



2022-2027

# Midcoast Council of Governments Five-year Strategic Plan



# Midcoast Council of Governments Strategic Plan

**Introduction.** The purpose of the Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) is to provide a blueprint for Staff and Board of Directors work over the next five years. It is meant to guide planning decisions, inform budgetary discussions, funding searches, and guide staff alignment as MCOG works to advance regional programs, projects, and services on behalf of its member communities. The plan will provide sound data support, provide ongoing technical assistance to communities in need and further regional collaboration.



The MCOG Strategic Plan reflects goals and strategies for MCOG focus in the coming years. The goals and strategies were identified through a four-step planning process. In the first two steps, MCOG conducted four forums in the region (the subregions<sup>1</sup>), and through planning sessions with the region’s professional planners. In the third step, we asked the General Assembly, in group sessions, to recommend areas of MCOG focus. They selected: Housing, Infrastructure funding, and the Hub of Excellence (regional economic development).

<sup>1</sup> Subregions included the greater Bath Brunswick Topsham Sagadahoc region, the Lincoln County region (through the auspices of the Lincoln County Planning Commission), the Knox County region, and the rural region (north and west of Route 1, including Waldo County). The subregions also reflected the 4 Labor Market Areas for the region.

The Board of Directors were responsible for the fourth step in the strategic planning process: review and approval of this Final Strategic Plan. The Plan synthesizes information collected from all stakeholders, consolidating input into Seven Goals:

- **Midcoast Sense of Place**
- **Hub of Excellence**
- **Bring more Federal and State \$ to the Midcoast Region**
- **Housing**
- **Sustainability and Resiliency**
- **Communication**
- **Community Opportunities**

The goals break down into strategies, with supporting actions described by the following tables:

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Action in support of the strategy	H, M, L	1-5; and stepped based on actions	Funding in support of the action	Preliminary list of participants, will evolve over time	Measurable accomplishment

The key action supports the strategy. The priority is based on input from the planning process (particularly the SWOT analysis) and is either High, Medium, or Low<sup>2</sup>. The period is generally identified as year 1 through 5. We will identify funding possibilities, if known, as well as preliminary partners in the strategy. Benchmarks are provided, where appropriate.

This strategic plan and available resources guide the annual work plan and budget. Staff will endeavor to identify gaps in service provision by action and the partners that could assist or lead in that activity. Annually, staff will work with the Board of Directors to establish a work plan that reflects the work of the plan, available resources, and the identification of new resources where necessary.

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<sup>2</sup> All priorities are important, but the high medium low designation considers, staffing, staging, mission appropriateness, and funding.





### **Present Mission and Vision Statement.**

The Board of Directors established a mission for MCOG in the winter, 2021. The mission is to **strengthen the capability of member municipalities and counties** to act individually and collectively to make Midcoast Maine a better place to live, work, and play.

This involves:

- Developing and implementing a **regional economic development strategy**;
- Identifying, developing, and implementing **regional strategies for other pressing issues and opportunities**;
- **Mobilizing resources in the region**, including member municipalities and counties, business and economic development organizations, environmental and conservation nonprofits, schools and research laboratories, and others, to implement regional strategies;
- **Providing technical assistance to municipalities and counties** to effectively design and implement planning and development policies;
- **Advocating at the state level for policies and funding** that support regional and local planning and development strategies;
- Exercising other such powers as member **municipalities and counties may delegate**.

The call for this strategic plan emanated out of this mission statement and guidance from the MCOG Board of Directors

**Organizational Statement.** Based on MCOG Bylaws and State Statute, MCOG exists as a creature of its' municipalities. As such, this strategic plan is implemented through MCOG's structure:

**MCOG General Assembly:** Membership, representing each community in the MCOG region will provide general policy guidance, provide a platform for regional discussion, and approve MCOG's annual operating budget. The General Assembly meets twice per year.

**MCOG Board of Directors:** The General Assembly approves membership to the Board of Directors (BOD). The BOD provides budget and organizational oversight. The BOD is responsible for final approval and implementation of this Strategic Plan and the supporting annual work plan.

