

# GPCOG Executive Committee AGENDA

October 19, 2021

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82855747276?pwd=ZUJMOUITTDhiTlpXcDFibElvemdOZz09>

Or join by phone by calling: 1-646-558-8656

Note: At the direction of the GPCOG Executive Committee, all committee meetings are being held via [Zoom conferencing technology](#) due to the continuing pandemic. We remain committed to full public participation in our meetings through remote access during the COVID-19 crisis. Remote meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of [LD 32, 2021 Public Law 290](#) and [1 MRSA Chapter 13, Subchapter 1](#).

## 1. Welcome

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

## 2. Acceptance of 9/21/21 Minutes (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. Executive Director's Report (Attachment B) (5 min.)

## 5. Spotlight: Conversation with Cathy Conlow (15 min.)

Cathy Conlow, the new Executive Director of Maine Municipal Association, will join us to discuss shared work and priorities amongst the two organizations.

## 6. Housing and Zoning Policy (Attachment C) (15 min.)

### Staff Report:

In 2020 and 2021 GPCOG supported [LD 609](#) “Resolve, To Establish a Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions.” The resolve became law this summer with strong bipartisan support.

The Commission is meeting now, and GPCOG staff have been fully engaged. Vanessa Farr is representing GPCOG on a Maine Municipal Association working group focused on Commission recommendations, and Kristina Egan has submitted written testimony (see Attachment C) and verbal testimony (on [YouTube](#) starting at 2:07:00) to the Commission.

In response to her presentation, the Commission has asked GPCOG to work with other Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) in Maine to craft a regional technical assistance funding proposal for the Commission, designed to allow RPOs to help municipalities adopt Commission recommendations and change their zoning and land use policies to expand housing choices.

Action: Review and advise staff regarding continuing engagement with the Commission, as well as related GPCOG legislative advocacy as the Commission’s recommendations move into the legislative process in the new year.

## 7. Future Direction of GPCOG’s Broadband Work (20 min.)

### Staff Report:

GPCOG staffs and serves as the fiscal agent of the Maine Broadband Coalition. This is statewide work. GPCOG is also working on a regional level with Lakes Region and Oxford County communities to support these municipalities as they plan and become investment-ready for broadband. Both the statewide and regional work is growing in significance, with resources growing particularly quickly for the statewide work.

Today, the GPCOG Executive Committee will offer direction on GPCOG’s relationship to the Maine Broadband Coalition.

The Maine Broadband Coalition successfully led the state’s first broadband bond campaign, coordinated critical policy advancements, and deployed data collection, public education, and capacity building for regions and municipalities across the state. The Coalition is poised to significantly expand its capacity building programming, which will recruit, train, and deploy “Booster” volunteers who can provide embedded capacity to regional broadband planning efforts throughout all of Maine’s counties.

While there is alignment between GPCOG and the Coalition in policy and programming priorities, the Coalition is focused throughout the state. Coalition members see the Coalition on a path of growth that will enable the Coalition to become an independent entity with dedicated staff and funding.

Recommended Action:

As the Coalition and GPCOG begin to plan this transition for the Coalition, provide guidance on GPCOG's priority and level of engagement on regional broadband and on statewide broadband work.

## **8. Menu of Regional Investment Options for ARPA Funds (20 min.)**

Staff Report:

GPCOG has been working, along with the Maine Municipal Association and Cumberland County, to help its members navigate options and identify opportunities for their use of funding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). Along with individual eligible uses of ARPA funds, we have heard a desire for communities to work together on issues that transcend local boundaries and can leverage county, state, and other funding. We also have heard concerns, mainly from smaller communities, that they simply do not have the administrative bandwidth to handle compliance and reporting.

Cumberland County has likewise been working on its own process for allocating its nearly \$57 million in ARPA funds and has proposed a framework for a competitive process this fall for the balance of the first tranche of funds, about \$20 million, and again for the second tranche next year.

