

## GPCOG Executive Committee

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

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***In-Person:***

*Greater Portland Council of Governments*

*970 Baxter Boulevard, Room 201*

*Portland, Maine*

*(Lunch provided)*

***Remote:***

*Webinar link:* <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86844969864>

*Phone:* 1 301 715 8592

*Webinar ID:* 868 4496 9864

*Participating by phone? Use \*9 to raise your hand and \*6 to unmute.*

*As of April 26, 2022 GPCOG and PACTS are holding committee meetings in hybrid format, both in person at GPCOG's offices and via webinar. The remote portions of all meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of GPCOG Executive Committee policy, LD 1772, PL 2022 Ch. 666, and 1 MRSA Chapter 13, Subchapter 1.*

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**1. Welcome**

This meeting is being recorded and will be made available at [gpcog.org/AgendaCenter](http://gpcog.org/AgendaCenter).

**2. Public Comment**

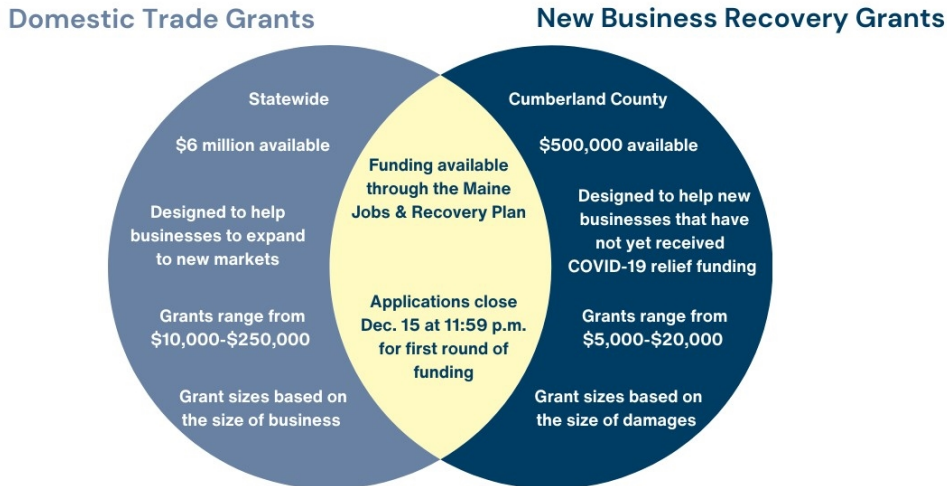
Members of the public are welcome to provide up to three minutes of public comment on any topic, including items on the agenda.

**3. Approval of the 10/17/23 Meeting Minutes (Attachment A)**

**4. Spotlight: Grants for Businesses**

**10 minutes**

Paul Johnson, Economic Development Director, will describe new grants available to businesses and non-profits. Here's a graphic preview:



- 5. **Executive Director’s Report (Attachment B)** **5 minutes**
- 6. **Rural Transportation Projects (Attachment C)** **10 minutes**

Staff Report

In September, GPCOG published a notice of funding for transportation planning projects or studies for calendar year 2024. At this meeting, the Executive Committee will select projects for an award.

The total funding available is \$75,000. The funding source is MaineDOT. Funding must be used for small-scale planning or data collection initiatives, costing generally less than \$20,000. No local match is required. GPCOG received three proposals, listed below.

**Durham: \$4,000.** The Town of Durham has requested GPCOG provide transportation information to support implementation of its 2018 Comprehensive Plan, including: identification of high-risk road segments and intersections; population and traffic increases; anticipated MaineDOT road improvement projects; road shoulder widths; and commuter data.

**New Gloucester: \$11,000.** The Town of New Gloucester has requested GPCOG’s assistance to study the intersection at Cobbs Bridge Rd. and Rte. 231. The project will use Miovision crash and “near miss” safety detection software. Although the intersection is not identified as a “high crash location” using MaineDOT’s definition, New Gloucester residents are concerned that there is a high number of near misses.

**Yarmouth: between \$12,000 and \$15,000.** The Town of Yarmouth has requested GPCOG’s assistance in a trail mapping project. The intent is to create both a physical map and GIS data layer identifying trails in Town. The mapping project advances the Town’s long-term goal in implementing complete streets transformations. Letters of support from Nat Tupper, Town Manager, and the Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee are included in Attachment C.

Recommended Action

Award the Durham, New Gloucester and Yarmouth projects.