## **MCOG Subcommittees:**

**Midcoast Economic Development Committee (MCEDC):** responsible for advising on implementation of economic development strategies as well as the development of the Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) necessary for Economic Development Administration funding. This CEDS process is a useful vehicle for all other economic development planning. MCOG staff will assist the committee in this work

**MCOG Loan Committee:** Monitor's MCOG's loan portfolio while acting upon loans and investment to businesses that further the goals of the strategic plan.

**MCOG Nominating Committee:** Appointed by the President of MCOG, this group will be responsible for nominations to the MCOG committees

**MCOG Ad Hoc Committees:** The BOD may establish additional committees as needed.

**MCOG Staff:** Staff provide for the daily implementation of the Strategic Plan while meeting the needs of member communities and MCOG committees. MCOG staff is responsible for the management of financial resources used to support the implementation of this plan. Presently, MCOG is staffed with 5 full time (one a contractor) and part time contractors. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors. Staffing levels are based on demand and funding levels.

Based on recent experience, internal implementation workgroups are as follows:

- Community and Regional Land Use Planning
- Economic Development
- Sustainability and Resiliency
- Housing
- Transportation Planning

Staff have responsibility for one or more of these working groups, as overseen by the Executive Director. Through this organization, staff will support the work of all MCOG Committees, both permanent and ad hoc. Partnerships will be cultivated to expand capacity and meet the goals of this plan. Strategic plan benchmarks tracking will be presented to the Board of Directors for their evaluation every 6 months. Budgets, staffing levels (including permanent and contracted positions), schedules, and priorities will be adjusted as needed.

**Strategic Plan Primary Goals and Strategies.** The strategic plan forums helped collect the base information for this strategic plan. The General Assembly further refined the plan by identifying key priorities for the region. The Board of Directors will review and approve this plan, with an eye towards the annual work program and the key benchmarks we as a planning and municipal service organization, want to achieve. With each annual work plan, we will assess our strategic plan goals and strategies and adjust the work plan accordingly.

**Funding Strategies.** Any Council of Governments operates with multiple funding resources, some requiring local matching funds, often expanding internal staff capacity. Dues are also valuable matching sources because they are non-federal and unrestricted in use. Annually, staff and the BOD will examine funding resources, combining programs with match to achieve the strategies of this plan and maximize MCOG's ability to provide supportive staffing. The importance of dues, and their strategic use, cannot be understated.

# **Midcoast Council of Governments Strategic Plan**

1. **Midcoast Sense of Place. *Preserve and strengthen, through land use strategies, investment, and membership support the sense of place and character associated with MCOG town centers, villages, neighborhoods, working waterfronts and the natural landscape.***



- a. Map growth and non-growth areas, aligning them subregionally and coordinate to reduce conflict and sprawl.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create a report on conflicts and barriers in growth and nongrowth areas	m	1	Technical Assistance program	MCOG, communities	Conflicts inventory, mapped

- b. Identify critical working waterfronts, assess their vulnerability and address identified issues.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Develop key strategic partnerships to leverage work and funding	h	1	Coastal zone, EDA supplemental	MCOG, Region1, Island Institute (II), GOPIF, Casco Bay Estuary, COGs, other private and public non-profits	Key working partnerships identified

Develop models and strategies for vulnerability assessments to working waterfronts	h	2+	GOPIF, Coastal Zone funding; position for infrastructure and energy funding	MCOG, II, communities	Working model for measuring vulnerability, funding
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- c. Collaborate with regional partners to identify character-defining natural resource properties at risk, and coordinate strategies to protect and conserve high priority natural assets.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create partnerships with local and regional conservation trusts	l	2-5	Foundations	MCOG, local trusts, Maine Farmland Trust, Midcoast Conservancy, others	Establish working group

