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Portland Task Force on Regionalism Report

January 29, 2004

**Submitted by the
Portland Task Force on Regionalism**

**Tom Ainsworth, Chairman
William Dobrowolski
Ann Mazerolle
Councilor James Cohen, Council Liaison**

**Staff Assistance Provided by the
Greater Portland Council of Governments**

January 29, 2004

Mayor Nathan Smith & Members of the Portland City Council
City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101

RE: Portland Task Force on Regionalism

Dear Mayor Smith and Members of the City Council:

We are very pleased to submit the enclosed report, Portland Task Force on Regionalism. The report has been unanimously adopted by all members of the *Task Force on Regional Services and Facilities* as well as the Portland City Council's liaison to the Task Force, Councilor James Cohen.

Over the last ten months, the Task Force has worked with steady purpose and commitment in an effort to responsibly fulfill the charge of the City Council "*to identify opportunities for the cost-effective delivery of public services and consolidation of public facilities in the City of Portland and surrounding communities.*"

In exploring regional opportunities, and with input from each of the City's departmental directors, the Task Force has developed a keen appreciation and respect for the complexities involved in its task. Mindful of history and Maine's deeply rooted traditions of local control, the Task Force believes that Portland's status as Maine's largest city offers a unique opportunity for the City to provide critically needed municipal leadership at the regional level. Portland is positioned to serve as a vital link between concept and action. The Task Force believes that it is in the City of Portland's best interest to be a strong leader in this effort.

The recommendations of the Task Force are presented under three broad action categories that together offer both short and long-term potential for changing the manner in which traditional municipal services are delivered. As a prudent first step, the Task Force recommends a series of short-term actions or "baby steps" that hold the promise of yielding immediate cost-effective benefits.

One important recommendation of the Task Force is for the City to encourage the formation of one or more coalitions of neighboring communities in order to address the numerous opportunities identified for collaboration. We believe this step will create a public policy environment for regional cooperation, the end goal of which is to save taxpayer money and/or improve the quality of services. The Task Force also identified numerous specific and general recommendations for regional cooperation, many of which can be implemented right away.

January 29, 2004

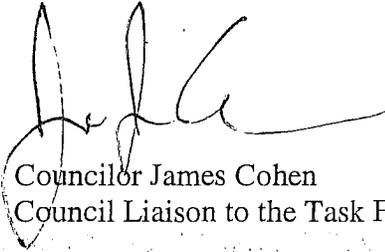
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The Task Force acknowledges and is grateful to the many individuals and organizations who have contributed enormously with such dedication to this report. We look forward to the opportunity to present and discuss the report with the Portland City Council.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Ainsworth, Chair



Councilor James Cohen
Council Liaison to the Task Force



William Dobrowolski



Ann Mazerolle

cc. Joseph Gray, City Manager

Portland Task Force on Regionalism Report

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I. TASK FORCE ON REGIONALISM: AN OVERVIEW

On March 3, 2003, the Portland City Council unanimously adopted a resolution directing all city departments to provide input on regional services and facilities to a three-member **Task Force on Regionalism**. The purpose of the Task Force was to explore opportunities for the City to engage in the regional delivery of services and facilities. The specific charge to the Task Force was as follows: “*identify opportunities for the cost-effective delivery of public services and consolidation of public facilities in the City of Portland and surrounding communities.*” This report documents the work of the Task Force on Regionalism from March 2003 to January 2004.

Task Force members and meeting schedule.

Task Force members included Chairman Tom Ainsworth, an active Portland citizen and local attorney; Bill Dobrowolski, a Portland resident and retired executive; and Ann Mazerolle, Director of Finance for the Greater Portland Council of Governments. Portland City Councilor Jim Cohen, who helped spearhead the effort to adopt the Resolution, served as Council liaison to the Committee. The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) hosted over 15 meetings, where staff provided guidance in preparing the report and maps. See Appendix B for the Task Force Work Schedule.

Meeting participants included representatives from Cumberland County, the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce, Portland firefighters, Portland neighborhood associations, and numerous City department heads. The purpose of these meetings was to explore areas where it may be feasible for the City of Portland to participate regionally with neighboring communities in order to provide a mutual benefit to the participants. See Appendix C for a summary of these meetings.

Focus of Task Force Report.

Given the Council directive, the central focus of the Task Force report is twofold:

- (1) Identifying opportunities for inter-governmental collaboration that offer a strong possibility of being implemented in the short term; and
- (2) Proposing a *process* for evaluating more complex opportunities for inter-governmental collaboration that could be implemented over time.

In the deliberations of the Task Force, one dominant, guiding principle was universally embraced: *Regional efforts should only be pursued if they either lower costs, and/or improve services, and successful regional initiatives must offer a mutual benefit to the participants.*

Guiding Principles.

The Task Force developed the following guiding principles from which recommendations were formed:

1. Regional efforts should only be pursued if they either lower costs, and/or improve services.
2. Successful regional initiatives must offer a mutual benefit to the participants.
3. There is value in maintaining local community or neighborhood connections or identities.
4. Communities participating regionally can benefit from “best practices” developed in one or more of the communities.

I. BACKGROUND

With 455 municipalities and nearly 90 additional quasi-municipal entities, the State of Maine has a strong history of home rule and local control. By contrast, states to the south and west use county or regional forms of government with fewer overlapping bureaucracies. Local control contributes to the character of Maine. However, as the cost of government continues to rise and the tax burden in Maine becomes more onerous, it is imperative to rethink how government services are delivered. A key element of this regionalism initiative is to explore opportunities to deliver services or operate facilities on a regional or sub-regional basis rather than the historic model of exclusive municipal control.

From an historical perspective, the City of Portland has a strong record of leadership in working with neighboring communities. Examples over the last 30 years include such regional initiatives as participation in the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), the Greater Portland Transit District (METRO), the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee (PACTS), the Southern Maine Economic Development District (SMEDD), and Regional Waste Systems (RWS). More recently, the City has participated in a collaborative planning effort regarding emergency management planning and homeland security, and entered into mutual aid agreements for fire and emergency medical services.

Many regional initiatives underway.

As referenced in the Appendices, a number of regional initiatives already exist in Portland. Department heads from throughout the region meet regularly, and programs of shared services are in various stages of planning and implementation.

In response to federal requirements, Portland has also been working closely over the last year with ten other communities in the region to develop a stormwater mitigation program pursuant to federal requirements under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Similarly, through the monthly meetings of Public Works Directors, the City has provided important leadership and support in the development of an equipment-sharing program that is being coordinated through GPCOG. The latter includes a complementary measure to identify the planned capital and facilities investments of municipalities with the goal of linking communities together

when common needs are identified. While these efforts represent valuable initiatives with both short and long term benefit, many more opportunities remain.

Many areas of duplication remain.

Examples of service duplication are numerous. On Allen Avenue, the City of Portland staffs a full fire company, and the Town of Falmouth operates a volunteer fire station within one mile of each other. The communities of Falmouth, Westbrook, and Portland operate separate salt and sand sheds, even though the three communities share a contiguous border. More than six public transportation companies operate in the Portland Metropolitan area, not including school buses and specialty buses serving area hospitals and other institutions. In addition, services such as the scheduling of athletic fields, emergency services training, and code enforcement are often conducted independently by each community in Greater Portland.

While Cumberland County provides E-911 services to 15 communities, many of the communities in Greater Portland operate independent emergency dispatch and E-911 services. And although the number of E-911 services has been reduced statewide, neighboring New Hampshire is served through just one E-911 system. Clearly, there is room for more cooperation at both the regional and state level on this critically important public safety service.

Portland as part of a broader region.

The economy in Greater Portland does not stop at the City boundaries. To the contrary, growth and development trends in southern Maine continue to spread the labor force outward from the traditional urban core to an urban-suburban corridor. Consequently, residents of all Greater Portland communities work side by side in offices and other locations throughout the area, all of whom rely on public infrastructure and common facilities such as highways, the Portland Jetport, Port of Portland, interstate passenger rail, bus, ferry and freight systems.

The public wants action.

The impact of escalating property taxes, in combination with tax burdens from all levels of government, is causing residents and taxpayers in Portland and elsewhere increasingly to demand not only quality service, but also quality service at low cost. It is less important to residents what insignia is on the truck that plows their street or responds to an emergency service call as long as the streets are efficiently plowed and emergency medical services are dependable and professional. With this dynamic, a new public policy environment is emerging that offers a fresh opportunity for change by challenging government in Maine, be it local, county or state, to think creatively, question long-held assumptions, and carefully consider the delivery of public services from a more regionally based perspective.

III. PORTLAND NEEDS TO BE PROACTIVE.

As the largest community in Maine and as the urban center for southern Maine, the City of Portland is positioned to provide important political leadership on regional issues. The Task Force believes that, by committing itself to exploring opportunities for regional cooperation, the City will be in a far stronger position to both influence state policy and realize the benefits of any new state and federal policy that may offer incentives for regional activity. Viewed from this perspective, the City will be positioning itself as any successful business does -- namely, to stay "ahead of the curve" by virtue of a commitment to not only understand trends, but to craft policies for effectively responding to those trends. The Task Force applauds efforts the City has taken recently in this direction, and encourages the City to move even further in this direction.

There is also great risk to the City of Portland if we do not actively plan for regional cooperation. There are three active regional corridor coalitions coordinated by GPCOG that are meeting regularly to develop strategies for managing growth in response to growing transportation and land use pressures. Common sanitation services are being discussed in other parts of Cumberland County, and efforts are underway in State government to encourage regional initiatives through financial and other incentives. Failure to actively participate in such initiatives will not only impair the City's opportunity to leverage state and federal funds, but it could also ultimately isolate the City from more regional approaches being taken around it. For this simple and pragmatic reason, the Task Force believes that expanded and more formalized engagement with neighboring communities is critical to the long-term health of the City.

IV. REGIONALISM REQUIRES CAREFUL PLANNING.

The understandable impulse to leap to a regional approach needs to be tempered by a collective respect for thorough research and analysis before final decisions are made. Whether it is a relatively simple, straightforward service sharing agreement or a complex, long-term binding agreement, the Task Force believes that the City would be wise to conduct appropriate due diligence in order to minimize future unintended consequences and clarify expected benefit levels.

Facilities-based vs. Services-based Cooperation.

