



## Introduction

The GROWashington-Aroostook regional planning initiative was launched in June of 2012 at a large stakeholders meeting in collaboration with the start of the Mobilize Maine Downeast economic development planning process.

Mobilize Maine is a partnership between Vital Economy and the seven economic development districts (EDDs) in Maine, each of which are developing strategies based on their region's indigenous assets. The Mobilize Maine process, underway in Aroostook County since 2009, was linked with Washington County when the Eastern Maine EDD changed in 2011 and shifted Washington County from an association with the Eastern Maine EDD (with Eastern Maine Development Corporation in Bangor) to the Aroostook-Washington EDD (with the Northern Maine Development Commission in Caribou).

A primary first step for both the GROWashington-Aroostook and the Mobilize Maine planning processes was to create a vision for the region. As the goals of both processes are similar in multiple respects they share a single vision.

Over the course of several "asset-mapping" meetings in the fall and early winter of 2012, stakeholders developed ***the following vision for the Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District:***

*Our region is a place of abundant natural resources that is reflected in the beauty of our landscape and the potential for economic and social prosperity it offers. We value the individuality and endurance of our people while recognizing the strong sense of community and place that sustains us. We will create economic growth by focusing on sectors that best leverage these assets and by working to develop policies that promote private sector investment; while at the same time, retaining the quality of life that makes the region special.*

## Outreach and Communications

Each Work Plan Component (<http://www.gro-wa.org/plan-components.htm>) in GROWashington-Aroostook created Work Teams (<http://www.gro-wa.org/workgroups.htm>) composed of staff, partner agencies and stakeholders.

As with the work products themselves, the type of community input varied across subject areas. Some input followed a traditional work team series of meetings that contributed to the production of a final report, for example in the creation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Housing in Washington County. Other areas were more dependent



on staff and technical expertise to generate work products and then outreach meetings to gather input and refine the product, for example in the Climate Vulnerability Assessments in Washington County (<http://www.gro-wa.org/climate-vulnerability-assessment>) and the water systems assessments in both counties (<http://www.gro-wa.org/specific-water-systems-analysis>). Still others culminated in summit gatherings where over a hundred stakeholders came together to learn, network and share innovations and ideas, for example the November, 2013 Downeast Transportation summit (<http://www.gro-wa.org/downeast-acadia-transportation-summit>), the Washington County Local Food outreach meetings in April and May of 2013 (<http://www.gro-wa.org/food-system-meetings>), and the March, 2014 Washington County Food Summit (<http://www.gro-wa.org/washington-county-food-summit>).

In addition the GROWashington-Aroostook Facebook page provided announcements from time to time of public meetings and the web site provided an opportunity for input throughout the process.

Finally a request for input on the entire project was released in “Local Happenings”, an e-news service provided by the Sunrise County Economic Council, in April of 2014. All comments received were incorporated into final work plan products.

### ***Washington County Community Input***

#### **Healthy Communities**

- Board and staff of Washington County: Once Community (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/healthy-communities/WashCntyHealthCommWorkTeam.pdf>)
- Monthly meetings of Board and staff of Washington County: Once Community April 2013 – February 2014

#### **Local Food Systems**

- 5 Community meetings in April and May of 2013 (<http://gro-wa.org/food-system-meetings>)
- with audience polling (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/healthy-communities/Food%20System%20Meetings/Food-System-Mtgs-Merged-Summary-2013.pdf>)
- 117 participants
- Communicated throughout Food Summit planning, surveys, notices, evaluation with over 150 stakeholders through Constant Contact distribution lists
- Community Food Council – development, planning, meetings (3)
- Hosted Washington County Food Summit (<http://gro-wa.org/washington-county-food-summit>) - Re-scheduled from Nov 9, 2013 to Mar 8, 2014 (118 attendees)

### Vision and Outreach Summary



- Evaluation survey after Food Summit (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/healthy-communities/FoodSummit/Food-Summit-%E2%80%93-Participant-Evaluation-Survey-Results.pdf>) 27 responses

