

**East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 10, 2019
Location: Weston Town Office**

Meeting Objectives

- Finalize asset mapping requirements and data gathering design with communities.
- Finalize project design and timeline.
- Identify project related opportunities and challenges for continued discussion.
- Set Steering Committee meeting calendar through April 2020.

Agenda

3:00 Review/revise agenda

3:05 Review/affirm project basics

- Affirm project goals
 1. Improve the quality of life for the people who live, work and visit the twelve communities in the region.
 2. Capitalize on regional momentum and investments that have been made over the past five years.
 3. Prepare a regional economic feasibility study to guide short and long term priorities and investments.
 4. Develop a collective “voice” for the region to influence state and regional initiatives that can impact quality of life and economic stability.
- Affirm sub-region map boundaries and participating communities
- Affirm deliverables and target completion date
- Update on project funding plan (Elbridge)

3:20 Discuss and finalize project design.

- Review asset mapping outline and components, work to date, need for GIS mapping
- Identify timing window for community meetings to complete asset mapping
- Identify any other community events to incorporate into project design and calendar.
 - Ex: 200th Maine celebration – March 2020
- Identify project communications priorities for communities/stakeholders.
- Set 2019-2020 calendar
- Identify date for February retreat to review project findings/proposals.

4:00 Review Steering Committee role and project responsibilities

- Membership
- Group agreements
- Project responsibilities

4:15 Identify/discuss project-related opportunities/challenges to monitor.

- School consolidation (Peggy/Dwayne)
- Forest City Dam/Fisheries (Elbridge)
- Others?

4:45 Closing Comments/Insights/Concerns

5:00 Adjourn

East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project
Project Design – DRAFT ONLY
Submitted by Sarah Strickland - October 7, 2019

Based on the work to date by Steering Committee members, and the seasonal calendar, I recommend a three-phase approach to complete a written regional economic feasibility study for the East Grand Region. Please see the Scope of Work attachment for added information.

Phase 1: October – January 2020

Consultant Deliverables:

1. Complete locally-based introductory and/or asset mapping meetings with xx communities.
2. Compile all asset mapping and SWOT information into a user-friendly summary report and database for the Steering Committee.
3. Work with UMM/Tora Johnson on GIS mapping as needed.
4. Assist in completing selected grant applications to fund the project.

Steering Committee Responsibilities

1. Be available to advise Sarah as needed.
2. Provide key contacts in each community to arrange an asset mapping meeting.
3. Attend at least one asset mapping community meeting with Sarah.
4. Attend Steering Committee meetings as scheduled.

Phase 2: February

Consultant Deliverables

1. Hold a 1 day Steering Committee retreat with other invited community members to identify short and long-term economic development goals from the collected data.
2. Prepare first draft of plan for review by the Steering Committee.
3. Prepare the second draft for review by the community at large.

Steering Committee Responsibilities

1. Attend a 1 day retreat in February to review data, and identify feasibility plan goals/priorities.
2. Provide the time to review and comment on the draft plans.
3. Approve a draft to be used in the next round of community conversations.

Phase 3: March – May

Consultant Deliverables

1. Hold 3-4 community conversations across the region to present the draft plan and gather input and feedback.
2. Work with Steering Committee and determine the best sustainability and collaboration strategies to implement and fund the plan over for the next five years.
3. Meet with selected community and funding stakeholders/partners for feedback and buy-in.
4. Prepare a final document for distribution to all stakeholders and funders.

Steering Committee Responsibilities

1. Attend Steering Committee meetings as scheduled.
2. Participate in community conversations.
3. Meet with key community and funding stakeholders/partners for feedback and buy-in.
4. Review, comment and approve the final plan.

October 7, 2019

To: Elbridge Cleaves and Project Steering Committee

From: Sarah Strickland, Consultant

Re: East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project (EGREPP)

Greetings all –

Attached is a letter of agreement for my project management services for the East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project. To date, I have provided 18 hours of project related services and traveled several times to Danforth.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this project!

Sarah Strickland

Agreement for Project Management Consultation Services

This Agreement is made this day, October 15, 2019, between Sarah Strickland, a Maine resident d/b/a Strategic Wisdom Partners, with a mailing address of PO Box 34, Robbinston, ME 04671 (“Consultant”) and Citizens Organization for Rural Education with a mailing address of PO Box 252, Danforth, ME 04424 (“CORE”). CORE hereby agrees to hire the Consultants to perform the following Scope of Services in support of the East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project (EGREPP).

