



Metro Regional Coalition Agenda

February 9, 2021
Noon to 1:30 pm
Via ZOOM Conferencing

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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

Passcode: 500116, Webinar ID: 825 7176 4292, 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 January 12, 2021 meeting (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. MRC request to PACTS for TOD planning (25 minutes)

Staff report: At the last MRC meeting members suggested exploration of how PACTS funded transit-oriented development (TOD) planning could be wed to MRC municipal comprehensive planning and local/regional efforts to address the information contained in Jeff Levine's [Multifamily Housing and Land Use Regulation](#) study.

Matt Sturgis (Cape Elizabeth Town Manager and PACTS Chair) and MRC Chair Amy Kuhn will share their thoughts about how PACTS and MRC members can collaborate.

Action: Understand, and if appropriate approve, plans for moving forward with an MRC request to PACTS to conduct transit-oriented development plans in MRC communities in alignment with the Levine study.

5. Homelessness Proposal from Portland City Councilor Tae Chong (25 minutes)

Staff report:

From Councilor Chong:

“Ryan Cullen, former director of the Portland Emergency Shelters and current CEO of CHOM housing did an in depth study of people experiencing homelessness. 33% of people experiencing homelessness stayed at the shelter for 3 days or less. This population needed access to emergency funds to stay in their homes but had no choice but to disrupt their housing which often includes children and seek help in Portland.

Encouraging vulnerable populations experiencing housing disruption to seek assistance in emergency shelters puts a large number of people at risk, especially in time of Covid. I believe if we created a Cumberland County 211 GA program, many families could stay in their homes, keeping them safe (as well as front line service workers). I would like to explore how we as a community of municipal leaders can expand the current 211 GA program administered through the Opportunity Alliance in partnership with the Greater Portland of United Way.”

Action: Understand Councilor Chong’s proposal and set out any appropriate next steps.

6. Racial Equity (25 minutes)

Staff report: Director of Community Engagement Zoe Miller and Special Projects Coordinator Tori Pelletier will brief members on progress to date around GPCOG efforts to support local action addressing racial equity.

Action: Provide GPCOG staff with input of existing efforts, and feedback on additional community needs.

7. Adjourn

Upcoming Meetings

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

January 12, 2021

Noon to 1:30 pm

Via ZOOM Conferencing

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Amy Kuhn, Chair	Falmouth
Nathan Poore	Falmouth
Virginia Wilder-Cross	Gorham
Misha Pride	South Portland
Scott Morelli	South Portland
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Jeremy Gabrielson	Cape Elizabeth
Michael Foley	Westbrook
Belinda Ray	Portland
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Jim Gailey	Cumberland County
Kate Snyder	Portland
Kate Simson	Sen. Collins Office
Ephrem Paraschak	Gorham
Presenter	Jeff Levine
Public	Eammon Dundon, Ken Capron
For GPCOG:	Kristina Egan, Chris Hall, Tom Bell, Julia Dubovsky

1. Welcome and introductions

Amy Kuhn called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm and welcomed everyone.

2. Acceptance of the minutes of the December 8, 2020 meeting

Mike Foley moved acceptance of the minutes from the October 13, 2020 MRC meeting, seconded by Belinda Ray. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

3. Public Comment.

Mr. Dundon introduced himself as the new public policy director at the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce.

4. Presentation from Jeff Levine, Levine Planning Strategies LLC

Jeff Levine, former Portland City Planner and Principle of Levine Planning Strategies, LLC, presented his report [MULTIFAMILY HOUSING & LAND USE REGULATION](#). A copy of the report is also attached as a pdf to these minutes.

Levine began by summarized the process he used to develop the maps showing how easy or difficult it is to build multifamily housing across the region.

Levine used a layered approach, beginning with an ordinance review that identified primary barriers (like zones where multifamily is not an allowed use), and secondary barriers (like site location ordinances which increase the difficulty of siting multifamily development).

Next Levine talked with local planners in each community to confirm the ordinance analysis and refine how non-ordinance factors impact multifamily development prospects.

