



Regional Coordinator Needs Assessment

Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission
October 2025



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Introduction

As part of the State of Maine's [Resilience Maine NOAA Regional Challenge Grant](#), Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) received funding to serve as a Regional Coordinator for the [Community Resilience Partnership \(CRP\)](#). This funding was provided to all the regional planning organizations in the state to assist communities enrolled in the CRP with their priority community resilience actions. **In its role as a regional coordinator, SMPDC provides project development assistance, help with pursuing funding opportunities, community engagement support, grant technical assistance, and grant administration support.** This regional coordinator role began in 2024 and is funded through 2029.

SMPDC conducted this needs assessment to inform its regional coordinator work plan for 2026 and the remaining years of the program. The purpose of the needs assessment is to ensure that SMPDC is providing the best support possible to the communities enrolled in the CRP in its region. The objectives of this needs assessment are to:

1. Determine whether SMPDC's time and effort spent on regional coordinator tasks aligns with the greatest needs of enrolled communities.
2. Identify activities SMPDC is not currently doing that are needed by the communities enrolled in the CRP and that fit within the regional coordinator scope of work.
3. Better understand sub-regional differences in community priorities and needs.
4. Provide feedback to the CRP on the experience of communities participating in the program.

Protocol

This needs assessment was conducted using a hybrid interview and survey format. The step-by-step protocol is documented in [Appendix A](#).

SMPDC reached out to 20 enrolled communities and asked them to participate through either a semi-structured interview or online survey. As our initial point of contact, we reached out to the existing CRP contact person for each town, usually the Town Planner, Town Manager, or Code Enforcement Officer. Nine interviews were conducted with staff and committee members from nine enrolled communities. During these interviews we primarily spoke with Town Planners, Town Managers, and Select Board members or Chairs. Two towns provided online survey responses prepared by town staff. Nine towns did not respond to requests for their participation. SMPDC also reached out to the 19 communities in the SMPDC region that are not enrolled in the CRP. However, these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful and no surveys or interviews were completed with unenrolled communities.

The interviews and survey consisted of eight questions divided into three categories:

1. Resilience Priorities and Challenges
2. Trainings and Resources
3. Collaboration and Engagement

The questionnaire that guided the interviews is presented in [Appendix B](#). SMPDC staff took notes during the interviews and shared the notes with the interviewee for review. The responses from each community were collated in a master assessment spreadsheet, which was analyzed to identify common priorities, interests, and needs.

To supplement the interview and survey findings, SMPDC also developed a follow-up survey to assess how the priorities and needs identified through the interviews and survey responses compare with those observed in other parts of the [Southern & Midcoast Resilience Coordinator Collaborative \(SMRCC\)](#)

region. The survey was distributed to 16 individuals, including all SMRCC Regional Coordinators. Four responses were received from SMRCC Regional Coordinators who, combined, serve all counties in the SMRCC region.

The follow-up survey was organized into two sections: Future Priorities, and Supports and Asks. Future Priorities categories included Energy Use and Efficiency, Roadway Infrastructure, Local Food and Land Use, Emergency Management, Waste Management, and Transportation Planning. Supports and Asks included Community Engagement and Capacity, Funding and Technical Assistance, Trainings and Resources, Collaboration and Engagement, and Information Sharing and Formats. Each item was drawn from the initial interview and survey findings and presented in summarized form under its respective category. Respondents were asked to select *agree*, *disagree*, *neither*, or *not applicable* in response to whether each item is a priority need for the community.

The results of the follow-up survey can be found in the *How our findings compare to the larger SMRCC region* section of this needs assessment.

Findings

The needs assessment findings are based on the collective interview and survey responses of all participating communities. Community-specific results are summarized in the master assessment matrix, [Appendix C](#). Some additional information known to SMPDC through its regional coordinator work is also included to provide context to the assessment results.

Most of the communities interviewed directly by SMPDC (82%) had populations greater than 4,000, even though 53% of all communities in the SMPDC region fall at or below that threshold. As such, the needs reflected in these findings may be more representative of larger or more resourced municipalities (4,000 - 22,500 population).

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Regional Priorities & Challenges

Completed, Ongoing, and Planned Projects

The first three questions in the interview and survey asked participants to consider their communities' priorities for resilience projects, and to discuss any challenges or considerations they are facing as they work on addressing those priorities.