- d. Brand quality and character of place as a strategy for the Midcoast Region and ensure that there is connectivity between community centers and the natural assets of the region.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Following conflicts analysis and the work associated with the "HUB", establish working partners to focus on a Midcoast brand	m	3	EDA, MDOT, Maine Office of Tourism	MCOG Midcoast Economic Development Committee (MCEDC)	Coordinated brand for region

- e. Provide value to MCOG communities with land use and comprehensive plan technical services.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Provide direct technical assistance to MCOG communities as identified	H	ongoing	Maine Technical Assistance; community funding, GOPIF	MCOG staff, communities, state agencies	10 communities directly served per year

Provide technical training seminars and written information, web and email blasts	H	ongoing	Maine Technical Assistance, MCOG dues, state agencies	MCOG staff, partners by subject areas	Website update monthly; 5 seminars per year
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**2. Hub of Excellence. Expand the MCOG region’s economic diversity by relaunching an economic development program focusing on embracing its place as a Hub of Excellence within the state of Maine’s economic development strategy.**

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish Midcoast Economic Development Committee (MCEDC), with work plan	H	1	EDA, Hubs of Excellence funding	MCOG and partner members, MCOG Staff	Group meeting (quarter, bi-monthly?) Annual CEDS

a. Implement the use of the Midcoast Economic Development Committee (MCEDC) to investigate and conduct the following actions:

- i. Identify and develop for MCOG the keys associated with Hubs: talent and a convergence of research, higher learning, skilled workforce and business, and a livable, healthy space ([https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov/decd/files/inline-files/DECD\\_120919\\_sm.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov/decd/files/inline-files/DECD_120919_sm.pdf)).

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Identify and contact key assets for a HUB of Excellence in the MCOG region	H	2	EDA, Hubs of Excellence	MCEDC, Chambers, Tech Place, Laboratories, training institutions, II	Working group at midyear annual General Assembly meeting, report

- ii. Work with member communities to identify key local and regional businesses of all sizes to attract, grow or expand, identify supportive investment and infrastructure improvements to ensure that growth and link with MCOG’s partners in workforce development.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create CEDS Plan, outline for upcoming update	H	Years 1-5, yearly update; update five-year plan (23-24)	EDA, Hubs of Excellence, Rural Development, FAME, and lending partners	MCEDC, Communities, Coastal County Workforce, Businesses	Annual and Five-year CEDS

- iii. Focus on the following business clusters, identifying their vulnerability, workforce needs, investment strategies, and link them to local development strategies:

- 1. Creative Economy

2. Marine Economy including fishing, aquaculture, and value-added production; coordinate with SeaMaine
3. Farming, hydroponics, and value-added production
4. Manufacturing, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Boatbuilding and composites
  - b. Machining and precision manufacturing
  - c. Technical components, including medical
  - d. Woodworking
  - e. Specialty food products and ingredients
5. Maine Bio and bio related research and manufacturing
6. Hospitality and ecotourism
7. Aviation
8. Green Economy

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create an assessment and implementation strategy for each of the development areas above	M	2-5	EDA, Hubs of Excellence, Unknown	MCEDC, regional partners	Identify funding source for work; complete 2 focus areas per year

- b. Coordinate the work of MCEDC with the MCOG Loan Committee to grow and diversify MCOG’s lending and grant capacity, including links to private and public lenders and assist businesses that emanate from the work above or are identified through outreach. Establish a strategy for improving our:
  - i. Presence in the region;
  - ii. Access to funds; and
  - iii. Lending process.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Re-build the MCOG Loan Committee and update lending process	H	1	EDA, Loan sources and fees	MCOG, Loan Committee	Fill our board roster
Establish priorities for lending through ongoing coordination with MCEDC	M	2	EDA	MCOG Loan Committee, MCEDC	Tabulate loans by focus area
Build Unrestricted Loan Fund Balance	H	1	State, FAME	MCOG Loan Committee	Make \$1 million in loans from SSBCI by 2025

c. Establish a regional broadband strategy and assist member communities as needed.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Inventory the Broadband Needs of MCOG Communities	L	2	ConnectMaine Maine Broadband Coalition	MCOG and communities	Inventory presented to Board of Directors
Assist communities in addressing broadband need	L	3-5	ConnectMaine Maine Broadband Coalition	MCOG and communities	2 communities assisted per year