There exist a range of regional opportunities of varying complexity and potential benefit in which the City of Portland can participate. At one end of the spectrum, the City can enter into formal or informal agreements with neighboring communities to deliver services such as training, sharing of equipment, or providing mutual aid. At the other end of the spectrum, two or more communities can combine to construct or own regional *facilities or infrastructure*. The more complex and far reaching the arrangement, the greater the need to establish appropriate legal terms in order to clarify ownership percentage, financial responsibility, and term of obligation.

Capital-intensive projects involve greater risk.

Initiatives that combine complex operations with long-term debt are risky, regardless of the number of participants. The risk is heightened as the number of participants increases, emphasizing the need to establish clear policies regarding governance and mutual financial obligations. As examples, the Task Force cites Regional Waste Systems and the Cumberland County Jail. Both efforts benefit the participating communities more than if they did not cooperate; however, the high capital costs of each magnify the risks to the participating communities.

To underscore this point, imagine for a moment that the region lacked a centralized, solid waste management or corrections facility. Each community would be responsible for the siting, funding, and operations of these programs. This would obviously be neither cost-effective, nor desirable from an environmental or land use perspective. The primary risks that derive from these initiatives relate to their capital intensive nature; like any local enterprise, unforeseen changes in demand for services, population shifts, or changes in law can impact cost structures, and the effect of such changes are magnified the greater the fixed cost of the operation. Such has been the case with both the County Jail and RWS, even though there have been overall benefits to the participants as a result of these cooperative ventures.

The Task Force believes that future opportunities to collaborate on major projects should draw from the experiences provided by earlier efforts such as RWS and the County Jail. Important lessons learned -- be they positive or negative -- need to be communicated and understood by policy makers and citizens alike. Detailed research focused on a full understanding of the risks and their potential consequences must serve as a cornerstone of such efforts. And it is imperative that proposed collaborative initiatives include a strengthened contingency plan in the event key financial assumptions turn out to be incorrect. This is no different than how business ventures among private parties would be structured.

Regional dispatch.

The issue of shared public safety dispatch is also illustrative. Early on, the Task Force identified emergency dispatch and E-911 services as having a high potential for effective regional cooperation. From the perspective of technology, advanced GIS mapping enables real-time viewing of available personnel, street maps, and service call locations regardless of where the viewer or dispatcher is located. Examples include the Maine Turnpike operation center with video and radio capability, and the City of Portland Dispatch Office with real time information on the location of police vehicles. However, as noted in the attached memos from the Portland Police and Fire Departments, getting to such cooperation requires further study. For example, neighboring communities operate at different radio frequencies and with different systems, which complicates the goal of integration. For this reason, area communities are working with Portland and Cumberland County to secure funding to study system compatibility. The Task Force

supports such steps as they not only lay the groundwork for future cooperation, but also as they provide a disciplined and deliberate process for evaluating the feasibility of a regional approach

Regional Service Differentials.

Another clear concern regarding regional efforts relates to differences among communities in terms of levels of services and the associated need for careful analysis. In the area of fire service, volunteer and professional departments coexist in neighboring communities, but there are great differences in training and availability. There are also differences in service response times in neighboring communities, with some communities like Portland offering a three to four minute response, and other communities offering response in eight or more minutes. Working through these differences to achieve collaboration will require further analysis, and the development of regional understanding of acceptable levels of service.

Task Force recommends “baby steps.”

Gaining the confidence and trust of the public will be critical to achieving the goals of regionalism. To that end, the Task Force recognizes that looking further into the realm of regional cooperation requires building on successes, and starting small with modest services offering the greatest opportunity for success. Using the “*baby step*” approach, the City of Portland should pursue regional opportunities on the premise that success builds upon success. The extent to which such efforts are effectively communicated to citizens will be an important factor in building awareness and support for regional cooperation. If the City, its residents, and the region benefit from modest levels of cooperation, the groundwork will be in place for more involved regional cooperation.

V. GEOGRAPHY: WHO ARE PORTLAND’S PARTNERS?

Defining the boundary of regional cooperation is not a mathematical exercise. Depending upon the nature of the service or facility contemplated, our partners may be different. To illustrate, we have included copies of several area maps provided by GPCOG showing different regional enterprises such as the Portland Water District, PACTS, SMEDD, and joint purchasing initiatives, many of which contain partially overlapping or separate sets of communities. As a direct result of the 2000 U.S. Census, the federally designated Portland Metropolitan Planning Organization (PACTS) has expanded the planning area from 7 to 15 communities creating an “urban corridor” that stretches from Biddeford-Saco in the south to Yarmouth and Freeport in the north and out to Windham in the west. In this report, the Task Force outlines several different “corridors” in which the City can participate, ranging from Portland’s immediate neighbors to Cumberland County as a whole. Which unit is most appropriate for Portland is likely to depend on the service at issue and the common interests of the participating communities.

VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION: RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Task Force discussed a wide variety of services and programs in an effort to more clearly understand the potential for regional solutions. The areas of discussion were significantly guided by the input of the departmental directors of the City of Portland. Memos outlining the specific recommendations of the directors are attached to this report.

Create Regional Coalitions involving Portland.

The Task Force recommends the formation of regional coalitions around various “interest spheres.” These coalitions could be structured in much the same way as the Coastal and Central Corridor Coalitions facilitated by the Greater Portland Council of Governments. This step will provide an important framework for future regional cooperation.

A prudent *first step* recommended by the Task Force calls for the Portland City Council to invite its neighboring communities of Falmouth, South Portland and Westbrook to meet and discuss the concept of forming a “Metropolitan Service Coalition,” which is described more fully below. GPCOG has indicated to the Task Force that it is prepared to serve as a facilitator and coordinator of any meetings of such a coalition, if so requested. Should there be sufficient interest among the communities, GPCOG will explore possible funding assistance to support the activities of the Coalition.

In addition to the Metropolitan Service Coalition, the Task Force recommends that the City of Portland consider working to develop several other coalitions to address the regional opportunities described in this report. Specifically, the Task Force recommends a Portland Harbor Coalition, an Urban Corridor Coalition, and a County-Wide Coalition. Each of the proposed coalitions is described in greater detail below:

Metropolitan Service Coalition:

Membership: Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, and Falmouth.

Purpose: To explore all potential service delivery and infrastructure investment opportunities within the four community sub-region. Specific issues that the Metropolitan Service Coalition may choose to consider should be thoroughly researched and reviewed through subcommittees that include the respective department heads who are responsible in their communities for the issue(s) under study. Recognizing the substantial financial impact of education on municipal property taxes, a Metropolitan Service Coalition would be wise to encourage the establishment of a special subcommittee on Education.

Portland Harbor Coalition:

Membership: Portland, South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth & Long Island.

Purpose: Identify potential cooperation regarding port development, port security initiatives, and coordination of inter-municipal waterfront land use and transportation issues.

Urban Corridor Coalition:

Membership: The 15 members of PACTS, plus Brunswick, Bath, Topsham, and Standish.

Purpose: To elevate the importance of coordinating transportation investments with sound land use principles; to provide a formal link with the non-PACTS communities in transportation (including transit services) and growth management planning; and to strengthen the planning and coordination of regional transportation services and investments within the transportation corridor stretching from Biddeford to Brunswick

County-wide Coalition:

Membership: All of the communities in Cumberland County, plus County government.

Purpose: Explore a regionally based social service delivery system, including affordable housing; development of a county growth management plan; and a seamless County emergency/disaster response and mitigation plan.

General Recommendations.

In addition to, or as part of, the work of any coalitions that may be formed involving the City of Portland, the Task Force identified the following general recommendations for regional service delivery or facilities that should be pursued. These recommendations were identified consistently throughout the Task Force process and cut across all of the City's departments and activities. They are as follows:

1. Pursue shared training opportunities for municipal employees.
2. Expand joint purchasing opportunities for equipment and supplies.
3. Pursue agreements among city departments and/or municipalities to share special equipment and facilities.
4. Consider consolidation of various municipal and school administrative functions.
5. Develop an inventory of Portland's assets and pursue opportunities to share any available capacity with neighboring communities.
6. Consider regional opportunities whenever the City is making decisions regarding hiring more staff, developing a new building or facility, considering a major purchase, or investing in technology.

Detailed Recommendations.

The Task Force has also outlined a number of detailed recommendations that the City, in conjunction with one or more of the coalitions described above, should explore and consider implementing over the ensuing months and years. Most of these recommendations are discussed in greater detail in the attached memoranda from departmental directors, or other attached supporting documents.

A. Police and Fire

- Pursue shared Police support services in the areas of training, planning, research, purchasing and laboratory services.
- Pursue shared Fire suppression services and/or EMS services in Greater Portland and define acceptable levels of service and training.
- Consider forming a regional Fire Protection District and implement standardized fire safety programs using the same fire codes.
- Work toward shared E-911 services, or central PSAP, for region, County, or even southern Maine. Based upon results of County study of communications interoperability, explore opportunities for expanded cooperation regarding emergency dispatch within region.

B. Transportation

- Study the concept of reorganizing existing fixed route bus services into a single transportation provider, for example, METRO, South Portland Bus Service and Biddeford Saco ShuttleBus.
- Explore shared school transportation opportunities.
- Identify potential new park and ride lots in surrounding communities for commuter bus service.
- Work within PACTS to encourage municipalities to locate commercial development adjacent to existing public transportation corridors.
- Consider establishing a Port Commission to set policy for regional, marine-related transportation issues.
- Consider creation of a Southern Maine Regional Transportation Authority to oversee bus, airport, rail, and marine operations, and financing.

C. Planning & Housing

- Explore the concept of a regional housing authority or increase activities between existing housing authorities. Consider expanded County role.
- Explore opportunities with HUD for the City of Portland to work with Cumberland County on the designation of an “urban county.”
- Implement stormwater regulations through the continued support of the 11-town NPDES consortium.

- Propose the development of a comprehensive regional plan for either the Portland Transportation Corridor (essentially the new PACTS region) or the entire Southern Maine Region.

D. Public Works

- Pursue agreements between municipalities to share specialty equipment such as large sewer vacuators, TV inspection equipment for utility line work, and street sweeping.
- Pursue shared use of staffing for maintenance and servicing equipment from other area municipalities.
- Pursue shared use of public works facilities, such as salt storage, vehicle repairs, and communications and dispatching services.

