

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

Key Findings

- The town has a history of regional cooperation with other communities to provide high quality municipal services and promote the health of the region.

As one of the founding members of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), the Town of Cape Elizabeth has enthusiastically embraced regional projects for decades. Cooperative agreements and infrastructure sharing are also common practice with the abutting municipalities, the City of South Portland and the Town of Scarborough. The state comprehensive plan rule requires the following elements in a regional coordination program:

Pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4326(4), a regional coordination program must be pursued with other communities (or LURC if the community abuts land under its jurisdiction) to manage shared resources and facilities, including but not limited to lakes, rivers, aquifers, and transportation facilities. The plan must identify any shared resources and facilities, describe any conflicts with neighboring communities' policies and strategies pertaining to shared resources and facilities and describe what approaches the community will take to coordinate management of shared resources and facilities. In addition, the plan must include a summary of regional coordination efforts from all applicable topic areas.

Summary of Regional Efforts

The following is a summary of regional coordination efforts which are discussed in more detail in the applicable plan chapter.

Economy

The town participates in the following regional economic development organizations: Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Bureau, Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation (GPEDC), the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG),

and Cumberland County Community Development Block Grant Municipal Oversight Committee.

The Business A District on Shore Rd is the only commercial zone abutting another municipality, in this case the City of South Portland. The Business A district is a neighborhood business district with uses and regulations intended to be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods. The neighborhoods abutting this district, both in Cape Elizabeth and South Portland, are very similar in character. The cooperation between Cape Elizabeth and South Portland in this area is exemplified in the renovation of 535 Shore Rd, a property and building located in both municipalities. Code enforcement staff from both municipalities jointly met to sort out the nonconforming status of the property in both communities and property has been renovated as office space with multi-family units on the second floor.

Transportation

The town is a member of the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). The town manager, public works director and town planner are members, respectively, of the policy committee, technical committee and planning committee, as well as adhoc PACTS committees such as the Destination 2040 Committee and the TIP (transportation investment program) committee. As a member of PACTS, the town works with member communities to distribute over 7 million dollars for regional transportation improvements every 2 years.

Public Facilities and Services

The Cape Elizabeth School department is a member of the Greater Sebago Education Alliance Regional Service Center, an interlocal agreement with Brunswick, Gorham, Scarborough, Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, RSU14, MSAD 6 and RSU 15. This regional association will facilitate increasing efficiencies and collaborative opportunities and increase state subsidies from \$46/student to \$96/student (estimated \$72,772.00 revenue increase). [PENDING VOTER APPROVAL NOVEMBER, 2018]

The school department is currently sharing a Director of School Nutrition with the Town of Scarborough School Department. [Cape Elizabeth High School \(CEHS\) is one of twelve regional schools which accesses the Portland Arts and Technology High School \(PATHS\). This association allows a growing number of Cape Elizabeth students to augment their curriculum with a variety of career and technical education. CEHS also offers three dual enrollment classes with Southern Maine Community College.](#)

There are also several high school sports and clubs which combine students from Cape Elizabeth, South Portland, and Portland into joint community teams, such as; girls crew, girls hockey, sailing, and Ultimate Frisbee. Bus transportation costs are shared with teams from other schools when possible.

For the past three years, CEHS and South Portland High School have conducted a career fair for all students in grade 10. TEDx events held at CEHS have also extended invitations to attend to neighboring schools.

The Cape Elizabeth and South Portland Public Works Directors cooperate with snow removal on dead end roads that begin in one community and end in another for efficiency and public safety. Cape Elizabeth is a founding member of ECOMaine, a regional solid waste to energy facility.

In July 2009, the town joined a consolidated dispatch system with the cities of Portland and South Portland. The town also shares an Animal Control Officer with the City of South Portland. The Police Department also participates as a member of the Regional Forensic Crime Lab.

The Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with nearby communities in the region. The town has also participated in ongoing discussions with the City of South Portland regarding options to merge the functions of the Willard Fire Station in South Portland and the Cape Cottage Fire Station in Cape Elizabeth. The town also supports the WETeam, a specialty team that handles water extrication and rock rescue calls for the region. Another example of regional cooperation using specialty teams is the Hazardous materials team which is hosted in South Portland.