GPCOG staff are developing a survey for its members, with mini-scopes for regional initiatives on ARPA administration (shared service model), water/sewer, broadband, homelessness, and affordable housing, to identify their priorities. Based on the outcomes of that survey, we hope to identify matching needs and goals across communities to support through the county's competitive process.

Recommended Action:

For discussion and potential action.

## **Adjourn**

## Upcoming Meetings

All meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month at noon. Upcoming meetings are noted below with potential agenda items:

November 16	2022 Advocacy Priorities Strategic Planning Goals and Process
January 18	FY21 Audit Report
February 15	
March 15	FY23 Priorities Executive Director Annual Review
April 19	FY23 Budget – First Draft
May 17	FY23 Budget – Final Recommendation to General Assembly FY23 Officers and Executive Committee Nominations Adoption of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update FY23 Meeting Calendar Affirm Investment Policy
May XX	General Assembly and Summit

**Attachment A**

**GPCOG Executive Committee**

**MINUTES**

**September 21, 2021**

**In Attendance:**

Name	Affiliation
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Carmen Lone	Bridgton
Justin Poirier	Chebeague Island
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Sandy Carder	Gray
Jarrod Maxfield	Windham
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Kristina Egan, Tony Plante, Chris Hall, Vincent Edwards, Andrew Butcher	GPCOG Staff

**Welcome**

Sandy Carder, President, opened the meeting, which was held via Zoom.

**Acceptance of 7/22/21 and 8/24/21 Minutes**

Nat moved acceptance of the 7/22/21 and 8/24/21 minutes. Matt seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

**Public Comment**

Ken Capron requested a copy of the most recent audit report and management letter. He added that he received a request from staff on information on MicroRail. Ken stated that he cannot provide information that is proprietary but is willing to give a presentation on MicroRail.

George Rheault questioned the reasoning behind changing the job title of the Development Director to the Director of Strategic Partnerships. Additionally, he questioned the fairness of this title change on the applicants for the Development Director position and the hiring of the successful candidate.

### **Executive Director Report**

Kristina Egan provided the Executive Director’s report. Staff has been focusing on the “Operate with Excellence” strategy of the three strategic priorities this summer. GPCOG has grown with the addition of the Resilience Corps and the handling of more federal funds. GPCOG’s “plumbing and wiring” has been strained. She and Tony Plante are working on the contacts management system, file storage and migration to the cloud, and team-based products.

Over the summer, PACTS has made several allocations of transportation funds, including collector roads, municipal partnership initiative funds, and CARES funding for transit. Additionally, PACTS complex projects went through a selection process. There were not enough funds available to fund all the projects.

Transit Together, which is the follow-up initiative to Transit Tomorrow, looks at the seven transit providers, routes, and ways to make transit more customer focused. Additionally, GPCOG will be issuing an RFP for the Rapid Transit corridor. This will investigate providing faster transit service between Portland, Westbrook, and Gorham. Smaller studies, such as the South Portland Waterfront, TOD Saco/Biddeford Mill District, Sebago sidewalks, and Falmouth watershed study, are coming to an end.

GPCOG is finishing a pilot project with the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. The work has been done with Bridgton and Windham to look at the resilience issues of both towns. There is \$28,000 that both towns can access to take steps to addressing those issues. The priority project will be looking at ordinances and capital investments programs and how resilience criteria can be implemented into those policies.

The Connectivity Authority has been set up and will be handling hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for Broadband. Andrew Butcher was instrumental in shaping on the Authority. Additionally, he has raised over \$100,000 in philanthropic funds for broadband work with another \$200,000 coming from Connect Maine to deploy boosters to help do community planning for broadband.

Finally, our inaugural class of 14 resilience corps will be departing mid-October. GPCOG will be welcoming a new class in November, which staff is actively recruiting new talent. There will be fewer internal fellows and more external placements in municipalities and non-profits.