E. Finance and Tax Assessment

- Explore opportunities for regionalizing tax assessment administration.
- Explore how Portland's assets may be better utilized, particularly where there may be extra capacity.

F. Parks and Recreation

- Consolidate administration of after-school programs.
- Regional efforts for open space planning and design.
- More regional use of certain sports facilities, including for school athletics.
- Regional aquatic center.

G. Health & Human Services

- Work with Cumberland County to explore a regionally delivered service and funding model.

H. Library

- Promote greater regional cooperation among libraries in terms of universal access, shared responsibility for inter-library loans, and focus on Cumberland County as being an appropriate funding mechanism for such services.

I. Education

- Shared specialty services, such as special education services, English as a second language, music, or art.
- Shared administrative services, such as finance.
- Shared transportation services or other cooperation with neighboring communities, and/or regional transit providers.

VII. CONCLUSION

In the deliberations of the Task Force, one dominant, guiding principle was universally embraced: *Regional efforts should only be pursued if they either lower costs, and/or improve services, and successful regional initiatives must offer a mutual benefit to the participants.*

With this guiding principle in mind, the Task Force identified short and long-term recommendations with City Department directors to explore areas where it may be feasible for the City of Portland to participate regionally with neighboring communities in order to provide a mutual benefit to the participants.

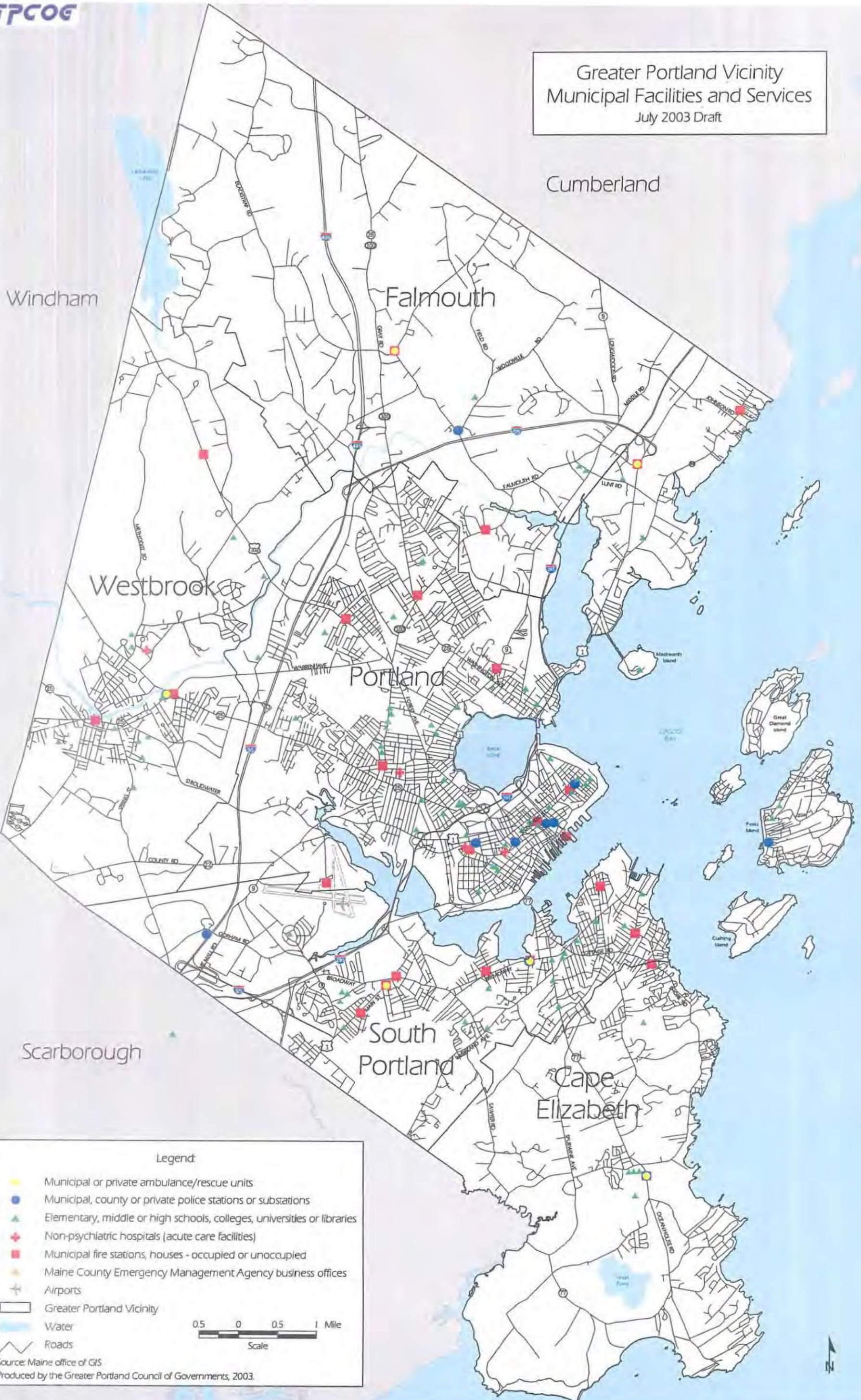
Given Portland's status as Maine's largest city, the Task Force recognizes the unique role the City plays to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the region. It is less important to residents what insignia is on the truck that plows their street or responds to an emergency service call as long as the streets are efficiently plowed and emergency medical services are dependable and professional.

Gaining the confidence and trust of the public will be critical to achieving the goals of regionalism. To that end, the Task Force recognizes that looking further into the realm of regional cooperation requires building on successes, and starting small with modest services offering the greatest opportunity for success. Using the "*baby step*" approach, the City of Portland should pursue regional opportunities on the premise that success builds upon success. The extent to which such efforts are effectively communicated to citizens will be an important factor in building awareness and support for regional cooperation.

If the City, its residents, and the region benefit from modest levels of cooperation, the groundwork will be in place for more involved regional cooperation.

MAPS

Greater Portland Vicinity
Municipal Facilities and Services
July 2003 Draft



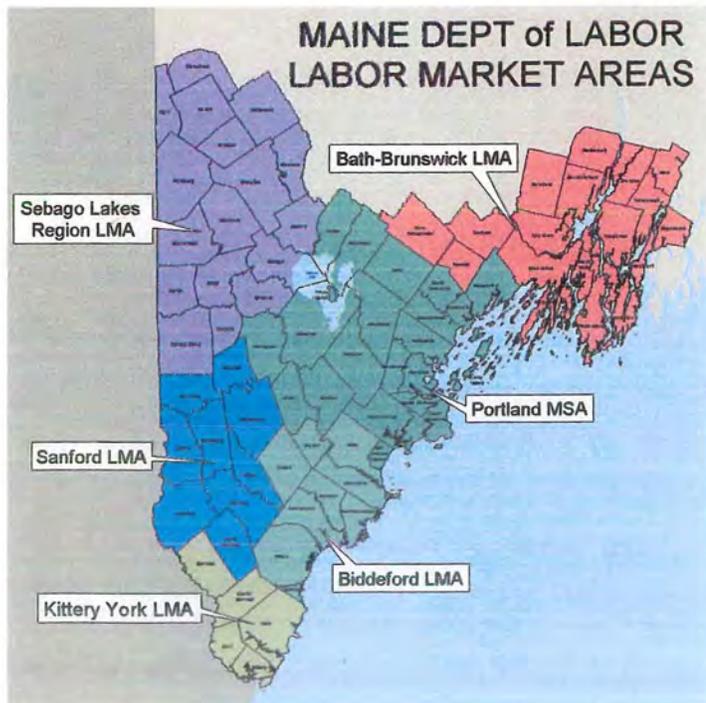
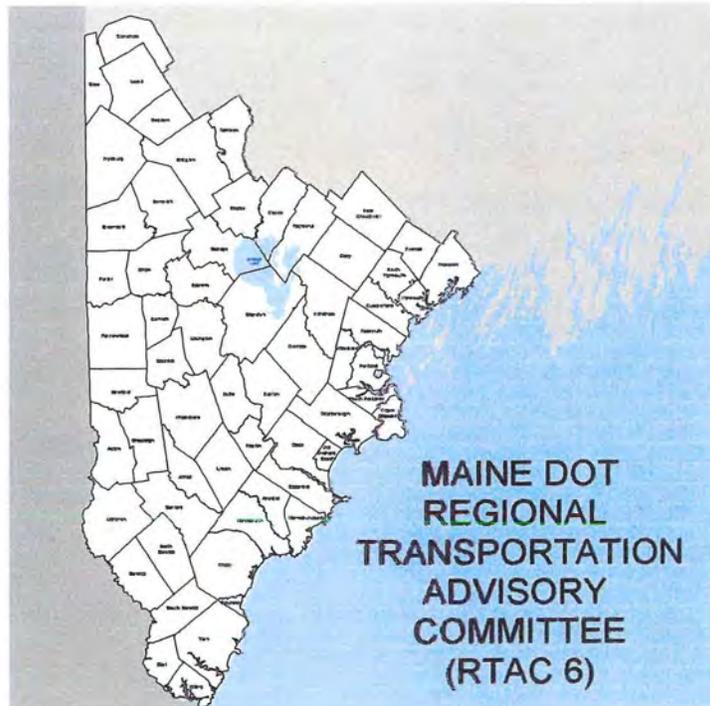
Legend

- Municipal or private ambulance/rescue units
- Municipal, county or private police stations or substations
- ▲ Elementary, middle or high schools, colleges, universities or libraries
- + Non-psychiatric hospitals (acute care facilities)
- Municipal fire stations, houses - occupied or unoccupied
- ★ Maine County Emergency Management Agency business offices
- ✈ Airports
- Greater Portland Vicinity
- Water
- Roads