When asked about completed, ongoing, and planned projects, participants shared a variety of project types, spanning both planning and implementation. **Projects included:**

- Open space and landscaping (5 communities)
- Coastal resilience projects (5 communities)
- Municipal energy and climate planning (4 communities)
- Transportation planning and improvements (4 communities)
- Municipal facilities upgrades (4 communities)
- Ordinance updates (3 communities)

Open space and landscaping was one of the most common identified project types that communities have undertaken or planned. It was mentioned by inland and rural as well as large and small

communities. This aligns with SMPDC's recent experience seeing an increase in interest from enrolled communities on open space planning. The towns of Berwick, South Berwick, Hollis, and Eliot are all in different stages of completing and implementing their Open Space Planning projects. Berwick is also working on a community garden project, Fryeburg is completing a street tree planting effort, and Kittery recently completed a tree shade coverage plan. The City of Biddeford and the City of Saco are both interested in updating their landscape ordinances to encourage tree planning in downtown areas where the cities experience heat island effects.

Among the coastal communities, it came as no surprise that there was a common thread of **coastal resilience projects**. Saco, Biddeford, Old Orchard Beach, Kittery, and York all mentioned ongoing coastal resilience work, many stemming from the January 2024 storms. Saco, Biddeford, and Old Orchard Beach mentioned working on beach management and dune resilience through a sub-regional partnership with York County Emergency Management Agency. Kittery discussed a focus on partnering resilience work with transportation planning through the Joint Land Use Study infrastructure vulnerability assessment and emergency preparedness plan. Other ongoing coastal resilience projects include watershed-based stormwater planning and marsh restoration and management.

Municipal energy efficiency and climate planning also spanned inland, coastal, small, and large communities. Coastal cities like Biddeford and Saco mentioned engaging in greenhouse gas inventories and Climate Action Plans, and smaller western Maine communities like Parsonsfield and Fryeburg mentioned work on municipal energy planning and energy audits. This aligns with what SMPDC has been hearing and seeing in the projects that member municipalities are asking to pursue. Electric vehicle chargers, heat pumps and energy efficient upgrades to town buildings, and energy audits all continue to be priorities for municipalities across the region.

Transportation planning efforts like bike and pedestrian planning were mentioned both by larger communities like Saco and Biddeford and by Fryeburg, a smaller inland community. The Town of York also mentioned ongoing work on the Route 1 corridor study, which is a collaboration with neighboring municipalities and will have impacts across the region.

Ordinance updates were mentioned by three coastal communities and included solar, electric vehicle charging, and coastal hazards ordinances. All communities that mentioned ordinance updates have completed a climate action plan that aligns with the updates being undertaken. They also have higher capacity than most SMPDC communities, each with multiple planning staff and committed volunteer committees.

Future Priorities

In addition to ongoing work and projects, the communities were asked to identify some of their **future priorities and areas of interest**. These include:

- Energy use and energy efficiency (7 communities)
- Emergency management (6 communities)
- Local zoning and policy updates (3 communities)
- Local food production and agricultural land conservation (3 communities)
- Coastal resilience (3 communities)
- Waste management (2 communities)
- Transportation infrastructure (2 communities)

Municipal energy efficiency efforts were the most mentioned future priorities. Biddeford, Parsonsfield, Kittery, and Fryeburg all mentioned municipal energy audits and energy efficiency measures such as heat

pumps. Other communities like Hollis and York were interested in efforts to help households with energy projects.

Emergency management projects have been a growing area of priority in recent years, and were mentioned frequently as a future priority. This was spread throughout the region, with the towns of Hollis, Parsonsfield, Eliot, Old Orchard Beach, and York all mentioning a desire for more work in this area. There was particular interest in developing heating and cooling centers in the inland towns, while the coastal towns were interested in developing sea level rise and emergency flood scenario planning.

Biddeford, Kittery, and Eliot all mentioned a desire to work on projects including farmers markets, land conservation efforts, and agriculture centered updates to town ordinances. SMPDC has heard discussion of these interests from communities in the past, but as of 2025 there has not yet been a regional effort to tackle land conservation or food systems planning. This could be an area of expansion for SMPDC's work moving forward.

While there was interest from multiple towns in local zoning and policy updates, the scope of these varied greatly from town to town. Saco wanted to work on developing a landscape ordinance, Kittery was interested in bringing climate considerations into their housing policy, and York was interested in developing a coastal hazard overlay zone and a stormwater ordinance. As with the completed/planned/ongoing projects, all communities that mentioned ordinance updates have a completed climate action plan that aligns with the updates being undertaken. They also have higher staff and volunteer capacity than most SMPDC communities.

Challenges

Overall, participants shared similar challenges, including:

1. Community engagement (8 communities)
2. Staff capacity (8 communities)
3. Funding (6 communities: 3 that identified funding as insufficient, 3 challenged by identifying funding)
4. Political process challenges such as council engagement, competing priorities, and political will (5 communities)
5. Community engagement and membership (2 communities)

Community engagement was tied with **staff capacity** as the most mentioned challenge from participants. This included challenges getting community members interested in participating in engagement activities, difficulty having community members understand municipal processes, and challenges facilitating and developing engagement activities. Staff capacity is a common problem among all of SMPDC's communities. Participants mentioned difficulties related to staff turnover and juggling too many or competing priorities.