d. Coordinate businesses, communities, and workforce development partners with Goal 5 Regional Housing-workforce housing.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Conduct barriers to housing report for MCOG region	H	1	EDA Supplemental	MCOG	Final Report
Conduct deep data dive and baseline mapping, with survey of key businesses on staff needs by payroll and travel	M	2	MCOG dues, State Community Partnership funding, HUBs funding, EDA	MCOG, Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER, USM) regional housing partners	Final Report
Support Housing development activities	M	2-5	MH, Lenders, Genesis Fund	MH, Lenders, Genesis Fund, Community TIF strategies	2 projects per year in region

e. Work with Brunswick Landing Tech Place to establish a second center in the northeastern part of the region to further the work of incubator and shared workspace development while supporting innovation.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Identify key location and partners to move forward with second location	M	2	Unknown	MCOG, Brunswick Landing, Leadership Maine Group	Working Group Report

- f. Identify best practices for local permitting processes to help communities reduce the cost and barriers to development.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Build on Barriers to housing study and permit process for “permitted business uses” by inventorying local permitting processing/variations	L	3	Maine Technical Assistance program	Intern	Final Report with model ordinances



**3. Bring more Federal and State \$ to the Midcoast Region. *Position the MCOG region and take advantage of the present opportunities for infrastructure and other supportive funding at the state and federal level.***

- a. Pursue funds that will assist the region and its communities in meeting their strategic goals. Infrastructure areas of focus could include:
- i. Town center roads
  - ii. Town rural roads
  - iii. State road systems
  - iv. Municipal water systems
  - v. Municipal sewer systems
  - vi. Waterfront facilities and access
  - vii. Municipal facilities

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create an inventory of Municipal Infrastructure Needs	H	2	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL: <a href="https://www.maine.gov/bil/">https://www.maine.gov/bil/</a> ) other fed. funds	MCOG, MCEDC, communities	Inventory completed

- b. Use the Midcoast Economic Development Committee to develop fair and transparent criteria for including infrastructure projects in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
MCEDC will develop a process for CEDs approval prior to developing the 5-year plan.	M	2	EDA	MCEDC	Approval of process

- c. Advance congressionally directed funding proposals that benefit the communities of the MCOG region.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Advance collaborative proposals that can benefit the region	L	2	n/a	MCOG BOD, MCEDC	Process agreed to by MCOG BOD

- d. Facilitate the delivery of the MDOT Village Partnership in conjunction with MDOT.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Identify funding streams	H	1	MDOT, federal agencies directly	MCOG, MDOT	Establish funding source for work

- e. Revitalize the Route 1 Corridor Development strategy (aka Gateway 1) to coordinate transportation planning throughout the MCOG region, stressing:
- i. Connectivity, Village partnership
  - ii. Alternative transportation modes, including transit, pedestrian, and trails system investment
  - iii. Safe and efficient road systems at acceptable levels of service, and
  - iv. A reduction in energy and emissions in the corridor.
  - v. In conjunction with Goal 6, coordinate an EV charger planning and investment program and apply for funding at the state and federal level.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Conduct deep data dive and baseline mapping on transportation movement in the region	H	1	MDOT	MCOG, CBER	Data Analysis completed
Establish Route 1 Corridor and Village Connectivity Group	M	1-2	MDOT, federal direct funding	MCOG, CAPs, communities, transit	Work Program established



				operators, key businesses	
Route 1 Corridor Action Plan revisited, update	H	1-2	MDOT, federal direct funding	MCOG, consultants	Evaluation Report: status of "Gateway 1"
Route 1 Corridor Action Plan	M	3-5	MDOT, federal direct funding, sub-projects	MCOG, MDOT, Lincoln County Planning Commission, CAPs, communities, transit operators, key businesses	Regional CIP reflecting local plans



f. Provide annual training and technical assistance on demand for Tax Increment Financing proposals (business, infrastructure, affordable housing).