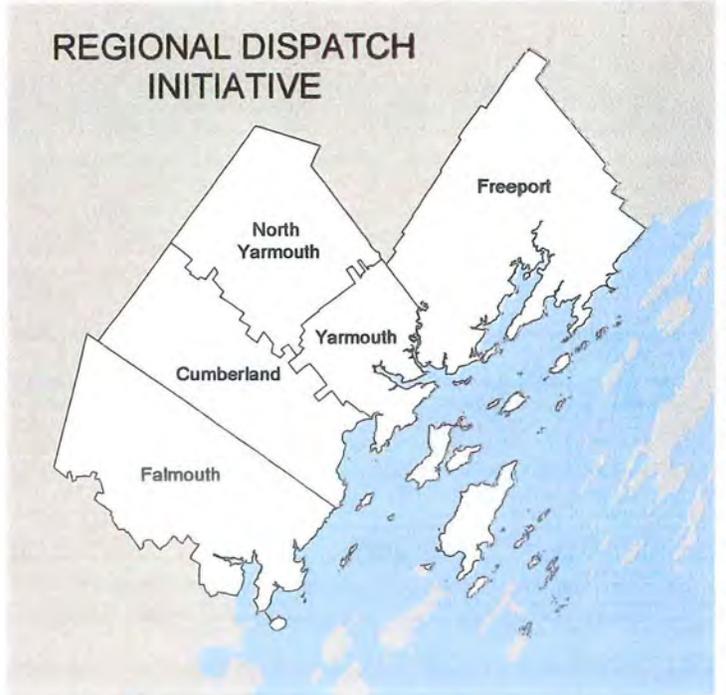
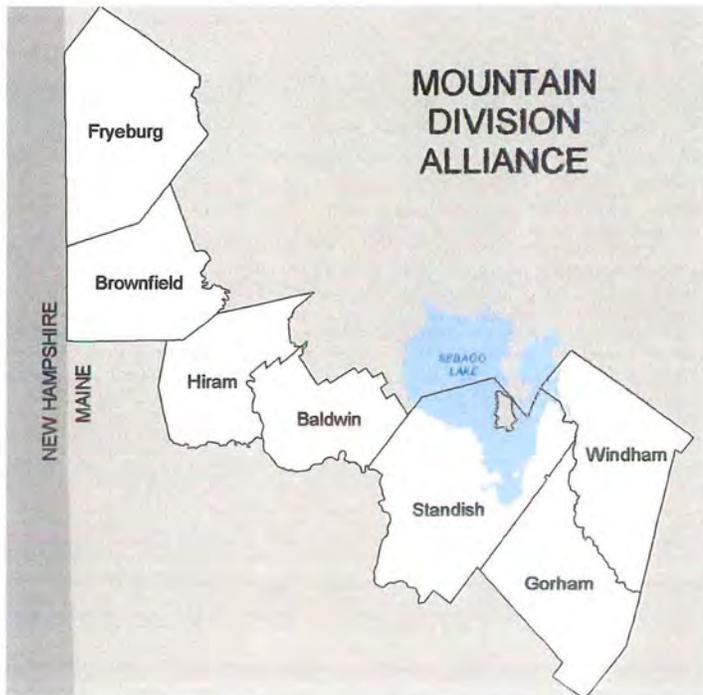
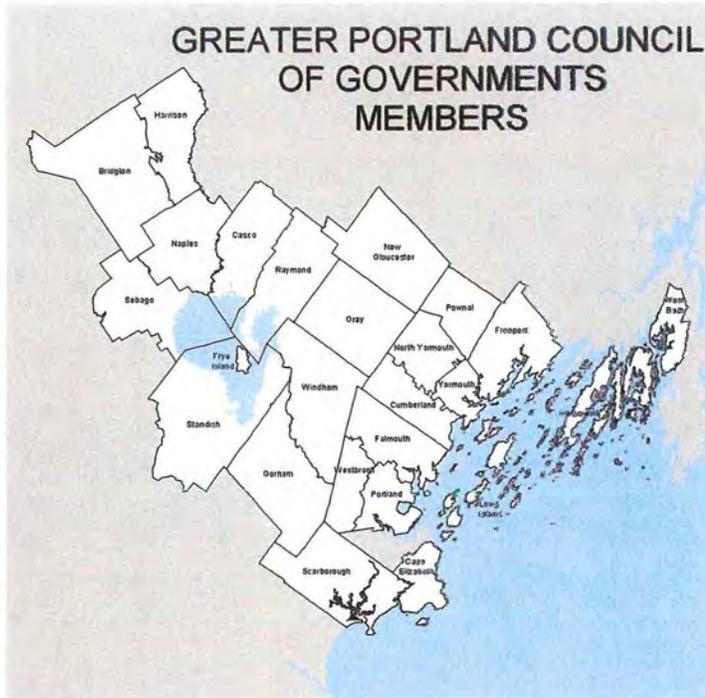
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Source: Maine office of GIS
Produced by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, 2003.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & DISTRICTS



REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & DISTRICTS

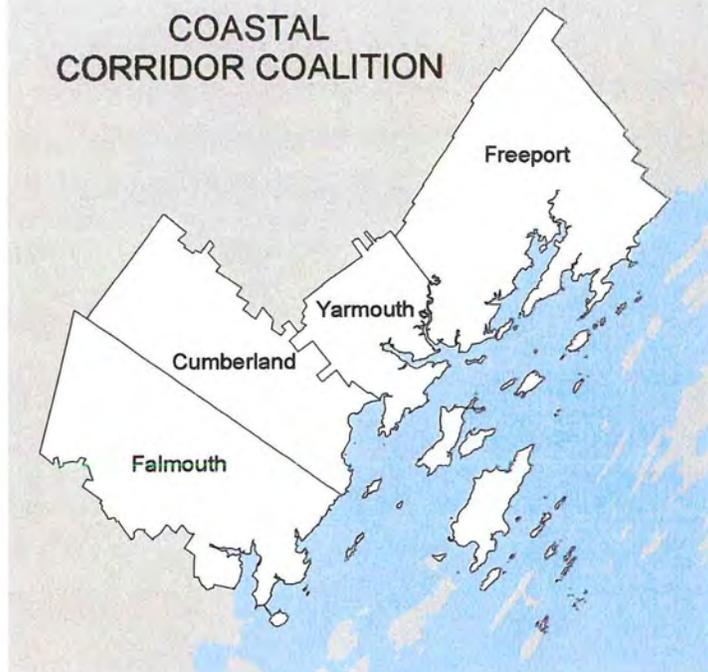


REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & DISTRICTS

CENTRAL CORRIDOR COALITION



COASTAL CORRIDOR COALITION



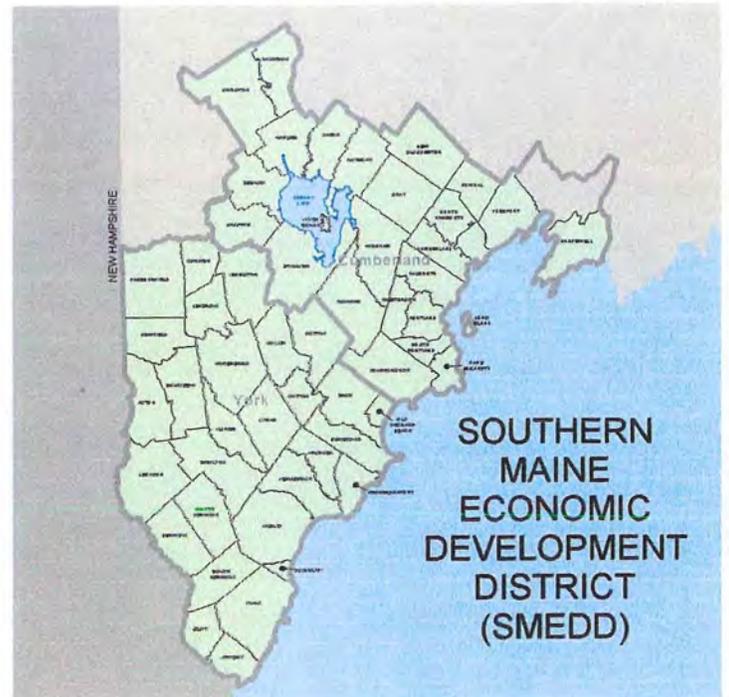
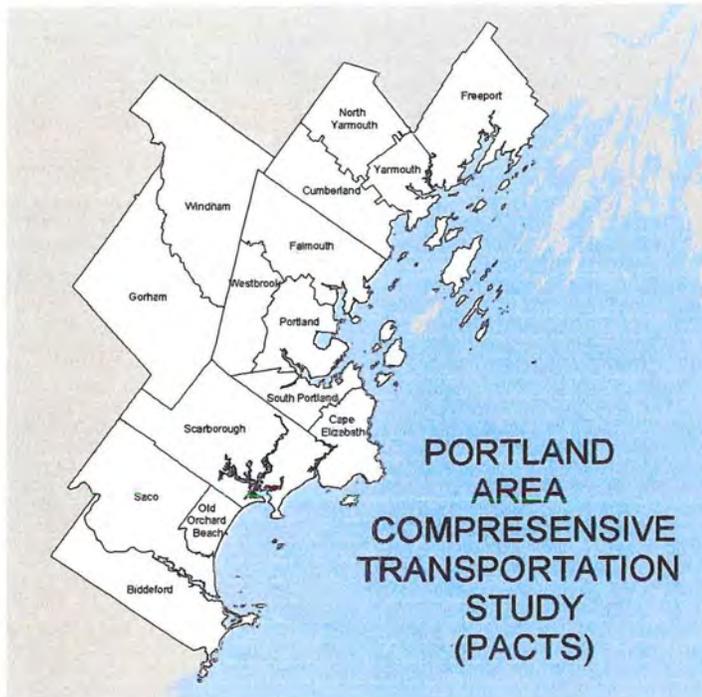
ROUTE 114 CORRIDOR COMMITTEE



ROUTE 302 AND YOU COMMITTEE



REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & DISTRICTS



Appendices

APPENDIX A

Resolution for Regional Delivery of Services

Passed 3/3/-3 8-0 (Leeman absent)

JAMES F. CLOUTIER (MAYOR) (A/L)
PETER E. O'DONNELL (1)
KAREN A. GERAGHTY (2)
NATHAN H. SMITH (3)
CHERYL A. LEBMAN (4)

CITY OF PORTLAND
IN THE CITY COUNCIL

JAMES I. COHEN (5)
JOHN W. GRIFFIN (A/L)
JILL C. DUSON (A/L)
NICHOLAS M. MAVODONES (A/L)

RESOLUTION FOR REGIONAL DELIVERY OF SERVICES

WHEREAS, Portland is considering extraordinary cuts to essential programs and services as a result of increases in costs outside of the City's control, particularly the cost of employee health care; and

WHEREAS, reductions in crucial aid from the State of Maine greatly exacerbate the budget problems faced by the City and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, Portland's property taxes are among the highest in the state as compared to the income of our residents, and this property tax burden hurts individuals and families as well as businesses; and

WHEREAS, choosing between severe cuts or substantial increases in taxes is not a choice that the people of Portland want to make, and we must therefore look for new opportunities to deliver services at a lower cost; and

WHEREAS, many services are provided separately by each of the communities around Portland, and each of these communities and their resident taxpayers as well as Portland taxpayers might be better off if we share facilities and services that each community currently provides alone; and

WHEREAS, some of our neighboring communities have begun a dialogue on the regional delivery of certain public safety services and Governor Baldacci has made regional delivery of services a priority; and

WHEREAS, it is important that Maine's largest city take an active role in moving the concept of regionalism forward; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the City Manager shall work with the City's Department Heads and other employees and a 3 member Council Task Force on Regional Services and Facilities, to be appointed by the Mayor to identify areas where regional services and facilities might work effectively, and on a cost efficient basis for the citizens of Portland and surrounding communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Manager shall report the results of the Task Force staff effort and a recommended process for working with other communities on or before September 3, 2003 to the City Council.