Many participants mentioned **funding challenges**, split into two categories. Fryeburg, North Berwick, and Parsonsfield participants mentioned that they struggled to identify appropriate funding sources that would help them implement their priorities. On the other hand, Biddeford, Berwick, and Old Orchard Beach participants shared that the funding they received for their work was often insufficient.

Another commonly mentioned challenge was **political process challenges**, including the difficulty of building political and community support for projects. Several participants from communities with City/Town Council governments mentioned challenges getting the council to focus on community resilience priorities or being conservative in their budgets, impacting the ability to fund new initiatives. One community mentioned challenges with navigating public pushback to regulatory changes. Other

communities with town meeting type governments mentioned the challenge of having public approval to allow projects to move forward.

Asks

Participants were also prompted to consider what they would like to see SMPDC do to best assist them in their resilience work in the coming years. These asks align closely with the challenges shared by communities:

- Project management and grant administration (7 communities)
- Finding funding opportunities and grant writing (5 communities)
- Assistance with community engagement (4 communities)
- Consultant procurement and management (4 communities)
- Technical expertise and resources (3 communities)
- Sharing across municipalities and region (3 communities)

In response to this question, SMPDC expected to see differences in communities' needs based on their size or capacity. However, it was clear from these responses that the things that municipalities most need assistance with are largely consistent regardless of size or capacity. For example, assistance with project management and grant administration was the most commonly mentioned ask of SMPDC. Many of these topics, such as consultant management, assistance with community engagement, and assistance with procuring funding, all can translate to the same overall need, which is **more capacity and availability of town staff to add resilience projects into the daily operations of the municipality**.

There is a strong interest and willingness to engage in this work in the region, but municipalities struggle to find the capacity to find relevant funding, and furthermore, to manage those often complex, multi-level projects if and when awarded.

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Technical Assistance & Training

Training Topics

In the second set of questions, SMPDC asked the communities about the types of training and resources that would be most helpful to them in the upcoming years. Resources of interest to communities include:

- Direct technical assistance
 - Grant writing training (4 communities)
 - Project scoping training (2 communities)
 - Community engagement training (2 communities)
 - Consultant procurement and management training (1 community)
- Topic-based expertise and assistance (8 communities, varied topics)
- Regulatory updates (4 communities)
- Grant opportunities (3 communities)

The identified training and resources topics fell into two major categories. First, the towns asked SMPDC to provide **direct technical assistance** on resilience projects. This technical assistance ranged from training on grant writing and project scoping to training on possible project tasks like community engagement and hiring and managing consultants. Grant writing was the most common, with four

communities specifically identifying this as a need. All communities that requested this assistance have a population under 10,000 according to the last census, and only one has a population above 5,000.

The other major category for training and resources was **topic-based assistance and training**. This category was broad and dependent on the individual needs of each town. Coastal resilience training, including working waterfronts, were mentioned by Biddeford, York, and Kittery. Eliot requested training on stormwater and erosion control, and Parsonsfield was interested in training on solar and reducing energy costs as well as waste management. Fryeburg, an inland community, was interested in assistance on how to implement nature-based strategies (NBS) in their community. The Town of North Berwick was interested in training on Climate Action Planning, which could be a direct follow-up to SMPDC's previous efforts with the Climate Action Plan Cohort project.

Training Types

After discussing topics of interest, participants were asked what SMPDC could provide through the Regional Coordinator contract that would have the most benefit. They provided examples such as:

- More grant opportunity information (7 communities)
- In-person meetings, workshops, and/or trainings (7 communities)
- Virtual webinars, meetings, and/or trainings (6 communities)
- Information on relevant state policy updates (4 communities)
- Regional coordination on project collaboration opportunities (3 communities)
- Information on SMPDC's ongoing projects (2 communities)
- Case studies of completed resilience projects (2 communities)

Similarly to training interests, the most popular ask of SMPDC in future planning efforts was the need for **more information on grant opportunities**, especially individualized outreach. Communities also mentioned the need for **sharing updates among communities** and **coordination of towns to collaborate where possible**, all of which speak to an overall need for SMPDC to assist the member communities with identifying funding for both individual local projects and larger regional collaborations. Both smaller inland communities and larger coastal cities with more capacity were interested in this type of assistance, which presents an opportunity for SMPDC to connect lower-capacity communities with larger partners who may have different municipal capacity but similar resilience priorities.

There is an overall need for assistance identifying funding for both local municipal projects and larger regional collaborations.

Six communities asked SMPDC to develop **in-person meetings and workshops**, and five asked for more **virtual webinars and trainings**. In the past, SMPDC's approach has been to conduct mostly virtual trainings and webinars for our member communities. While this approach is still appreciated for webinar and information-sharing approaches, this assessment shows that the communities are also interested in in-person events as opportunities to connect.

