



# GrowSmart Maine

Keeping Maine...*Maine*

## Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2021

**JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021**

As Maine's State Rural Development Council through USDA: Rural Development, we are connected to peer organizations across the country. We know that smart growth is about more than land use. Planning is just as essential for towns and cities as it is for a household or business because planning—how we manage growth—impacts all aspects of daily life. Even with the current challenges of the pandemic and divisive political wrangling, through collaboration with partners across and beyond Maine, we continue to, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, “do what we can, with what we have, where we are.”

GrowSmart Maine's work focuses on the links between community revitalization, economic development, and conservation of natural resources. With that in mind, we aim to:

1. Raise awareness and support of smart growth principles and connect Mainers with the resources, methods, and tools to manage growth and change in their communities.
2. Provide leadership by facilitating meaningful and informed conversations among diverse voices to arrive at common sense solutions.
3. Advocate for policies, projects, and programs that allow Maine's economy to grow and prosper while conserving and enriching Maine's beautiful and productive natural spaces.

We have successfully fulfilled these goals in a variety of ways this past year:

**Raise awareness and support of smart growth principles and connect Mainers with the resources, methods, and tools to manage growth and change in their communities.**

**Energy Efficiency Community Campaign** brings the tools in the Island Institute's **Bridging the Rural Efficiency Gap** to inland communities. Energy efficiency is a strategic first step in climate action; by meeting people where they are in an appreciation for Yankee frugality while providing comfort and safety and reducing use of fossil fuels. Our work in Windham and Biddeford began with Virtual Weatherization Webinars. Then, in collaboration with WindowDressers and AmeriCorps/Maine Energy Assistance Partnership, and dozens of local volunteers, we are hosting “builds” to provide insulating window inserts for forty households. Special thanks to AmeriCorps members Andrew Tierney (2020), Grace Sherman and Phoebe Little (2021).



Dave Dostie for Maine Magazine

Jeff Levine, left, and Colin Woodard at the 2020 GrowSmart Maine Summit.

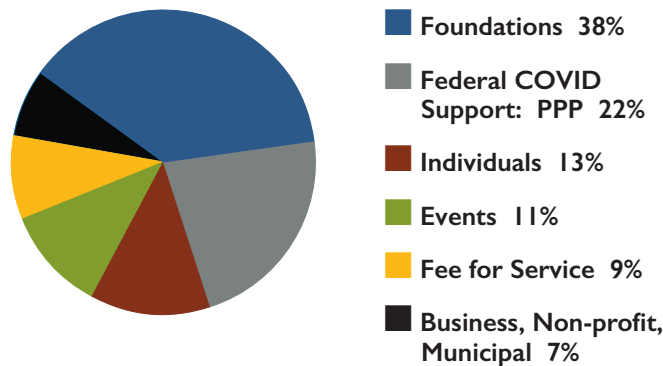
**Maine Smart Growth Awards** highlight and honor the great work being done across the state as people strengthen communities, protect open spaces, and build opportunity for all Mainers. 2020 was our third year of recognizing this good work at our annual Summit.

**Local Wood WORKS** promotes purchasing wood from local sources to reward landowners for growing trees instead of converting woods to unplanned commercial and residential development. Partners are committed to sustainable forestry, strong and resilient local economies, conservation of both working woodlands and ecological reserves, reduced energy consumption and transportation costs based on local product sourcing.

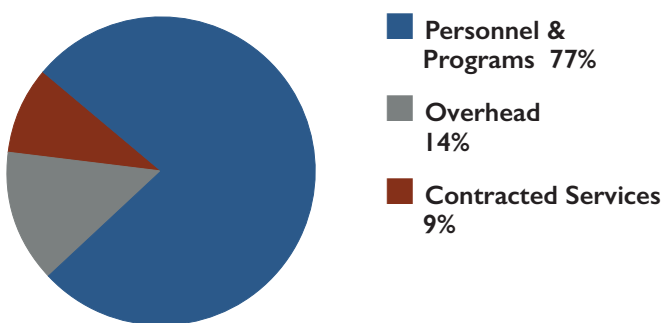
We are working with partners to design additional projects in this role, including:

