



GPBR Legislative Updates

April 2026 Local Policy Tracking Report

Housing, development, and local regulation continue moving fast, and April brought no shortage of headlines. Property taxes and budgets are front and center across Maine, with many towns facing important school budget ballot questions ahead of the **June 9 Primary Election**. You can request your **[absentee ballot here](#)**.

Portland saw major movement on housing development, including a judge giving the green light to the Riverside project and Thompson's Point advancing 257 new apartments. At the same time, neighborhood opposition groups continue pushing back on new development and closely monitoring project compliance.

Portland's proposed FY27 budget includes a 4.2% tax rate increase—adding approximately \$130 annually for the median homeowner—while also cutting 74 city positions. **A public hearing is scheduled for May 18**. These conversations directly impact housing costs and operating expenses and are especially important in light of the Portland property tax study GPBR commissioned - **[Read the full study here](#)**.

Gorham continues moving forward with its Fire Suppression Systems fee schedule despite ongoing concerns about added construction costs and barriers to development.

Short-term rental restrictions and rental registry pressure continue spreading statewide.

Scarborough is advancing STR ordinance changes, with **public hearings scheduled for May 6 and May 20**.

Cape Elizabeth

- Cape Land Trust expansion: Added 15 to existing 325 acres (David Forest)
- Solar project approved: Installation on capped landfill behind transfer station
- Blue Meadow condo development breaks ground in Cape Elizabeth, 18 unit condo dev **[covered here by Maine Biz](#)**
- Cape **[Newsletter here](#)**
- Cape Town **[Manager's Report Here](#)**
- Meeting and **[agenda here](#)**
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Cumberland

- Budget Review Workshops, [more info here](#)
- Latest [Cumberland Crier here](#)
- Town Council: 1 At-Large seat & 1 Center seat, [more info here](#)
- [Agenda Center here](#)

Falmouth

- Sign-up For Free Energy Coaching Session, [more info here](#)
- FY 27 Budget Public Hearing to be held 4/27, [more info here](#)
- Coffee with Councilors
 - Wednesday, May 6, 6-7pm (Councilors Hach & Sharp)
- Latest [Falmouth Newsletter here](#)
- [Calendar and agendas here](#)

Freeport

- How tariffs are driving up the cost of a 45-unit housing development in Maine, [covered here by the BDN](#)
- Coffee with Councilors - Come discuss ideas and concerns with Town Council leadership the first Monday of every month at 8 a.m.
 - [Visit the Town Council page](#)
- New Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council [here](#)
- [Calendar and agendas here](#)

Gorham

- [Gorham United Facebook here](#) - Gorham United is an all-volunteer organization made up of Gorham residents working to protect our small-town character by promoting thoughtful development
 - Exciting news: We've hit a major milestone in our effort to stop the Amazon warehouse in Gorham - We have officially raised over \$5,000 to support the campaign - Donate here:
<https://gofund.me/9efdf17f7>
- Town Council moves forward with Fire Suppression Systems fee schedule
 - [Gorham Sprinkler Fee Schedule.jpeg](#)
- Proposed FY 2026-27 Municipal Budget & School Department [Budget Information here](#) A Special Town Council Meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 12-Public comment
- Town Council [agenda](#)

Gray

- Open positions include:
 - Gray Town Councilors (two 3-year terms)
- Town of Gray Launches "No Gray Area: Just the Facts" Webpage to Combat Misinformation, [more info here](#)
- Village Transformation Project - [More info here](#)
- You can learn about the FY27 budget on our [website](#)
- Gray [Town Newsletter here](#)
- [Agendas here](#)

New Gloucester

- Select Board Member - 1 position (3-year term), [more info here](#)
- [Council meeting schedule here](#)

North Yarmouth

- 2 seats for Select Board (3-year term), [more info here](#)
- Comprehensive Plan [Proposed changes to Land Use here.](#)
 - Comprehensive Plan Committee seeking member, [more info here](#)
- [Meeting and agenda here.](#)

Portland

- Judge gives green light for Portland apartment complex, [covered here by the BDN](#)
 - [Friends of Riverton Facebook group](#) seeks to slow development by finding and reporting violations, [covered here](#)
- New leases on life: Portland storefronts starting to fill up on troubled downtown street, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
 - [April 1 registration deadline for the Vacant Storefront Ordinance](#)
- Portland opens door for affordable housing funding applications, [covered here by News Center Maine](#)
- Strimling: Maine court solidifies rent control's power to protect tenants, [covered here by the Maine Beacon](#)
- City Manager presented a \$363.9 million Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget to include the use of \$4 million in unassigned fund balance and an estimated 4.2% tax rate increase on the City side. At this time, the estimated impact of this increase on an average homeowner with a median property valued at \$540,000 would result in an additional \$130 in annual property taxes. - [City Manager's full budget letter.](#)
- Portland budget proposal calls for raising property taxes, cutting 74 positions, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Portland's proposed budget includes dozens of staff cuts in effort to limit tax increase, [covered here by News Center Maine](#)
 - Public Hearing on budget is scheduled for the May 18, 2026 City Council meeting
- Historic Sagamore Village housing community in Portland gets full makeover, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Portland Planning Board voted 5-0 against the adoption of an increased buffer zone between large performance venues, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Portland helped find housing for hundreds of people in 2025, city says, [covered here by the PPH](#)
- Portland Foreside developer sets out to reshape eastern waterfront, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Portland weighing the fate of the historic Expo, [covered here by Maine Public](#)
- A Gen Z woman couldn't afford rent, so she bought a duplex and cut her housing costs in half. Here's her playbook, [covered here by Money Wise](#)