1. Scope of Services:

- Provide guidance to EGREPP Steering Committee regarding the design and execution of the planning process;
- Work with the EGREPP Steering Committee and other key stakeholders to develop an economic development feasibility plan by May 1, 2020. While the final content of the plan will be determined by the planning process, the parties expect that the plan will include asset mapping data, SWOT data, 10-year goals, and strategies to guide the region for a five year period. The plan will likely also address initiative sustainability, governance, funding, and local partner capacity issues.
- Work with EGREPP Steering Committee to identify and prioritize the projects necessary to realize the goals and strategies identified in the feasibility plan. An evaluation plan and project related metrics will be included.
- Attachment A outlines a draft project design and additional information about roles and responsibilities.

2. Term

This Agreement shall be effective October 15, 2019 and end on May 31, 2020, unless terminated earlier. Either party may terminate this Agreement with or without cause, by giving written notice to the other party at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of termination.

3. Finances

Costs and Billing

The total fee for this project is \$20,000. The first invoice for \$5000 will be billed in October when this agreement is signed. Billing will then be monthly from December through April, and a final invoice in May 2020. Mileage, lodging and meals associated with on-site work will be billed in addition to fees.

CORE agrees to pay Consultants in a timely manner upon submittal of invoices; payments shall be made individually on or about the dates outlined below.

- 1st payment, October 15, 2019 - \$5,000.00
- 2nd payment, December 15, 2019 - \$2,000.00 + travel expenses
- 3rd payment, January 15, 2020 - \$2,000.00 + travel expenses
- 4th payment, February 15, 2020 - \$2,000.00 + travel expenses
- 5th payment, March 15, 2020 - \$2,000.00 + travel expenses
- 6th payment, April 15, 2020 - \$2,000.00 + travel expenses
- 7th payment, May 15, 2020 - \$5,000 +travel expenses

In the event, that this agreement is terminated during the term of this agreement pursuant to section two, final payment shall be made within 15 days of the date of termination; such payment shall be prorated based upon number of days since the most recent payment.

Additional assistance may be requested from time to time to augment the Consultant's responsibilities or provide a service that the Consultant is not equipped to provide. Any proposal for the services will be approved in advance by the Steering Committee's representative.

4. Confidentiality

CORE and the Consultant agree not to disclose any financial, personnel, procedural, or funding information concerning their operations disclosed pursuant this agreement to any third party without express written permission of the subject party. Furthermore, Consultant agrees to not disclose any financial, personnel, procedural, or funding information concerning the operations of any partner organization disclosed pursuant this agreement to any third party without express written permission of the subject party. This obligation to maintain confidentiality shall continue after the termination of this agreement.

The parties hereby agree to the terms of this agreement this 15th day of October, 2019.

Elbridge Cleaves
Citizens Organization for Rural Education



Sarah Strickland
Strategic Wisdom Partners

GREATER EAST GRAND REGION ECONOMIC PLANNING PROJECT

PROJECT MANAGER - Scope of Work

DRAFT DATED: June 14, 2019

Revised June 30, 2019

Revised October 7, 2019

Greater East Grand Region's Long-term Goals

1. Improve the quality of life for the people who live, work and visit the twelve communities in the region.
2. Capitalize on regional momentum and investments that have been made over the past five years.
3. Prepare a regional economic feasibility study to guide short and long term priorities and investments.
4. Develop a collective "voice" for the region to influence state and regional initiatives that can impact quality of life and economic stability.

Phase 1: Project Deliverables

1. Prepare a written regional economic feasibility study that:
 - Utilizes, where appropriate, product and progress from 2019 regional planning efforts prior to execution of contract.
 - Completes comprehensive asset mapping with all key stakeholders and communities in the region;
 - Identifies the major goals and strategies for economic development in the region;
 - Identifies priority projects and required investment.
2. Identify how to build and maintain the organizational capacity to sustain the initiatives.
3. Identify funding strategies for both short and long-term projects.
4. Prepare the final study document for dissemination and presentation to key stakeholders.

Project Manager Responsibilities with the Project Steering Committee

- Utilize a variety of strategies to organize teams, engage stakeholders and involve planning agencies and resources while working closely with the Steering Committee.
- Monitor project status and modify schedules or plans as required.
- Assemble and perfect any useful existing planning materials (developed prior to the start of the contract) in anticipation of assimilation with other materials into the final plan or plans.
- Conduct and co-ordinate an asset mapping process to include interviews and/or surveys of key people and organizations to ensure accurate assessments of assets, gaps and potential solutions.
- Direct and coordinate activities and to use project resources to ensure project progresses on schedule and within budget.
- Prepare and report project status updates.
- Seek ways to utilize the planning effort to help develop local capacity in order to carry on economic development efforts post contract.
- When and if necessary, the project manager will strive to identify and resolve any issues in order to keep the project on track.
- To organize, develop and present material in the final plan (s) to include both written and map-based material. Potentially utilize google earth as a mapping platform in order to expedite current and future public access to map-based material.
- Final report writing, drafting review and dissemination with nexus to economic development

