plan. Workplan items described in each section will support our work to respond to the pandemic and to emerge as a more resilient and equitable region.

Activities that are *grayed out* are ones that are completed, removed, postponed or incorporated in other activities.

Strategy 1: Strengthen Cities and Towns by Providing Responsive Services

Critical priorities are to:

- Provide responsive services to city and town leaders in slowing the spread of COVID-19 and supporting economic recovery (1.1.1). We'll do this through regular peer convenings (1.1.6.1), advocating for municipal, regional and state needs (2.3), and deploying the Resilience Corps (2.5.8)
- Finalize and announce a multi-municipal joint commitment to expand housing choices. (1.1.2.7)
- Create a plan for the Saco/Biddeford Mill District, which will be our signature TOD plan for this year. (1.1.2.5)
- Begin providing technical assistance on sustainability and high speed internet (broadband) to municipalities (1.1.8.3)
- Replicate the community action planning for racial equity, successfully piloted in the opioid misuse disorder project (resources permitting) (1.1.1)

Below is a full list of all priorities (x.x) and projects (x.x.x), also illustrated by year on the accompanying matrix. Specific project outcomes (x.x.x.x) are shown on the accompanying matrix and not listed here for conciseness:

1.1 Flexibly Serve Members

- 1.1.1 Responsive Member Services** –We will continue to respond to requests from members, with short turn-arounds and high quality data and analysis. In FY21, our focus will be on supporting municipalities as they navigate the pandemic. We'll complete the provision of technical assistance for the new MS4 stormwater permit and renewals of cable franchise agreements, complete the Gray traffic diversion study, and launch racial equity community planning (resources permitting).
- 1.1.2 Transportation Project Management** – PACTS-funded projects are actively managed by staff to ensure projects progress on schedule. For FY21, these projects include Regional Traffic Management Systems, High Crash Locations, the Transit-Oriented Development plans for the Saco/Biddeford Mill District and South Portland's waterfront, as well as multiple new transit projects funded through CARES.

- 1.1.3 Metro Regional Coalition** – We will continue to staff this effective coalition, implement its FY21 work program. In FY20, the pandemic impeded the “State of the Region” release and event, at which the joint resolution to expand housing choices would have been announced. In light of the pandemic, and with anticipated pandemic and climate migration, expanding housing choice (1.1.3.8) continues to be a priority. In FY21, we will make that public announcement, as well as release additional research on housing. Our approach may particularly focus on encouraging infill housing in areas with vacating retail and commercial businesses.
- 1.1.4 Municipal Planning** – Our goal is to have a reputation for high quality work in convening, project managing, and delivering planning services. At the outset of FY21, no planning services were in the pipeline with the exception of GPCOG’s regular work to prepare transportation chapters for municipal comp plans.
- 1.1.5 Data Services** – This task is no longer a stand-alone task.
- 1.1.6 Regional Coordination** – The goal of this work is to find shared approaches and solutions to common challenges experienced by our members. A continuing activity is regular convenings of municipal managers and public works directors. Other activities are described in 1.1.1. This is a responsive service, and we will continue to look for opportunities to help subgroups of municipalities organize themselves to take action.
- 1.1.7 Lakes Region Coalition** – We assessed member interest in building a Lakes Region Coalition, and concluded there is no need for creating it. No further action needed.
- 1.1.8 Sustainability Technical Assistance** – We will build off Portland’s and South Portland’s One Climate Future and offer municipalities the opportunity to engage us to develop a basic climate plan for their community.
- 1.1.9 Ongoing Member Relationships** – Our goal is to know our members, deliver value, and generate demand for our services. We will meet with newly elected or re-elected officials after June and November elections, continue our many regular convenings, and hold “Coffees with COG” to create a stronger peer network.

1.2 Facilitate Regionalization

- 1.2.1 Shared Solutions** – In FY21, we will explore, with the County, the need for and potential for rebuilding the public health infrastructure in our region. We will also explore the potential for a standardized “See, Click, Fix” approach to capital asset management.