- Share Your Input! Future of "Midtown" Properties in Bayside - [Midtown Community Survey here](#)
- [Proposed Project Located at 19 Cedar Street](#) - Avesta submitted a Major Site Plan application for the construction of a five-story, approximately 5,225-square-foot multi-family residential building at 15 & 19 Cedar Street. The proposed development includes 30 dwelling units
- Portland [community survey results are now available](#)
- [Thompson's Point project will add 257 apartments to marketMainebizhttps://mainebiz.biz › article › thompsons-point-project-...](#)
- Stroudwater Commons - 130-unit development will feature an additional 26 accessory dwelling units, [more info here](#)
- The 2026-2027 [Affordable Housing Development Application](#) has been released
- [City news updates](#)
- [Meeting schedule here](#)

Pownal

- [Pownal Annual Town Report here](#)
- [Meeting calendar here](#)

Scarborough

- Scarborough [Budget info here](#)
- Short term rentals - The Ordinance Committee voted to move an amended draft [Chapter 1020](#) and Chapter 405 as presented on to the full Council
 - Public hearing on May 6 and second reading on May 20
- The Council created a new Tree Care Advisory Board
- Scarborough [Newsletter here](#)
- Town Council [agendas](#).
- Planning Board [agendas](#)

South Portland

- The Comprehensive Plan Committee unanimously approved the [SoPo 2040 Comp Plan](#), and the City Council will consider adoption of the final draft on Tuesday, April 21. [Get the update.](#)
- South Portland holds budget workshop to try to close multi-million-dollar deficit, [covered here by WGME](#)
 - [Budget info here](#) 2026 budget workshop April 21
- New testing identifies elevated benzene emissions near South Portland tank farms, [covered here WMTW](#)
- Pearl Street Pump Station and main replacement and upcoming increases in sewer use fees - [info session](#) on Wednesday, April 15 at 4 PM in City Hall Council Chambers and [read things to know](#) about the project.
- Several open committee seats, including on: planning, affordable housing and comp plan committees - [more info here](#)
- South Portland [Newsletter here](#)

- South Portland City Council and Planning Board [agenda](#)

Westbrook

- Residential phase of Rock Row development taking shape in Westbrook, [covered here by WMTW](#)
- Rock Row developers pitch hotel, housing and more retail in Westbrook, [covered here by PPH](#)
- Information regarding the Municipal School Budget for FY2027 may be found at the [Westbrook School Department Website](#).
- [Meeting and events calendar](#).

Windham

- Windham [Housing Needs Study here](#) - To meet current and future demand, this study estimates Windham needs approximately 1,200 new homes by 2030
- [Meeting calendar here](#).

Yarmouth

- Town Council: 3 three-year terms - [More Info Here](#)
- FY27 Municipal and School Budget Discussions: [More Info Here](#)
 - Town Council Special Meeting, May 7th, 7:00 p.m., 2nd Public Hearing, draft FY27 Budgets
 - Town Meeting, June 2nd, 6:00 p.m. re Town Budget
- 33 and 41 Collins Road Zoning Change Request: [More Info Here](#)
- Royal River [Dam updates/FAQs here](#)
- Building Moratorium [Updates and FAQS here](#)
- Zoning Amendments proposed re Historic Districts, Historic Sites, and Historic Projects: [More Info Here](#)
- Yarmouth [Tree Committee info here](#)
- [Meeting calendar here](#)

Other Local

- Join your friends and neighbors on FlashVote and make sure voices from your town are heard on important regional issues - [Register here](#)
- Machiasport, Ellsworth and Georgetown looking at restricting STRs
- Bangor group gets \$2M in federal funding to build tiny home village for homeless, [covered here by the BDN](#)
- Arundel - Looking at instituting a mobile home park rent ordinance
- Presque Isle looking at vacant building tax
- Biddeford - Tenants Unions asking Council for more comprehensive rental registry

Other State/National

- 5 takeaways from the new MaineHousing annual report, [covered here by PPH](#)
 - [Maine Housing Annual Report here](#)

- Maine lawmakers approve first-in-nation temporary ban on data centers, [covered here by the Sun Journal](#)
- Maine's modular housing industry in limbo after Legislature fails to support regulatory fix, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Modular structures are another option to speed construction, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- 400 Maine Affordable Homes Unable to Break Ground due to Buy America Rules, [covered here by Planetizen](#)
- Maine Lawmakers Targeted by Social Media Campaign Opposing Data Center Ban, [covered here by MSN](#)
- Federal appeals court rejects HUD request to temporarily allow changes to housing-assistance programs, [covered here by WMTW](#)
- Broker report: Maine's multifamily market settling into period of stabilization, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Maine announces more than 90 new apartments for people experiencing chronic homelessness, [covered here by Maine Public](#)
- Fix for gray area in Maine's modular housing industry dies, leaving uncertainty, [covered here by the PPH](#)
- Construction's moving parts: Prefab components have come a long way, [covered here by Maine Biz](#)
- Gov. Mills to decide whether Maine should strengthen tenant rights amid immigration fears, [covered here by Maine Morning Star](#)
- The hidden barrier to solving Maine's housing crisis - upgrading aging sewer system, [covered here by the PPH](#)
- Experts urge less regulation, more workers to ease housing shortage, [co](#)

Ongoing:

- Building an Accessory Dwelling Unit is easier than ever in Maine, [covered here by the PPH](#)
- Maine [ADU Guide here](#)
- Maine ADU Summit & Expo [5/15, more info here](#)

Elections:

- Upcoming Election [Information here](#)
- Request for [Absentee Ballots here](#)
- Candidate List [2026 Primary Candidate List posting FINAL 3.16.26.xlsx](#)
 - May 11 - Absentee Ballots become available.
 - May 20 - Closed Period Begins: Only in person registrations will be accepted until Election Day
 - June 4 - Last day to Absentee vote without a special circumstance
 - June 9 - Election Day



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