



Metro Regional Coalition Agenda

October 13, 2020

Noon to 1:30 pm

Via ZOOM Conferencing

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82571764292?pwd=anJ2L0wwYUdoYXBsdFFVYtXOEJ1UT09>

Meeting ID: 881 5252 6113 Passcode: 500116

Or Call: 312 626 6799

Note: As of March 31st, 2020 PACTS and GPCOG will be 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 (5 minutes)

Chair Amy Kuhn will call the meeting to order.

2. Acceptance of minutes from the September 8, 2020 meeting (Attachment A)

3. Zoning for Transit (45 minutes total, including Q&A)

Staff report: GPCOG Senior Planner Rick Harbison and GPCOG Transportation Director Chris Chop will present the recommendations of Transit Tomorrow, the region's long-range public transportation plan. Today's discussion will focus on the municipal land use actions that will be required to support more transit service in the region.

Action: Information and identification of linkages and alignment between Transit Tomorrow and the Metro Regional Coalition's work to expand housing choices in the region.

4. Homelessness Update (15 minutes total) (Attachment B)

Staff report: At its last meeting, the Coalition asked the Chair to send a letter to the Governor and MaineHousing Executive Director Dan Brennan in support of a new Homeless Services Center in Portland (see Attachment B). Time will be available to discuss other regional initiatives.

Action: Information sharing and identification of other regional action steps.

5. Finalizing the FY21 Coalition Work Plan (30 minutes) (Attachment C)

Staff report: Last month members reviewed the FY20 Metro Regional Coalition work plan and used it to outline its priorities for FY 20-21. At today's meeting members will review the draft work plan for FY 20-21 (see Attachment B) and finalize it.

Action: Review, amend and finalize priorities for the FY21 Coalition Work Plan.

6. Adjourn

Upcoming Meetings

Nov 10, 2020 12:00 PM

Dec 8, 2020 12:00 PM

Jan 12, 2021 12:00 PM

Feb 9, 2021 12:00 PM

Mar 9, 2021 12:00 PM

Apr 13, 2021 12:00 PM

May 11, 2021 12:00 PM

Jun 8, 2021 12:00 PM

Attachment A



DRAFT

Metro Regional Coalition Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2020

Noon to 1:30 pm

Via ZOOM Conferencing

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Amy Kuhn, Chair	Falmouth
Virginia Wilder-Cross	Gorham
Kate Snyder	Portland
Scott Morelli	South Portland
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Jeremy Gabrielson	Cape Elizabeth
Michael Foley	Westbrook
Nathan Poore	Falmouth
Jon Jennings	Portland
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Public	Ken Capron
For GPCOG:	Kristina Egan Chris Hall

1. Welcome and introductions

Amy Kuhn called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm and welcomed everyone.

2. Acceptance of the minutes of the April 14, 2020 meeting

Matt Sturgis moved acceptance of the minutes from the April 14, MRC meeting, seconded by Virginia Wilder-Cross. The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote.

3. Building the FY 2020-2021 MRC Work Plan

Each year in September MRC members establish a work plan for the coming year. Members reviewed the FY 19-20 work plan and identified new and continuing priorities for FY 20-21.

The following priorities were discussed:

Homelessness. Members agreed that homelessness continues to be a substantial regional priority.

Portland City Manager Jon Jennings gave a recap of the exceptional work that Portland City staff have done since March 2020 to deal with homelessness in Portland, including relocating 40-50 people to USM's Sullivan Gym while it was available for use as a shelter to support public health, housing 150 people and families in motels around the region, and utilizing the Expo as a shelter after the Sullivan Gym became unavailable. Jennings described the shutdown of the Preble Street Resource Center and the subsequent displacement of people to Deering Oaks Park and to City Hall. He also noted the continued arrival of asylum seekers.

In October, the Expo will return to sporting events, necessitating an alternative location for those staying there now. Jennings highlighted efforts to bring forward a new facility in the Riverside location, in partnership with state government and the Maine Housing Authority. This will not be a traditional 'brick & mortar' building but the project will require state financial support in the range of \$8 to \$10 million dollars to accommodate up to 200 people, with expansion possible.

Portland Mayor Kate Snyder expanded on Jennings summary, adding that a new focus on services for the chronically homeless is required. The loss of services at Preble Street has had a heavy impact on the spreading out of people suffering homelessness, causing difficult new challenges for the city and many of its neighborhoods. She joined Jennings in emphasizing the excellent work that city staff have done and noted the important help the city has received from many agencies.

Jennings concluded by noting that we were lucky that the Mills Administration and leadership at Maine Housing understand Portland's challenges and want to help. He explained that regional support of a Maine Housing request for \$8 to \$10 million dollars to fund the Riverside project would be very helpful.