### **Spotlight: What’s Your Transportation Question?**

Rick Harbison and Zoe Miller presented the spotlight, which focused on Connect 2045. The key features of a long-range transportation plan are a long-term regional vision (20+ years), considers all users and modes, identifies needs, identifies policies, and projects that address those needs, and meet federal requirements (updating the plans every 5 years).

The GPCOG team is the project team and is responsible for managing the project and developing the plan. The advisory committee is a body of 30 people, which comprises of municipalities staff and representatives from community groups, non-profits, large employers, Federal Highway and Maine DOT. Their role is to provide guidance and input to the project team and help with promotion and outreach. The plan’s content involves public and stakeholder engagement, mapping and data analysis, recent plans and studies, and federal requirements. There will be a 30-day public review and comment period.

Additionally, there will be a period of federal review and the PACTS Policy committee will vote to adopt the plan.

Connect 2045 will take 1.5 years to develop, which is standard for a plan of this scale.

The public engagement campaign centered around a “question campaign”. Staff went out to over ten locations (outdoors) and asked different people of different backgrounds, ages, races, and ethnicities about the future of transportation. The prompt was, “What’s your question about getting around Greater Portland in the future?”

In July – September staff went to different events, such as community concert in Standish, farmer markets, the Prosperity Maine block party, and other events. Additionally, staff made it possible for the public to ask their question over social media or text their question. As a result, over 400 questions were made by public. There are plans for a Youth Poster Contest when schools are up and running. In September – October, staff will hold vision labs, which are public workshops to categorize and prioritize questions. Advisory committee workshops will also be held to draft the vision and goals of this campaign.

Vision labs will be held from September 27<sup>th</sup> – October 4<sup>th</sup>. Themes will be presented on the “Idea” wall and individuals will share their ideas.

Executive Committee members got to experience the virtual idea wall through the Mentimeter app, where their responses were generated in a word cloud and a virtual board.

Kate Lewis commented that significant time was spent on Transit Tomorrow, and she was surprised that there was a new plan launched for transit. She asked what will be different about Connect 2045 and merit equal investment. Kristina Egan answered that Transit Tomorrow is the foundational component of Connect 2045. She explained that this is the long-range transportation plan, which includes all modes (bike, ped, roads, and transit), is required to be updated every four years by the federal government.

Rick Harbison added that part of their long-range transportation plan is reviewing recent studies and Transit Tomorrow is a comprehensive transit study that will enveloped within the plan.

Kate also asked if staff would hold individual meetings with local transit committees. Rick answered that there will be time set aside to hold those meetings and are currently working on coordinating them.

### **Maximizing the Impact and Value of Federal Funds**

Matt Sturgis stated that the investments that are made in the region should be treated the same way towns/cities approach bonding. He adds that those investments have longer lives when funds are put in projects that benefit the region 30-40 years down the line. Matt explained that there should be the best benefit for the longest period to ensure a maximization of investment.

Kristina Egan expressed that one GPCOG’s priorities is to assist the region make the most of the federal resources to maximize its long-term benefits. Over the summer, staff met with officers to discuss Broadband and other opportunities available from federal funds flowing into the region. CARES funding and ARPA funding have already come in, with the infrastructure bill and large budget proposal on the horizon. These funds can greatly benefit the region, but GPCOG needs direction to figure out its role in bring municipalities together and potentially aggregating resources across different levels of the government.

Tony Plante recapped the meeting on ARPA, that had about 30 elected and appointed officials present. There were 3 main questions that were posed to the municipalities...

1. What has your jurisdiction done to put ARPA funds to use? How did you arrive at those decisions?
2. How are the balance of the funds being prioritized?
3. What do you hope to accomplish?