1.3 Cooperatively Purchase

1.3.1 Cooperative Services – The FY21 goal is to implement the program so that the agency breaks even. We will opportunistically welcome new opportunities for sharing high-cost equipment.

1.4 Attract Grants

1.4.1 Municipal Grant Writing – This is not an FY21 activity, and will likely morph into an FY22 activity, “Region Project Development” of preparing shovel-ready projects that advance the region’s priorities, rather than delivering grant-writing services to members.

1.5 Build a Strong Peer Network

1.5.1 Events & Gatherings – We hold events and trainings to create a peer network amongst our members, connect members with the private and social service sectors, and develop civic leadership. All FY21 events will be produced through the lens of regional recovery and resilience:

- Annual Summit: Celebrating the Region!
- Annual “Welcome & Congrats!” reception for newly elected and re-elected officials
- State of the Region’s address – focused on economic recovery
- Coffees with COG – FY21 programming to include municipal climate action planning, the opioid action planning toolkit, resilience in action, and more.
- Leadership trainings for Chairs and Vice Chairs, Councilors, Selectmen – We will offer one of our regular trainings in FY21 and another training for residents, particularly BIPOC, who may want to run for office.
- Planning training for electeds, staff, and planning board members – In FY21, we will convene the GPCOG region planners for discussions and sharing of best practices (not trainings).

1.5.2 Regional Champions – This is not an FY21 activity.

Strategy 2: Lead the Region toward Sustainable Prosperity

Critical priorities are to:

- Help the region economically recover from the pandemic, funneling federal recovery grants (2.5.3) and loans to small businesses (2.5.3) with a focused effort to ensure resources reach BIPOC businesses, deploying a Resilience Corps (2.5.8) of young professionals, preserving vibrant places and targeting investments to recovery zones (2.5.9), and advocating for and implementing other measures for economic resilience emerging from the Regional Resilience Roundtable (2.1.3).
- Rebuild transit ridership through sharing best public health practices for transit operations and launching a public education campaign.
- Publish Transit Tomorrow, providing a blueprint for growing transit in the region (2.1.1)
- Publish a new funding framework for selecting priority transportation investments (2.1.2.4)
- Advance the region's shovel-ready priority transportation investments (2.1.2.3-4)

Below is a full list of all priorities (x.x) and projects (x.x.x), also illustrated by year on the accompanying matrix. Specific project outcomes (x.x.x.x) are shown on the accompanying matrix and not listed here for conciseness:

2.1 Develop a Regional Vision and Plan

- 2.1.1 Regional Transit Plan** – We will complete Transit Tomorrow, identifying the region's transit priorities and mapping TOD districts.
- 2.1.2 Regional Transportation Priorities** – PACTS will shift its work from selecting a short-list of high priority projects to lining up as many shovel-ready projects as possible. We will work with our committees and member municipalities to explore ways in which to leverage state/federal funding, save money and time joint procurement of services/products (e.g. cleaning services, PPE, etc.), and work with municipalities to identify projects that are ready for design and/or construction, with the hope that these projects (or bundle of projects) could be candidates for future state or federal funding packages. This initiative may advance transformative regional projects that have been featured in prior plans and studies.
- 2.1.3 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy** – We will create an online economic dashboard and a resiliency index. We will convene the Regional Resilience Roundtable to guide the region's economic recovery.
- 2.1.4 Active Transportation Plan** – This was completed in FY19. The projects identified in the plan have been included in the "universe of projects" developed during through the

PACTS Priorities Process in FY19. FY21's key outcome is a regional complete streets policy. Other implementation work will be postponed until at least FY22.

2.1.5 Regional Transit Plan Phase 1 Implementation – Moved to section 2.2.

2.1.6 Regional Sustainability Strategy – The newly-formed Sustainability Team is tasked with developing a sustainability strategy to guide the agency's sustainability priorities and activities.

