

Unity College Transitional Housing Community Proposal

June 12, 2023

June 12, 2023

This proposal envisions leasing the Unity College campus at 90 Quaker Hill Road in Unity, Maine for use as a transitional housing campus. Currently, MaineHousing has contracts with two (2) hotels in Southern Maine: the Comfort Inn in South Portland, with 125 rooms for individuals, and the Comfort Inn in Saco, with 100 rooms for families (up to 300 individuals).

The Unity campus can provide transitional housing for 600 individuals for less than it costs to shelter 300 people at the Saco hotel or 125 at the South Portland one. The cost savings alone are reason to explore this further.

Utilizing the Unity College campus to house people who are circumstantially homeless would represent significant cost savings over these hotel models while also offering superior infrastructure.

While this proposal is being submitted by GPCOG, it represents the work and thoughtful contributions of many individuals and organizations, including the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition; Prosperity Maine; the City of Portland; GPCOG's Metro Regional Coalition, Executive Committee and member municipalities; state legislators; our congressional delegation; the Center for Regional Prosperity; the United Way of Southern Maine; Kevin Bunker of Developers Collaborative; and many representatives of state agencies and departments who have participated in conversations around this concept including: Greg Payne of GOPIF; Dan Brennan,

Adam Krea, and Lauren Bustard of MaineHousing; Julia Trujillo of DECD; Dan Chuhta of DOE; Bill Guindon of MEMA; and Bethany Hamm of DHHS.

It is the result of hundreds of conversations GPCOG has convened over the past 18 months to craft a thoughtful, systematic approach to welcome asylum seekers to Maine's community and workforce. While there are many populations in need of housing assistance in Maine, we have focused on solutions for this population due to the large number of asylum seekers Maine has already seen and the global conditions that indicate these geographic population shifts will be a continuing trend for years to come.

Early on in our research, we identified the "Transitional Housing Campus" as an ideal model for doing this work. By co-locating transitional housing with community space where people can gather and receive trainings, education, and services that help connect them to systems, we can create efficiencies that save money

for municipalities, service providers, and the State while also more quickly integrating people into their new communities. The Unity College campus, which is currently under-utilized, provides a great opportunity to pilot this model in Maine and provide much needed housing that will free up resources for other populations and uses.

The campus resources – gymnasium, fields, trails, conference and meeting rooms, worship and gathering space, wellness center, public library – provide a healthier environment and will allow for more comprehensive services on-site.

The all-inclusive annual lease, at \$7.8 million, can provide transitional housing and meals for 600 people on a 224-acre campus with amenities that far surpass what is available in the hotels.

In addition to having nine (9) residential halls, all with laundry rooms, common areas, and kitchenettes, the Unity campus has athletic facilities, recreational space, and walking trails; a public library; a full-service dining hall; offices, classrooms, and conference rooms; space for worship services and community gatherings; computer labs; Internet/Wi-Fi; a wellness center; a 24/7 public safety office; and more.

The lease scoped in this proposal is for the full campus with access to all buildings and green spaces, technology, Wi-Fi, dining services, public safety, maintenance, groundskeeping, and plowing, included. Other arrangements may be possible but would need to be negotiated.

Services similar to those being provided by Catholic Charities in Saco and Preble Street in South Portland can be provided on site in Unity at a projected cost of \$7 per person per day.

The Unity College campus is currently available, so a lease could be executed with reasonable speed. There are still details to work out, of course, and none of this can happen without assistance from the State, but GPCOG stands ready to work with all parties to help get this over the finish line.

We look forward to discussing this proposal with you further and assisting you as necessary to bring it to fruition.

Sincerely,



Belinda Ray, Director of Strategic Partnerships
GPCOG



Utilizing existing college campuses for transitional housing makes a lot of sense, because they are designed to be communities in full for their residents, many of whom do not have their own transportation.

Communities working together to build shared and sustainable prosperity

970 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 201 • Portland, Maine, 04103 • Telephone (207) 774-9891 • www.gpcog.org

Proposal: Lease Unity College (90 Quaker Hill Road, Unity) for use as a transitional housing community for asylum seekers.