- Housing Choices through **Southern Kennebec Working Communities Challenge**
- Design of a regional economic development plan anchored in arts and culture and quality of place as critical economic drivers, and design of a mixed-use smart growth neighborhood with **Snow Pond Center for the Arts** in Sidney

## FY2021 Revenue: \$214,773



## FY2021 Expenses: \$178,100



June closed our full pandemic fiscal year with strong financials due to government COVID support funding and the decision not to replace our Community Outreach Director while direct community work is on hold. Fundraising was difficult, though we had solid successes. Financials are net positive and strong. To support municipalities during the start of the pandemic, GrowSmart Maine offered complimentary membership for 2020. We are pleased so many towns and cities took advantage of this offer.

### Provide leadership by facilitating meaningful and informed conversations among diverse voices to arrive at common sense solutions.

GrowSmart Maine hosted three board-led webinars:

- **More Broadband, Less Sprawl**, March, 2021 plus op-ed on the subject April 2021
- **Open Streets: How to Hang Out Again**, August 2020
- **Securing Housing Choices for a Well-Rounded Community**, June 2021

**Annual Summit:** In October 2020, GrowSmart Maine created a one-of-a-kind event with an anchor location in Biddeford, five regional satellite venues across Maine, and virtual attendance totaling 125. Topical breakout sessions were replaced with regional discussions delving deeper into keynote presentations and a follow-up forum the following

week to identify action in response to key issues identified. GrowSmart took three actions related to the key regional challenges identified by participants:

- Housing: **Securing Housing Choices for a Well-Rounded Community**
- Land Use: **LD 1240** "Resolve, To Review Barriers to Regional Solutions for Housing Choices"
- Climate Change: Community Guide for **Regional Action for Climate Action**

**Maine Alliance for Smart Growth (MASG)** is a network brought together by GrowSmart Maine supporting economically and culturally vital downtowns and the natural areas surrounding them – working farms and forests, open space and waterfronts. MASG advocates for significant policy changes related to smart growth and its value to Maine communities. We also connect organizations and communities whose smart growth interests overlap, creating a stronger network. This coordination results in more resources and better growth outcomes across the state. Together, we continue to support Maine's historic rehabilitation tax credit as critical to downtown revitalization and climate action. Read the **Economic Impacts Report**. MASG also hosted two Smartin's networking events in Hallowell and Augusta.

**Policy Matters** We sponsored Press Herald policy conversations to get to the foundational issues and context that frame some of the most compelling challenges we face in Maine.

### Advocate for policies, projects, and programs that allow Maine's economy to grow and prosper while conserving and enriching Maine's beautiful and productive natural spaces.

Coalitions magnify our effectiveness by both coordinating effort and broadening the voices and audiences for smart growth. We lead the **Maine Alliance for Smart Growth**, co-lead the policy committee for the **Maine Broadband Coalition**, and participated in Climate Maine advocacy strategy sessions. Our advocacy addressed climate action, housing and land use, historic preservation, equity, and broadband.

Read our **testimony** and **updates** online or view our **Top Twelve Bills**, all available at [www.growsmartmaine.org/policy](http://www.growsmartmaine.org/policy)

GrowSmart Maine co-led the statewide campaign of the **Maine Broadband Coalition** that resulted in nearly 75% voter approval for a \$15M bond to expand broadband access. The pandemic affirmed this as an essential service, even as we work with communities to minimize associated risks of sprawl.