Collaboration & Engagement

Collaboration Partners

The last section of questions addressed communities' collaboration and engagement needs. When asked what types of partnerships they are hoping to pursue or develop, participants identified similar groups, including:

- Neighboring communities (6 communities)
- Community members, citizen groups, and committees (6 communities)
- Regional non-profit organizations (5 communities)
- Local businesses and business owners (4 communities)
- State and county agencies (3 communities)
- Local organizations (2 communities)
- Local schools and colleges (2 communities)
- Regional planning commissions (2 communities)

Participants mentioned a wide variety of collaborations. Several discussed how their collaboration partners varied depending on the type of project. Participants most commonly mentioned their interest in collaborating with **neighboring communities** and **their own community members**. Old Orchard Beach and York both indicated a more general interest in connecting with regional or statewide communities working on similar issues and priorities. Both large coastal communities like Saco and small, inland, rural communities like Parsonsfield discussed a need to connect with citizens committees and volunteer groups in their towns. York, Parsonsfield, and North Berwick all identified a specific need to connect with more vulnerable community members and groups.

Participants identified an interest in collaborating with neighboring communities, as well as increasing involvement with local community members, citizen groups, and committees.

Both inland and coastal communities were interested in connecting with **regional non-profits and organizations**. Berwick, Eliot, Kittery, Biddeford, and Hollis identified specific groups they would like to work with more in the future. These groups included land trust organizations, Efficiency Maine, the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and the York County Community Action Corporation. Berwick and Biddeford both also mentioned **developing connections with local organizations**. Saco, Biddeford, and Old Orchard Beach - some of the larger communities included in this assessment - also identified an interest in connecting with **state and county agencies**. Some of these include the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Maine Department of Transportation, and York County Emergency Management Agency.

How SMPDC can support

Participants were asked to identify what role would be most helpful for SMPDC to play in assisting with collaboration and engagement. Possible areas of assistance include:

- Providing templates, example materials, and best practices (5 communities)
- Assisting with in-person gatherings (3 Communities)
- Other:
 - Outreach to community members, committees, and neighborhood associations
 - Engagement with City Council/Select Boards
 - Engagement with vulnerable populations

The most common need for engagement support was for **community engagement templates, example materials, and best practices**. Some of the smaller communities, Fryeburg and North Berwick, identified a need for **assistance with in-person gatherings** and workshops. Several of the larger communities such as Kittery and Saco mentioned that they didn't feel as much need for engagement support.

Most participants shared that they felt they had strong relationships for collaboration within their community. Several participants from Old Orchard Beach and York noted a need for SMPDC's assistance in making connections with regional organizations and making connections between communities with similar priorities.

How our findings compare to the larger SMRCC region

The responses from the follow-up survey, which was distributed to other SMRCC Regional Coordinators (RCs), illustrate how the priorities and needs identified through SMPDC's community interviews and surveys compare with those in other parts of the SMRCC region.

Priorities

There was agreement across all RCs that the following are priorities for the communities in the regions they serve:

- Municipal energy audits and energy efficiency upgrades
- Sea level rise and flood scenario planning
- Coastal resilience and working waterfront investments
- Culverts and drainage improvements
- Stormwater projects
- Development of heating and cooling centers
- Local zoning and policy updates
- Regional transportation projects

In contrast, there were several priority items from SMPDC's communities where one or more RCs indicated either disagreement or neutrality:

- Assisting homeowners with energy efficiency upgrades
- Tracking climate action plan progress
- Tree planting and open space planning
- Local food production, farmers markets, and land conservation

Only one RC – serving Lincoln County – indicated that recycling and waste diversion improvements were a community priority.

Needs

There was unanimous agreement that the following are shared needs across the SMRCC region:

- Navigating public pushback to regulatory changes
- Staff capacity and project management
- Grant writing, project scoping, and RFP training
- Grant administration support
- Regional coordination and information sharing
- Topic-based assistance (e.g., coastal resilience, climate planning)
- Access to technical resources, such as model ordinances, overlays, metrics tracking tools, and case studies

There was also general agreement (though not unanimous) on the following:

- Consultant procurement and management
- Finding and applying for funding opportunities
- Sharing updates and case studies across communities

While overall alignment was strong, some variation in priorities may reflect differences in community capacity, population size, and how climate and resilience work is framed at the local level. For example, the RCs serving Lincoln County – which has the highest percentage of communities with fewer than 4,000 residents (95%) – and Sagadahoc, Knox, and Southern Waldo Counties – which have the second highest percentage of communities with fewer than 4,000 residents (81%) – identified several needs related to volunteer and committee engagement, engaging vulnerable populations, and partnering with other organizations. These types of support are often critical in smaller towns where municipal staff are limited or absent.