After discussion members were unanimous in supporting a GPCOG letter to the Governor and Maine Housing Director Dan Brennan expressing the region's support for the funding Jennings described for the Riverside project. Staff will request GPCOG Executive Committee authorization for the letter and get a draft to Jennings for review and approval by the end of the week.

Members discussed other aspects of the regional homelessness problem. Westbrook has met with Avesta and made zoning changes to expand housing choices in the City. South Portland has convened a working group to address homelessness in the City. Revisiting a discussion

from last year, members considered various options for generating financial support for Portland's extraordinary expenditures on homeless shelters and services.

In conclusion members identified next steps as:

- Immediate advocacy in support of the Portland Riverside project
- Exploration of a county-based revenue that would be dedicated to Portland's homelessness expenses (and would not result in new county taxes to Portland residents).

Opioid Misuse. Members agreed that this work is complete and can be removed from the FY 20-21 work plan. The project's success was noted, and Zoe Miller's work was recognized as essential to all the benefits the project generated.

Economic development. Members agreed to retain this priority but pivot it to alignment with state and federal post-pandemic economic recovery and resilience efforts.

Kristina Egan and Chris Hall briefed members on new GPCOG efforts to convene a regional leadership group focused on post-pandemic economic recovery and future resiliency. The group has met with Josh Broder, CEO of Tilson Technologies and co-chair of the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee. Based on his recommendations the group is examining regional investment priorities and defining advocacy initiatives to position our region to successfully compete for 'shovel ready' federal stimulus opportunities when they arise.

Expanding Housing Choices. Members agreed to retain this on-going priority. Action items will include a GPCOG report on housing choices expansions over the last year, based on member data.

Additionally, last spring six MRC communities passed a joint resolution prioritizing expanded housing choices, but the pandemic took away the opportunity to announce that progress. As an action step we will find an opportunity to celebrate that progress in the future.

Members discussed the growing rental and eviction crisis, recognizing that both renters and landlords need additional support. They agreed to incorporate rental issues in the FY 20-21 work plan.

Finally, members discussed local resistance to new housing development. They explored what role GPCOG could best play to support growth. Education was identified, both regarding how compact development is an excellent climate change strategy, and how open space and nature-based solutions can reconcile growth with other values in non-competitive ways.

COVID-19. Members agreed to add this to the FY 20-21 work plan, keeping a focus on federal financial aid to municipalities and state government, and monitoring the changing needs and circumstances that member communities experience as the pandemic continues.

Racial Equity. Members agreed to add this to the FY 20-21 work plan subject to available funding. They suggested action items modelled on the Opioid Misuse project, emphasizing local level convening, education, and action planning.

Kristina Egan shared that GPCOG has already been approached to do this work. However, additional funding is needed (as it was with opioids) to pay for national level expertise and to provide staffing. Members agreed to condition this work plan element on acquisition of new funding, which GPCOG is currently seeking.

Next steps. Staff will draft a FY 20-21 MRC work plan based on the input from members. The draft will be submitted for final approval by the MRC at their 10-13-20 meeting.

4. Adjourn

At 1: 31 pm Amy Kuhn adjourned the meeting by acclamation.

Attachment B



September 11, 2020

Governor Janet Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Daniel Brennan, Director
MaineHousing
26 Edison Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Regional support for a new Homeless Services Center in Portland

Dear Governor Mills and Director Brennan,

I am writing today on behalf of the Greater Portland Metro Regional Coalition to express our strong support for a new Homeless Services Center in Portland, and for essential state financial backing to make the Center a reality.

We believe the new Center will help address critical regional and statewide needs and obligations. Serving people suffering homelessness is a priority for every one of our municipalities – Portland should not bear the costs of compassion alone.

We urge you to provide essential state financial support to a new Homeless Services Center. We understand that \$8 to \$10 million dollars are needed to make the Center a reality. We believe the Center represents a regional and state priority that must be funded, even in these difficult budget times.

The Metro Regional Coalition (MRC) includes the cities of Portland, South Portland and Westbrook, and the towns of Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth and Gorham, all supported by the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

Regional responses to homelessness have been a top priority for the MRC for many years. We have expanded our understanding of supportive housing options and inventoried our limited regional capacity to support homeless facilities. We are exploring ways in which our municipalities might provide financial support to Portland to help the City with the costs of the homeless services it provides.

But state financial support is essential to advance new services for those who are suffering homelessness. With your help and understanding we can do better.

Thank you both again for all you are doing to lead our state. We are lucky to have you at the helm as we meet the extraordinary challenges we all face together.