As a result of these questions, staff found that municipalities were using the funds to cover revenue losses due to the pandemic, providing premium pay to essential worker, and expenses related to responding to the pandemic (ex: retrofits to buildings). Individual communities addressed issues such as water/sewer infrastructure. For many of the communities, the funds received were not enough to put a dent into the price tag of an infrastructure project. Additionally, homelessness, housing choice and affordability, and mental health and substance abuse are all issues that demand regional solutions. There was a recognition that these funds represent generational opportunity to make a difference in the region. Smaller communities stated that they did not have the administrative capacity to handle the funds. Staff sees an opportunity to be of service to its members, like the Cable Franchise Renewal project. There are many needs that call for regional collaboration and it is important to ensure that these funds are used to its greatest benefit.

Sandy Carder stated that the rural communities have a short list of what qualifies for its funding. She mentioned that using the funds on social programs, like mental health, would be a drain on their resources and infrastructure is a better use of the funds. Sandy added that these funds are essentially a bond and because of that it is important to ensure that they are being maximized for the long-term. However, it does not preclude them from considering premium pay or other items that would be easy to administer.

Matthew Sturgis asked if there is the ability to expand the capacity of broadband to improve the quality of service, while still working on covering un- and under-served parts of the region. Andrew Butcher answered that the Greater Portland region is served more than other regions but there are shortcomings and gaps in that service. He also added that the state has redefined its level of service, which redefines many areas in the region as underserved. Andrew explained that the economy and way of life are evolving fast and to entice economic development in the region, digital infrastructure must be considered. Staff has taken the directive from the Executive Committee and facilitated targeted conversations around regional readiness regarding broadband. Kristina Egan added that there are still unserved and underserved areas in Cumberland County that still need to be addressed. GPCOG's role with the Maine Broadband Coalition may change and GPCOG's work in the Lakes Region has resulted in a group of six or seven communities working to become investment ready.

Sandy Carder stated that individual towns have individual activity. The speed test mapping is good but in some areas are not very detailed. Andrew Butcher replied that the mapping is a great tool when related to demand aggregation. He mentioned the need to look at the collective needs as a region because it will inform the decisions and investments from the private sector to help spark economic development. Staff is beginning to find areas where broadband would be the greatest benefit, areas of inadequate service, and partnerships that should be pursued. He believes that GPCOG's role is articulating the goals of broadband in the region.

Kristina Egan mentioned GPCOG's work in the Lakes region in broadband, including providing Resilience Corps staffing, mapping assistance, and consulting assistance. She mentioned that the Executive Committee should think about how these funds are best used to address other regional concerns such as water, sewer, homelessness, and housing choice.

Nat Tupper stated that the recommendation for the funds that his municipality has received is mostly going toward wastewater treatment facility to keep people and rivers health and the area financial solvent. Additionally, part of the recommendation was for premium pay and a regional broadband improvement effort. Internet providers have offered to fiber to only a third of the area. He asked how he can use the opportunity to leverage an investment and can he use the money with others to get utilities to allow pole attachments. In addition, he asked if he could construct pole attachments using capital funds and lease to internet providers. He states he is waiting on an organization, like GPCOG, to figure out a solution for community. Kristina replied that staff has been tentative to propose anything due to these funds being municipal funds. If the Executive Committee wants staff to put together a menu of regional investment options, including for broadband, that is something GPCOG can do. She added that staff is always open to think of the way GPCOG can serve the municipalities when making these local and regional decisions.

Carmen Lone spoke about the need in her community and other small communities for administrative guidance on what funds are available, what it can be used for, how it can be leveraged, and timeline for certain projects.

Kate Lewis stated that if these funds are generational opportunity, then the size of the population in the next 5-20 years should be considered when funding infrastructure projects. Climate migration is forcing people to Maine, which has led to housing issues and demand on systems

Jarrold Maxfield said the role of GPCOG should be to organize and advocate. He stated that broadband differs in service from town to town and sometimes within areas of a town. However, he noted that changes in broadband to some of these rural areas will probably come from the federal and state level. Technology is changing and perhaps fiber is not that the only way individuals will be able to access the internet. Jarrold agreed the focus should be on generational issues such as wastewater and water quality.