The town's emergency management director, which is a part-time position, attends monthly Cumberland County Emergency Management Association meetings.

The Thomas Memorial Library program offerings include access to 10,000 ebooks and downloadable audiobooks through participation in a statewide consortia. The library also processed over 37,000 interlibrary loan items in 2017.

One of the most significant regional agreements is the town's contract with the City of South Portland to handle flows from the northern Cape Elizabeth wastewater system to the South Portland sewer treatment plant. The town contracts with the Portland Water District, a public utility, to manage the southern Cape Elizabeth sewer treatment plant and its public water hydrants.

When the town was designated a NPDES II community under federal regulations, it joined a dozen other communities to create the Interlocal storm-water working group (ISWG). ISWG partners with entities such as the Department of Environmental Protection, Casco Bay Estuary Project and the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District to develop and implement a 5-year storm-water management plan.

Natural Resources

Over one-third of the town land mass is estimated to be wetland. Out of necessity, Cape Elizabeth has been a leader in local resource protection regulation. The Spurwink Marsh extends westward from Cape Elizabeth into the town of Scarborough. The marsh creates a natural barrier that limits land use coordination with the town of Scarborough. Sawyer Rd crosses the marsh from Cape Elizabeth in the north to Scarborough in the south. Both communities are participating in a study of the hydraulics surrounding Sawyer Rd, which routinely floods.

The second largest marsh, Sawyer Marsh, is located along Cape Elizabeth's northern border with the City of South Portland. Cape Elizabeth's stringent wetland regulations were a consideration when the City of South Portland strengthened their wetland regulations and established a wetland mitigation fund. State mandatory shoreland zoning requirements have minimized any inconsistency in managing these resources, so there have not been any conflicts.

Winnick Woods is a 71 acre property located on Sawyer Rd which was donated to the town for open space preservation. The Winnick Woods master plan designates 15 acres on the northwest corner of the property as shrubland habitat. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) owns an abutting 10 acres and the town has partnered with USFWS to jointly manage the properties as habitat for the new england cottontail and other shrubland habitat species.

When the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) submitted new floodplain mapping, Cape Elizabeth joined Portland, South Portland and Falmouth to retain a consultant to do better quality modeling which was then submitted to FEMA. Most of that data has been incorporated into the FEMA maps now under final review.

Agriculture

Cape Elizabeth hosts 2 community gardens. Five plots are set aside to grow food for the Maine Harvest for Hunger program managed by the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension program.

Marine Resources

The town has partnered with the town of Scarborough to share a Harbormaster.

Water Resources

Trout Brook establishes a portion of the municipal boundary between Cape Elizabeth and South Portland. Both communities have partnered to create a management plan for Trout Brook in order to address its classification as an urban impaired stream.

Land Use

Except for the previously mentioned Business A District on Shore Rd, the entire boundary of Cape Elizabeth and South Portland is zoned residential. Cape Elizabeth regulations tend to require slightly less density and more open space. The portion of Cape Elizabeth bordering Scarborough is predominantly marsh, river, or remote undeveloped land with no history of land use policy conflicts.

Future Regional Coordination

Past practice has been for the town to seek out opportunities to partner with other communities when there is mutual benefit. As the needs of partners change, old arrangements are discontinued and new agreements are formed. For example, the town shared an assessor with Scarborough from 2015-2017. When the assessor became the Cape Elizabeth town manager, both communities decided that a shared position would no longer meet their needs. Within the year, a new partnership sharing a harbor master began.

These partnering opportunities are facilitated by town staff as part of ongoing communications with colleagues in other communities. This approach will continue. In addition, the town council, and other committees as appropriate, will direct staff to make inquiries and meet with other town councils as needed. It is reasonable to expect that regional delivery of services will increase.

Regional Coordination Goals

Goal 1: The town shall pursue regional coordination opportunities with other communities to manage shared resources and facilities, including but not limited to lakes, rivers, aquifers, and transportation facilities.

Recommendation:

89. Continue discussions with the City of South Portland regarding opportunities to share resources between the Cape Cottage Fire Station and the Willard Square Fire Station.
90. Take advantage of opportunities to partner with other communities to provide public services in an efficient, cost-effective and comprehensive manner.