



Metro Regional Coalition Agenda

September 12, 2023

Noon to 1:30 pm

Hybrid meeting – In Person at GPCOG and Via ZOOM Conferencing

If attending via Zoom, 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

This meeting will be conducted in person and remotely in accordance with the requirements of GPCOG Executive Committee policy, [LD 1772, PL 2022 Ch. 666](#), 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 Michael Foley will call the meeting to order, remind attendees that the meeting is being recorded, and ask attendees to briefly introduce themselves.

2. Acceptance of minutes from the June 20, 2023 meeting (Attachment A)

The minutes from the June 20, 2023 MRC meeting are found below as Attachment A. A motion for acceptance is in order.

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. MRC Work Plan 2023-2024 (40 minutes) (Attachment B)

Staff report: Each year in September the Metro Regional Coalition establishes its work plan for the coming year. A draft plan prepared by staff is attached and ready for member feedback, edits, additions, and revisions.

Action: Review, amendment, and approval of the 2023-24 MRC work plan.

5. Transitional Housing and Shelter Update (30 minutes)

Staff report: Since the MRC last met in June there have been several developments on the ground and at the State House impacting the unhoused in our region. Chris Hall and Belinda Ray will provide updates on new shelter options, the status of a statewide transitional housing strategy (including the carried-over [LD 1721](#) sponsored by Sen. Duson for MRC), and the Governor's [Executive Order](#) last month setting the stage for establishing a state level Office of New Americans.

Action: Current and accurate information and an opportunity to understand how member communities can support positive outcomes for the unhoused and the entire region.

6. MRC Member Roundtable (15 minutes)

Staff report: This standing agenda item gives MRC members a chance to share updates with each other, and to discuss common issues outside the regular meeting agenda.

7. Adjourn

Upcoming Meetings (all Noon to 1:30 pm both in person and remote via Zoom)

October 10, 2023
November 21, 2023
December 12, 2023
January 9, 2024
February 13, 2024
March 12, 2024
April 9, 2024
May 21, 2024
June 18, 2024

Attachment A



DRAFT

Metro Regional Coalition Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2023

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Michael Foley	Westbrook
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Nathan Poore	Falmouth
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Kate Snyder	Portland
Danielle West	Portland
Sarah Lawrence	Office of Rep. Pingree
Steve Fitzpatrick	Office of Sen. Collins
Guest	Cullen Ryan, CHOM
For GPCOG	Kristina Egan, Chris Hall, Belinda Ray, Matt Panfil

1. Welcome and introductions

Chair Michael Foley called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm and welcomed everyone. Attendees gave brief introductions.

2. Acceptance of minutes from the May 9, 2023 meeting

Jerre Bryant moved acceptance of the minutes of the May 9, 2023 MRC meeting seconded by Matt Sturgis. The motion was passed without objection.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Update on Systemic Reforms to Address Homelessness.

Belinda Ray provided an update on GPCOG efforts to help restructure housing options for people suffering homelessness, including a pivot from the Blueberry Road proposal to a new location on Riverside Street, a larger transitional housing campus opportunity in Unity Maine, and the status of Senator Duson's LD 1721 in the legislature.

Member discussion focused on the immediate need for additional shelter housing as existing resources are full, and some are temporary and will close later in 2023.

The potential of the Unity College site was warmly welcomed, and members congratulated Belinda on moving this idea so far forward. Members urged action on asking legislators to include funding for the Unity project in the current Supplemental Budget being finalized at the State House and directed staff to communicate the need to members of the Appropriations Committee. (That communication was made the day following the meeting.)

Members also looked ahead to other legislative issues including general Assistance reform. Bills to reform GA have been carried over to the next session (in 2024), but GA reform discussions will continue in a task force appointed by the legislature that will meet this summer and fall.

Members urged each other to carefully monitor GA reform discussions, and also expressed hope that a statewide registry would be one GA reform that will come forward in the next session.

5. Introduction to Phoenix Flats ([link](#))

Cullen Ryan, Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine (CHOM), gave members a brief orientation and overview of the Phoenix Flats development's purpose, design, and place in the community.

Ryan highlighted his organization's small size and large impact from Bar Harbor to Sanford working with over 50 partners.

He described Phoenix Flats as a blended supportive housing project that is designed to help residents overcome challenges by providing the stability that housing provides. He emphasized that Phoenix Flats is a model that can work in any community where support services can be matched to resident needs.

6. Walking Tour of Phoenix Flats - 83 Middle Street Portland Maine

Members walked to Phoenix Flats and toured several different units. The project is in the final stages of completion and should be ready for occupancy later this summer.

Members were very impressed with the quality of the construction, especially the energy efficiency of the building. The facility will be a wonderful benefit to everyone lucky enough to find a place there.

7. Adjourn

Mayor Foley adjourned the meeting by acclamation at 1:45 pm.

Attachment B

Metro Regional Coalition 2023-2024 WORKPLAN DRAFT 8.21.23

These are the Metro Regional Coalition's goals for Fall 2023 through Summer 2024 and its planned actions to achieve those goals.

Priorities for Action and Advocacy

Expand Housing Choices

Goal #1: Continue expanding housing choices and increasing the supply of workforce housing in MRC communities for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households, while implementing recent state zoning and housing requirements.

Actions:

Lead a collective response to help our region meet state housing growth targets:

- a) Collect and track housing data through the Metro Regional Coalition's annual housing report
- b) Provide planning and technical assistance, as requested, to support member strategies to encourage well-located housing projects that expand density, mobility options, resilience, and sustainability.
- c) Work to align local and regional investments in infrastructure, transportation, and climate action with housing developments, in Priority Centers

Advance Solutions to Homelessness

Goal #2: Provide more options for unhoused people in our region through transitional housing, reforms to General Assistance, and increased shelter capacity.

Actions:

- a) Continue support for [LD 1721](#), *An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State*.
- b) Continue support for changes to state General Assistance law that reduce the staffing and fiscal burdens on municipalities.
- c) Understand and implement best practices for replacing encampments of unhoused people with safer, more supportive housing options.

Retain and expand our workforce

Goal #3: Grow our region's workforce through assisting with the implementation of the Governor's 10-year Economic Development Plan.

Actions:

- a) Engage with the formation of the state [Office of New Americans](#) at the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.
- b) Welcome and retain newly arriving asylum seekers, refugees, and other relocating populations through regional implementation of the Governor's Economic Development Strategy and the Safe in Maine Fund.
- c) Understand and support other state and regional workforce initiatives, including efforts of the state and local workforce boards.

Increase Climate Preparedness

Goal #4: Prepare for climate change through planning and emergency preparedness.

Actions:

- a) Understand and implement regional emergency management plans for extreme climate-related events.
- b) Understand and implement forward-looking best practices to incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation into traditional municipal functions.

Education Priorities

- A. **Economic Development** – Learn about emerging new developments in the region and the implementation of [Greater Portland's Regional Prosperity Plan 2023-2028](#), the new GPCOG 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) plan.
- B. **Transportation** – Learn about the regional implementation of [Connect 2045](#), [Transit Together](#), [Vision Zero](#)
- C. **Governance** – Learn about best practices to support municipal election officials and the election process.