Kristina Egan suggested a focused conversation on Broadband in the next meeting. Staff will put together a menu for leveraging investments in different areas. Sandy Carder stated that the administrative assistance for communities to request, administer, and compliance for funds should be included. Kristina replied by stating that like the Cable Franchise project, consultants can be hired temporarily to support communities in administering the funds.

## **FY22 Workplan**

Kristina Egan briefly presented the FY22 Workplan and opened the floor for questions.

Kate Lewis asked if the FY22 Workplan needed adoption or if it is simply a guide of the work of GPCOG. Kristina stated that the workplan is an internal document that does not need to be adopted by the Executive Committee. The leadership team reviews the workplan quarterly to track progress on goals for the fiscal year. Kate wanted clarification on Item 3.3.7 in the workplan, which is Transportation Request for Proposals (RFP). She notes that she is wary of not going through an RFP process each time because

some creative proposal can be overlooked in an “umbrella” contract. Kristina answered by stating that GPCOG often gets small requests from members to do projects. Procurement is done for all bigger projects. However, she notes to be more responsive in a quicker time frame, this process was adopted to increase the turnaround of smaller projects. Kate mentions that diversity of ideas is important and should not be overlooked, even for smaller projects.

Matt Sturgis believed that the FY22 Workplan is both aspirational and operational and was happy to see that some items from the previous fiscal year have been accomplished. He added, like Kate, he thought it was a good idea to have a roster of contractors. However, he understood that staff should have the ability to move quickly on smaller projects, if necessary.

Nat Tupper expressed how impressed he was with the FY22 Workplan and how well it explained the breadth of work that GPCOG does. Kristina added that a directive from the Executive Committee is to be focused and as a result, there were items that were rejected from the workplan.

Sandy Carder liked the layout of the FY22 Workplan and appreciated the balance of detail. She added that this workplan was a great way to view everything that is going on at GPCOG.

Kristina Egan mentioned that next month is the Executive Committee retreat. However, the Committee will be meeting by Zoom, so it will be a shorter retreat than in past years. She will be working with Sandy on some retreat items for next month’s meeting. She stated that one of the items that they will be working on for the meeting is the 2-year strategic plan update. Additionally, Broadband is another topic that will be on table for next month’s meeting.

Nat moved adjournment; Matt seconded. The meeting ended at 1:30 PM.

## Attachment B

### Executive Director's Report

#### Strategic Priority – Serve our Members

- **Cooperative Purchasing Savings.** GPCOG saved participating communities at least \$34,500 on snow plow edges.
- **Comprehensive Planning.** *Long Island* and *Casco* are being supported by GPCOG's planning team as these communities update comprehensive plans.
- **Resilience Priorities.** *Windham* and *Bridgton* have completed pilot projects to build community and climate resilience. GPCOG supported the cooperative effort between the towns, and will continue supporting this work, shifting focus to implementing the communities' joint priority of integrating resilience considerations into investment plans and ordinances.
- **Resilience Corps.** The inaugural group of Resilience Fellows are closing out their service year. Fellows served the broadband committees in *Naples*, *Standish*, *Sebago* and *Harrison*, *South Portland* and *Portland's* efforts to implement *One Climate Future*, composting, and air quality monitoring, *Cumberland County*, *Yarmouth's* affordable housing committee, *Portland Downtown*, *Portland's* office of economic opportunity, *Creative Portland*, *Casco Bay Lines*, the *Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center*, *Casco Bay Estuary Partnership* and *Casco Bay Shellfish Working Group*.

So far, five of our 14 Fellows have been offered jobs in Maine.