2.1.7 State of the Region – Our first State of the Region was completed in FY20, but never published due to the pandemic's immediate impact on the economy. In FY21, we'll hold a State of the Region event, focused on economic recovery and resilience.

2.1.8 Omitted as a duplicate of 2.1.5

2.1.9 Transit Tomorrow – Incorporated into 2.1.1.

2.1.10 Regional Transportation Plan - In FY21, we will begin the update of the region's long range plan. The plan, while visionary in nature, will reflect all modes of regional transportation and will feature sections on equity/environmental justice, performance measurement, congestion mitigation planning, and financial constraint. The plan will serve as a prominent guiding document for future GPCOG work and will require the TIP to be aligned with the plan's goals, objectives, and priorities. The plan will be completed by the end of CY21.

2.2 Implement Transportation Investments

2.2.1 Long Range Transportation Plan Implementation – This is an ongoing activity to implement Destination 2040. For FY21, the critical priority is to complete a funding framework for transportation investments (see 2.2.8 below).

2.2.2 Transportation Improvement Program – Upon completion of the funding framework in fall 2020, we will turn our attention to revising the TIP Policies and Procedures, with a focus on improving efficiency and setting clear expectations for our members. PACTS will update its MPI policy, as needed. PACTS will select its 2023 capital project list, as well as its CY21 MPI project list, and CY22 Collector Paving project list.

2.2.3 Mobility Management – GPCOG will continue to build mobility management networks both in Southern Maine and statewide. The networks will facilitate better transportation access for underserved communities by advancing cross-sector coordination, informing policy change, and spurring innovation.

2.2.4 Inclusive Transportation – In FY20, GPCOG launched its Community Transportation Leaders program and updated its civil rights plan. In FY21, PACTS will add Community

Transportation Leaders to its decision-making structure and will continue implementing the civil rights plan.

- 2.2.5 Implement Transit Tomorrow** – In FY21, PACTS will implement or do the next level of planning for selected Transit Tomorrow recommendations.
- 2.2.6 Transit Together** - To improve the customer experience, employee satisfaction, and make good use of limited resources, we will facilitate a stakeholder process to develop improvements to the transit network and agency operations.
- 2.2.7 Transit Communications Campaign** – To rebuild the region’s ridership after the shock of the pandemic, we will inform the public about the safety of transit. This is an opportunity to coordinate and synthesize regional marketing and public engagement efforts related to public transportation and pilot a shared communications approach for the transit agencies.
- 2.2.8 Funding Framework** - The PACTS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee will complete its development of a funding framework that integrates transit and roadway projects (including active transportation). The draft framework will be objective, transparent, and easier to understand than the existing structure.
- 2.2.9 Regional Transit Plan Phase 1 Implementation** – In FY20, PACTS advanced electronic fare payment for three providers and adopted a regional fare policy. FY21 will focus on identifying better route connections between systems through Transit Together (2.2.6) and piloting coordinated communications through a public education campaign to rebuild ridership (2.2.7).

2.3 Organize the Voice of the Region

- 2.3.1 Regional Voice** – This activity includes our agency-wide communications and advocacy work. Our top communications priorities for the region are to elevate the following messages:

- Our region faces a profound transportation funding deficit.
- Where we build, and where we don’t build, matter deeply.
- Resilience and innovation will define our future – it’s up to us to control how that happens.

Our FY21 advocacy priorities focus on priorities related to the pandemic and economic recovery and include:

- Permanently permit remote meetings
- Support transportation/ broadband bond

- Pandemic relief funding
- Zoning study bill
- Recovery zone incentives
- State level project development fund
- Climate action
- Fund homeless shelter

2.4 Develop and Communicate Data

2.4.1 Data Services (see above, under Strengthen Cities and Towns) – This task is no longer a stand-alone task. Data development, analysis and communication underpins many of the FY21 workplan activities.

