



**10 Year Statewide Strategic Plan**  
**Supportive Infrastructure Strategy – Work Leads**  
**Friday, February 19**  
TEAMS Meeting

**Meeting Objectives:**

- Update Leads on proposed implementation process
- Determine if proposed process or alternative makes sense for this strategy area
- Determine who is missing from discussion, barriers, invites
- Determine any next steps

**Meeting Attendees:**

- Martha Bentley
- Jennifer Brickett
- Denise Lord
- Ana Hicks
- Erik Jorgensen
- Kelsey MacKinnon, DECD Staff

**Notes:**

**Item 1: Introductions**

- **Martha Bentley:** Director of Economic Development Coordination at DECD. Building out implementation structure for the 10-Year Strategic Plan and ERC Recommendations.
- **Ana Hicks:** Children’s Cabinet Coordinator.
- **Denise Lord:** Senior Director for Planning and Communications for MaineHousing.
- **Erik Jorgensen:** Director of Government Relations for MaineHousing.
- **Jennifer Brickett:** Director of Planning for Maine Department of Transportation.

**Item 2: Current Status of Strategic Plan Implementation**

- Strategic Plan was released in December 2019
- Steering Committee first met in March 2020, but focus shifted to COVID response
- Implementation was held until the ERC committee published their recommendations in November 2020
- Steering Committee met again in January 2021. Decided to expand the committee to serve 2 purposes:
  - Work group team who will lead the block and tackle implementation work
  - Private sector thought leadership to provide feedback and connect to work being done external to state gov’t
- Expanded Steering Committee met in February 2021
- Work groups are starting to meet and work on implementation

- We'll also be sending out Requests for Collaboration to help us identify collaborations already taking place in support of this work

### **Item 3: Review of 10-Year Plan and ERC Recommendations**

#### **Child Care:**

- **What work is already going on around these recommendations?**
  - Children's Cabinet's overarching goal is to ensure all Maine children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. A number of initiatives are in place to reach that goal:
    - Working to strengthen and support the Child Care Subsidy Program. Increased subsidies for infants and toddlers with a focus on quality.
    - CEI is working to expand child care businesses. Children's Cabinet will be supporting this work through startup grants.
  - Bigger system pieces in the ERC recommendations and 10-Year Plan are more challenging due to funding limitations
    - Workforce component (increasing wages for early child care/education providers through either direct supplements or a tax credit) is still outstanding. Taking some steps toward professional development and training, but wages are a big effort that still need to be addressed.
    - Universal pre-K was stalled due to the pandemic. Children's Cabinet is regrouping and trying to push it forward.
- **Are short-term innovative approaches being considered to tackle this work? Can the Strategic Plan implementation team help support these innovative approaches?**
  - Biggest innovation is community partnerships and how we support them
    - e.g., partnerships between Head Start and public schools, child care and public schools, state and local gov't
  - Some innovations might conflict with Children's Cabinet goals
    - e.g., pandemic-related regulation changes that allow for a higher number of kids per adult in home-based care can conflict with Children's Cabinet goals around quality and safety. There's concern over extending these changes beyond the pandemic.
    - The Strategic Plan group can play a role in figuring out how to balance the ability to try new approaches without losing a level of quality
- **Does the Children's Cabinet have the structure/support needed to move forward with implementation, or are there are people/organizations who should be pulled in?**
  - Business voice would be helpful to include. Are there opportunities for businesses to elevate these issues and provide more support for child care?
  - CEI – Keith and Cynthia's continued involvement is also important

#### **Housing:**

- **What work is already going on around these recommendations?**
  - Maine enacted a State Housing Tax Credit – new resource/tool to increase production of affordable multifamily housing developments
  - Increased the production of multifamily housing units (328 units in 2020. Goal of 1000 units in 2021.)
  - We're seeing an increase in market rate multifamily units (when we develop a multifamily project, more often some of those units are being reserved for market rates – so we can mix the income in those developments a bit more going forward)
  - Also doing more in the single family arena – income limits are a little higher, so we can address a wider population