**7. Advocacy: Growth Management update**

**10 minutes**

Staff Report

LD1976, *An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws*, was carried over by the legislature last summer and is scheduled for a public hearing on November 14<sup>th</sup> – the same time as our Executive Committee meeting. A group of regional councils, including GPCOG, have collaborated on the below testimony which recognizes the need for significant changes in the state’s Growth Management laws, but asks for more municipal input and consensus before the bill’s proposed changes to the law are enacted. If you have questions or concerns about the attached testimony, please contact Kristina Egan or Chris Hall by Monday November 13<sup>th</sup>. At our meeting we will discuss your thoughts on the proposed legislation.

Re: Regional councils testimony neither for nor against LD 1976, *An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws*

Dear Sen. Pierce, Rep. Gere, and Housing Committee members,

Please accept this letter as the testimony of 10 regional councils in Maine neither for nor against LD 1976, *An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws*.

Our ten regional councils cover the state of Maine. We deliver transportation, land use, sustainability, and economic development services to municipalities and their residents, and we collaborate with many state agencies in our work.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is due for an update. It has flaws and needs to be updated in both statute and rule. However, the specifics contained in LD 1976 have raised many concerns amongst our regional councils and our member municipalities. We see numerous conflicts between the bill as drafted and existing laws, regulations, and municipal ordinances.

Regional planning agencies have had little or no input into LD 1976, and we believe much broader stakeholder and community discussions are needed before enacting changes to the GMA. As we have discussed with you before, regional councils are an excellent means of implementing state policy priorities, and their voices will improve any GMA changes if the councils are asked to provide input and implementation support.

Because LD 1976 has substantial impacts on housing, land use, and environmental policies, we suggest converting this bill into a resolve that convenes all the diverse stakeholders that have interest in the GMA, and charges them with developing recommended GMA changes for presentation to the 2025 legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns with LD 1976, and please let any of us know if we can provide anything more to support your work on this important issue.

Recommended Action

Provide input on LD 1976.

**8. PACTS - MaineDOT Memorandum of Understanding 15 minutes**

Staff Report

MaineDOT has drafted a proposal to redefine the relationship between MaineDOT and GPCOG’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (PACTS). The proposal eliminates the annual ~\$6M allocation of capital funding to the region and promises shared decision-making for all projects MaineDOT invests in the region (except ones on the national highway system). On November 14, before this body meets, the advisory committee to PACTS (called RTAC) will meet to discuss the implications of this significant change in roles and responsibilities. If you are up for a deep dive, see [item #5 in the RTAC agenda](#) on page 12.

Recommended Action

Information and discussion only.

**9. Strategic Plan Work Session 40 minutes**

Staff Report

At our retreat, we assessed GPCOG’s performance against its 2017 [Strategic Plan](#) and anticipated major disruptions our region should anticipate. At today’s session, we’ll review input received from municipal members, staff, partners, and residents about GPCOG’s role and strengths, learn about their expectations for GPCOG in the future, and gather input from you on vision, mission, and values.

Recommended Action

Discussion and input.

**10. Other Business**

**Adjourn**

**Upcoming Meetings.** All meetings held from 12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. except for General Assembly and Summit

January 16, 2024 – Last Year’s Audit Report; Next Year’s Member Dues

February 27, 2024

March 19, 2024 – Annual Review of Executive Director

April 23, 2024 – Annual Budget (First Draft); Executive Director’s Performance Goals

May 14, 2024 – Annual Budget (Final Recommendation); Executive Committee Nominations; Investment Policy; FY25 Meeting Calendar

May 30, 2024 – General Assembly and Summit at St. Joseph’s College in Standish

Board and committee members, the public, and other stakeholders are encouraged to subscribe to the GPCOG Executive Committee calendar at [gpcog.org/Calendar](http://gpcog.org/Calendar).

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*If you require accommodations to review materials or participate in this meeting (such as captioning or interpreting—at no cost to you), please contact: (207) 774-9891 or [transportation@gpcog.org](mailto:transportation@gpcog.org)*

*Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will help us to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.*

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# Attachment A

## GPCOG Executive Committee

### MEETING MINUTES October 17, 2023

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Carmen Lone	Bridgton
Krista Chappell	Gray
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Mark Dion	Portland

#### Welcome

Krista opened the meeting.

#### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### Nomination of Executive Committee Member

Nat nominated Nathan Poore, Town Manager of Falmouth, to fill the vacancy on the Executive Committee. Carmen seconded. The roll was called. All voted in favor.

#### Approval of 9/5/23 Minutes

Nat moved approval of the 9/5/23 minutes from the annual retreat. Carmen seconded. Mark and Sue abstained and the remaining members voted in favor.

