

# METRO REGIONAL COALITION

## Agenda

February 12, 2019

Noon to 1:30 pm

GPCOG, 970 Baxter Boulevard, Portland

### 1. Welcome and introductions

### 2. Acceptance of minutes from January 8, 2019 meeting (Attachment A)

### 3. Expanding Housing Choices – A Conversation with Dan Brennan (60 min.)

As we continue to explore ways for municipalities to work both individually and together to grow housing choices, especially for the middle and lower parts of the market, we welcome back Dan Brennan, the Director of Maine State Housing Authority. Maine State Housing Authority is a \$1.7B financial institution that serves 90,000 people statewide, each year. Dan will discuss the full array of tools that can help our communities diversify and expand housing choices.

After Dan's presentation, we'll pick up our discussion from the January meeting and answer these questions:

- What tools and strategies are working best? What isn't working well?
- What experiences (good and bad) have you had when working with developers?
- What are the sources of public opposition to expanded housing choice?
- What are some successful strategies communities have used to address or mitigate concerns raised by neighbors or other residents?

### 3. Fire Training Facility (Attachment B) (5 min.)

Tom Hall will update the Metro Regional Coalition on the next steps to explore the feasibility of constructing a shared fire training facility. Attachment B contains background information.

### 4. Opioid Misuse Pilot (5 min.)

Falmouth held its first event for the Coalition's first pilot project to help municipalities better address opioid misuse. We'll get a quick report on how it went.

## **5. Mid-Year Review of FY19 Workplan (Attachment C) (10 min.)**

We will review our collective progress on the Metro Regional Coalition's revised FY19 Workplan, and identify next steps and milestones through June 30.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

- March 12: Funding Housing First (tentative)
- April 9: Developer Roundtable on Expanding Housing Choices (tentative)

## Attachment A

# Metro Regional Coalition

## MINUTES

January 8, 2019

**In Attendance:**

Name	Affiliation
Bill Donovan, Chair	Scarborough Council
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth Town Manager
Jeremy Gabrielson	Cape Elizabeth Council
Jim Gailey	Cumberland County Manager
Nathan Poore	Falmouth Town Manager
Caleb Hemphill	Falmouth Council
Ginny Wilder Cross	Gorham Council
Jon Jennings	Portland City Manager
Belinda Ray	Portland Council
Jeff Levine	Portland Planning & Urban Development Director
Tom Hall	Scarborough Town Manager
Josh Reny	South Portland Assistant City Manager
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook City Manager
<b>For GPCOG:</b>	Kristina Egan Steph Carver

### Welcome and introductions

Bill Donovan called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. Each participant described the value of the Metro Regional Coalition to the community and the region, and Jeremy and Ginny, as new representatives, introduced themselves to the group.

### Acceptance of minutes from November 13, 2018 meeting

Jon moved approval, Matt seconded, all were in favor.

### MRC Roundtable: Expanding Housing Choices

Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook provided brief presentations on the tools each is using to diversify housing choices and expand housing

production. Steph Carver provided some background data, noting that for two decades (1990 to 2010), the Metro Regional Coalition communities were producing half the housing growth of all of Cumberland County, averaging about 1500 new units annually. Since 2010, those same communities are only producing about one-third of the County's units, dropping to an average of 600 new units per year, which is a 60% decline.

### **Scarborough:**

Tom Hall said that the town's 2006 comprehensive plan prioritized affordable housing, and outlined several strategies, including changing density requirements and allowing infill development in growth areas. Likely, the biggest gains Scarborough has made in affordable housing are due to successful partnerships with affordable housing developers, who understand financing opportunities, like the federal housing credit ([Low-Income Housing Tax Credit](#)). Scarborough instituted a 10% inclusionary zoning requirement for the new Scarborough Downs development. The Town has provided town-owned land to Habitat for Humanity, which resulted in new units. The Town has been collecting in-lieu fees for developers that aren't producing units, and this local funding can leverage a lot of new housing.

To preserve units, Scarborough offers a senior tax relief program, which helps older people stay longer in their homes, and leaves housing in the affordable stock for longer.

Scarborough administers a Growth Management Ordinance, but affordable housing is exempt from this, and the requirement hasn't likely produced much. Tom noted that creating affordability in perpetuity is challenging over a sequence of home sales.

### **South Portland**

Josh Reny said there is a spectrum of housing needs in his community. The concept of affordability is relative to the person. Affordability is not just the federal definition of housing for which occupants are paying no more than 30% of a household's income for gross housing costs. The housing market is out of equilibrium because demand is outpacing supply, which is driving up prices. To combat this, we need to both produce more housing as well as create more affordable units.