### Sustainable Housing

- Extensive stakeholder group (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/sustainable-housing/WashCntySustHsngWorkTeam.pdf>)
- 5 Work Team meetings from June- August, 2013 (<http://gro-wa.org/sustainable-housing-agendas-and-minutes>)

### Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience

- 5 Bay- and Town-specific Climate Vulnerability Assessment outreach meetings (<http://www.gro-wa.org/climate-vulnerability-assessment>)
- 99 attendees in meetings from Sept- November of 2013;
- notification to all attendees and to all Washington County member towns via Constant Contact distribution lists (over 200 stakeholders) of availability of on-line storm surge inundation scenarios

### Growth Management Law Change

- Notification to all Washington County member towns via Constant Contact distribution lists (over 75 stakeholders) of testimony on Rulemaking revisions to the Growth Management law to allow adoption of regional data and policy in local Comprehensive Plans (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/growth-management-law-change/JCE-WCCOGcomments%20on%20chapter%20208%203-31-11.pdf>)
- Notification via Constant Contact distribution lists (over 125 stakeholders) to all Washington County municipal officials (Selectmen, Clerks, Planning Boards, Code Enforcement Officers) of availability of:
  - on-line town specific customized Public Parcel Viewer <http://gro-wa.org/public-parcel-viewer>) and
  - Planners maps (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps>)

### Water Infrastructure

- Direct letter to Water System operators introducing RCAP Solutions (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/water-infrastructure/System-Letter-Intro.pdf>)
- And their development capacity analysis of water systems (<http://gro-wa.org/water-systems-assessment>)

### Vision and Outreach Summary



- Notification via Constant Contact distribution lists (over 125 stakeholders) to all towns of Decentralized Wastewater Systems On-line Resource Manual for Landowners and Municipal Officials (<http://gro-wa.org/wastewater-resource-manual#>)

### Transportation Infrastructure in Support of Economic Development

Several one-on-one meetings with Eastport Port Director Chris Gardiner to identify necessary data layers for routing alternatives analysis; integration of stakeholders in the update of the Downeast Coastal Multi-Modal Corridor Management Plan (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/transportation-infrastructure/2014-DCCMP-Stakeholders-and-AC-Members.pdf>) with GROWashington-Aroostook regional planning analysis of transportation infrastructure in support of economic development.

### Brownfields and Economic Renewal

Expansion of existing Washington County Advisory Committee (<http://www.gro-wa.org/assets/files/brownfields/WCCOG-BrfldAdvComm2014ForWeb.pdf>) with additional committee members including new town/city managers in Eastport and Baileyville; Brownfields Program Manager in Passamaquoddy Tribal Community at Pleasant Point, and a Calais Downtown Revitalization Committee representative

Outreach videos (<http://gro-wa.org/brownfields-outreach>)

### Transportation and Housing

Collaboration with agencies in Hancock and Washington County,

- multiple stakeholders (<http://gro-wa.org/assets/files/transportation-housing/WashCountyRuralTransitWorkTeam.pdf>)
- 6 meetings from June, 2013 – January, 2014 (<http://gro-wa.org/transportation-and-housing-agendas-and-minutes>) ;
- Transportation Summit (<http://gro-wa.org/downeast-acadia-transportation-summit>) over 130 attendees

### *Aroostook County Community Input*

### Healthy Communities

- Staff/stakeholder meetings to determine goals of grant and work accomplished to date. (January 2013, February 2013, May 2013)

### Vision and Outreach Summary



- Contacted organizations to recruit members to stakeholder meetings. (November 2012, December 2012, January 2013, February 2013, May 2013, September 2013)
- Monthly meeting (virtual) to gather data for website (January 2013, February 2013, May 2013)
- Contacted local groups to gather information regarding local food systems. (May 2013, September 2013)