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Direct assistance and training programs as needed	L	ongoing	Maine Technical Assistance, CDBG, NBRC	MCOG, communities	3 communities per year; one seminar per year; website updated

- g. Assist our member communities by facilitating the development of a plan for regional ambulance services by:
  - i. Establishing the subregional collaborations and experts necessary to coordinate emergency response in the MCOG region;

- ii. Working in subregions to define the baseline issues;
- iii. Facilitate discussion in the subregions to establish a sustainable emergency response system across urban and rural borders.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Develop Subregional Action Plans	M	1	MCOG Dues	MCOG, Counties, private and public responders	Ensure that no community is without service

**4. Housing. Implement a regional program that addresses the short term and long-term housing shortage in the MCOG region.**



- a. Establish a regional working group to study and advocate for housing in the MCOG region.
  - i. Conduct an analysis of housing need across the housing, income and age continuum and provide a regional definition for affordable, workforce, and attainable housing.
  - ii. Collaborate with area business (clusters) to identify employment needs by job type, income, and locational preference, providing an additional understanding of supply needs by housing type.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Conduct a deep data dive and baseline mapping with surveys and focus groups for businesses	H	1	MDOT, Housing partnership, EDA Maine Technical Assistance	Maine Housing (MH); MDOT, Public (Bath and Brunswick HA) and private housing partners and groups (Boothbay, Knox County area, others)	Final data analysis

- b. Address the shortage of workforce housing by focusing on the development of public and private partnerships to meet housing need.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Work with local legislative delegation to establish subregional model	H	2	Housing partnership	Partners within each Labor Market area	Subregional programs to address workforce housing need

Funding Incentive Program: creating accessory units	M	2	Housing partnership; Maine Housing Community Solutions	Bath and Rockland	Program established
Work directly and support existing housing coalitions and trusts	M	1-2	Housing partnership; Maine Housing Community Solutions	MCOG, Maine Housing (MH), Boothbay and Knox County area Trusts, Bowdoinham, HAS	Facilitate the establishment of one regional housing trust per year

c. Identify and work with communities to address the conflicts between growth and non-growth area borders and the land use barriers that restrict development of workforce and affordable housing in the MCOG region.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Coordinate workforce housing focus with Goal 1 and 2.	H	2	Housing partnership grant	MCOG, Labor market subregions with housing partners	Specific sub-report on workforce housing solutions

d. Identify funding sources and develop creative mechanisms (i.e., TIFs or Maine Housing Community Solutions Program) to assist communities and development partners in addressing the needs identified above.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Funding Program guide for communities	L	2	Housing partnership, other COGs	MCOG	Program guide

e. Develop regional and local strategies for the management of accessory and short-term rental units.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Convene working group	H	1, then ongoing	Housing partnerships, Municipal Technical Assistance, contracts	MCOG, hospitality industry, communities	Community Program Guide; direct ordinance assistance

f. Collaborating with appropriate partners, help coordinate regional housing strategies for:

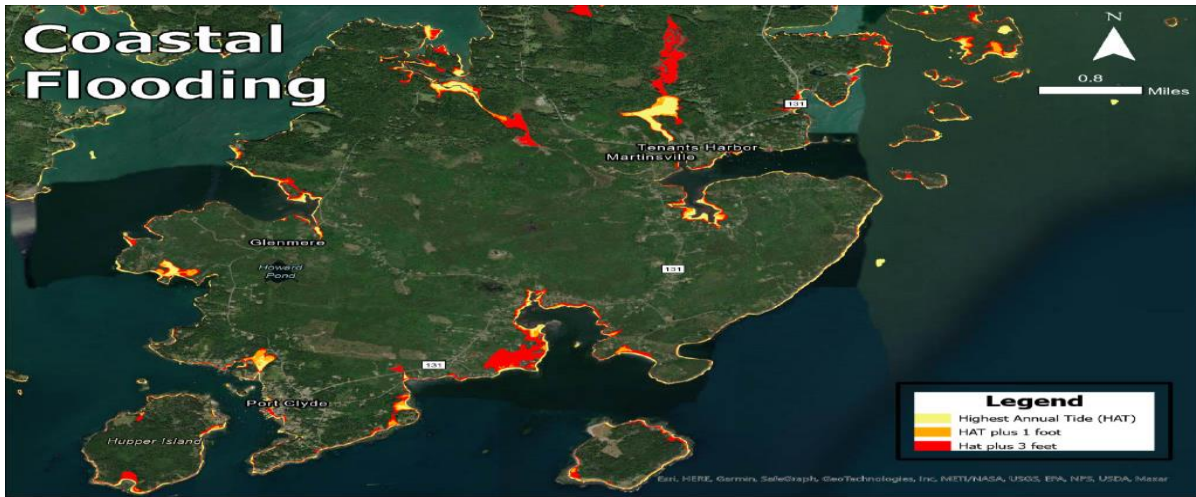
- i. Seniors;
- ii. Homelessness; and
- iii. Supportive Housing

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Provide guidance for communities on creating housing for groups identified	L	ongoing	Community Partnership Grants, MH	MCOG, housing partnerships	3 communities per year direct assistance; website guidance, email blasts

g. After needs assessments, further assess the potential for intergenerational housing development.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Survey community interest for a pilot	L	3	MH, Genesis, lender partners, federal agencies	MCOG, communities	Survey results





**5. Sustainability and Resiliency. *Establish an effective sustainability and resiliency program that helps member communities address issues related to increasing storm damage, while embracing the green economy.***

- a. Develop a regional Sustainability and Resilience Plan that:
  - i. Collects and analyzes data to establish a baseline of climate related challenges on a local and regional. Examples include:
    - 1. Sea level rise
    - 2. Storm event changes
    - 3. Wildlife impact zones
    - 4. Emissions
    - 5. Energy consumption
    - 6. Vulnerable populations
  - ii. Develop local and regional plans, with our partners, to mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change while embracing the green economy<sup>3</sup> as an implementation tool.
  - iii. Identify financial resources to support the plan.
  - iv. Implement the Sustainability and Resiliency Plan

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Utilize St. George Pilot to create a model for program delivery	H	1	Community Partnership grant, Coastal Zone Grant	MCOG, St. George, consultants	Lidar modeling and community vulnerability assessment
Establish a MCOG Sustainability and Resiliency Plan	H	1	EDA Supplemental, MCOG Dues	MCOG, community partners, consultants	Program Plan to guide MCOG in Sustainability

<sup>3</sup> Green economy: UNEP (2011a): [A] green economy [is] **one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.** Further defined, green economy can be “economic activity related to reducing the use of fossil fuels, decreasing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the efficiency of energy usage, recycling materials, and developing and adopting renewable sources of energy” (Maine’s Green Economy: An Overview of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Sectors, Maine Department of Labor, February 2010). No changes proposed here

Working Waterfront vulnerability assessments	M	2-3	Community Partnership grant, Coastal Zone Grant, NOAA	MCOG, consultants	2-3 per year
Deep data dive and baseline regional mapping	H	1-2	Community Partnership grant via community contracts, NOAA	MCOG, state agencies, GIS support systems, CBER	Baseline maps to assist communities; storyboard for website
Engage communities in creating a local plan through the community Resilience Partnership	M	2-3	Community Partnership Grant	MCOG Communities	2-3 community enrolments per year;
As a R1CC member Coordinate subregional cohort initiative	H	1-4	Community Partnership Grant	MCOG subregions (BBT area, Coastal Sagadahoc, Coastal Knox, partner with Lincoln County Planning Commission	Convene and continue subregional working groups in the first 3 years