APPENDIX B

Summary of Task Force Meetings

Task Force Meeting Schedule and Attendees

May 8, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen (via speakerphone), Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Steve Scharf, Peter Crichton, Neal Allen, Robert Reynolds, Mike Williams, John
Duncan, David Willauer

Summary: Introductions, scope of task, discussion of regional issues.

May 16, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Larry Mead, Peter Crichton, Robert Reynolds, Alex Jaegermann, Peter Ventre

Summary: Brainstorm areas of possible cooperation for regional services and facilities.

May 30, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Larry Mead, Peter Crichton, Robert Reynolds, Steven Scharf, Peter Ventre

Summary: Discussion of reducing costs and increasing efficiencies.

June 6, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Larry Mead, Robert Reynolds, Steven Scharf, Neal Allen, Mike Bobinsky, Denise Albert,
David Willauer

Summary: Transportation services presentation by David Willauer, Director of
Transportation and Land Use Planning, GPCOG

June 12, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle

Summary: Discussion and evaluation of various methods for delivery of cost saving
ideas and revenue enhancement via existing channels, overlay zones, creation of new
channels, etc.

June 20, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle

Summary: Public Safety presentation by Portland Police Chief Michael Chitwood and
Fire Chief Fred LaMontagne.

July 1, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Larry Mead, Robert Reynolds, Neal Allen, Mike Bobinsky, David Willauer, Peter
Crichton, Peter Ventre

Summary: Discussion of model to create and evaluate delivery systems.

July 18, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Larry Mead, Robert Reynolds, Mike Bobinsky, David Willauer, Jane Duncan, Elizabeth
Trice

Summary: Continue discussion of delivery systems for Greater Portland and potential
municipal partners.

July 25, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski
Larry Mead, Mike Bobinsky, David Willauer, Peter Crichton, Peter Ventre, Elizabeth
Trice

Summary: Discussion of various municipal partnership strategies.

July 31, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski
Larry Mead, Mike Bobinsky, David Willauer, Peter Ventre, Elizabeth Trice, Jerry Byers,
Peter Crichton

Summary: Human Services presentation by Jerry Byers, Director of Human Services

August 7, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer

Summary: Identify and prioritize concepts for inclusion in report to City Council.

August 21, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer

Summary: Continued discussion of draft report.

October 17, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer

Summary: Discussion and review of rough draft and appendices.

November 14, 2003

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer

Summary: Discussion and review of rough draft and appendices.

January 6, 2004

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer

Summary: Editing of report.

January 20, 2004

Tom Ainsworth, James Cohen, Bill Dobrowolski, Ann Mazerolle
Neal Allen, David Willauer, Larry Mead, Steve Scharf, Elizabeth Trice, Mike Bobinsky,
Peter Crichton

Summary: Presentation and discussion of draft report with Task Force and members of
the public.

APPENDIX C

Regional Organizations and Agencies

Appendix C

Inventory of Regional Organizations and Agencies

Many examples of regional cooperation and collaborative approaches exist today. Mutual Aid Agreements exist between numerous cities and towns for the purpose of responding to fires and other emergencies requiring help from neighboring municipalities. Town managers, public works directors, transit providers, planners, EMS chiefs, and fire chiefs meet on a regular basis to share regional issues and concerns. The following are examples of existing regional organizations, governmental and otherwise.

Casco Bay Estuary Project

Grassroots organization funded by EPA comprised of local, state and federal officials, and citizens to preserve the Nationally-recognized Casco Bay estuary and watershed.

Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD)

Year-round local ferry operation with five vessels serving six Casco Bay Islands and a summer charter operation serving Casco Bay.

Cumberland County

Employs 400 staff to carry out the County's regional functions and services, including the Registry of Probate, Registry of Deeds, County Correctional Facility, County's Patrol and Police services, emergency management department, and the Cumberland County Regional Communications Center.

Cumberland County Soil and Water District

Developing stormwater mitigation plans pursuant to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) guidelines between 11 municipalities.

Greater Portland Council of Governments

Regional agency providing transportation, land use and economic development planning, technical services, Census data management, public policy forums, and joint purchasing to member municipalities throughout Cumberland County.

Greater Portland Transit District (METRO)

Providing fixed route bus service for Portland, Westbrook and the Maine Mall.

Mountain Division Alliance

A consortium of communities, non-profits, and state agencies, staffed by GPCOG, coordinating transportation, recreation and economic development along the Mountain Division railroad corridor between Portland, Maine and North Conway, New Hampshire.

Peoples Regional Opportunity Program

Community action partnership agency serving most Cumberland County municipalities, assisting over 6,000 households each year, and supporting programs through work in five areas including home, family, youth, seniors and community.

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee – PACTS

Federally designated transportation planning region involving 15 Greater Portland municipalities, supported by GPCOG.

Portland Explorer

Express bus service, administered by GPCOG, linking key transportation terminals and hotels in Portland and South Portland.

Portland Public Library

A quasi-municipal entity based in Portland that is designated by the State as one of two regional libraries in Maine. Provides free library access and inter-libraries loans to individuals throughout southern Maine, particularly within Cumberland and York Counties.

Portland Water District

Providing public water from Sebago Lake to 10 Greater Portland municipalities.

Regional Transportation Program (RTP)

Provides door-to-door transportation for the elderly, persons with disabilities and children in Cumberland County. Also operates paratransit bus service per the ADA and commuter express bus service between Portland and Bath Iron Works.

Regional Waste Systems (RWS)

Municipal solid waste management program serving Southern Maine municipalities and governed by a Board of Directors from member communities.

Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging

Providing information, referrals and case management services to seniors assuring that older people receive the support they need to maintain their independence.

Southern Maine Economic Development District

Federally designated economic development district serving Cumberland and York Counties, organized through a partnership between the Greater Portland Council of Governments and the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission; administered by GPCOG.

Waterfront Alliance

Providing a forum for education and outreach to marine-dependent businesses, operations and organizations, promoting Portland's diverse marine industries and preserving Portland's working waterfront. Staff support is provided by GPCOG.

APPENDIX D

**City of Portland Departmental Directors
Memoranda/Recommendations**

PORTLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Service Regionalization
Areas for Exploration
Submitted by Chief Fred LaMontagne

The Fire Service in Greater Portland has already taken small steps towards regionalization. As neighbors we are working toward the standardization of equipment and training. We currently share Hazardous Materials Resources, Training and Personnel with the County of Cumberland and the State of Maine.

Portland and the surrounding communities share resources through automatic mutual aid and requested mutual aid on a daily basis. These agreements have permitted all communities to forego a portion of the infrastructure and personnel expenses required to provide the fire and medical service level that each community has identified as their response standard.

Furthermore, these bordering communities meet monthly as a group to share ideas, solve problems and identify mechanisms where we can enhance public safety without a significant cost increase. Recent examples of these efforts are the Radio Interoperability Grant and the development of the Strike Team program for emergency response.

The radio interoperability grant was an application to the Department of Justice for six million dollars to ensure that communities surrounding Portland could communicate with Portland Public Safety Units when operating in Portland and vice versa when Portland assists with an emergency in these communities. Currently, this is accomplished through a statewide channel that often has multiple communities using the channel. The Strike Team program is a system managed by the communities around Portland. This program aligned similar fire units such as ambulances or ladder trucks in to groups of three. These units were then plotted and organized by proximity to the incident. When a community had an incident or needed additional resources, they would request a strike team. Once a community had called the closest three strike teams Portland Fire or South Portland Fire would then dispatch the next seven strike teams as requested to respond thus allowing the local communications center to manage the incident. A similar program is being developed where multiple alarm fires greater than three alarms would be supported by Portland or South Portland. This sharing of resources permits communities to reduce capital expenses for standard and specialty fire equipment.

Despite these efforts there are still areas where we can share resources and reduce some short term costs, but more importantly minimize future capital costs. Listed below are areas that I believe warrant further exploration.

Training

Currently each community offers the same mandatory training classes. Often times the classes are attended by two maybe three attendees during the day time. If communities

were to share the instructor and program costs and partner with Portland or the larger fire departments we would provide a cost effective training with a greater level of peer interaction which would lead to a heightened training experience. This model could be applied to all Fire and EMS programs

Purchasing

While there have been several attempts at a regional purchase program I believe that the time has come for us to revisit regional purchasing through the Council of Governments. As the fire service has become more regulated standardization of equipment has occurred. Many communities have successfully completed joint purchases of equipment realizing savings. Combined purchases should lead to additional savings.

Inspections

Most of the communities around Portland have the same fire safety programs and fire codes. The formulation of a fire protection district would permit shared resources for community risk reduction, minimize administration and ensure the vitality of programs which are often the first programs cut in difficult budget times.

Dispatch

The centralization of communications facilities would be the most logical area where services could be combined. However, the capital expense in technology to combine reporting systems, CAD systems and radio systems may make this a cost prohibitive solution if immediate savings are the intent versus long term savings. Additionally, communication centers provide many services beyond "911".