2.5 Catalyze Investments

- 2.5.1 Transportation Funding Allocations** – PACTS will program its annual highway and transit funds, which approximate \$25M. PACTS will also allocate the remaining \$53M in federal CARES funds for transit.
- 2.5.2 Food Manufacturing** – The ‘Scaling for Growth’ USDA grant will successfully conclude by June 2021 on time and on budget.
- 2.5.3 Small Business Loans** – In FY21, our focus is on pumping funding into the economy, through the state’s economic recovery grants, existing GPCOG loan funds, CDBG CARES loan funds, and loan funds we manage for our member municipalities.
- 2.5.4 Brownfields Grants and Loans** – We will continue to be responsive to redevelopment opportunities, while starting to be more intentional and proactive about where we invest. We will continue to develop and maintain an inventory of parcels ripe for redevelopment in priority centers and provide assessment and/or remediation resources, seeking to leverage other public and private investment. With the addition of supplemental RLF funding in FY21, our goal is to commit at least enough remediation funds to be eligible for further assessment, loan, and supplemental funding.
- 2.5.5 Maine Clean Communities** – Through this statewide program, GPCOG will continue to advance vehicle alternative fuel and electrification.
- 2.5.6 Broadband** - GPCOG will continue fiscal sponsorship of the Maine Broadband Coalition’s policy leadership, community capacity building, and educational efforts. Additionally, GPCOG will dedicate efforts to support community based – and multi-

municipal broadband planning and development efforts to increase reliable and affordable high-speed internet.

- 2.5.7 Resilience Exchange** - Seeking to match needs with resources, GPCOG will grow the Greater Portland Resilience Exchange as a platform to support businesses, non-profits and the public sector to partner. In FY21 GPCOG will conduct outreach to dozens of BIPOC businesses and stakeholders in alignment with racial equity and inclusion goals, match Resilience Corps members with local communities, and establish a new communication forum to highlight and showcase examples of resilience exchanges.
- 2.5.8 Resilience Corps** - GPCOG will engage 14 AmeriCorps Members who will be both hosted by member communities and partner agencies to support planning, volunteer engagement, data collection, and project implementation. Corps Members will also be tasked with supporting GPCOG – regional projects around small business recovery, resilience planning, public health, racial equity and climate action.
- 2.5.9 Recovery Zones.** GPCOG will work with municipalities and other stakeholders to align investment resources to vibrant neighborhoods, villages, and downtowns. The objective is to preserve these places, as commercial and retail spaces vacate, and enhance their long-term resilience with strong and climate-resilient transportation, broadband, and green infrastructure, expanded housing choice, and public health access.

Strategy 3: Operate with Excellence

Critical priorities are to:

- Grow our resources for our un- or under-funded priorities, with a focus on retaining the level of capacity we now have past 2022 (3.3.2)
- Strengthen our team’s understanding of structural and institutional racism, and apply an anti-racist lens to all our program areas and operations (3.1.2)
- Consolidate PACTS committees

Below is a full list of all priorities (x.x) and projects (x.x.x), also illustrated by year on the accompanying matrix. Specific project outcomes (x.x.x.x) are shown on the accompanying matrix and not listed here for conciseness:

3.1 Create a Learning Organization

- 3.1.1 Performance Management for Staff** – This is an ongoing activity to continually implement GPCOG’s performance management system in which individual performance expectations are linked to the agency’s work plan and the strategic plan. All staff are annually appraised and regularly coached.

3.1.2 Professional Development – In FY21, our sole focus will be on expanding our agency’s understanding of structural racism and integrating racial equity into GPCOG’s work. The agencywide professional development goals in FY20 - enhancing skills in clear and compelling communications and grants development – may be added back into our professional development work in FY22.

3.2 Build Strong Team

3.2.1 Recruitment – In FY21, due to pandemic relief funds, GPCOG will grow, adding loan management capacity, a program manager for a 14-AmeriCorps Member Resilience Corps, and a digital media specialist for the transit communications campaign. We will recruit other staff, as needed.