It is also worth noting that RCs serving Cumberland County, where only 36% of communities have populations under 4,000, disagreed or were neutral on several of the identified priorities and needs. These included:

- Local food production, farmers markets, and land conservation
- Recycling and waste diversion improvements
- Volunteer and committee engagement
- Making technical information accessible
- Community engagement training
- Partnering with regional non-profits and land trusts
- Engaging community members, vulnerable populations, and youth
- Partnering with businesses, schools, and state agencies.

These differences may be because many of these communities have the capacity to address these priorities and challenges independently without RC assistance, or have already done so, rather than the priorities being irrelevant.

Alignment with Regional Coordinator Services

Many of the needs shared by participants in this needs assessment fit into three broad categories:

- 1. Addressing limited staff capacity**
- 2. Connecting municipal work to opportunities and resources beyond their borders**
- 3. Ensuring municipal efforts are aligned with regulatory changes and requirements related to resilience**

Many of the services SMPDC currently offers through its regional coordinator work address the need of limited staff capacity. These services include project scoping, grant writing, grant admin support (especially for smaller communities) as well as technical assistance on municipal energy and climate projects.

There are several ways SMPDC's current services can be refined and guided based on the priorities identified in this needs assessment:

- **Provide more tailored grant identification support**, connecting communities to relevant and feasible grant opportunities individually rather than uniform emails to all enrolled communities.

- **Provide more coordination on potential projects across communities**, both neighboring and similar interest communities.
- **Develop expertise in emerging priority areas** such as emergency management, and **draw on other areas of SMPDC expertise** such as open space planning and regional transportation.
- **Increase coordination of community priorities with SMPDC's other planning divisions with relevant expertise and capacity**, such as alternative transportation, climate considerations for comprehensive planning, and open space conservation.

SMPDC's regional coordinator services that connect municipal, regional, and state efforts are primarily conducted through the SMRCC. The SMRCC develops regional newsletters, compiles training opportunities, and provides a forum for all participating regional coordinators to connect and cross pollinate community efforts. The priorities identified in this needs assessment will help SMPDC **better connect communities within the SMPDC region with similar priorities for future projects**. For example, Biddeford, Kittery, and Eliot all mentioned a desire to work on projects supporting local food systems for community resilience. SMPDC could facilitate discussions between these communities to share best practices and consider potential regional projects.

So far, SMPDC has provided limited guidance to enrolled communities about relevant regulations and state policy updates. In the past, SMPDC has relied on CRP-led communications to enrolled communities about state issues. This needs assessment indicates that **there is a need from enrolled communities for more direct guidance from SMPDC on state-level changes that impact their community resilience efforts**, such as the 2024 update to Maine Wont Wait, changes to net energy billing legislation, and new MS4 community permitting requirements.

This needs assessment also identified how training opportunities could be adjusted to better serve enrolled communities. In particular, SMPDC can add **more in-person trainings and learning opportunities** to give municipal staff and volunteers the chance to build connections face to face. SMPDC should continue to **offer a diverse mix of topic-based and skill-based training opportunities**. Participants in the needs assessment shared a general interest in **seeing examples of resilience projects in practice** in areas and towns that are similar to theirs. SMPDC could collate and share more case studies (both during trainings and available online) of the common priority topics identified through this needs assessment. For example, SMPDC/SMRCC could share more examples of climate-related ordinances being developed throughout the region and could share examples of nature-based strategies that are relevant to inland communities.

There were several types of support requested by needs assessment participants that are outside of SMPDC's current typical regional coordinator services. These new services were mentioned most frequently by the participants representing SMPDC's smaller, less resourced communities. These include:

- **Community engagement facilitation assistance.** While SMPDC does assist communities from time to time with community engagement efforts, it is not specifically offered as a service to all enrolled communities. SMPDC could consider offering this service to enrolled communities that want to engage their communities through a workshop or other type of effort but need help planning, developing outreach materials, and facilitating.
- **Community engagement template resources and examples.** SMPDC/SMRCC could develop a toolkit of engagement materials that could be publicly available online for enrolled communities to draw from. SMPDC could assist enrolled communities with adapting these resources.
- **Consultant procurement support.** SMPDC could offer this as a regional coordinator service to enrolled communities. SMPDC could advise on RFP processes and could research and share lists of qualified consultants.

Conclusion

The SMPDC Needs Assessment and follow-up survey findings offer a snapshot of both shared and differing priorities across the SMPDC and SMRCC regions. They reflect the diversity of community contexts – urban and rural, staffed and volunteer-led – and highlight how capacity, local framing, and existing progress can shape what communities see as most urgent or achievable.