Emergency Medical Services

In this service area we can possibly make our greatest in roads. Levels of training are certified and measurable. The level of service desired is identifiable and measurable and it potentially impacts the majority of the population either directly or indirectly through family and friends. The staffing impact and costs for communities is minimal. Most communities around Portland have some level of permanent staffing. All of the communities in greater Portland are experiencing an increase in service demand. This service area has an established platform which is common for all communities. Furthermore, the fixed assets owned by most communities and the field processes utilized are similar.

Fire Suppression

Similar to Emergency Medical services Fire Suppression provides us a solid platform for regionalization. The greater debate will be the level of service that needs to be provided to a particular area. Operating procedures and concepts are similar yet different as they are often driven by the response level in a community on a given day. Furthermore,

significant capital expense will be required to locate stations to ensure coverage, staffing levels and response time for a particular community.

In closing, I believe that the consolidation of resources should be further explored. Steps that are taken should be small and may even fail. As a region we should recognize that failure will be a part of consolidation and should not deter efforts for regionalization.

City of Portland, Maine
MEMORANDUM

To: Larry Mead, Assistant City Manager
From: Mark B. Adelson, Director, Div. Housing and Neighborhood Services
Date: August 4, 2003
Subject: Regionalism - Thoughts and Ideas

Here are some brief and general thoughts about opportunities for regionalism in functions undertaken by this division. The Division of Housing and Neighborhood Services has four primary functions;

- Community Development Program Management
- Housing Program Management
- Code Enforcement (zoning, building, housing, health)
- Housing Policy Development and Administration

Community Development Program Management

Cumberland County has been informed by HUD that it is now eligible to become an entitlement "Urban County" under the HUD Community Development Block Grant Program, and thereby will be entitled to receive the same HUD funding Portland uses in our HCD budget. The process of becoming an entitlement "Urban County" is convoluted and tied to South Portland's plans to become an entitlement City (they were also informed and have priority over the county). Theoretically, a county-wide community development program would be possible, and Portland could even contract to administer it. Although some efficiencies in the use of funds might be gained, these are federal funds used primarily for activities not normally funded with local tax dollars. Therefore, little or no saving in local tax dollars would occur.

Housing Program Management

Aside from the county-wide community development program discussed above, HUD allows multi-community housing programs (Consortia) under the HOME Program. Although Portland is already a "participating jurisdiction" under HOME and receives \$750,000 annually, we might choose to participate in a Home Consortia if it increased the amount of HUD funds we receive, or as a way for accomplishing a regional approach to affordable housing as advocated in the housing element of our Comprehensive Plan. This office has already had very preliminary discussions with South Portland and Westbrook about forming a Home Consortia. Again, these are federal funds that can only be used for housing activities. Therefore, little or no saving in local tax dollars would occur.

Code Enforcement (zoning, building, housing, health)

A significant portion of the country administers code enforcement on a county basis. It works because the same codes are used throughout a particular region (county).

Currently, Portland has many more rules and codes than our neighboring communities. Most choose not to adopt the codes Portland has, such as a local housing code, a local food service code, or the BOCA building code. So participating in regional enforcement program at this time wouldn't accomplish Portland's needs.

Theoretically, if several towns adopted the same code(s), such as the State's food service code (for example), a regional FSE inspection program could be undertaken. This may spread the cost out over a wider area. The regional approach, under these circumstances, is kind-of intriguing.

The State may adopt a building code in the near future, but I don't believe it will be mandatory. If it was mandatory, we could think about a regional approach. We've cross-trained our code officers for efficiency purposes. A regional program would probably need to hire code officers for a single purpose.

**Department of Parks and Recreation
City of Portland**

**Regionalization of Parks and Recreation
Conceptual Ideas**

Prepared by
Denise Clavette Albert, CPRP
Director, Portland Parks and Recreation

Regionalization of Parks and Recreation – parks, recreation, programs, services, forestry, horticulture, cemeteries, golf courses, ice arenas and more - is a concept that is quite well established in various areas of the country with park districts and county parks and recreation systems. Successful districts generally accommodate a small geographical area with a large population / demographic base. County systems accommodate a large geographical area with varying population / demographic bases.

In Maine, as with all of the New England states – the concept of park districts and county parks and recreation systems is not widespread. The mid-Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia and some of Pennsylvania are predominantly districts and county systems. New England's hesitancy to create regional approaches to parks and recreation may be attributed to the nature of "small towns" that want to have their own services, community centers, parks, programs. The financial component, including the fact that parks and recreation in most communities is viewed as a non-essential service, often drives departments to focus primarily on existing parks and recreation programs and services and not exploring cost saving measures and efficiencies with regionalization.

In order to respect the integrity of the small town parks and recreation departments, the need for local and neighborhood parks, programs and facilities, regionalization concepts must be ideas that help small towns and cities come together for a mutual financial, physical and specialized gain. Opportunities and ideas that merit consideration are listed below for discussion.

Administration

Personnel / human resources management, general administration, payroll, financial operations and other related administration functions could be consolidated and regionalized to maximize efficiencies.

Parks and Open Space Planning and Design

With a regional approach to parks and open space planning and design, benefits could be realized by pulling together a complete team of professionals to assist departments in their needs for planning and design.

Administration / Supervision of Before and After School Programs

Administration and supervision of before and after school programs could be managed regionally. This would retain the individual community and neighborhood need for the programs, yet provide an overall management strategy and philosophy for these programs.

Sports Fields

Fitzpatrick Stadium, though designed primarily for the City of Portland has seen increased rental and use by outside communities, including being the home for state championship football games. Designing a specialized facility such as Fitzpatrick affords greater opportunities for a greater number of athletic venues.

Forestry

Portland's forestry section manages an extensive urban forestry program. Outlying communities in general do not have those resources. Managing urban and rural forestry programs and services, work orders, contracted services, emergency management could all benefit from a regional approach.

Equipment Purchases / Bidding

A regional approach to equipment bidding and purchasing would realize efficiencies.

Specialized Equipment

Purchasing specialized equipment that can be shared among communities would realize benefits.

Aquatic Center

The greater Portland area has many indoor aquatic facilities, some newer than others and some needing serious repairs and rehabilitation in order to remain in operation. A regionalized, larger aquatic center with a 50 meter pool, diving area, recreational pool as well as an outdoor pool would attract a larger number of people, give the area a specialty pool that is needed, and provide a larger base of users that would support the facility.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Larry Mead
Assistant City Manager

FROM: Michael Chitwood *mc*
Chief of Police

DATE: October 8, 2003

RE: Regionalization Concept

The concept of regionalization of local law enforcement services should be evaluated from two perspectives. The first is operational and the second is support. Operational services do not lend themselves to regionalization in a multi-jurisdictional environment except as related to emergency mutual aid functions. However, some significant aspects of support service functions could be performed on a regional basis.

Operation regionalization is not possible. A host of legal, monetary, administrative and community specific services provision issues prohibit unification of police services. In addition, from the City of Portland's perspective, we provide a full spectrum of police services while other regional communities do not. This is primarily due to our size and the demand we have for specialized services. Consequently, the burden of being a full service police agency is inescapably ours, and no rational incentive exists for us to limit needed functions or for smaller agencies to adopt capabilities not in demand. It should be noted that this holds true for emergency communications as well.

Support regionalization is possible in areas of shared concern. For example, such things are interoperability, training, planning and research, purchasing or laboratory services which are of equal concern to all. In these areas economies of scale can be realized which would be beneficial to local police agencies.

The key to evaluating police services for regionalization is two fold. There must be proximate equity in the demand and supply of the service in the participating communities and there must be an acceptable cost/benefit ratio to each community. An application of this type of analysis clearly shows that regionalization is limited as I have briefly described.

This memo summarizes my thinking on regionalization of police services. It represents in a concise way the many details which I discussed with the Regionalization Task Force some months ago.

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

cc: Joe Gray
City Manager

**DEPARTMENT OF PORTS AND TRANSPORTATION
REGIONAL APPROACHES**

Submitted by Jeffrey Monroe, Director

The concept of regionalized transportation services has proven to be an effective tool in providing coordinated systems approaches to transportation, managing costs and improving services. Portland needs to explore opportunities as consequences of urban sprawl increase.

CONCEPTS:

1. Public Transportation

All public transportation (bus services) now managed by 5 separate operators could be reorganized into a single transportation provider, sharing resources, management, operational personnel and assets. This would allow the development of better route efficiencies, application of proper equipment on critical routes and eliminate redundancies in asset management. Services could be expanded into areas not served currently and a proportional subsidy allocated from served communities.

The services could potentially be expanded to incorporate school transportation for junior high and above.

2. Parking Infrastructure and excessive commuter traffic

The demand for parking structures is generally placed on the service centers, such as Portland, which erodes its available space for development and forces the service center to meet demand for commuters. This encourages the single party commute in private automobiles.

In a regional approach, a reoriented public transportation system encourages public transportation connections and offers alternatives to standard single-occupancy vehicle commuting practices. Outlying communities provide low cost or no cost park-and-ride lots. Connections to downtown are made by efficient bus service. The mass transit options reduce the need for parking structures. Parking revenue in public facilities is tied to the support of public transportation and streets and roadways are designed to discourage heavy traffic loads.

3. New Development Planning Criteria

In a regional approach, all communities agree to reduce parking requirements for commercial development. All new developments are placed within reach of existing or planned public transportation corridors.

4. Regional Transportation Service Centers

Currently the City of Portland manages and controls all of the transportation assets that relate to aviation or maritime activities. This system does not take into account the impacts on South Portland where most of the airport property is located or the fact that we share the port with South Portland.

A regional approach would invite three South Portland City Councilors to join the Transportation Committee and form a Port Commission, dealing with regional transportation issues. The 6 person group of elected officials would set policies and provide direction to staff in a coordinated fashion. Portland and South Portland staff could also be mutually supportive in addressing issues that affect both communities.

5. Southern Maine Regional Transportation Authority

The most comprehensive approach to regionalization of transportation would be the creation of an independent authority to coordinate the various elements of the transportation system, including air, marine, rail and bus transportation. Such an authority would have to be approved by the State legislature.