#### Spotlight: Vision Zero for Rural and Island Communities

Rick Harbison, Senior Planner and Data Manager for GPCOG, presented a [slide deck](#) on this new project to make streets safer for all users in GPCOG's rural and island communities. The Vision Zero plan, once completed, will make communities eligible to apply for federal implementation grants for road safety improvements.

Several members asked how to ready their communities to apply for project funding. Krista asked if Gray could apply for demonstration project funds without an action plan in place. Rick responded that he would check with Belinda Ray but explained that the town would certainly be eligible next year before the Safe Streets and Roads for All Round 3 deadline and that there are possibly other sources of grant funding out there. (Post meeting follow up: an action plan is indeed a requirement to apply for demonstration project funds; another potential source of funding is the Community Action Grant program if the community is in the state Resilience Partnership).

Krista also wondered what the implications would be if a town is not identified as a priority safety area. Rick explained the factors that go into identifying priority safety locations (high injury network, high risk network, community identified concerns, equity zones), how the larger region will be split into smaller subregions, and mentioned that in all likelihood each community will have several priority safety locations identified (note: in the action plan these locations will be called “critical safety corridors” and “critical safety intersections”).

Nat asked what types of roads this plan will consider (i.e., are local roads included?). Rick responded that local roads are included but the plan will not address safety issues on the highways (I-95 / I-295).

Nat and Carmen both inquired about MaineDOT’s level of commitment to Vision Zero as well as their willingness to fund projects once the plan is complete. Rick noted that MaineDOT’s Director of Safety is on the project’s advisory panel, but acknowledged there may need to be a more significant Vision Zero culture shift that happens within MaineDOT as well.

With respect to funding projects, Kristina explained that having a project identified in a plan gives it more heft than if it’s just a community making the request alone. Rick described how for the last implementation grant GPCOG staff met collectively with member municipalities to identify the best projects to apply for. Additionally, since implementation grants are so large (maximum grant amount is \$25 million) GPCOG would likely submit a regional application with many projects bundled together to be more competitive. Kristina added that Safe Streets and Roads for All funding is designed to go straight to MPOs, not state DOTs. Since state DOTs often work collaboratively with U.S. DOT, we have reason to believe there will be stronger local-state-federal alignment with these funds.

Carmen expressed her hope that this project and GPCOG’s influence will shift MaineDOT’s culture to be more responsive towards a community’s safety concerns. Nat shared his experience that these kinds of programs and conversations do tend to change the mindset and culture of MaineDOT, as well as that of residents.

Matt asked about the timeline and application parameters for submitting the next proposal. Rick explained that the Round 3 Safe Streets and Roads for All deadline will likely happen in July of 2024. At that time GPCOG will issue a call for projects and convene a regional discussion.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Chris Hall clarified that the “tech hub” grant is a new business grant program for businesses that started during the pandemic and can now qualify for relief.

### **Executive Director’s Performance Goals**

Nat asked how the ED’s goals differ from the agencywide goals, noting that the ED’s responsibility is to make sure the agency achieves its goals. Kristina agreed and added that the goals, as drafted, are to guide her in what she can uniquely do to advance those overall goals.

Sue moved adoption of the Executive Director’s performance goals for FY24 as printed. Matt seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

### **Advocacy Priorities**

Chris Hall said that the short session begins in January and is scheduled to end in April. There will be a supplemental budget as more revenues come into the state. With a strong rainy day fund, Chris anticipates there will be discussion on what to do with these funds. He presented the proposed priorities and reminded the group that ongoing discussion with members will be needed as the session plays out. Staff will continue to

coordinate with MMA, prioritize areas of regional need, and try to find the areas of most consensus amongst our diverse member municipalities.

Sue moved approval of the advocacy priorities as printed. Nat seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

### **Adjustment to Loan Fund**

Nat noted that the proposed adjustment is an internal transfer. Jerre added that the proposed action is a correction for an error from eight or more years ago. Sue asked how it happened and how to ensure it doesn't happen again. Kristina acknowledged that this error happened before hers and Josh's time, and the accounting system doesn't provide clarity on why it happened, just that it happened. There are safeguards in place to ensure GPCOG doesn't bill a higher operational cost than interest generated for the loan fund. These include bi-weekly review and approval of all timesheets and internal financial reports generated by Josh that enable Kristina and Tony to ensure our labor costs stay with budgeted expenses.

Nat moved to authorize the transfer of \$278,000 from the Reserve Fund to GPCOG's Loan Account for FAME business loans. Matt seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

### **Strategic Plan Work Session**

Kristina began a short presentation on member and stakeholder input gathered through surveys and interviews. About 1:15 p.m., the building's fire alarm went off. By the time the group was able to return to the conference room, it was too late to continue the meeting.

The remaining group adjourned.