### Sustainable Housing (4 meetings)

- June 13, 2012 initial meeting of the Sustainable Housing Lead Team, Agenda and Minutes posted (<http://grow-wa.org/sustainable-housing-agendas> and minutes)
- October 2, 2012 meeting to discuss questionnaire for distribution to various agencies, organizations, municipalities, etc. to get input on housing issues, Agenda and Minutes posted
- November 2, 2012 – team members conducted interviews and circulated questionnaires, results are included in the Regional Housing Assessment Plan
- June 6, 2013 – Sustainable Housing and Transportation Public Forum at Caribou Inn and Convention Center, Agendas and Minutes posted on gro-wa website
- Extensive phone and e-mail messaging with stakeholders during 2012-2013 program year, including Aroostook County Action Program, local housing authorities, CDBG Community Development Advisory Committee members in Caswell, Portage Lake, Fort Kent, etc., real estate, financial institutions, Micmac and Maliseet Indians, and affordable housing management agencies.
- Numerous phone conversations with Maine Human Rights Commission, Pine Tree Legal, Maine State Housing Authority, Aroostook Agency on Aging, and Legal Services for the Elderly.

### Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience

- Initial Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience Lead Team organizational meeting Lead Team composition, Agenda and Minutes in August 7<sup>th</sup> 2012
- Second Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience Component Team Meeting Agenda September 27<sup>th</sup> 2012
- Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience Conference, UMPI Center Allagash Room Agenda Minutes and event Photos February 26<sup>th</sup> 2013

### Growth Management Law Change (5 meetings)

### Vision and Outreach Summary



- Notification to all Aroostook County Towns via email and mail of testimony of Rulemaking revisions to the Growth Management law allowing adoption of regional data sets.
- Two stakeholders meetings held at NMDC office in Caribou between October 2012 and May 2013.
- Subregional meetings in Ashland, Madawaska and Houlton between March 2013 and August 2013 to discuss regional data sets.

### Water Infrastructure (3 meetings)

- Initial meeting with the Water Infrastructure Lead Team members on September 10, 2012, agenda and minutes posted on gro-wa website
- Meeting with RCAP Solutions via teleconference on October 24, 2012
- Meeting with RCAP Solutions via teleconference on December 16, 201
- Direct letter to Water System operators introducing RCAP Solutions

### Transportation Infrastructure in Support of Economic Development (13 meetings)

- BoP meeting held (with MaineDOT) at the University of Maine at Presque Isle on November 7, 2013.
- Three lead team meetings between 6/12 and 3/13.
- One on one meetings with Aroostook Regional Transportation Systems Inc. to discuss public transit.
- One on one meetings with Presque Isle and Caribou Airport Directors to discuss air service and infrastructure needs.
- One on one meeting with Northern Maine Rail representatives to discuss marketing potential of rail systems.
- One on one meetings with public works directors to discuss infrastructure and funding needs.
- One on one meetings with community development and recreation directors to discuss trail needs.
- Public forum held on June 6, 2013 in conjunction with sustainable housing.

### Brownfields and Economic Renewal (14 meetings)

- Lead team meetings held semi-monthly between 5/12 and 10/13.
- Public forum held (in conjunction with Water Infrastructure )on 6/26/13)
- Several one on one meetings with the Aroostook Band of MicMacs between 6/26/2012 and 10/15/13 to discuss HUD grant in general and Brownfield's and transportation infrastructure in particular. (David Silver).
- Meet with the St. John Aroostook RC&D Steering Committee on 12.6.12 to discuss brownfields and transportation infrastructure.



#### Transportation and Housing (5 meetings)

- Public Forum held on June 6, 2013 with Sustainable Housing
- BoP meeting held (with MaineDOT) at the University of Maine at Presque Isle on November 7, 2013.
- Several District Coordinating Council meetings to discuss transportation (agenda items not full meetings) and housing issues between May 2013 and November 2013.

The contributions of hundreds of stakeholders in the two county region have proven invaluable in making the GROWashington-Aroostook regional planning work products relevant and representative of our regional economy. The staff of the three primary agencies – NMDC, WCCOG and SCEC – wish to express our sincere appreciation for the time, energy and expertise of these community stakeholders.