Incremental progress can be made by encouraging infill development, allowing accessory dwellings, and allowing for smaller lot sizes. Larger scale progress is possible by catalyzing large scale projects, although this can be very challenging given potential neighborhood opposition. South Portland has had success in packaging housing with other objectives, such as downtown revitalization projects or with mixed use development.

Josh provided a hand-out, describing South Portland's recent history in expanding housing choices.

### **Falmouth**

The Town desires housing affordability, and particularly mixed-use development, but the challenge has been finding the right properties for new growth. The Town hosts three Habitat for Humanity developments. Falmouth has some town-owned land that could accommodate more Habitat housing or other housing development. In 2016 Falmouth adopted ordinance amendments that allowed for more density in growth areas, but is now facing significant public opposition. Opposition stems from fear about potential impacts on school costs and on the character of the community.

### **Portland**

Jeff Levine said that Portland both requires and encourages developers to build affordable housing. Belinda added that most residents are supportive of the idea of housing, but like many places, locating new housing is a challenge due to neighbor opposition. Jeff echoed Josh's observation about South Portland. Portland is succeeding in expanding high end and low income housing choices, but is not building enough housing for middle income residents in the 80% to 100% Area Median Income range.

Portland has made three recent changes:

- Upzoning key corridors with density bonuses. The City's recent comprehensive plan identified opportunities for rezoning. By making these zoning changes, the City is being proactive in defining where growth should go, rather than being reactive to developer proposals. Portland is now receiving development proposals that don't require zoning changes to move forward.
- Inclusionary zoning requirement. The City requires 10% of new housing that's built to be affordable. A key to this successful tool is that there is no mechanism available for local government to waive the requirements. Developers have a variety of options on how to meet the requirement.
- Staff resources. To implement a successful workforce housing program, you need to resource it, both with consulting support and ongoing staffing. With limited staff resources this can be challenging.

Portland has an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Jon Jennings noted that these resources are important to leveraging investments, and may be one of the most important tools the City has to catalyzing new housing construction.

Jeff and Jon reported that there is a lot of activity at the state level, with the Mills Administration expected to release the senior housing bond, a pending proposal for \$20M in a state tax credit program to mirror the federal housing tax credit, and new leadership at Maine Housing.

### **Westbrook**

Jerre Bryant told Westbrook's story: In the early 2000's, the City did aggressive rezoning to align its planning and zoning with smart growth principles (locating higher density in serviced areas, mixing uses, and mixing housing income levels in the downtown). At the time, there was not a lot of development, due to the pervasive odor from the paper mill. Once the smell disappeared, there was some development activity in denser areas and a little development in the downtown. However, a proposed infill project generated a lot of public opposition, and dampened development for years. Now, Westbrook is starting to see the impacts from the rezoning in 2002. There is now quite a bit of development pressure. While there has been some public opposition, including proposed moratoria on development, the City Council has stayed the course. The Westbrook Housing Authority has been a partner in expanding housing choices. Lessons learned are that it takes time for the zoning tools to work and that a housing authority is a helpful agent.

### **Cape Elizabeth**

Matt said that there is not a lot of development in Cape. Because of restrictions on development and a lack of developable land, housing starts have not kept pace with demand, which has caused property prices to rise. The high cost of land is also a major barrier to expanding housing choices. Cape Elizabeth's requires that 5% of a development be affordable to low-income families or 10% of the development be affordable to moderate income families. Cape just completed a draft of its 2019 comprehensive plan, and proposals to do infill development met public opposition.

### **Discussion**

Ginny Wilder Cross said that Gorham has mostly single-family housing, and has very few condos, and even fewer apartments for rent. She and others posed some questions for the group to consider, and potentially for GPCOG to answer.

- What portion of a municipality's stock is affordable? Can we compare median income against assessed value?
- How much new housing is being developed annually, statewide, and how does that compare to the increases in construction for seasonal homes?

The group ran out of time, and agreed it will continue the discussion at the February MRC meeting.

## **4. Updates on Other 2018 Priorities (10 min.)**

- **Marijuana data collection** – The City of Portland will be providing a list of data to collect and a methodology to help all towns aggregate their expected costs incurred from legalizing marijuana. We are awaiting information from Anne.