Services and Facilities Susceptible to Regional Planning and Use

PLANNING for all subheadings below

Communications:

Dispatchers, 911, 311 web site sharing, local area net/internet
Cable television; internet service provider
Closed circuit television

Transportation:

PACTS and roadway systems, including Maine Turnpike Authority
Bicycle and pedestrian policies and walkways
Metro, other bus services and mass transit generally
Taxis
Transit Authority (could include ferries; buses; light rail; Jetport; Seaport, school buses)
Vehicle maintenance facility (see Public Works below)
Group purchasing of fire, rescue, police and school motor vehicles
Parking

Public Works:

Vehicle maintenance facility
Road crews for maintenance, plowing, paving (includes possible shared ownership of specialized equipment such as paving machines, etc.)
Standardization of types of equipment for police, fire and rescue (see Planning below)
Athletic Facilities
Schools and their teachers and administrators

Taxation:

Assessors
Sharing some revenues
Regional benefit of local non-profit services
Fair payment for universal services such as police, fire, rescue
Tax exemptions and TIF projects

Public Facilities:

Consider shared continuous use of -
Schools
Libraries
Athletic facilities

Maintenance Facilities

Low cost housing (shared responsibility for projects throughout the region)

Programs:

Fire, police and rescue training; school bus and facility training
Hazardous material training and procedures
Public health and human services
Low cost housing
Collective purchasing (and possible shared ownership) of equipment, all supplies
Grants
Building codes and standards of performance
Regional funding for centralized social services (both governmental and non-profit)

Personnel:

Police, fire and rescue
Teachers, administrators and school personnel
Planners: land, urban, transportation, communications.
Standardize requirements and share services

Department of Public Works

Conceptual Ideas For Regionalization

Prepared by
Michael Bobinsky, Director

The Regional Government Task Force for the City of Portland has been working over the past several months on evaluating specific municipal services that may be candidates for regional or shared services with other municipalities. The basis for considering regional service level is related to a State wide initiative led by Governor Baldacci, whereby state aid to local governments may be determined based upon local municipalities actually implementing regional approaches to service levels.

Candidate services elements in Public Works for further study;

-Regional/Shared municipal procurements-

-salt, fuel, paving services, traffic lane markings/painting,

-GIS services-

-Maintenance of regional data bases or base map information, such as parcel maps, zoning, streets, utilities, topographical information, and land use patterns, open spaces.

-Implementing storm water regulations- The City of Portland Public Works Department has been an active participant in the joining with other Casco Bay cities and towns on working together on a variety of issues and elements surrounding new federal storm water regulations affecting all area cities and towns. On-going planning and work groups have been in effect for over a year to assist with sharing costs and program ideas on implementing the new regulations. Possible cost savings will exits by sharing cost for specific elements of compliance such as public information, construction inspections, 5 year project goals, storm water testing and evaluation, and long term funding options.

-Mutual Aide Agreements among area cities and towns for use of public works equipment in cases of emergencies

-Shared purchases of specialty equipment, such as large sewer vactors, and TV inspection equipment for utility line work, street sweeping,

-Shared training of employees, technical and supervisory skills

-Shared use and staffing for maintenance and servicing equipment from other area cities

-Shared use of future public works facilities, such as salt storage, vehicle repairs, and communications and dispatching services.

APPENDIX E

**Public Safety Interoperability Paper
Marsters 6/03**

POSITION PAPER
ON
PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABILITY

1. The purpose of this document is to provide a brief overview of what interoperability should mean to Public Safety communities and identify interoperability issues and potential resolutions for the State of Maine.

According to PSWN (Public Safety Wireless Network), a jointly sponsored initiative, by the Dept of Justice and Treasury, the purpose of interoperability is so that *"no man, woman or child ever loses his or her life because public safety officials cannot talk to one another"*. PSWN states that *"interoperability is the ability for on demand and real time radio communications between public safety personnel and personnel from other agencies"*. Simply put, interoperability is the ability of public safety officials to communicate with each other across different radio systems when the need arises.

There are 3 types of interoperability. First is *Day to Day*, which involves communications and coordination for routine or local public safety operations. Second is *Mutual Aid*, which involves joint (out of town) and immediate response to incidents (major or catastrophic) and requires communications between numerous public safety agencies and personnel. The third is *Task Force*, which involves local, state, and federal agencies operating together for an extended period of time to address a public safety incident (major or catastrophic).

Interoperability is the ability of different agencies to communicate with one another. This may be between Police, Fire & EMS in a single jurisdiction responding to a routine incident or multiple jurisdictions and agencies responding to a major incident. Public safety officials need to communicate effectively and efficiently with all resources involved in an incident, large or small, but especially incidents that require support from more than one agency.

2. Interoperability is plagued by 3 major issues. These issues are seldom looked at unless an incident takes place and it comes to every one's attention. However, before problems are resolved they are quickly forgotten and little is done to correct the problems associated with each of them. These issues are:

- a) Lack of radio frequencies or channels for on-scene (talk-around) interoperability
- b) Incompatible radio systems
- c) Lack of Standard Operating Procedures

b) Regionalized “dispatching” should be done on 1 or 2 dedicated “dispatch channels” for each region, eliminating the need for each and every small community to have their own separate channels. It is not unheard of to have 20 or more municipalities dispatched on a single channel as long as they implement the use of talk-around channels upon arrival at the scene. Talk-around channels should be used by responders once they arrive on the scene. This is a much more efficient use of the RF spectrum and provides the incident commander with much better command and control of responders and various functions at the scene while also clearing up the dispatch channels and enabling dispatchers to continue handling ongoing activities in their communities while not having to compete with the incident related communications and not have to sort out the requests from responders at the scene and continued routine public safety incidents in the community. This would free up VHF channels for more effective use throughout the region and state. Some of these VHF channels could be assigned as the region-wide and statewide talk-around channels by the various public safety functions.

c) Regional and statewide channels should be established for talk-around communications. Once responders arrive on scene, they should immediately switch to talk-around channels for their various functions and conduct their incident related communications on them. Only the incident commander or designated representative needs to communicate with dispatch. Assigning several to each of the three major functions (fire, police and EMS) would work very efficiently and the use of these at an incident scene, by mostly low powered hand held radios will allow their use throughout the region and state with minimal potential for interference with other incident related communications making it possible to reuse these channels throughout the state.

d) Establish at least 6 to 8 channels dedicated for “on-scene” talk-around communications. Assign them to the various functions (i.e., fire ground, rescue, triage, transportation, staging, EMS, security, traffic, investigations, etc.) at the incident. Use simplex or point-to-point communications for the short range, local communications between units at the incident scene. Communications with dispatch should be by the Incident Commander or his/her designated representative. Keep the normal dispatch channel free from incident communications and available for dispatch to manage the ongoing activities around the community

The second issue is incompatible radio systems, radios that operate on different portions of the radio frequency (RF) spectrum. It's estimated that more than 90 percent of the public safety agencies in Maine use the traditional VHF (153-174 MHz) high band spectrum. However, some agencies operate on totally different parts of the RF spectrum (VHF Low Band, UHF and also 800 MHz). This presents a major problem when interoperability is

Recommendation(s):

a) Strongly recommend to the state and local agencies to remain on the VHF high band RF spectrum, and begin the process of replacing old outdated radios and systems with narrow band radios. Although APCO Project 25 (digital) radios allow for digital trunking in the future, they are extremely expensive and not practical for most communities. Traditional analog systems provide the most reliable and effective capability in a non-trunking environment. Trunking is not practical except in large cities such as Boston and New York. Maine's populace and radio traffic volumes do not warrant trunking systems.

b) Encourage agencies to look at the "big picture" and focus on interoperability issues when expanding or replacing their radio systems.

c) Stress the importance of the "technical experts" within the agency or other agencies available in the state, being actively engaged in the process of upgrading and expanding communications systems. Vendors are in the business to sell equipment and are not always familiar with the specific needs of an agency and are definitely not looking at the big picture or interoperability needs of the agency. Administrators and often times agency chiefs are not the technical experts and should not be making decisions without consulting those who are using the systems daily and know first hand what the needs and requirements are to accomplish the public safety mission. Any time a public safety communications systems is designed, upgraded or changes it potentially affects more than just the local community.

The third major issue is the lack of common operational procedures and training. For many agencies, the use of talk-around channels for incident communications is a new concept. Even agencies that have talk-around channels seldom use them. This will be a major culture change and training hurdle for our first responders and communications center personnel. We don't have an SOP for the current statewide channels and we haven't developed procedures or guidance for the use of talk-around channels for incident communications. The implementation of these operating procedures will greatly enhance our command and control of incidents and help make our overall public safety communications more effective and efficient. This culture change will require total support from all public safety agencies throughout the state and it will be essential to use these procedures during all public safety operations, from day to day operations to mutual aid and task force operations.

Recommendation(s):

From: "Marsters, Harry, CMSgt, 265CBCS, LG, 698-7921"
<Harry.Marsters@mebngr.ang.af.mil>
To: "George Flaherty (E-mail)" <flaherty@cumberlandcou...>
Date: Thu, Mar 6, 2003 6:45 AM
Subject: some interesting comments FYI....

STATEMENT OF THERA BRADSHAW

President

Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) Intl.

before the

Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

Subcommittee on Communications

Wednesday, March 5, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am especially grateful to Chairman Burns, Senator Hollings and Senator Inouye for your leadership in drawing much-needed attention to the E-911 issue.

I am Thera Bradshaw, President of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, known as APCO. I am also Assistant General Manager, Policy and Public Services, for the City of Los Angeles Information Technology Agency. My career has been dedicated to building emergency communications systems in a variety of venues up and down the west coast, from rural Washington and Oregon to urban areas such as San Francisco and Los Angeles. In addition to being a long-standing member of APCO, I served as President of the National Emergency Number Association in 1994-95 and was a co-signer of a 1996 consensus document within the public safety community that led to the FCC rule on E-911 deployment.

APCO is the oldest and largest not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to public safety communications. Our members are truly the first of the first responders in an emergency. We are the first voice people hear when they call 911 for help - and we put the emergency response in motion. In addition to getting as much information from the caller as possible, our members identify the location of the emergency, dispatch help to that location, and provide the means for the responders to communicate with each other on the scene. APCO is the face of 911, and we have nearly 16,000 members in the U.S. and around the world.

Mr. Chairman, you and your colleagues are well aware that public safety and emergency communications capabilities are critical in our increasingly wireless world. Virtually everyday, we hear of yet another life being lost or put at greater risk because the location of a 911 call from a wireless phone could not be identified. As you know, E-911 technology provides the communications infrastructure to locate these calls.

