

GPCOG Steering Committee Minutes
September 17, 2008 Meeting
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Paul McKenney, President, Cape Elizabeth; Genie Beaulieu, Freeport; Gordy Billington, Standish; Cathy Breen, Falmouth; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Ed Suslovic, Portland

Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Anne Holland, Carey Kish, Ann Mazerolle

- (1) **Welcome.** Paul McKenney welcomed everyone at 12:05.
- (2) **Approval of July 31, 2008 minutes.** *Gordy Billington moved approval of the July 31st minutes with Genie Beaulieu seconding the motion. All were in favor.*
- (3) **Proposed Cost Sharing Agreement for Ridesharing Technology.** The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the state of New Hampshire Dept. of Transportation (NHDOT) and GPCOG have been discussing sharing the rideshare technology that GO MAINE currently uses. GPCOG has estimated a savings of \$35,000 over the next two years should it decide to partner with VTrans and NHDOT. A Memorandum of Understanding would be needed which would detail the terms and conditions, including the consent of MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority for this expanded regional ridesharing technology partnership.

Carey Kish provided some background. The software that GO MAINE uses currently resides on GPCOG's in-house servers. We are planning to move GO MAINE software off site to a data center so we won't own any more hardware. To move to the data center complex costs money so NHDOT and VTrans will be able to share in those costs. There would be no change regarding how GO MAINE currently operates; the consumer won't notice any changes. NHDOT and VTrans will each manage their own share of the data under one license. It is not uncommon; the five boroughs of New York have the very same system. We will realize considerable cost savings.

GPCOG has been informed that GO MAINE will be receiving additional funds from MaineDOT in October to help with staffing needs because the program is growing so rapidly. The GO Maine program has doubled so we are in need of additional staff. We expect an additional \$370,000 to come to us for the next year and part of it will be allocated to a half-time person to help with these needs. There is a huge demand for vanpools and it requires a lot of administrative time. We went from operating nine vans to 17 vans in the last year. We will be receiving \$100,000 for a bike commuting program and we will need staffing for that as well.

Gordy Billington made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute the Memorandum of Understanding with GO MAINE, VTrans and NHDOT to enter into an agreement for this expanded regional ridesharing technology partnership. Cathy Breen seconded the motion and all were in favor. Cathy requested that the GO MAINE logo and link be sent to the GPCOG member municipalities so they can add it to their web sites if they so desire.

- (4) **Sustainability Retreat: Discussion of Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps.** Paul thought the Retreat was very successful. A recap of the Retreat was handed out. The cover page of the handout provides an overview of the Retreat, followed by the principles taken verbatim from the retreat. Then staff tried to interpret all of the principles into a shorter list. Gordy pointed out that in the first paragraph it states that we need to work together to address "climate change and advance sustainability development" and he thought that might not be the way to frame this. He suggested changing the wording to say "changing energy consumption patterns." The same change

could be made in the last paragraph on the first page where 'greenhouse gas emissions' are mentioned it could say 'energy consumption' instead.

The Committee wanted to reduce the number of principles to about seven if possible. It was determined that numbers 1 and 13 were pretty much the same so the Committee decided to go with #13 and eliminate #1. They wanted to keep the verbiage down as much as possible. Number 11 didn't come from the Task Force Retreat so it was decided that it should not be listed. Numbers 6 and 10 were considered strategies rather than principles, so they were eliminated. The Committee worked together on revising the wording of the principles and got the number down to seven from thirteen. The revised document will be sent to the Steering Committee.

The context in which the principles are placed is important. It was suggested that the principles be printed up so that the towns can hang them at their offices. Ed asked about follow-up. Paul suggested that we get more inclusion in our forums, bring elected officials together to talk about why these principles are important, etc. These principles will permeate everything we do if we bring them to the people. Genie noted that we have to show the communities how savings can be achieved. Councilors tend to look at the here and now rather than looking to the future. We need to demonstrate what these principles could mean economically. Ed agreed that we need to take it to the people. We should start there and then get the municipal buy-in. We can ask the Executive Committee members to bring it back to their communities. These principles would serve as the foundation for a regional plan.

- (5) **Nova Scotia Trip.** Gordy thought it was an immensely successful trip. Cathy said she was thrilled to be a participant and she found it fascinating. They have much better services for their money. It gave a great amount of confidence and relief to hear that regionalism/amalgamation is the way to go. Genie mentioned that there are some things that need to be legislated from the top down. Ed thought that Halifax was a rare bright spot in the Maritimes regarding economic development. Amalgamation was the reason. Paul noted that we have a lot of "home rule" but, even so, we can do a lot on a regional basis. We need to tie the regional plans to the economic benefit that the towns receive.

Charlie Colgan has expressed an interest in serving on one of our boards and would be interested in assisting with our sustainability planning. Ed mentioned that the City of Portland's Sustainability Group received assistance from some Muskie interns who performed high caliber work. The interns may be available to assist with GPCOG's sustainability work.

- (6) **GPCOG Staff Restructuring.** Neal presented his staff restructuring plan. He explained that the resignation of David Willauer offered the opportunity to increase the responsibilities of a number of staff and to restructure tasks into three major "teams" – Transportation Programs; Transportation, Land Use Planning and Sustainability; and Community and Economic Development. The Steering Committee expressed its support for the restructuring plan as outlined by Neal.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.