- **Homelessness** – GPCOG is developing a proposal for the County and for member municipalities to consider for providing operating revenues for Housing First developments in the region (all of which are currently located in the City of Portland).
- **Opioid misuse** – Falmouth is our first pilot community to begin learning about the public health challenge of opioid misuse, and explore how municipal officials can contribute to the solutions. The first workshop will be held with municipal officials the third week of January.

## Attachment B

# Fire Training Facility Update

Scarborough and Portland have agreed that a feasibility study is necessary to further explore building a shared fire training facility at ecomaine. In order to move this initiative forward, these two municipalities have agreed to split the cost of the study. Below is the scope for the work.

### Project Description

This project is a regional, multi-modal fire service training facility that will serve the fire departments with the Metro Fire Chiefs

Association and other departments in southern Maine. Key attributes include:

- Classroom Building
- Training Building arranged for CPAT testing course and equipment storage
- Outdoor training area
- Prefabricated Live Burn Evolution/High Angle Training Building and Tower
- Parking infrastructure and travel lanes for apparatus
- Site utilities, including building services, water mains and hydrants, area lighting, storage containers and security fencing

The construction of this project will be multi-phased and subject to funding.

### Scope of Services

We understand that the first deliverable with this project is an updated feasibility study that includes the following facets:

- Site analysis and selection recommendation, including comparison of other sites at the ecomaine property
- Updated site plan based on original Gawron Turgeon Site Layout Plan, 10/23/06
- Discussion of project with utility providers to confirm ability to serve
- Floor plan layout of modular classroom building
- Floor plan layout and sizing of CPAT training facility and storage building
- Recommended phasing plan along with corresponding budgets and Gantt schedule
- Opinion of Probable Costs for the project

### Deliverables

1. Written feasibility report
2. Presentation to Metro Fire Chiefs Association  
Schedule

We anticipate needing six weeks from contract execution to deliverables.

## Attachment C

# Metro Regional Coalition WORKPLAN *Revised 2/5/19*

Below is a summary of the Coalition's goals for FY19 and its planned actions to achieve those goals.

### Homelessness

#### Goals:

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

#### FY19 Deliverables:

- A widely-supported and specific proposal to encourage Housing First developments outside of Portland

#### Actions:

- 1) Develop policy proposal that a) increases operations funding for Housing First development and b) encourages communities outside Portland to host the developments
- 2) Advocate for additional homelessness resources and supportive policy in Augusta

### Opioid Misuse

#### Goal:

- To prevent opioid misuse among our region's residents
- To improve the language we and our colleagues use about the epidemic to destigmatize the people who suffer from the disorder

#### FY19 Deliverables:

- Toolkit for cities and towns to combat opioid misuse distributed
- 3 pilot projects to reduce stigma and galvanize support for effective community-wide strategies.

### Actions:

- 1) Send toolkit out by email and snail mail to city and town staff and every local and state elected official in the County, including school board members.
- 2) Reconvene the seven MRC committee school superintendents for a follow-up roundtable on best practices in preventing opioid misuse by children.
- 3) Do pilot projects, starting with one community, learning from the experience, and then replicating the pilot in two more communities.

## Marijuana

### Goals:

- To increase resources for municipalities to pay for the costs associated with legalizing marijuana

### FY19 Deliverables:

- Common data-gathering and analysis methodology
- Projected costs from our seven communities into a communications piece that can be used for legislative advocacy

### Actions:

- 1) Develop and share a common methodology for cities and towns to gather data on the prevention, public safety, and code enforcement costs associated with the legalization of marijuana
- 2) Develop the data, aggregate the projected costs from our seven communities, and produce a communications piece that can be used for legislative advocacy
- 3) Advocate for additional resources and supportive policy in Augusta

## Improving Housing Choices

### Goals:

- To diversify housing options and increase the supply of workforce housing in MRC communities

### FY19 Deliverables:

- MRC members are educated on the issue
- Educational materials for the residents of the region about the benefits of denser residential growth
- Joint commitment of MRC communities to diversify housing options (tentative)

**Actions:**

- 1) Member communities develop short piece on what their community has done to expand affordable housing choices
- 2) Hold MRC roundtable to share our best practices
- 3) Hold second roundtable with housing developers and other potential partners to learn how municipalities can better lay the groundwork for affordable housing developments
- 4) Develop and promote materials about the benefits of denser residential growth

**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

**FY19 Deliverables:**

- High level officials from all communities engaged

**Actions:**

- 5) Reach out to TM and Chair in Gorham
- 6) Focus meetings on decision-making