3.2.2 Leadership Team & Staff Meetings - We will continue regular staff huddles, transportation, events, and grants/contracts team meetings, and leadership meetings.

3.2.3 Organizational Culture – We will finish the office refresh to create an improved and inspiring workplace, ready for us and our members when we move back into our office. BUT – we will also seriously consider whether we need to retain the level of office space we currently have.

3.2.4 COG-PACTS Merger – This activity is complete.

3.2.5 Human Resources Capacity – In FY21, we will depend on Cumberland County’s HR capacity for many issues. We recognize that a more structured approach to HR is needed as GPCOG grows. In the spring of FY21, we’ll assess whether and how to add capacity.

3.3 Develop Organizational Systems

3.3.1 Financial Management –The critical goal for FY21 is to build out the remaining pieces of the agency-wide budget tool to allow us to make workload adjustments as needed and budget adjustments every 6 months. Ongoing tasks and goals are to obtain a clean audit and ensure good cash flow. GPCOG and the leadership team receive regular financial reporting. In FY21, we will add in regular financial reporting to PACTS governing bodies.

3.3.2 Grants and Contracts Development – Due to federal COVID relief funds, in FY21, the agency’s budget increase will exceed the annual target of growing the budget by 5%. Nonetheless, the grants and contracts team will further ramp up its efforts to bring in new revenues to advance our strategic priorities most in need of funding. We will dedicate staffing capacity to comprehensively surveying opportunities. Our FY21 fundraising priorities are:

- developing regional priority projects to be shovel-ready and obtaining funding for shovel-ready projects
- racial equity
- sustainability

3.3.3 Organizing and Staffing Workload – Ongoing tasks include implementing the Managing & Tracking System (Russian Nesting Dolls) developed in FY19. Our continued goal is to deliver on time and on budget projects through excellent project management.

3.3.4 Contacts System – In FY20, we began using CivicPlus in the hopes it would fulfill our need for contacts management. But, our current assessment is that we also need a Customer Relationship Management system that will enable us to track more detailed information about the people with whom we engage and communicate. In FY21, the communications team will research options and select a solution, with the goal of implementing the system in FY22. In FY22, we plan to track the goals and interests of electeds and managers.

3.3.5 PACTS Committees Consolidation – PACTS has provided direction to shrink the number of committees and increase representation of transit, equity, private sector and elected leaders. In FY21, the governing bodies will consider a proposal to consolidate committees.

3.4 Educate and Communicate Clearly

3.4.1 PACTS Website - This activity is complete.

3.4.2 Social Media - Omitted as a standalone activity

3.4.3 Member Communications – We will continue the regular publication of the bi-weekly “News from the Executive Director.” In FY22, we may add as a priority to develop new content and materials on who we are and what we do.

3.4.4 Hot Topic of the Year - In FY21, there are too many hot topics! Our research and big event will focus on the “State of our Region’s Recovery.” Our advocacy will focus on pandemic recovery. Our communications will focus on transportation funding needs, climate action, and housing/open space needs and balance.

3.5 Create Accountability

3.5.1 Agency Performance Metrics – This is not an FY21 activity.

How We Approach our Work

GPCOG's and PACTS' work is complex and varied. However, we apply a common methodology to addressing the region's challenges and opportunities. Our approach is informed by the values articulated in our strategic plan:

- To understand an issue, we are data-driven and guided by our value of stewardship.
- As we convene stakeholders, we value civic engagement and inclusiveness.
- As we develop shared vision and goals, we foster cooperation amongst our stakeholders, trying to find the areas of agreement and shared interest.
- As we plan and identify resources, we identify ways to catalyze positive change. We are frugal and practical as we manage projects.
- We are transparent and data-driven as we assess our work, and as a learning organization, we seek to apply what we've learned to create best practices or a stronger next phase of work.



Model for how GPCOG approaches its work