# Attachment B

## Executive Director's Report

### Strategic Priority – Serve our Members

- **Events** – Several events are coming up, including:
  - 11/15: Our first Legislative Reception on Wednesday November 15 from 4 to 7 pm in **North Yarmouth**
  - 11/27: Municipal day of service at the new shelter in Portland at 166 Riverside. We have 37 volunteers from 7 different municipalities who will help assemble furniture and complete other tasks to get the facility up and running.
  - 11/29: Chairs in a Circle
  - 12/13: Annual Welcome & Congratulations holiday reception for newly elected municipal officials on December 13 at the Centerboard Yacht Club in **South Portland**
- **Resilience Corps** – We're recruiting for our 4<sup>th</sup> cohort of Resilience Corps Fellows. If you know someone eager to serve the region, please help recruit them! Here's [information](#) to share.
- **Cable Franchise Agreements**. Senator Rick Bennett is working with our team to make a request to the Attorney General for an opinion as to whether Charter Communications is complying with state law to distribute public access TV at the same resolution in which it's provided. Most local access channels now use high definition cameras and other video equipment, but Charter's equipment sending the signals upstream are mostly, if not all, standard definition, requiring signals to be downgraded in apparent non-compliance with existing state law.

### Strategic Priority – Regional Prosperity

- **Regional Housing Deliverables** – Last month's report included a list of municipalities for which GPCOG is providing direct technical assistance on LD2003 and much more. To help meet the region's housing goal of producing 24,000 homes, with 75% of them near transit and services, and most of them affordable to low- and middle-income people, GPCOG is also producing several regional products, including the Great Maine Neighborhoods campaign, a regional Housing Report Card, a Housing Toolkit, and a regional Housing Summit next spring.
- **PACTS**. The PACTS Policy Board approved the \$3.75M 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program, which details PACTS' planning work for the next two years.

### Strategic Priority – Operate with Excellence

- **Recruitment**. We wrapped up three unsuccessful searches for vacant positions. We've reposted for Senior Planner, and will repost for a Communications Manager position.

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- **Grants.** Since October’s report, GPCOG received notice of a \$886K Environmental Justice grant from US EPA and a \$75K grant from Maine’s Department of Economic and Community Development to support housing technical assistance.
- **Budget Report.** At one-quarter through the fiscal year, we should be running expenses at about 25% of budget. Overall, we’re on track. The few expenses that need explanation have notations. If the expenses for the Riverside shelter were removed from the report, the total expenses would be about 22% of the budgeted expenses.

Greater Portland Council of Governments Executive Committee Budget to Actual (EXPENSES) As of September 30, 2023					
Description	FY24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	Difference	% Spent	
<b>Personnel</b>					
Salaries	2,668,208	595,409	2,072,799	22%	
Fringe Benefits	563,723	110,664	453,059	20%	
<b>Office</b>					
Postage	1,000	121	879	12%	
Utilities	8,500	3,640	4,860	43%	
Office Supplies	9,000	1,450	7,550	16%	
Printing & Copying	7,000	365	6,635	5%	
Rent	148,320	48,519	99,801	33%	
Cleaning	2,632	655	1,977	25%	
Telecommunications	8,340	1,860	6,480	22%	
Depreciation	1,126	-	1,126	0%	
Payroll Processing Fees	4,500	1,232	3,268	27%	
Copier Lease	5,052	1,263	3,789	25%	
Equipment & Furniture	25,000	3,583	21,417	14%	
<b>Consulting Services</b>					
Legal	30,000	656	29,344	2%	
Audit/CPA	30,000	12,000	18,000	40%	
Loan Underwriting	10,000	-	10,000	0%	
Information Technology	96,000	23,030	72,970	24%	
Equipment/Software Maintenance	20,000	11,176	8,824	56%	Due to paying upfront for some services
Website Fees	10,000	327	9,673	3%	
Software Fees	143,430	11,418	132,012	8%	
Consultants - Engineering	552,637	1,117,433	(564,796)	202%	This is entirely due to the Riverside Shelter project where we have already paid over \$900k towards a \$2.7m budget for construction
Consultants - Other	398,005	95,459	302,546	24%	
Consultants - Graphic Design	32,250	-	32,250	0%	

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(continued next page)

