



**Northern  
Maine  
Development  
Commission**

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To: Smart Growth America c/o Roger Millar, AICP  
From: Jay Kamm, Senior Planner  
Date: June 26, 2012  
Re: Regional Planning for Small Communities Implementation

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update of Northern Maine Development Commission's (NMDC's) Regional Planning for Small Communities implementation process.

Since the February 28-29<sup>th</sup> Regional Planning for Small Communities Workshops, sixteen "lead teams" have been developed to implement the work plan for the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant. The Lead teams are comprised of members of a variety of agencies, departments, the general public, tribes, and underserved populations. NMDC and Washington County Council of Governments have developed strategies to implement the principals highlighted in the June 29<sup>th</sup> workshop. Each lead team plans to aims to complete draft policies and procedures in the next year.

The Creation of the Washington Aroostook Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (WARPSD) is a multi-year initiative with four fundamental objectives:

- Development of a sustainable growth plan for the Washington and Aroostook region, including implementation steps for state and local government, recommendations for private sector stakeholders, and establishing a solid foundation for the new Economic Development District.
- Large-scale public education to increase visibility and awareness of regional issues related to the economy, environment, and quality of life.
- Region-wide civic engagement in the planning process with special attention to populations not traditionally involved in planning processes. This will help scope, understand and adopt regional planning elements thereby improving the efficiency of local Comprehensive Planning in this largely rural area.
- Institutional capacity and relationship building throughout the region, linking technology and information to community decision making for current and future planning processes

## **NEXT STEPS**

As per the Next Steps memo, the following steps have been taken as a roadmap for initiating the regional planning process.



1. Organize the project team for efficient and effective project management, resource utilization, and documentation.

Project lead team members from NMDC, WCCOG, and SCEC met numerous times to iron out issues relating to the workplan and staff allocations. Staff met, within a month of the workshop, and has agreed to project management and resource allocation that best meet the needs of the region and best utilize staff expertise. All members are now working toward workplan implementation.

2. Refine the project workflow and update and refine the schedule

See #1 above.

NMDC staff met weekly to refine project workflow and redevelop schedule. Staff is in the process of developing Lead Teams for each workplan element. Lead teams will meet and anticipated 6-8 times for approximately 2 hours +/- each, over 12 months, with an additional 8 hours of time outside of meetings for research and correspondence, lead team work completed by July1, 2013.

3. Resolve workload sharing to ensure that consortium members are receiving grant resources commensurate with their capacities and project responsibilities

See #1 and #2 above

4. Determine if contract professional services are needed and initiate procurement process

NMDC will not be contracting professional services for this grant. WCCOG will be working with the Washington County Action Program on housing and transportation sections. Contracts were in place at the time of the workshop.

5. Establish a documentation protocol and identify a document repository

No activity.

6. Re-engage consortium members who have not been involved in project start up.

Staff will meet with all consortium members to reinvigorate the project. This will occur between March and May 2012. The goal is to have all members signing project agreements in June and July.

7. Have all consortium members sign the project agreement

While most consortium members have signed, this task is still underway. With the recent reorganization of State government, several state agencies were not involved in the initial grant application which has made it more difficult for Commissioners to “sign off” on project agreements. NMDC staff is working with those agencies and expects to have all project agreements signed by the end of July.



- Schedule a kickoff meeting for consortium members and other partners.

A kickoff meeting has been scheduled for June 29, 2012 at the Caribou Inn and Convention Center. Many invitations have been mailed and emailed to the general public and other interested parties. Projected turnout numbers is good.

- Develop and implement a Communications Plan to engage elected officials, staff, business and civic organizations, the public and the media in a timely and appropriate manner.

No activity.

- Develop key messages and identify key messengers

The following “message” has been developed:

*The Grow Washington Aroostook Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (GRO-WA) is a sixteen element strategy that will plan for the inter-related issues of transportation and housing costs; workforce and economic development, including brownfields redevelopment; infrastructure throughout the region in support of a sustainable future (broadband, electricity transmission, water and wastewater, structures likely to be impacted by sea level rise, renewable energy); and healthy communities. The plan will address the livability principles outlined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities.*

Key messengers are consortium member staff.

- Train project staff on the communications plan

NMDC staff training on the entire project has occurred weekly (Friday mornings from 10:30 to noon) since the workshop.

- Develop a project website

A website (: [www.gro-wa.org](http://www.gro-wa.org)) has been developed.