This needs assessment shows that there is alignment between community needs and the services currently provided by SMPDC's regional coordinator work. It also identifies several areas where services can be better tailored to support enrolled communities in the region and new services that might better support SMPDC's smaller and lower capacity communities. SMPDC's Year 2 Regional Coordinator Workplan will incorporate the findings of this assessment to ensure that enrolled communities are able to further their community resilience priorities with the help of SMPDC as their regional coordinator.

Appendix A: Needs Assessment Protocol

This appendix outlines the steps taken by SMPDC in performing our needs assessment and is intended to be replicable for other Regional Coordinators' needs assessment processes.

- 1. Determine community contacts.**
 - Enrolled communities: existing CRP contact
 - Unenrolled communities: existing point of contact, or town administrator/clerk
 - Create a spreadsheet of all community contacts, with columns for date contacted, date of scheduled interview, other applicable information
- 2. Send introductory emails.**
 - Enrolled communities: overview of SMPDC's role as a Regional Coordinator, purpose of the needs assessment, ask to schedule a 45-minute to 1-hour interview call via Zoom or phone
 - Unenrolled communities: background on the CRP, overview of SMPDC's role as a Regional Coordinator, purpose of the needs assessment, ask to schedule an interview call, offer written survey alternative option
 - Send a follow-up email or phone call if no response is received
- 3. Create an interview questionnaire document ([Appendix B](#)) as a basis for the interview conversations.**
 - Adapt the questionnaire document into a survey for any communities who chose the survey option as an alternative to an interview
- 2. Create a master assessment spreadsheet ([Appendix C](#)).**
 - One row per town, with columns aligning with the questions from the interview questionnaire document and survey
- 4. Create a personalized version of the interview questionnaire document for each town in advance of their interview.**
 - Add notes about the town's previous CRP materials, other past engagement about climate priorities, and any other pertinent background information
- 5. Conduct semi-structured interview call, using the questionnaire as a guide.**
 - Take notes in the town's personalized questionnaire document
- 6. Send notes to interview participants after the interview for review and additional input.**
- 7. Add interview notes (with any revisions/additions from interviewees) and any survey responses received to the master assessment spreadsheet.**
- 8. Review the assessment spreadsheet for themes and patterns, and assess how these results align with work we are already doing or not doing.**
 - Note priorities and needs that were mentioned by multiple communities
 - Note priorities and needs that are specific to sub-regions or community types (e.g. coastal or inland communities, communities with smaller or larger populations, communities with more or less staff capacity)
- 9. Create final report summarizing regional and sub-regional priorities and needs.**
 - Provide interview questionnaire document and any materials that will facilitate other Regional Coordinators' needs assessment processes

Appendix B: Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Resilience Priorities and Challenges

1. What resilience-based projects are you currently working on or planning to work on in the next three years?
 - a. If none are planned or active, what are some of your community's climate-related priorities?
 - b. Are there other climate priorities in your community that you're not currently addressing but would like to address in the future?

2. For your past and current resilience projects, what were some of the challenges your town faced in planning and executing the projects?
 - a. For example, funding, staffing, community engagement, technical expertise, regulatory hurdles, political will, identifying funding/managing funds once received?

3. Is there any sort of support SMPDC could have provided to help address these challenges?
 - a. Options include things like grant writing support, trainings, project administration and management support, consultant procurement and management, etc.

Trainings and Resources

4. What skills or knowledge are you interested in building or strengthening to increase your capacity for resilience work?
 - a. These could be either topic-based assistance on things like nature-based solutions and climate action planning or technical assistance on administrative activities like grant writing, community engagement, and regulatory updates.

5. What types of trainings, workshops, and other regional coordinator assistance meetings are the most helpful and accessible for you and other town personnel?
 - a. In-person workshops or meetings, virtual trainings, peer-to-peer learning with other communities, case study, subject matter expert presentations, others?

6. What type of information or communication would you like to see more of from SMPDC as your CRP Regional Coordinator?
 - a. Upcoming grant opportunities, identifying funding, projects in the region, updates on relevant state policy?

Collaboration and Engagement

7. Who are the key partners and collaborators that you want to work with on resilience projects?
 - a. What are some ways that SMPDC could help connect your community with others working on similar projects and priorities?

8. What are some ways that SMPDC could help engage residents and stakeholders in resilience efforts in your town?
 - a. What formats for trainings and workshops are most accessible to people in your community?

Appendix C: Master Assessment Matrix

Appendix C begins on the following page. It contains a matrix of community-specific interview and survey results.