General Steering Committee member role in the overall project

- Provide input to the overall project design.
- Develop agendas and facilitate meetings in which the consultants are not involved.
- Co-develop and participate in:
 - Asset mapping information
 - SWOT information
 - Interviews or meetings with communities and stakeholders
 - Internal data-gathering
- Duplication and distribution of all materials, reports and publications for meetings.
- Provide summaries of findings from interviews and meetings conducted by committee members
- Develop a personal “briefing book” of data gathered and provide analyses and findings reports for reference as requested.
- Collaboratively with the consultants, develop initial and final drafts of the narrative feasibility plan.
- Develop financial projections to support the feasibility plan.
- Present the final plan for stakeholder/community approval.

Work Environment

Work will primarily consist of meetings and interviews within the region with primary office space at home. Temporary office space during the day may be provided at no cost at one of the local town offices.

Position Type / Expected Hours of Work

Part time - estimate 40% of contractor time over six to eight months.

Travel

Travel is expected to consist of travel from Robbinston to the region and within the region to area towns for interviews and meetings.

Supervisory Responsibility

This position has no supervision responsibilities.

Independent Contractor et al

It is anticipated the project manager as envisioned for the above will be executing an independent contractor agreement with Sunrise County Economic Council and/or CORE and as such will address all aspects of insurance, State and Federal income tax and withholding liabilities.

Project Budget

Professional Services	\$20,000
Avg 25 hours per month for 8 months	
Travel and other expenses	\$ 5,000
Office Expenses/Video Conferencing	\$ 2,500
Communications and reporting	<u>\$ 2,500</u>
Total	\$30,000

Southern Aroostook school merger receives state's endorsement

[Joseph Cyr](#) • September 17, 2019

HOULTON, Maine — Could a regional high school for students in Houlton, Hodgdon, Southern Aroostook, East Grand and Region II become a reality?

The state's Department of Education is hoping so as it recently notified superintendents from RSU 29 (Houlton), SAD 70 (Hodgdon), RSU 50 (Southern Aroostook) and SAD 14 (East Grand), as well as the Region II Career and Technical Education Center that their consolidation project has been approved to receive up to \$120 million in state funds.

It marks the second regional high school project to receive state funding for consolidation. In 2018, the state [approved a regional high school project](#) that will merge Fort Kent Community High School, Madawaska and Wisdom High schools, setting aside up to \$100 million for a new St. John Valley educational facility that would replace three high schools and serve students from Grand Isle to Allagash.

RSU 29 Superintendent Ellen Halliday notified her board of the state's decision during a Sept. 9 meeting.

"There will be many next steps," Halliday said. "We are still working to learn what they all are, but certainly sharing this news and what it will mean for our students and communities is on the forefront."

Back in 2017, the five schools agreed to submit a proposal for a regional high school system. The southern Aroostook conglomerate also featured pieces with the University of Maine at Presque Isle and Northern Maine Community College for post-secondary education.

The intent of the state's pilot project is to encourage neighboring school districts with declining enrollments and increasing expenses to work together to combine resources and save costs.

"The school would have the CTE (Region II) program integrated into the school, so kids would not have to go to a different place," Halliday said. "We can build pathways of learning that go with the academics we have as well as the CTE programs. The opportunities for our students is just outstanding."

The RSU 50 board also discussed the announcement during their meeting on Monday, Sept. 9,, according to Superintendent Jon Porter.

"The RSU 50 board has a lot of questions with the overarching question of how the regional high school may impact the education of RSU 50 students," he said. "It is not every day the opportunity to have funding from the state to build a new regional high school happens. We need to examine this opportunity given to this region and determine if it is the right fit for our students and our school community."

According to Halliday, no school board votes are necessary for the project to move forward. However, if one of the districts decides it wishes to pull out of the merger, they may do so with a vote by their board.

A stipulation in the grant states that if any one of the districts withdraws from the project, the grant is nullified and would require an entirely new application.

“We will work on a committee that will make some school visits to schools that have integrated high school and career and technical education (CTE),” Halliday said. “We will be working to determine the structure of this new regional high school. There will be the formation of cross district committee to look at all aspects of what must be done.”

The project is not without hurdles. Determining where the new high school would be located will be one of the biggest sticking points, as residents in the Madawaska-Fort Kent-Wisdom consortium are finding out. That project has yet to agree on where their Valley Unified School will be located.

The southern Aroostook project would be even larger than the Valley Unified project, with more students involved.

The group has until calendar year 2022 to get through the site selection process, vote on concept approval and conduct a final referendum for the project.

“It’s not often you have the state saying they will give you the money to build a school like this,” Halliday said. “We would never have the opportunity on our own to come up with a state of the art high school with new equipment for a CTE program without this grant.”