



Metro Regional Coalition Agenda

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

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85676857436>

Webinar ID: 856 7685 7436, or call 646.558.8656

Note: At the direction of the GPCOG Executive Committee, PACTS and GPCOG are holding all committee meetings 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](#).

Participants are reminded that this meeting will be recorded and posted on the GPCOG website.

1. Welcome and introductions (5 minutes)

Chair Amy Kuhn will call the meeting to order and ask attendees to briefly introduce themselves.

2. Acceptance of minutes from the October 12, 2021 meeting (Attachment A)

3. Public Comment (3 minutes per person)

Residents of the region are invited to share up to 3 minutes of comment on any topic, including items on the agenda.

4. COVID-19 Roundtable (15 minutes)

Staff report: This standing agenda item is intended to provide a forum for MRC members to share with each other their pandemic-related questions, learning, and community updates.

Action: Information exchange.

5. Regional Climate Vulnerabilities Presentation (25 minutes)

Staff report: GPCOG's Sustainability Program Manager Sara Mills-Knapp will share research and information her team has assembled on regional climate vulnerabilities.

Action: Information and opportunity to engage with GPCOG climate action technical assistance.

6. Regional ARPA Survey Results and Housing Initiative Discussion (25 minutes)

Staff report: Staff will share the results of our recently completed survey on regional ARPA investment priorities showing housing as a top priority. The survey results will allow members to further consider regional ARPA partnerships that they want to pursue focused on housing, including a potential application to Cumberland County for a regional housing program.

Action: Information, discussion, and decision of possible ARPA regional funding application.

7. Homelessness Update (15 minutes)

Staff report: Staff will share recent discussions surrounding the expanding crisis of people experiencing homelessness in the region. A new convening of regional support organizations is being led by Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director of the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition.

Action: Information and discussion of available resources.

8. Other Updates

Staff report: As time allows.

9. Adjourn

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings from Noon to 1:30 pm on Zoom

December 14, 2021

January 11, 2022

February 8, 2022

March 8, 2022

April 12, 2022

May 10, 2022

June 14, 2022

Attachment A



DRAFT Metro Regional Coalition Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2021

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Amy Kuhn, Chair	Falmouth
Pete Lafond	Falmouth
Nathan Poore	Falmouth
Scott Morelli	South Portland
Jeremy Gabrielson	Cape Elizabeth
Virginia Wilder-Cross	Gorham
Anne McGuire	Portland
Michael Foley	Westbrook
Gail Kezer	Office of Senator King
Mark Winter	Office of Senator Collins
Sarah Lawrence	Office of Representative Pingree
For GPCOG:	Kristina Egan, Chris Hall, Tom Bell

1. Welcome and introductions

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

2. Acceptance of minutes from the September 14, 2021 meeting

Michael Foley moved acceptance of the minutes from the September 14, 2021, MRC meeting, seconded by Virginia Wilder-Cross. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

3. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

4. COVID-19 Roundtable

Mayor Foley announced that Westbrook would soon have free COVID-19 testing (PCR and rapid) available for all MRC communities. The Mayor will forward program details to GPCOG and they will share with all MRC members.

5. MRC Priorities for 2021-2022

Members reviewed the revised draft MRC priorities, now divided into education and action items. In discussion the following points were made:

Regional solutions to the homelessness crisis are urgently needed. Specific proposals are welcome from MRC member communities either individually or collectively. ARPA funding can be a central part of a solution.

Members discussed the growing difficulty of finding temporary housing for people experiencing homelessness, including a rising number of new Americans. Members discussed prior efforts to define a state/regional/local partnership and looked forward to an update at the next meeting.

Regional solutions to the housing crisis are also urgently needed. Solutions should expand housing development for all levels of income, particularly those already suffering housing cost burdens. Again, ARPA funding can be a substantial resource.

Members reviewed progress to date on the 2019 goals set by many MRC communities to increase housing choices by 10%. Progress has been uneven in the region, although some communities have made substantial progress. Overall, the region is only roughly half way to its goal.

In response members discussed the ongoing work of the state house Commission on Housing and Zoning. GPCOG staff shared the organization's testimony to the Commission in support of municipal flexibility, place-based policy solutions, and adequate state funding to enable local implementation of any Commission recommendations that become law in 2022. GPCOG has been asked by the Commission to submit a funding proposal for regional organizations to provide technical assistance to municipalities as a part of the Commission's recommendations.

After discussion the member agreed by acclamation to adopt the priorities as presented and attached below.

6. Cumberland County ARPA update

Cumberland County Commissioners have recently outlined their approach to distributing available ARPA funds. Members received a brief update and discussed possible alignment between the County's process and priorities, and MRC priorities including regional homelessness strategies and expanding housing choice efforts.

Members praised the County's public outreach process and noted their intent to promote the County application process to the public.

At the next meeting members looked forward to discussing whether MRC would like to participate in the County application process, or to communicate MRC priorities to the County Commissioners as they make their ARPA funding decisions.

7. Adjourn

At 12:55 pm Amy Kuhn adjourned the meeting by acclamation

Metro Regional Coalition 2021-2022 WORKPLAN FINAL

Below is a draft summary of the Coalition's goals for fall 2021 through summer 2022 and its planned actions to achieve those goals.

Priorities for Action and Advocacy

1. COVID-19 Response

Goals:

- Provide a peer-to-peer exchange for sharing ideas and best practices to meet the response and recovery needs of coalition members.
- Maximize the value of municipal, county, state and federal resources through advocacy for resources and by aligning and aggregating funding for regional priorities.

Actions:

- Provide a standing agenda item at MRC meetings to allow members to share pandemic experiences and insights with each other.
- Identify regional and multi-municipal investments, and advocate for them.

2. Homelessness

Goal: To house more people experiencing homelessness in the Greater Portland area through a regional strategy that distributes the costs of homeless services more equitably across communities.

Action: Advocate for a regional homeless services strategy and for state and other resources to implement that strategy.

3. Housing Choices

Goal: To continue expanding housing choices and increasing the supply of workforce housing in MRC communities for low- and middle-income households in the region by 10% between 2020 and 2025.

Actions:

- Publish second annual report on member communities' progress in expanding housing choices.
- Advocate for state legislative housing policy changes that support local housing policy options, provide funding for regional and local technical assistance, and set achievable policy goals for municipalities advancing housing choice.

Education Priorities

- **Racial Equity** - To continue to advance racial equity and anti-racism in our region, the MRC will share best practices to improve racial equity in their community.
- **Climate Resiliency** - GPCOG staff will share information about local and regional climate action, including a new climate vulnerability mapping tool.
- **Roux Institute** – To explore how municipalities can partner with the new Roux Institute, the MRC will host an exploratory discussion with Roux.
- **Workforce** – To grow and retain the region's workforce, the MRC will reach out to the region's chambers to learn more about ongoing efforts.
- **Electrification** – To prepare MRC members for managing the continued growth of non-carbon based energy generation and transmission, the MRC will develop and deliver an educational syllabus for MRC members.