Community	Who We Talked To	Method	Resilience Priorities & Challenges				Trainings & Resources			Collaboration & Engagement		Other
			1A. Completed, Ongoing, or Planned Projects	1B. Future Priorities	2. Challenges	3. SMPDC Assistance	4. Skills & Knowledge to Build	5. Most Helpful Training & Resource Types	6. Type of Info & Communication	7. Partners (Current or Potential)	8. Community Engagement Assistance	
Berwick	Town Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Space Plan & implementation Create Conservation Committee Community Garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study for impaired stream/wetland area Stormwater projects, incl. outfalls & catch basins in Sullivan Square 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient funding for funded projects Staff capacity Large scale community engagement, community understanding of municipal processes Working with abutters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate community dialogue Project management Technical resource "Other planner in the room" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding opportunities Project scoping Aligning with state goals (<i>Maine Won't Wait</i> update) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person workshops (most helpful) Case studies Online webinars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happy with current amount of communication Grants & opportunities for infrastructure projects most helpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Works Regional Land Trust Engineers (e.g. SLR Consulting, Sebago Technics) Envision Berwick PREP City of Somersworth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large-scale community forum Building social aspects of resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness to collaborate across the region
Biddeford	Economic Development Coordinator	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Landscape Plan/Ordinance Solar Ordinance EV Charging Ordinance Biddeford/Saco Community Action Grant for dune resilience with YCEMA GHG inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local food production, continuing pilot farmers market Energy audits for municipal buildings Tree planting downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff: funding, turnover Technical expertise Public engagement Council engagement Competing City priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing Connecting to technical expertise Sharing across communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal issues (dunes, nature-based strategies, engineered beaches) Public engagement Project scoping Moving from planning to implementation Creative funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual meetings In-person workshops Climate action workshop Short meetings & seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant opportunities Targeted emails with resources for specific communities One-on-one meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inside the community: Heart of Biddeford, Biddeford Community Gardens, MacArthur Library, UNE Outside the community: YCEMA, City of Saco, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Maine DOT, SMPDC, private solar developers & land developers, Pierson nurseries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Template engagement materials (infographics, handouts) Most engagement currently thru tabling & newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Eliot	Town Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing participation in the CRP Implementation of Open Space Plan & Comp Plan New town hall Fall 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag. focused land conservation Land trusts & land conservation in response to LD1829 Heating & cooling center at new town hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Getting public interest & engagement Meeting fatigue (multiple ongoing projects) Staff capacity (esp. stormwater program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing meeting fatigue Help with creative engagement like mailings Project admin Consultant management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater trainings for staff Erosion and sediment control Help with MS4 requirements Floodplain management & FEMA maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsletter One-on-one outreach on relevant topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land trusts (e.g. Great Works, Coastal Heritage, ME Farmland Trust) Neighboring communities Efficiency ME, technical assistance orgs Connecting to technical expertise to strengthen grant applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upcoming opportunities Assistance engaging with farmers, people in areas vulnerable to climate change impacts Help communicating sensitive info, e.g. vulnerability of private property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like SMPDC to serve as central org in partner applications for multiple towns Eliot has done engagement like mailings, 'walking office hours,' & tabling
Fryeburg	Town Manager	Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkability improvements Energy audits of municipal buildings Street tree planting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient municipal buildings Additional walkability & bikeability efforts Transfer station improvements for waste diversion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying funding Staff capacity Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultant procurement & management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature-Based Solutions Community engagement Regulatory updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual trainings Case studies Subject matter expert presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project dependent Often easier to work alone or with consultants from project coord. standpoint Could also be benefits to larger collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure In person gatherings are most successful to engage residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Hollis	Select Board Chair	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooling & heating center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing recycling rates Bike ped path along major roadways Helping homeowners afford home heating upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement Committee member capacity & engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance getting community participation Engage people at existing events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing training Virtual trainings In person/hands-on trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person or hybrid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Info-sharing on what other towns in the region are working on or considering Updates on state policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecomaine (improve waste management, recycling) York County legislators YCCAC Other towns in the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulletins or postings; lots of community members see the community message board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