On the federal level, we joined a coalition advocating for federal investments in infrastructure through letters to Maine's delegation, an op-ed, and video. Learn more at <https://www.investinmainejobs.org/>

## GrowSmart Maine Board of Directors 2020

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#### Contributing

Plan ME, LLC  
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### NONPROFIT

#### Sustaining

The Nature Conservancy

#### Contributing

Northern Maine Development  
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Development Council  
Sunrise County Economic  
Council  
Two Rivers Ottauquechee  
Regional Commission

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Town of Deer Isle  
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Town of Gorham  
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Kidder, David & June  
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McKay, John  
Miller, Lisa  
Norris, John "Bo"  
Sesker, Jacob  
Shankman, Neil

#### Silver

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Beeler, Lisa  
Boynton, Jon

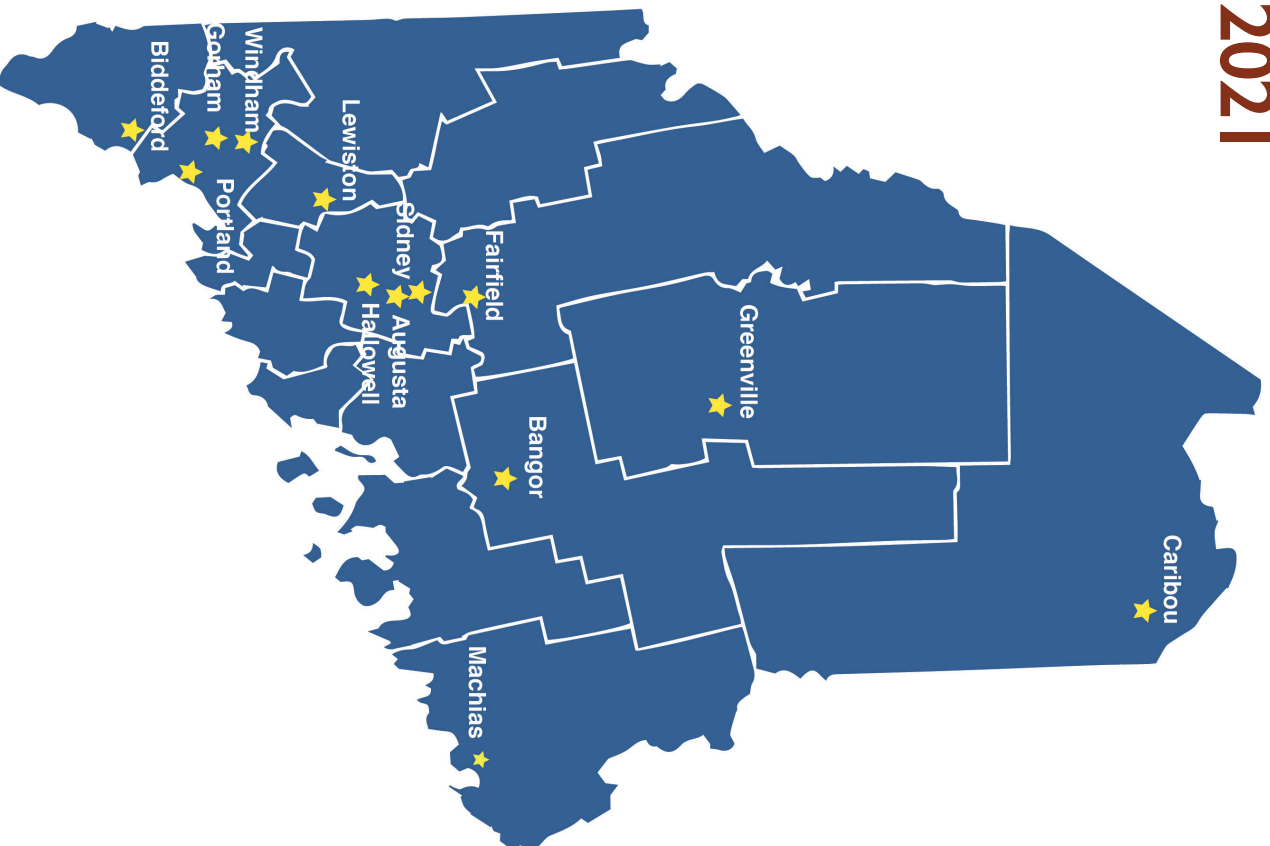
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Freeman, Len  
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Smith, Myles  
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Bowman, Peter  
Daniels, Ellie  
Lyman, Christine  
St. Pierre, James

# GrowSmart Maine Community Engagement

2021



2010-2021