We need this technology deployed as broadly and as quickly as possible. E-911 is a critical component of our public safety net when we are faced with fire, crimes in progress, medical emergencies, traffic accidents, and hundreds of other possible scenarios requiring an immediate emergency response. Unfortunately, in the post-September 11 world, these potential emergencies also include terrorist attacks on U.S. soil.

Full and effective deployment of E-911 is a multi-faceted undertaking, but today I want to focus your attention on one primary concern: the readiness of our 911 Centers. In the communications world, these centers are known as public safety answering points or PSAPs, and I will use that terminology here. I also want to briefly address the issues of spectrum availability and interoperability, which are critical to the overall communications needs of our nation's public safety personnel.

At the heart of PSAP readiness are two primary issues: PSAPs must be adequately funded, and PSAP personnel must be appropriately trained. Let me first address the matter of PSAP funding. In terms of any Federal appropriations for homeland security or emergency preparedness, I strongly urge Congress to recognize the essential role of emergency communications in protecting our citizens and our homeland. As the nation's first responders, APCO and its members ask that you clearly define the term "first responder" and that emergency communications professionals be included in this definition.

I would also like to address the current controversy regarding state funding. As you know, nearly 40 states have implemented a surcharge on cell phone customers to build a fund dedicated to deploying E-911. Given that most states and cities are currently facing severe budget deficits, this funding is crucial to PSAP readiness. These dollars are required for PSAPs to receive and process location information essential to identifying and locating wireless calls to 911. However, because not all states have enabling legislation that clearly specifies how these funds can be expended, a significant number of states have already diverted a total of nearly \$500 million from these funds and used it for other expenses.

In my home state of California, a proposal was introduced last month to transfer \$51 million from the State Emergency Telephone Number Account to pay for non-911 operations. This follows on the heels of a similar transfer of \$50 million last year. According to the Comptroller for the State of New York, \$162 million was shifted from their E-911 fund and used to pay for non-911 expenses. In a cruel juxtaposition, this news was discovered subsequent to learning of the tragic drowning of four high school boys in Long Island Sound. The boys made a cell phone call to 911 as their rowboat was sinking, but they could not be located because E-911 technology was not in place. I cannot emphasize this enough - these are life and death issues we are dealing with. By diverting funds intended for E-911 deployment, we prolong the implementation of this life-saving technology that many of our citizens, sometimes to great despair, assume is already in place.

On a positive note, I am proud to say that APCO is stepping up to help with PSAP funding. Last year APCO created the Public Safety Foundation of America (PSFA), a public-private partnership dedicated to saving lives by supporting and expediting the nationwide deployment of E-911. Funding for the PSFA is provided by a variety of sources, including donations from corporations, APCO chapters, and other organizations.

Two weeks ago, the PSFA announced its inaugural round of grants, awarding nearly \$2.4 million to 29 grantees in 20 states. Three more grant cycles are scheduled for this year. Recently, several of your Senate colleagues joined us in announcing the grant awards in their home states. I would like to thank Chairman Burns and Senator Dorgan for honoring the PSFA and its grantees by participating in grant announcements on February 20 in Montana and North Dakota, respectively. Although we realize these grants constitute just a small fraction of the total dollars needed to assure PSAP readiness, we at APCO and its foundation wanted to provide tangible support as well as technical advice toward the E-911 effort.

I am proud to say the PSFA is the only public safety communications organization to provide direct financial support to state and local public safety organizations. The PSFA is guided by a coalition of organizations with a shared commitment to public safety, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police; the International Association of Fire Chiefs; the National Association of Counties; the National Association of State EMS Directors; the National Emergency Number Association; the National Governors Association; and the National League of Cities.

The second issue critical to PSAP readiness is ensuring that our public safety communications personnel are adequately trained. Because the technology used by the PSAPs is constantly evolving and improving, training presents an ongoing challenge and expense to the PSAPs. This will be especially true in the next few years as the nation's wireless carriers introduce new technologies to meet the FCC rule of nationwide E-911 deployment by the close of 2005.

APCO has long been aware of the importance of training and, in 1988, established a nonprofit institute to provide affordable training and certification for fire, police and EMS dispatch professionals. The APCO Institute trains 10,000 individuals per year and remains the only not-for-profit educational institute that serves the needs of the public safety communications community. Still, funding for continuous training remains a challenge to most PSAPs.

APCO strongly believes that Federal funds should be made available for training of public safety communications personnel as a means of bolstering homeland security and general emergency preparedness. With the continuing threat of terrorist attacks involving the possible use of chemical or biological weapons, public safety in even the smallest communities has now become a national concern. Moreover, Federal assistance is especially important now to help mitigate any cutbacks in funding by state and local governments due to budget shortfalls.

In addition to PSAP readiness, I would also like to address briefly the need for additional spectrum and improved interoperability, two issues that are critically linked.

The lack of sufficient spectrum for public safety communications has led to dangerous congestion on existing channels. Homeland security efforts have increased the need for public safety communications capacity and capability, placing even greater demands on scarce public safety spectrum allocations. As a result, the ability of our public safety agencies to communicate with each other in emergency situations is severely limited.

As you are aware, resolution of the spectrum issue has been pending for many years now. In 1996, the joint FCC/NTIA Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee recommended that approximately 24 MHz of spectrum be allocated for public safety use within five years. In 1997, Congress mandated that the FCC so allocate this spectrum. Although the FCC did reallocate the spectrum from TV channels 63, 64, 68 and 69 for public safety, Congress' 1997 mandate permitted these television stations to remain on the air through 2006 - or until 85 percent of households in the relevant market have the ability to receive DTV signals, whichever is later. At this stage, it is highly unlikely that this 85 percent benchmark will be met until long after 2006 and probably not until well into the next decade. As a result, police, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety personnel must wait indefinitely for the additional radio spectrum and communications capabilities that, frankly, they needed yesterday. Therefore, we continue to urge that Congress revise existing law and establish December 31, 2006, as a firm date for the nationwide availability of this radio spectrum for public safety communications.

The lack of spectrum also has direct and significant impact on interoperability. Because of non-interoperable radio systems, public safety personnel frequently are unable to communicate with other responders in an emergency. In the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, emergency response personnel attempting to coordinate life-saving activities had to rely on hand signals and "runners" because their radios lacked effective interoperability. To varying degrees, similar difficulties were experienced on September 11 at the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Emergency crews

coming into New York from the surrounding areas found they could not communicate with emergency personnel already on the scene because of non-interoperable systems. New allocation of spectrum would allow agencies in the same geographic areas to utilize common or compatible radio frequency bands, permitting a more coordinated and therefore more effective emergency response.

Thank you again for the opportunity to join in this important dialogue on E-911 and related public safety communications issues. Once again, I commend Chairman Burns, Senator Hollings, Senator Inouye, and the Members of the Committee for raising the profile of these very important issues. APCO and its membership stand ready to work with Congress and all other stakeholders to address the challenges before us.

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CC: "Jane Duncan/Cumberland County (E-mail)" <duncan@c...

TO: Tom Ainsworth, Chairman, Portland Regional Task Force
FR: Peter J. Crichton, County Manager, Cumberland County Government
RE: Suggestions for Portland Regional Task Force
DT: February 2, 2004

On behalf of the Cumberland County Commissioners, I would like to begin by thanking you, the members of the Task Force, and Councilor Jim Cohen for the opportunity that I have been given to participate in your meetings and discussions during the past several months.

If City of Portland officials are serious about finding ways to reduce the cost of government to Portland taxpayers your work should be invaluable to this process. I believe your report will illustrate there are a number of ways this can be achieved. It shows that the future of this region can be filled with promise if we choose to make it so.

What I am suggesting here is not going to be accomplished overnight, or even in the immediate future. There are, however, certain opportunities that present some immediate benefits, such as the opportunity to have the City and the County working in collaboration to make human services funding more effective. Many people do not realize that the County's Human Services Advisory Committee makes an annual recommendation to the County Commissioners and the County's Budget Advisory Committee for annual grants to about 50 human service agencies adding up to approximately \$300,000 annually.

There are, quite literally, a number of choices that can be made whereupon the City of Portland and Cumberland County Government can work collaboratively to share the financial burden more equitably among the citizens of the Cumberland County region, and in certain instances help sustain the communities in this region. A partnership between the City of Portland and Cumberland County could include the following goals:

- improved delivery of public health and human services to the 266,000 residents of Cumberland County, including the 64,000 residents of Portland;
- regional emergency communications and dispatch through the Cumberland County Communications Center (the County currently provides E-911 services to 15 communities, as well as dispatch services to a number of communities);
- assistance by the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office to the City of Portland Police Department with traffic control and other support services;
- expansion of the County's supervisory training program for municipal and county supervisors through the Cumberland County Human Resources Office (a number of municipalities have participated in this program, including Westbrook, Cumberland and Falmouth);
- development of a regional training facility for fire fighters (on behalf of the communities of Cumberland County, county government could seek a federal grant);
- continued involvement of Cumberland County Government with annual funding for our regional hazmat/terrorism teams (this year the County is contributing \$220,000 for the teams);

- continued progress on the County's opportunity to become an 'entitlement or urban county', which means the County would be in a position to leverage \$2.3 million dollars of federal funds annually for eligible community development block grant projects, including affordable housing, and economic development;
- work with the City and the communities in the Cumberland County region to examine the opportunity of consolidating both the tax assessment and tax collection process under county government;
- and create a Cumberland County Library System without fear of communities relinquishing local control and input, through local library zones, to streamline procedures, and achieve more efficient allocation of personnel and financial resources.

As you can see, there are a number of choices that the City of Portland can make to provide much needed property tax relief for their taxpayers and, in some cases, improve or help expand government services to the citizens of Portland, as well as to the Cumberland County region. A 'City/County Partnership on Public Health and Human Services' is one example. This kind of partnership could be a major step forward in creating a more preventative and proactive public health system to achieve healthier communities and ease the increased demands on our medical and health care facilities in the Cumberland County region.

In closing, as someone once told me, "If you think you can, you can!" Fortunately, we are not captive to our present system of solving problems and making decisions. If the City of Portland and Cumberland County Government, together with the other communities of the Cumberland County region, want to make collaboration work we can achieve more effective and efficient government.

Kind regards.