- b. Ensure that commercial, industrial, institutional, and housing developments consider green economy implications and address issues of sustainability and net-zero impact.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Explore the Green Economy and adopt an MCOG-based model	H	2	EDA, Foundations, USDE, EPA	MCOG, MCEDC	Define the Green Economy for MCOG region
Invest in businesses and housing adhering to the MCOG Green Economy	M	3-5	Loan partners, EPA, USDE, other federal agencies	MCOG Loan Committee, emerging housing partners	Establish Loan Portfolio
Develop model development codes focused on net-zero impact	M	2-3	Foundations, EPA, Maine Technical	MCOG, Communities, Island Institute	Model code examples

			Assistance, MH		
Adapt the MCOG website and training program to support Sustainability Programs	H	1	Maine Technical Assistance, Community Partnerships, Foundations	MCOG communities, GPCOG and SMPDC, Island Institute	Website location, updated
Partner with Maine Clean Communities (GPCOG) to connect communities to EV and energy resource information	M	ongoing	USDE, MDOT	MCOG, GPCOG, communities	Website location established and maintained
Establish an internship program focused on sustainability planning	M	1	MCOG dues	MCOG, communities, sustainability community	1 or more interns per year
Become a member of the R1CC, support the RICC coordinator	H	2	Community Partnership program	Gabe McPhail (R1CC coordinator)	Member, 2023

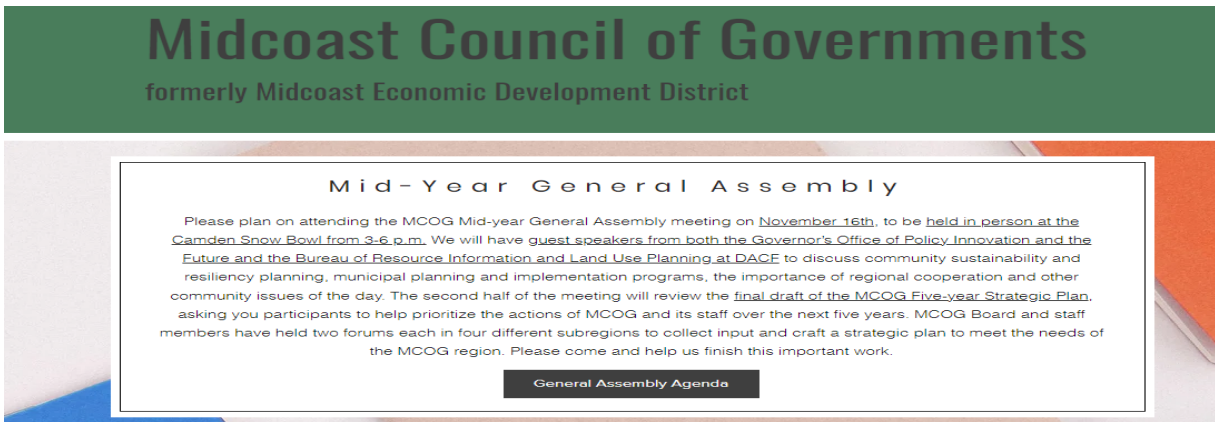
c. Establish a baseline and measure the demographic impacts of climate migration into the region.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Using generated data and baseline mapping, conduct a vulnerability assessment of MCOG residents	L	3	CBER	MCOG	Report: those most vulnerable to the impact of climate change

**6. Communication. Strengthen the recognition of MCOG, and the region, through communication, collaboration, and the use of technology.**

- a. In preparation of or in collaboration with branding and website design, revisit the present Mission and Vision Statements.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish new Mission and Vision statement	H	1-2	N/A	MCOG BOD	New statement to June General Assembly
Establish key, common message points when talking about MCOG	L	1	N/A	MCOG BOD	Standard elevator speech



- b. Create opportunities, through funding and internal communication for collaboration among member communities.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Generate 5 projects for community collaboration	M	1-5	Community and housing partnerships, MCOG dues, MDOT,	MCOG, BOD, communities	1 specific collaboration project per year
Develop Community Bulletin Board on website, with email blasts	M	2	Maine Technical Assistance program	MCOG, consultant	Community Page, website