- Over 73% of Mainers live in single family homes
    - Maine’s Single Family Loan Program (for first-time homebuyers) is able to reach a more moderate-income segment of the population
  - MaineHousing is working more with alternative home developers, such as coops and land trusts
  - Subdivision program has increased in the past couple of years, providing more opportunities for single family construction. A certain number of homes are set aside for first-time homebuyers as part of the program, so more workforce-category income level
  - Exploring innovative approaches to develop low cost, high density single family housing
- **What innovative approaches are being taken?**
    - Relationship with University of Maine – pilot for 3D printing using composite lumber
      - Will reduce construction costs
      - Pilot will be for smaller homes for the homeless population. Depending on the pilot’s efficacy, it could be offered more widely.
    - Community Solutions program launched 2 years ago to support municipally based solutions
      - Grant to Biddeford to look at smaller rental properties that can be repaired, brought up to standard, and hopefully sold to entry-level workers in the community
      - Grant to Sanford – Sanford public housing authority is looking to develop properties held in their land trust
    - Tree Street Neighborhoods in Lewiston – MaineHousing supported application for full funding out of Choice Neighborhood program. Will continue supporting their efforts.
  - **Are there are people/organizations who should be pulled in?**
    - MaineHousing’s mission doesn’t clearly support workforce housing development. Bringing in other partners for this area might be helpful:
      - CDFIs (CEI or Genesis Community Loan Fund)
      - Bankers Association, Realtors Association (private sector partners)
    - MaineHousing can convene and facilitate
    - MaineHousing has also worked with Build Maine – will look at its proposed landbank legislation when a copy comes out
      - Speaker Fecteau also has a bill that will recommend a planning group to look at land use regulations
      - Strategic Plan implementation team will be tracking legislation that connects to the plan

**Transit/Public Transportation:**

- **What work is already going on around these recommendations?**
  - 10-Year Plan says Maine spends 86 cents/person annually for public transportation. MDOT reevaluated this number, realizing it didn’t include spending on ferries and passenger rail. Actual number is closer to \$5/person.
  - Funding remains a challenge, exacerbated by the pandemic. Remain reliant on federal funding/federal discretionary grants and bonding.
  - MDOT developed public transportation plan in 2015. Revisiting the vision and recommendations in that plan.
    - As part of this work, MDOT is working with UMaine, who is researching transportation models in other states with similar population disbursements and climate as Maine.
  - GPCOG is finishing their Transit Tomorrow public transportation vision. Kittery MPO and Lewiston-Auburn MPO also have their own urban public transportation plans.
  - MDOT looks at everything but is more focused on rural areas
  - MDOT has always worked in partnership with MTA on the GoMaine program. In July, MDOT will be taking more of a leadership position for the program.
    - Plan to expand the program in 2022

- Looking at models of commuter programs in other states to figure out what a more expansive model would look like in Maine
  - Also need to consider the freight movement component – really important for economic development; MDOT is doing a lot in this area
    - ERC included recommendations around funding roads, bridges, and basic infrastructure.
- **What innovative approaches are being taken?**
  - Creating a village partnership initiative – leveraging local support to invest in transportation solutions to revitalize villages and downtown areas across Maine, with the goal of supporting local economies and attracting former/new residents to the state
- **Are there are people/organizations who should be pulled in?**
  - Jennifer will think about who might be a good fit to continue to provide support here. Will reconnect with Martha.

**Discussion:**

- **How do people learn about these programs? Are they oversubscribed or undersubscribed?**
  - **MDOT:** Planning Partnership initiative is oversubscribed every year. Regional partners at MDOT liaise with municipalities to make sure they're aware of the opportunities. Will use this regional planning network for the village partnership initiative.
  - **MaineHousing:** Community Solutions is a pilot, so not marketed yet but it's available as communities come forward.
- **Thinking around public-private funding partnerships – could private philanthropy be utilized as a funding source?**
  - **MaineHousing:** Working in conjunction with a housing foundation/trust on Peaks Island for a Portland grant. Private philanthropy is definitely welcome.
  - This broader group could be useful for identifying new funding streams/innovative financing for projects.

**Item 4: Next Steps**

- All leads on this work group will attend the next Steering Committee meetings, rather than having Jennifer report out for the entire group
- Martha and Kelsey will be building a comprehensive document around progress being made that can be shared broadly. Please share any additional details around the current work being done.