The new Resilience Corps will join our team in November. Fellows will continue providing broadband support to the Lakes Region Coalition, which includes *Naples*, *Standish*, *Sebago* and *Harrison* and begin providing support to *Bridgton* and *Windham* to implement their resilience priority. Members and organizations that will host new Fellows include: *South Portland's* and *Falmouth's* sustainability departments, *Westbrook's* office of economic development, *Portland's* office of economic opportunity, *New England Environmental Finance Center*, *Wild Seed*, *Portland Trails*, and the *Casco Bay Estuary Partnership*.

- **Call for Transportation Planning Projects.** All GPCOG and PACTS members can submit project proposals for transportation planning efforts. There is \$115,000 available for rural communities and PACTS communities. No match is required for GPCOG rural communities; match is required for PACTS communities. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

## Strategic Priority – Regional Prosperity

- **Maine Outdoor Dine campaign.** The Maine Outdoor Dine campaign continues this fall, supporting restaurants throughout the state by pointing people to restaurants that offer outdoor dining. There's a website and a social media push of the [video on the homepage](#).
- **Broadband events:** Cumberland County and GPCOG hosted the first in series of four broadband webinars. This first one focused on our region's readiness for investment, and featured case studies from South Portland, Harrison, Naples and Long Island. Check it out [here](#). The second webinar will be held:
  - 10/27 at noon: Digital Frontiers: Smart Infrastructure and the Internet of Things. Register [here](#).
- **Regional transit marketing campaign.** The [regional transit marketing campaign](#), which began in mid-March, will run TV commercials until 11/21/21, encouraging people to ride transit. Watch it [here](#).
- **Bus ambassadors.** With South Portland Bus and METRO, GPCOG is launching a new effort to help new riders who speak French, Portuguese, Swahili, Spanish, Tshiluba/Ciluba, and Lingala how to navigate and use the region's public transportation system.

## Strategic Priority – Operate with Excellence

- **Transition to hybrid work.** GPCOG's internal 'reopening team' has developed a new office plan that will support remote and in-person work for the staff team. While a limited number of people will have dedicated work spaces, most staff will share space. We will be converting larger offices to collaborative spaces and setting up 'hot desks'. Our goal is for the office space to be ready in the New Year.
- **Employee engagement.** With consulting support from Sam Fratoni, staff members shared input on what's working well at GPCOG, and what needs improvement. Over the summer, the leadership team worked with the whole staff team to identify and begin implementing high priority actions, most of which pointed to the need to improve the agency's operations systems. These include contacts management, professional development opportunities, file storage, budgeting and project management software, and more.
- **Staff changes.** Tori Pelletier, Special Projects Manager, is leaving GPCOG to work at Portland Empowered. Clara McCool, our broadband Resilience Fellow, will be joining the staff team as Broadband Associate.

- **FY21 member dues.** There is \$75K in FY21 member dues that are being used to ensure healthy cash flow, serve as contingency, and provide match for new grants. The FY22 dues are anticipated to be fully expended by the end of the fiscal year.
- **Grants and contracts.** Below is a summary of grants and contracts that were awarded and which proposals are still pending.