Levine noted the good news that every community is trying to expand housing choices, but that regional strategies could be used to make the process of expanding housing options more effective and efficient.

After gathering data, Levine asked Abe Daily, GPCOG's Data Analyst, to map the findings. Each MRC community has been individually mapped in the report, along with the region as a whole.

Levine noted the report was only a presentation of data – it does not judge the appropriateness of restrictions on multifamily development, many of which are necessary (such as green and open space preservation).

Levine's central findings and recommendations regarding multifamily housing are found on page 11 of the report and include expanding the locations where multifamily housing is allowed and encouraged, particularly in conjunction with regional growth planning.

Next Levine presented his findings and recommendations on how transit and multifamily housing are connected.

Levine defined 'walking sheds' where transit stop access was close to multifamily housing sites. He noted an existing alignment, and recommended efforts to concentrate new housing choice options in the corridors defined in the Transit Tomorrow report (which GPCOG will release in March).

Levine's findings and recommendations are found on page 21 of his report, and they encourage further efforts to align transit and housing policies to support greater housing choices and more robust transit options.

In Q&A the following points were made:

- Members expressed surprise at the high percentage of land in the region where multifamily housing is impossible or difficult to site. They urged each other to bring the Levine study to their Councils for discussion and action. GPCOG staff volunteered their help in that process if needed.
- Members noted that transit tax increment financing districts are another useful tool to address the challenge of integrating housing choice expansion and transit.
- 'Multifamily' is defined in the report as two or more dwelling units, a more generous standard than the three unit minimum used in some municipal ordinances.
- National best practices are difficult to import across communities – local needs, preferences and strategies need to be tailored to individual places.
- Strategies to unify and expand transit and housing choices include both ordinance and regulatory changes, along with incentives and assistance to developers to help them meet requirements in ways that advance municipal and regional policy. Levine noted that a regional housing trust would be an excellent example of how developer assistance/partnership can work, given sufficient funding.
- Members discussed the connections between the transit work being done at PACTS and the opportunities to bring housing choice strategies into transit planning.
- Members suggested that staff explore how transit-oriented development (TOD) planning could be wed to municipal comprehensive planning and local/regional efforts to address the recommendations contained in Levine's report. Staff was asked to provide MRC with a proposed action step in this regard at the next MRC meeting. Staff will work with MRC members who are also active in PACTS to do so.
- Members suggested that additional mapping of employment locations be added to the Levine report data in support of the transit/housing TOD planning concept.

Kristina Egan noted that GPCOG's Transit Tomorrow report has identified 32 transportation centers in our region, many of them located along the transportation corridors shown in the Levine report. She said that these centers will be getting TOD planning opportunities, and as a result the MRC request can fit well within GPCOG's existing work plan.

Next Steps:

1. GPCOG staff are working to complete FY 20 housing choice reports for each MRC community.
2. MRC members will bring the Levine report back to their Councils for discussion and action. GPCOG staff will be available to assist as needed.
3. GPCOG staff will work with PACTS members to draft a proposal on TOD that integrates the Levine report and MRC priorities into existing Transit Tomorrow implementation.

5. Homelessness Update

Chris Hall noted that the Biden administration is expected to reverse existing executive orders that have detained many asylum seekers at the US border. As a result, Portland City staff have convened a discussion of how the region can respond. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, a second 'Host Homes' program is problematic.

Members noted that outreach is needed to new Americans and the public regarding the safety of vaccines.

Next week Portland Councilors will get an update on the Riverside Homeless development.

Portland's recent approval of a new shelter included regulations requiring neighborhood impact management. MRC members asked for more information about these new requirements at a future meeting.

6. MRC Workplan Check-In

Members took a mid-year opportunity to review the MRC FY 2021 strategic goals and priorities and discuss any adjustments. After review they unanimously agreed to keep the work plan as it stands without changes.

7. Adjourn

At 1: 25 pm Amy Kuhn adjourned the meeting by unanimous roll call.