- c. Identify and connect critical partnerships needed to achieve MCOG goals and build capacity in the region.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Inventory key partners in the MCOG region by topic area	H	2	unknown	MCOG, public and private partnerships, BOD	Inventory of partners on email list, updated every 6 months; Collaboration list by partnership interest

- d. Upgrade MCOG's communications management system, including its email blast system, the website, and the use of social media where appropriate.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Develop a formal communication strategy adopted by the BOD	H	2	Maine Technical Assistance and MCOG	MCOG Staff and BOD	Adopt formal plan
Upgrade the website and maintain	H	1	MCOG	MCOG and consultant staff	Upgraded website
Dedicate staff or consultants to professionalize communications	L	2	MCOG	MCOG	Dedicated person

- e. Position MCOG and its website as a go-to resource for member communities in addressing comprehensive planning, land use strategy implementation, and associated capital planning.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Maintain Maine Technical Assistance contract and populate website with critical land use information	H	ongoing	Maine Technical Assistance Grant	Lead Technical Assistance Program Planner	Website as a working reference and referral source



- f. Regularly inform the MCOG community of funding availability and provide technical assistance where needed.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Consistently post funding Announcements by email and website	M	ongoing	Maine Technical Assistance Grant	MCOG	Maintain monthly and emergency blast system; community bulletin board on website

- g. Collaborate with Lincoln County Planning Commission on regional planning efforts whenever appropriate.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Create an MOU between the two organizations to ensure a working relationship	H	1	N/A	MCOG, Lincoln County Planning Commission	Approved MOU by both Boards
Develop Collaborative projects shared by the two organizations	M	1-5	unknown	MCOG, Lincoln County Planning Commission	1 project per year

- h. MCOG, working with its membership, will advocate for the region where state policies will have direct impact.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish a plan for advocacy by MCOG and periodically advocate certain positions	L	ongoing	N/A	MCOG BOD	N/A

**7. Community Opportunities. Develop a core plan that addresses how MCOG will address issues of employment, education, and service among vulnerable demographic groups of the Midcoast Region.**

a. Identify and map key non-profits for collaboration and clearly define MCOG’s role in that assistance.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish MCOG Community Opportunity working group	M	1-2	MCOG dues	MCOG, communities, CAPs, non-profit organizations	Organizational meeting, define opportunity issues for MCOG region

b. Develop an understanding of the key issues limiting opportunity by:

i. Conducting a deep demographic analysis of the region to better understand MCOG’s people.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Coordinate deep data dives and mapping with an opportunities focus	H	1-2	MDOT, Maine Technical Assistance, lending institutions	MCOG, CBER	Data report

- ii. Provide a baseline for measuring income disparity across all demographic groups and establish trends.
- iii. Identify and describe demographically the key social service issues facing our member communities.
- iv. Develop an action plan to address issues limiting opportunity within the parameters of green economy planning.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Identify key population groups by need	M	2	MDOT, Maine Technical Assistance, lending institutions	MCOG, coalition, lenders, businesses	Action plan

- c. Work with MCOG communities and partners to establish the region as a community for all ages while addressing issues of ageism and need disparities among our seniors.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish Age Friendly Collaboration in MCOG region	L	3	AARP, Maine Age-Friendly Communities Resource Center	MCOG, Age friendly collaborators	Coalition established

- d. Establish an employment and entrepreneurial development strategy with regional partners that better prepares and diversifies the MCOG workforce for a changing economy while integrating new Americans.

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Establish/work with working group(s) in the MCOG region to define the issue	L	2	unknown	MCOG, Coastal County Workforce, Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition	Coalition meeting

- e. With demographic information, address issues of increasing income disparity including, but not limited to the following:
- i. Cost of housing
  - ii. Cost of transportation
  - iii. Cost of day care and services to rural citizens
  - iv. Cost of energy-efficient homes for poor homeowners

Key Action	Priority	Time Frame: Yrs. 1-5	Funding Possibilities	Who	Benchmarks
Develop demographic report on the impacts of growing income disparity for existing MCOG population groups	M	3	Foundations	MCOG, Island Institute, non-profit agencies	Report published