Description	FY24 Budget	FY 24 Actual	Difference	% Spent	
<b>Meetings &amp; Travel</b>					
Travel - Mileage	8,000	2,093	5,907	26%	
Travel - Hotel & Airfare	15,000	5,402	9,598	36%	
Event Costs	12,000	302	11,698	3%	
Meeting Registration Fees	10,000	2,382	7,618	24%	
Meeting Supplies	15,000	2,574	12,426	17%	
<b>Other Direct &amp; Indirect</b>					
Memberships & Dues	17,500	7,337	10,163	42%	
Insurance - Business Line	21,133	524	20,609	2%	
Employee Screening	1,800	-	1,800	0%	
Advertising	20,000	1,291	18,709	6%	
Professional Development	20,000	263	19,737	1%	
Bank Service Fees	95	40	55	42%	
Miscellaneous Expense	460	100	360	22%	
Auto Lease	1,440	364	1,076	25%	
Subscriptions/Books/Publications	1,000	108	892	11%	
Doubtful Accounts	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
Doubtful Accounts - RLF Loans	14,000	-	14,000	0%	
Loan Forgiveness	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
FAME Fee on Loan Funds	15,800	-	15,800	0%	
In-Kind Labor from Partners	25,821	-	25,821	0%	
<b>Pass-through Expenses</b>					
Brownfields Loans	250,000	-	250,000	0%	This was added to the budget as we received additional RLF funding starting in FY24
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,223,772</b>	<b>\$ 2,063,041</b>	<b>\$ 3,160,731</b>	<b>39%</b>	

## Attachment C

### Letters of Support for Rural Transportation Projects



To: Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)  
From: Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee  
Re: Grant application for Funding of Planning Projects/Studies 2024  
Date: October 25, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (YBPC) to express our wholehearted support for the grant application submitted by the Town of Yarmouth for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mapping Project. This initiative holds great promise and aligns seamlessly with the YBPC's long-term goal of creating connected active mobility networks throughout Yarmouth that are safe for all ages and abilities.

We are enthusiastic about the potential community partnerships that can be engaged in this endeavor. We anticipate close collaboration with other town organizations such as the West Side Trail committee, the Yarmouth Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and Yarmouth Community Services to ensure a comprehensive approach to enhancing our town's biking and walking infrastructure. Engaging these stakeholders will not only enrich the project but also promote a sense of ownership and pride within our community.

With collaboration from our YBPC committee members, we have received feedback from throughout the community confirming the need and desire for this initiative. We believe that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mapping Project has the potential to create a safer and more accessible environment for residents and visitors alike. By mapping out biking and walking routes, we can encourage active transportation and, in turn, improve the health and well-being of our community. The project also has the potential to bolster local businesses, reduce vehicular road congestion, provide positive environmental impact, and strengthen our sense of community.

The Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee fully endorses this grant application and offers its unwavering support. We are eager to contribute to the success of this project and look forward to the positive changes it will bring to our town. Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to reach out to us if you require any further information or collaboration.

Sincerely,  
Colin Durrant  
Chair, Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee



**YARMOUTH**  
**MAINE**

Mr. Matt Panfil, Director of Planning  
Greater Portland Council of Governments  
970 Baxter Blvd Suite 201  
Portland, Maine 04103

October 26, 2023

Dear Matt:

I am pleased to be writing in support of the Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee's recent application for 2024 funding of their mapping project. This project would advance a long-term goal for the committee and the Town and would continue our success and progress in advancing complete streets transformation. That transformation requires both physical, policy, maintenance and infrastructure investments as well mindset shift of residents, walkers, bikers, and drivers over and along our public ways and paths. The mapping project would provide not only useful information to users, but also would provide cultural and community signals to the importance of shared uses, invitation and encouragement for non-vehicular travel, and networking of travel ways. This project commitment was formalized at Yarmouth's Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee's August 2023 strategic planning meeting for education and engagement and was included in the inaugural Town Sidewalk CIP submission for FY 2025. It is part of an optimistic, long-term project that could become a steppingstone for implementing other near-term strategies.

It has the practical benefit of providing printed materials detailing the location and accessibility of bicycle routes of which many residents and visitors are unaware. The increased awareness and affirmative support of and access to trails, pathways, and neighborhood connectors throughout Yarmouth will positively benefit public health, happiness, and safety by promoting physical activity and reducing automobile traffic for our town's residents and visitors. It builds on Yarmouth's already strong community spirit.

Furthermore, the project also aligns with the Town's 2015 Complete Streets Policy and the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, and undoubtedly will align with the pending 2024 Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan. The Yarmouth Planning Department staff and Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee would be enthusiastic teammates for GPCOG and look forward to the opportunity to collaborate.

**Nathaniel J. Tupper, Town Manager**  
(207) 846-9036 Ext. 209 | [ntupper@yarmouth.me.us](mailto:ntupper@yarmouth.me.us)  
200 Main Street, Yarmouth, ME 04096

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel J. Tupper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nathaniel J. Tupper

Town Manager