Abbie Sherwin, SMPDC Coastal Planner, wins New England wide Planning Award!

Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission (SMPDC) is pleased to announce that Abbie Sherwin, Coastal Planner with SMPDC, was awarded the 2018 Project of the Year award by the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA). Ms. Sherwin received the award for her work developing the Maine Flood Resilience Checklist (the Checklist) and working with Maine communities to understand and prepare for coastal flood hazards and sea level rise.

The Checklist, which Ms. Sherwin developed during her two-year tenure as a NOAA Coastal Management Fellow with the Maine Coastal Program, is a practical assessment framework and process for communities to enhance their understanding of coastal flooding and sea level rise impacts, assess local vulnerabilities, and identify specific opportunities and strategies to enhance their resilience. It provides communities with resources and recommendations for coastal adaptation planning as well as measures they can undertake to reduce flood insurance costs for policyholders through the Community Rating System, a federal flood risk reduction program administered by FEMA. Communities complete the Checklist by participating in a facilitated discussion process during which municipal officials, staff, and pertinent stakeholders examine local flood hazards, work through a series of questions to assess community-wide resilience, and identify locally appropriate strategies for reducing vulnerabilities and planning for sea level rise.

Implemented in several communities, the Checklist is assisting Maine’s coastal municipalities undertake tangible actions to prepare for intensifying coastal hazards. The Checklist has proven to be a vital tool in helping communities understand and act upon their vulnerabilities and is helping to substantially advance coastal resilience and sea level rise planning in Maine.

SMPDC Finalizes Dredge Purchase Feasibility Study

SMPDC and the Woods Hole Group recently completed a study: Examining the Feasibility of Purchasing and Operating Hydraulic Dredging Equipment in Southern Maine. The project was supported by a grant from the Maine Coastal Program and NOAA.
Long delays in getting Federal navigation projects completed led a number of southern Maine communities to examine a model for dredging based on Barnstable County, Mass. There, the county on behalf of all Cape Cod towns jointly purchased a dredge 25 years ago. Over that period of time, the dredge has saved communities hundreds of thousands of dollars in dredging costs and also has enabled dredging to occur on a more timely basis. This is critical for tourism and protection of beach fronts as almost all of the materials are used to nourish beach areas.

SMPDC hired the Woods Hole Group out of Falmouth, Ma. to see if such an idea was feasible for southern Maine. Ten southern Maine communities participated in the study which looked at historical dredge amounts, future dredging needs, the capital and operating costs of purchasing and maintaining a dredge for the region and finally a financial feasibility analysis.

The bottom line is that the concept has some real potential value, but the limited scope of the project highlighted additional research needs. More data is needed related to the amount of sand materials that might be dredged and reutilized within southern Maine navigable rivers and harbors. Some areas need to be dredged almost yearly (such as Wells Harbor). Other areas (such as York Harbor) not as often. The costs of maintenance and the availability of funding would also need to be more fully developed. Both SMPDC and the participating communities have outlined some next steps to consider which will include: more data gathering on sediment types along the coast; exploring options for use of a dredge with additional regions (or even New Hampshire); possibly looking at an interim step such as contracting for services over a 5-10 year period; and examining all funding options for both purchase and lease.

The report has a wealth of information about dredging and opportunities along the coast. It is available on the SMPDC website. To view the report click [here](#).

**Upcoming Workshop**

Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) is partnering with Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP) and the Wells Reserve to host a workshop geared toward the role of Conservation Commissions in the Planning Board plan review process. During the hands-on workshop, participants will learn how to review development plans with a focus on Conservation Commission goals and priorities, important environmental considerations for development projects, and approaches for interacting with the Planning Board during the plan review process. SMPDC will provide examples of how local communities involve Conservation Commissions in the review process as well as lead a hands-on exercise reviewing development plans.

The workshop is being held at the Wells Reserve on Thursday, November 8th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. To register for the event, please email Abigail Lyon of PREP at Abigail.Lyon@unh.edu.

**A note from Lee Jay Feldman, Director of Land Use Planning:**

Requests for assisting communities with Planning related issues continues to be a very busy discipline for SMPDC, whether it is ordinance work, comprehensive planning assistance or planning board review and meeting assistance. We have enough work right now that it is taking 3 and a half
of us to provide that assistance. We are grateful to all of our communities that request this assistance, and for the communities who have not needed us, we are always available and ready to serve you.

In the future you will see more of Eric Sanderson and Abbie Sherwin. They have been spreading their wings and starting to assist towns on their own. Both Paul and I are always behind them offering advice and technical information as they seek it.

This has been really helpful to me as I get a little reprieve from all of the night meetings, (although I do enjoy seeing you planning board members) but some of my responsibilities are changing as demands and needs change. The Town of Kennebunk has requested 20 hours a week of my time for the next 6 months. I will be working on some issues within their planning department. Much of my time will be spent either in the Kennebunk Town Hall office or working on tasks for them back at SMPDC. Clearly, I will not be disappearing and will make guest appearances at planning board meetings as our project load continues to shift. Once this stint is over, as Arnold Schwarzenegger once said, I’ll be back!

Economic Development

SMPDC's EDA Revolving Loan Fund

On September 19, 2018, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission was visited by Kia Booker of the Economic Development Administration’s Philadelphia Regional Office. Ms. Booker came to Maine to meet with several of EDA’s Revolving Loan Fund grant recipients. Staff had a great meeting with Kia and are grateful for her thoughtful suggestions for improvements to SMPDC’s EDA funded RLF. As part of the visit, Kia met with Kate Nelligan Design, one of SMPDC’s borrowers. This growing firm has received two loans from SMPDC and has created jobs while expanding their operations. SMPDC received $500,000 from EDA’s RLF grant program in 2014 with $600,000 in matching funds provided by the Southern Maine Finance Association. All of the funds have currently been lent to borrowers (approximately 10 loans throughout the region) and the funds are currently being revolved into new loans. If you know of a project in your community that is seeking loan funds please do not hesitate to call, or have the business call, either Chuck Morgan at 571-7065 or Will Armitage at 282-1748.

Transportation

Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations Annual Meeting

Tom Reinauer, SMPDC’s Transportation Director, recently presented at the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) annual meeting in San Antonio Texas. Tom’s presentation focused on the Traffic Incident Management (TIM) efforts in Maine, and specifically the Maine – New Hampshire TIM Committee. Joining Tom during the conference session were staff from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the North Central Texas Council of Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco area. All of the presenters highlighted their successes with their TIM committees, and also reasons why other MPOs around the country should
Upcoming Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Course

SMPDC is involved in organizing and helping to teach the 4-hour TIM Training Course, with the next class taking place on Friday, October 26th. The training will be held at the Cumberland Fire Station from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tom Reinauer helps teach the course, and will be joined by Lt. Bruce Scott from the Maine State Police, Kyle Chandler from Chandler’s Automotive and Towing in Sanford and Deputy Chief Tony Attardo from the Scarborough Fire Department. An information flyer for the class can be seen [here](#), or contact Tom Reinauer for more information.

Newest Addition to SMPDC

We are happy to announce that we have hired Kelsey Pelton as the Community Planner / Outreach Specialist. Kelsey was an intern for SMPDC last summer before returning to Vermont to finish her senior year of college. Kelsey will be taking on many projects regarding public relations, transportation, planning and much more! We are excited to welcome Kelsey back to the team.