**Midcoast Economic Development Steering Committee**

Meeting Summary

January 3, 2024

8:30am-10:00am

1. Attendance. The meeting had a quorum of four members present including Julie Hashem (Rockland), Sally Costello (Brunswick), Jay McCreight (Harpswell), and Jen Merritt (Waldoboro). For the Midcoast Council of Governments, Mathew Eddy, Charlotte Nutt, and Max Johnstone were in attendance.
2. Introductions

* Charlotte presented updated story maps based on previous comments with a desire to focus on all maps except the Housing Gaps maps, which have been polished and received positive feedback from MaineHousing. Sally has been sharing the story maps and has also heard positive feedback.
* Charlotte presented maps and data regarding the high levels of elderly population, the racial/ethnic makeup, and high percentages of single parent households.
* Charlotte presented maps and data showing the projected growth via Labor Market Area with a comparison to show the municipal breakdowns. The maps also included migration maps that showed the counties in the United States people were coming from and going to.
* There were also maps showing changes in education and access to child care.
* Charlotte wanted to frame the maps in a way to have viewers draw their own conclusions. For example, the migration maps showing the high number of people leaving the coastal counties in the United States may be moving due to climate-related matters; whereas residents may leave certain counties in the Midcoast due to increased cost of living or lack of amenities such as available child care.

1. Notes/Suggestions for Story Maps
   * Charlotte did not have information for Brunswick and Harpswell since they were lumped together with Cumberland County; however, she would see what data can be gathered through American Community Survey.
   * Charlotte will gather the nationwide trends of elderly residents living alone to compare with the Maine and Midcoast data.
   * Julie and Sally asked for legends and important description items to be a different color or highlight to help new users to easily use the maps.
   * Sally asked that the migration map narrative be reorganized to have the final paragraphs at the top of the story map section to have the conclusion statements easier to find.
   * Julie asked that a reference map is included below the titles to help reference each of the municipalities so viewers can connect them to the data of each story map. Charlotte said she would try to find a way to include it in some dead space but wants to avoid clutter.
   * Julie asked that the school enrollment map is broken down by school district; however, Charlotte said that information may be difficult to integrate.
   * Sally asked that the childcare map change the dark purple to something that stands out.
2. Webpage/Public Outreach
   * Charlotte went over the draft changes to the website.
   * The Economic Development tab and pages are being redone to be easier to understand for people not familiar with MCOG nor the CEDS process.
   * Charlotte noted that there is a tab that is going to have all story maps and data that are created; however, the Economic Development pages will have links that take people to the specific maps and data.
   * Mat wants to start doing press releases since MCOG is starting to gain attention with the work being done. Members of the Committee wanted the press releases done describing the work but not advertising upcoming meetings since there was concern that the Advisory Committee would not be as open if members of the press were in attendance.
   * Jay emphasized the importance of public engagement with the Advisory Committee since they are made up of diverse representatives of the region.
   * Sally and Julie voiced their issues with using SWOT analysis for future public participation meetings; however, Mat noted that the process is required under EDA.
   * Julie suggested starting meetings with a brief overview of the outlined goals from the previous meeting, and ending meetings with the outlined goals that would be achieved by the next meeting.
3. Next Meeting Goals
   * **Story Maps:** Charlotte will update the story maps based on feednack given by the Committee, with the hope they will be complete and ready for presenting to the Advisory Committee.
   * **Advisory Committee:** Mat and MCOG staff will begin to prepare the agenda and facilitation of the Advisory Committee on January 31, 2024 from 9am-11am. The materials will be sent out the Friday prior to this meeting.
   * **Scheduling:** In addition to the January 31, 2024 meeting, Mat is coordinating the future Advisory Committee meetings. The upcoming January meeting will be at the Midcoast Maine Community Action Program office in Bath, Maine; one meeting is considered to be in the Rockland City Chambers; finally, the third meeting is yet to be determined.
   * **Next Steering Committee Meeting:** Mat will send out a draft Advisory Committee agenda and facilitation plan on January 12, 2024. The Steering Committee will go over all materials during their next meeting on January 17, 2024.