**July 2020 through September 2021**

<b>Approved</b>	<b>Fiscal Agent</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>U.S. Economic Development Administration:</b> To help fund pandemic recovery and resiliency work in the GPCOG region through expanding the loan programs, growing the new Greater Portland Resilience Exchange, and helping communities expand broadband services.	GPCOG	\$ 400,000
<b>Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant Program:</b> To fund a regional COVID-19 relief loan program.	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 300,000
<b>City of South Portland MicroLoan Program:</b> To facilitate the city's microloan program.	GPCOG	\$ 60,000
<b>Town of Yarmouth MicroLoan Program:</b> To facilitate the town's microloan program.	GPCOG	\$ 100,000
<b>CARES Act Transit Planning:</b> To fund assessment to improve the efficiency of the transit network and to lead a regional communications campaign to recover transit ridership.	GPCOG	\$ 640,000
<b>Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps) FY21:</b> To launch the Resilience Corps	GPCOG	\$ 217,000
<b>Corporation for National Service (AmeriCorps) FY22:</b> To launch the Resilience Corps	GPCOG	\$ 217,000
<b>US EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Supplemental FY21-FY23:</b> To provide loans and limited subgrants for cleanup of areas designated as brownfields.	GPCOG	\$ 500,000
<b>Maine Technology Institute:</b> To launch the Digital Infrastructure Frontiers Series with Maine Broadband Coalition.	GPCOG	\$ 20,000
<b>Department of Transportation - Rural TA:</b> To provide transportation technical assistance to municipalities outside the PACTS region.	GPCOG	\$ 84,500
<b>Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry - General:</b> To provide land use planning technical assistance to inland municipalities.	GPCOG	\$ 15,130
<b>Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry - Coastal:</b> To develop a Community Intertidal Data Portal to support decision making and inform users of the Casco Bay intertidal zone.	GPCOG	\$ 40,088
<b>US Department of Energy Clean Cities:</b> To support Maine Clean Communities program.	GPCOG	\$ 90,000
<b>Maine Community Foundation:</b> To fund GPCOG efforts to provide racial equity training and resources to local municipalities.	GPCOG	\$ 6,000

<b>Combined proposal to 4 funding sources (Connect Maine, Maine Community Foundation, Island Institute, Northern Forest Center):</b> To launch a statewide data collection initiative to assess broadband speeds.	GPCOG	\$ 52,000
<b>Maine Department of Economic Development:</b> To support WinterDine.	GPCOG	\$ 50,000
<b>Maine Department of Economic Development:</b> Extension of first WinterDine project.	GPCOG	\$ 50,000
<b>Town of Freeport:</b> For public education communications on "Connect Freeport" project.	GPCOG	\$ 4,000
<b>Town of Scarborough:</b> For edit of comprehensive plan.	GPCOG	\$ 4,000
<b>Maine Governor's Office of Policy and Innovation Resilience Pilot Project:</b> To build capacity in two inland towns for vulnerability assessments and climate resilience planning with Bridgton and Windham.	GPCOG	\$ 15,000
<b>National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Program:</b> To support a second round of "Creative Shelters" installations celebrating diversity through original art on bus shelters in Greater Portland.	Creative Portland	\$ 25,000
<b>Elmina B. Sewall Foundation:</b> Funding for leveraging the unique role of the Maine Broadband Coalition to expand the sharing of information, resources, and coordination for communities throughout Maine.	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 40,000
<b>Island Institute:</b> In support of the Maine Broadband Coalition's education, engagement, and capacity building efforts, including upcoming broadband events.	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 15,000
<b>ConnectMaine:</b> Funding for GPCOG/Maine Broadband Coalition baseline broadband technology assessment contract for use in Lakes Region.	GPCOG	\$ 9,500
<b>Town of Falmouth:</b> To provide support and guidance in developing a town-wide climate action plan.	GPCOG	\$ 14,711
<b>US EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Supplemental Funding Request:</b> To provide loans for brownfields clean-up. Open to current RLF grantees having committed at least 75% of all RLF funds; GPCOG has committed over 85%.	GPCOG	\$ 500,000
<b>Casco Comprehensive Plan.</b> To support Casco in the development of its comprehensive plan.	GPCOG	\$ 70,000
<b>Rapid Transit Study.</b> CARES-funded feasibility study of the rapid transit corridor from Portland to Gorham.	METRO to GPCOG	\$ 800,000
<b>Submitted</b>	<b>Fiscal Agent</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>National Fish and Wildlife National Resilience Defense Fund:</b> To fund a regional resilience program, identifying nature-based solutions to flooding in our coastal towns.	GPCOG	\$ 250,000
<b>U.S. Small Business Administration Community Navigator Program:</b> To fund racial equity work.	DECD	\$ 100,000
<b>ConnectMaine:</b> To fund Maine Broadband Coalition's development of Regional Capacity Building broadband project.	GPCOG	\$ 200,000