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Kittery	Town Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal Hazards Ordinance Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) - infrastructure vulnerability assessment & emergency preparedness plan Climate Ready Kittery - vulnerable sites infrastructure design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local food production Climate considerations in housing policies Energy efficiency of town buildings Working waterfront Grid resilience (local & regional) Wildfire prevention, mitigation Evaluate groundwater contamination risk of private wells, septic systems GHG Emissions Inventory update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Staff changes Juggling multiple projects Implementation funding Public pushback to regulatory changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning capacity Grant application support Workshop coordination support Engage committees on broader regional work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting land use & climate strategies Working waterfront 	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding opportunities (esp. implementation) Opportunities for regional collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current partnerships: Other communities, PNSY, Kittery Land Trust Potential partnerships: PREP, York River Stewardship Committee, Route 1 businesses, Kittery schools, UNH, UNE, YCCC Generally, partnerships are project specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best engagement comes thru the town's communications, rather than from SMPDC SMPDC could provide communications support to less resourced communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in other communities' results from these interviews
North Berwick	Town Manager	Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving outreach to vulnerable populations Public EV chargers Heat pumps for heating/AC & hot water Energy efficient lighting 	None shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying funding Staff capacity Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing support Consultant procurement & management Project coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing Climate action planning Regulatory updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person meetings or workshops Virtual trainings 	None shared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General electorate Concerned citizen groups Vulnerable population groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMPDC could help with resources for meetings/events In person gatherings work best for residents 	None
Old Orchard Beach	Town Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach/dune resilience to 100 yr flood CAG with YCEMA Wastewater treatment plant improvements Dredging of the marsh recently completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road infrastructure Transportation projects regionally Sidewalks Beach resilience Outcomes from comp plan update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff capacity Funding for staff time Aging community & related infrastructure needs Community engagement Council open to hearing proposals but conservative with budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check back in Fall 2025 about comp plan results Finding funding opportunities Interested in more of a relationship with SMPDC Project management Consultant procurement & management Help with MS4 permits & management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing Regulatory updates & up-to-date list for towns to reference LD 1829 Housing & resilience resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not night meetings Series of workshops in shorter segments, easier to make time Peer to peer learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State level updates SMPDC projects Grant opportunities Tailored info for towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with people on both sides of issues GPCOG State agencies MS4 communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood specific outreach (e.g. Ocean Park) Neighborhood associations Council meetings & presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MS4: takes a lot of time & resources to manage (e.g. consulting engineer just for MS4 is \$40k in the annual budget) Lots of flooding in shoreland zone in Ocean Park; tailor engagement for Ocean Park residents
Parsonsfield	Select Board Chair	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal Energy Plan CAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heating & cooling center at Town Hall, eventually provide shelter during multi-day outages Plan for future flooding of Ossipee River Culverts on town roads; many dirt roads wash out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement & getting support from interested stakeholders Finding funding Grant writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing assistance Trainings for writing an RFP Project administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant writing RFPs Project admin Topic-based assistance: residents interested in solar, reducing costs for the community Increasing recycling rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For town personnel Zoom works well, esp. during Selectboard workshop hours Upcoming grant opportunities Updates on relevant state policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upcoming grant opportunities Policy updates SMPDC's presentations, either in person or recordings Nice to have facetime in person every so often Projects other towns are working on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local business owners Engage younger residents Parsonsfield has existing relationships with Porter and Cornish; could collaborate on projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to engage residents esp. in summer Recommend offering food at in-person meetings, hosting at certain times of year Town will continue to discuss resilience work at town meetings (high viewership streaming online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMPDC's newsletters are helpful Par Sem (Parsonsfield Seminary) example of local org with high attendance & engagement at events -- how can town get folks to show up?

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Saco	City Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Resource Recovery Center upgrade Climate Adaptation & Action Plan (CAAP) Beach Management Plan Transportation work, incl. Vision Zero Facilities management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape ordinance update CAAP progress tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competing priorities Residents already experiencing climate change impacts (also means they understand impacts firsthand) People live differently across the areas of Saco (farmland, industrial, downtown, coastal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate data management (dashboard) CAAP metrics tracking Managing state grant processes/admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood assessment resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconvening communities that participated in coastal community work SMPDC serve as connector org. In-person events Informal events (e.g. Planner happy hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant opportunities Feasibility of different grant opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRRRC – Maine Climate Council, MDEP, EPA Saco residents Energy & Sustainability Committee City Council York County Other communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No direct involvement needed For plans like CAAP: template outreach materials, example engagement actions, transferrable survey & workshop materials 	None
York	Town Planner	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LID requirement changes to ordinances Watershed based approach to stormwater Route 1 corridor study Bike/ped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal hazard overlay SLR & future flood scenarios hopefully by Nov 2026 Develop a stormwater ordinance Want more bike/ped transit links on Route 1 corridor Community solar future priority from CAP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff capacity Political will from voters Challenging process for bringing policies to ballot Committee membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models for the region on ordinances, overlays Coordinate municipalities to talk about models & best practices Make towns proactive not reactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic based things like nature-based strategies, sea level rise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person for detailed learning Virtual for broader audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative updates Grant opportunities Tracking of state policy changes & how it should apply to code & planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater outreach to development community Property owners for vulnerable areas accordng to coastal flood overlays Business owners Use RC to bridge gap with other folks with similar issues and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to Climate Action Committee and env planner Taylor Maguier York Ready for Climate Action Live events in town Land trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major role for SMPDC: show connections with other communities & good models, best practices Lots of interest in stormwater, SLR, drought Community engagement models, committee management Applying regional models & why they work helps town staff