Stay well,

Amy Kuhn
Chair
Metro Regional Coalition

Attachment C

Metro Regional Coalition FY 2021 WORKPLAN DRAFT

Below is a summary of the Coalition's goals for FY21 and its planned actions to achieve those goals.

COVID-19

Goals:

- To meet the needs of member communities for response and recovery
- To obtain state and federal aid for local governments
- To provide a network for sharing ideas and support

FY21 Deliverables:

- Increase federal aid to state and local government to support response and recovery
- Align with state initiatives and resource opportunities

Actions:

- 1) Continue to advocate with Mainer Congressional delegation.
- 2) Continue to advocate with state lawmakers and the Governor.
- 3) Work with the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee to align state and regional investment priorities and programs.
- 4) Continue to share experiences and insights for mutual support.

Homelessness

Goals:

- To house more of the homeless in the Greater Portland area
- To distribute the responsibility of caring more equitably for the homeless across municipalities

FY21 Deliverables:

- Increase the number of supportive housing developments outside of Portland
- Explore and define a means of municipal or county financial contribution to support homes services in Portland

- Develop a coordinated regional plan for responding to acute and chronic homelessness events through partnership with the Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency.

Actions:

1. Develop a MOU or emergency response agreement for homelessness through CCEMA inventory and planning development.
2. Advocate for additional state resources and supportive policy in Augusta, particularly regarding the new Homeless Services Center in Portland
3. Meet with elected County and local officials to find agreement on a funding mechanism for regional financial support of Portland homeless services.

Integrating MRC work with State Economic Recovery Plans and Transportation Priorities

Goals:

- To better coordinate local land use, transportation, economic, and resilience strategies with state and regional efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic's economic and social impacts
- To connect MRC efforts with the Governor's Economic Recovery Committee's recommendations and state implementation efforts.

FY21 Deliverables:

- MRC will become a regional implementing partner with the Mills Administration's statewide economic recovery efforts.
- MRC members will become active participants in implementing PACTS' Transit Tomorrow plan.
- MRC members will engage in the development of PACTS' Long Range Transportation Plan.
- MRC members will engage with the development and implementation of 'recovery zones' which will focus investments on transportation, broadband, housing, and economic development in corridors that promote compact, diverse growth and preserve/expand open space.

Actions:

- 1) Continue to meet with state economic development officials to define specific local and regional implementation opportunities;

- 2) Expand Transportation planning engagement opportunities to ensure 'corridor' participation as growth and recovery opportunities are identified; and
- 3) Facilitate public engagement designed to educate and support new approaches to development, and re-shape public resistance to changing land use patterns.
- 4) Work in collaboration the GPCOG-led Resilience Recovery Roundtable as it defines and implements 'recovery zones' throughout the region.

Expanding Housing Choices

Goal:

- To expand housing choices and increase the supply of workforce housing in MRC communities for low- and middle-income households in the region by 10% by 2025.

FY21 Deliverables:

- MRC members and the public are regularly educated on the need for expanded housing choices in our region.
- Continued implementation of the existing joint commitment of MRC communities to diversify housing options.
- Ensure that housing, economic development and public transportation decisions are more closely integrated, and made in a regional context when possible

Actions:

- 1) Publish a 2021 report on expanded housing choices based on the individual progress reports of MRC member communities,
- 2) Work with individual MRC members to implement their municipal resolutions on expanded housing choices
- 3) Work with partners in the region, including the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Greater Portland, to expand public acceptance of well-planned housing and transportation growth.

Racial Equity (conditioned on acquisition of additional resources)

Goals:

- To educate communities about the reality of racial inequality in our region

- To understand how greater racial equity can be achieved in our region
- To create opportunities for local governments to take action to increase racial equity.

FY21 Deliverables:

- Secure funding for a local assistance program to assist individual municipalities in addressing racial inequality.
- Continue webinars on aspects of racial inequality in our region.
- Offer local governments and regional partner organizations opportunities to participate in pilot efforts to improve racial equity in their organization and community.

Actions:

- 1) Raise funds needed to do racial equity work.
- 2) Provide a pilot program to one or more MRC municipalities, modeled on GPCOG's opioid prevention work, that supports local education and action to reduce racial inequity.
- 3) Continue webinar series as needed and practicable.

MRC's Effectiveness

Goals:

- To increase the consistent participation in MRC activities by all seven communities
- To increase the consistent participation in MRC activities by the chief elected official, chief administrative official, and other Councilors

FY21 Deliverables:

- High level officials from all communities engaged

Actions:

- 1) Focus meetings on decision-making