<b>Maine Community Foundation:</b> To support the Regional Capacity Building broadband project.	GPCOG or Center for Regional Prosperity (to be determined)	\$ 200,000
<b>Sam L. Cohen Foundation (letter of inquiry):</b> To fund helping municipalities identify and adopt institutional and structural policies and practices that advance racial equity and help bring Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals into public leadership positions (as staff, elected leaders, and committee members) through institutional relationships among communities of color and government entities.	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 30,000
<b>Fisher Charitable Foundation:</b> To fund adapting PlaceCode zoning toolkit template to the Maine context, piloting its use with one municipality, and educating Portland and surrounding communities about relevant best practices.	Center for Regional Prosperity	\$ 15,000
<b>Clean Cities Workplace Charging.</b> Part of a national group that applied to support EV charging infrastructure	GPCOG	\$ 90,000



## Attachment C

### Testimony on Housing and Zoning

September 30, 2021

Senator Craig Hickman, Chair  
Speaker Ryan Fecteau, Chair  
Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions  
13 State House Station  
Cross Office Building, Room 215  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0013

Senator Hickman, Speaker Fecteau, and members of the Commission,

Please accept this letter presenting the comments of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in full support of the important work the Commission is doing to increase housing opportunities in our region, and across Maine.

GPCOG serves 30 municipal members, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, and the County of Cumberland. We staff the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization which allocates over \$25 million dollars annually in federal transportation funds to regional priority highway and public transportation projects, extending our service territory into York County, including Saco and Biddeford.

GPCOG also serves as the Portland region's Economic Development District, as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and we support numerous programs like Maine Clean Communities and the Maine Broadband Coalition, along with the ever-changing needs of our member communities.

GPCOG partners with employers, nonprofit and education leaders, federal agencies, and local, regional, and state governments to strive for greater regional prosperity and equity for everyone, while providing transportation and land use planning, racial equity, climate action, and broadband readiness services to the communities we serve.

Like the rest of the state, our region is suffering from too little housing that every member of our community can afford. Working families, retirees, young people, and everyone with low-to-moderate income are struggling to find housing they can afford in the places they want to live.

Several years ago, our municipal members identified this problem, as well as the cascade of negative effects that flow from unaffordable housing. GPCOG has commissioned studies that examine the linkage between land use policies and housing deficits – we will share those studies with you as a follow up to this testimony.

Today we need your help. Your recommendations have the power to shape legislative action that will encourage more diverse, affordable housing developments in our region.

Here's what we hope you will do:

1. Create a framework for municipal action that includes a menu of land use policy options all centered on expanding housing choices. We hope you will give municipalities several options for local action, recognizing that one policy cannot fit all the different urban, suburban, and rural needs of our region, or the state.
2. Create a clear definition of success for municipalities. While much of the housing market is outside local control, local land use policies can be changed to better support expanded housing. Focus your recommended policy outcomes on successfully advancing local land use policies that set the stage for greater housing.
3. Provide strong and continuing funding for municipal technical assistance so local efforts to improve housing choice are supported by state, regional, and consulting experts. Land use policy changes are complex undertakings that most of our members cannot successfully complete without adequate support. Make adequate funding a prerequisite for any municipal requirements.
4. Provide new revenue opportunities for municipalities that successfully complete housing expansion land use reforms. Expanded housing will generate new demands on local services. Communities that successfully expand housing should be supported with additional revenue streams to offset those additional costs.

As an aspect of considering new revenues, explore adding preferential scoring (or similar treatment) for municipalities that successfully take action to encourage housing expansion when the state is awarding economic, transportation, and sustainability programs.

We believe this Commission can set Maine on the road to resolving our housing crisis. While success will take time, progress begins with your recommendations and strong bipartisan support from the Legislature next year.

We hope you will consider our suggestions as a part of your work. I'm happy to answer your questions, and provide additional information at your request.