

Good morning all,

We hope this email finds you well. Here is our November Newsletter:

General Assembly Strategic Planning Meeting

MCOG held a successful General Assembly meeting in mid-November with many communities attending either in-person or on Zoom. We would like to thank the Camden Snowbowl for hosting us and our guest speakers, Sarah Curran from the Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation, and the Future and Judy East from the Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning. Throughout our strategic planning and community engagement process this fall, we identified seven goals for MCOG and the Midcoast region over the next five years:

- A focus on land use strategies that Maintain a Midcoast Sense of Place
- Business Development around the "Hub of Excellence concept"
- Bringing more Federal and State money to the Midcoast region
- Balancing Housing Supply and Demand
- Sustainability and Resilience Planning and Implementation
- Communication
- Diversity, Equality, and Integration in our changing communities

At the General Assembly, Housing, the Hub of Excellence, and identification of funding opportunities for the region were deemed to be of high priority. The final strategic plan, with a set of work targets and benchmarks, will be presented to the Board of Directors in December. Thanks to all that participated in this process. The MCOG staff looks forward of working with you as we implement these goals and strategies.

Announcements

Regional Hub

MCOG staff are finalizing the budget and work plan for a \$689,619 Regional Hub grant we were conditionally awarded in October. Our contract with DECD should be executed by the end of December, which will allow us to start providing financial and technical assistance, including group training, to new Midcoast businesses beginning in January. The program will be funded through June 30, 2024 with an opportunity to renew for an additional year for an amount of up to \$254,681. If you know of a new business that has struggled with the recent economy, please contact us to see if there is a fit.

MCOG helps St. George win \$70K in grant funding to study climate impacts. Helping communities meet their climate-related challenges is the focus of MCOG's new Sustainability and Resilience Program, and we've recently assisted St. George in doing just that. MCOG staff facilitated two State grant-funded projects that will help ensure that all town roads, waterfront structures, community assets critical to St. George's identity, history and economy are intact in 2050.

One project, funded by Maine's Community Resilience Partnership program, will use visual storytelling to deepen understanding of complex information, expand the decision-making capacity of community members, and connect with the community at large. In a new approach to gathering and presenting complex data, the study team will integrate a full set of geo-referenced imagery, geo-spatial data and 3D laser scans to create a realistic digital model of the study area and show how sea level rise and flooding will affect selected roadways, the town's working waterfronts and historic structures. Community planners will be able to visualize alternative sea level rise scenarios and plot adaptive alternatives. The resulting intuitive experience puts people "in the picture" to experience flood conditions, and adaptation alternatives.

The second project, which will happen concurrently, will dive deeper into how the dual challenges of sea level rise and recent changes to fishing regulations will impact this tight-knit fishing community. Working with stakeholders to understand both these climate and socio-economic impacts will serve as a "pilot" project for similar communities. Taken together, these projects support Maine's Climate Action Plan to build healthy and resilient communities. For more information on MCOG's Sustainability and Resilience program and how your town could benefit from funding opportunities, please contact Meg Rasmussen, Community Sustainability Planner at mrasmussen@midcoastcog.com.

Workshops and Seminars

Planning Board Workshop with Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission

The Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) will be hosting a joint Planning Board training workshop with the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 5:00PM at the LCRPC Office and by Zoom. LCRPC's office is located at 297 Bath Road (Route 1), Wiscasset. A Zoom link will be circulated to interested members as we get closer to the meeting.

The workshop will cover Planning Board Basics, Freedom of Access Act, Application Review Procedures, and additional State Standards and Rules. This workshop is based on the Planning Board workshops offered by the Maine Municipal Association (MMA). Whether you have Planning Board members who need a refresher course, or have been unable to attend an MMA training session, this workshop will be available to all members as part of our technical assistance program. This will only cover the basics of Planning Boards, and will not cover Board of Appeals nor Subdivisions.

If you would like to attend this workshop or have any questions, please email Max Johnstone at mjohnstone@midcoastcog.com.

November Seminars

Throughout November, the Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) held three separate workshops and seminars as part of our Technical Assistance Program. All meetings were recorded and can be viewed on our website: <https://www.midcoastcog.com/workshops>. We

welcome members with any free time to take a look at these recordings so you aren't missing out on important issues in the area.

Solar Ordinance- The recent boom of solar development in Maine has concerned some communities with long term impacts and loss of prime farmland area. Maine Farmland Trust presented examples of Maine communities that have been proactive with creating a solar ordinance that aims to protect farmlands or to have the developments work in cooperation.

Cooperative Purchase- Tony Plante from the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) presented how municipalities can save money through collaborative bulk purchasing of office and public works supplies/ services that are used in everyday life. There were some technical difficulties; however, the presentation from Tony is enlightening and could be something for communities to keep in mind as we begin to enter budget season. GPCOG is starting their next Cooperative Purchase cycle, and it is important that we have updated contact information for town staff members who will be using this program. If you, or someone in your community, is interested in this program, please email Max Johnstone at mjohnstone@midcoastcog.com.

LD 2003- MCOG held a joint workshop with Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) to discuss the basics and updated guidance regarding LD 2003. This recently passed legislation has raised questions within both organizations about how it would be implemented and what communities are expected to allow. This workshop was well attended both in-person and on Zoom, including by interested parties outside the Midcoast region.

Are there other topics you would like us to cover? Contact Max Johnstone at mjohnstone@midcoastcog.com about topic ideas and guest speakers.

All the best,

The MCOG Team

Mathew Eddy, Brian Dancause, Meg Rasmussen, Max Johnstone, Michael Martone, and Charlotte Nutt

165 Main Street, Suite F
PO Box 62
Damariscotta, ME 04543
207-209-4129