Target Population: Single asylum seekers and families with children under 4
(to minimize community/school impacts in the short-term)

Capacity: 600 individuals

Room & Board: \$36/person/day

Cost Savings: \$139/person/day over South Portland
Comfort Inn model (singles)



\$38/person/day over Saco Comfort Inn
model (families)



Annual Savings

Housing 600 individuals/year
with Unity model would save:

\$30.6 MM/year

over South Portland hotel model

\$8.1 MM/year

over Saco hotel model

NOTE: All numbers for South Portland/Saco Comfort Inn based on current contracts with MaineHousing.

Unity College Campus

- 224 Acres
- Activities Building: gymnasium, weight room, locker rooms, multi-purpose rooms
- Classroom, lab, and administration buildings
- Offices + conference rooms
- Cross country + walking trails
- Athletic fields
- Public library
- Dining hall
- Wellness Center
- Nine (9) Residence Halls



Residence Halls

- 1 (4) Cottages (1,024 SF each)
- 2 Maplewood (6,800 SF)
- 3 Cianchette (19,769 SF)
- 4 Clifford (17,800 SF)
- 5 Unity 2 (17,800)
- 6 Unity 3 (18,200)
- 7 Wood Hall (14,121 SF)
- 8 Eastview (11,611)
- 9 Westview (9,640 SF)

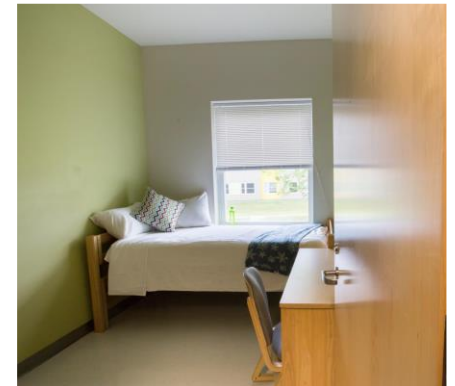
Capacity:
600 Individuals



Residence Halls



- Private rooms with beds, dressers, desks, closets
- Room configuration varies with single and double occupancy rooms, and some units set-up suite style
- All halls have common rooms, kitchenettes, and bathrooms with toilets/sinks/showers
- All halls have laundry facilities



All Inclusive Lease - \$7.8 million*

- Furnished rooms for 600 individuals
- Access to all buildings (155,000 SF)
- 224 acres (trails, fields, open space)
- Wifi Internet access with IT support 40hrs/week
- Technology on site
- Public Safety 24/7
- Electricity & Fuel
- Heating/Cooling & Plumbing
- Dining Services for 600 individuals
- Public Library
- Gymnasium, weight room
- Waste Services & Recycling
- Common Area Custodial Service
- Mowing/Plowing/Groundskeeping
- Maintenance (repair and replace)
- Insurance

***Current Saco hotel lease (with meals) = \$7.97 million for 300 individuals**


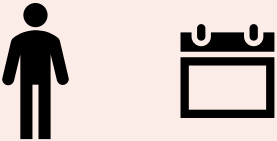
Lease Cost Breakdown


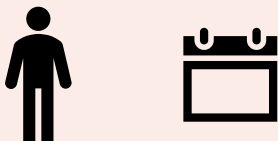
Item	Notes	Cost
Access to all buildings and green spaces, furnished, technology, etc.	155000 SF + 224 acres	\$3,400,000
Internet/Campus wi-fi	IT support available 40 hours/week	\$150,000
Public Safety	Office on campus, 24/7 presence	\$300,000
Dining service*	Full dining service, 3 meals per day (Mon-Fri), 2 meals per day (Sat, Sun)	\$3,942,000
TOTAL	\$13k/pp/year or \$36/pp/day	\$7,792,000

**If census is consistently above 500 individuals, there is potential for additional savings in dining costs.*

Current Saco hotel lease (with meals) = \$7.97 million for 300 individuals

Room & Board Cost Comparison

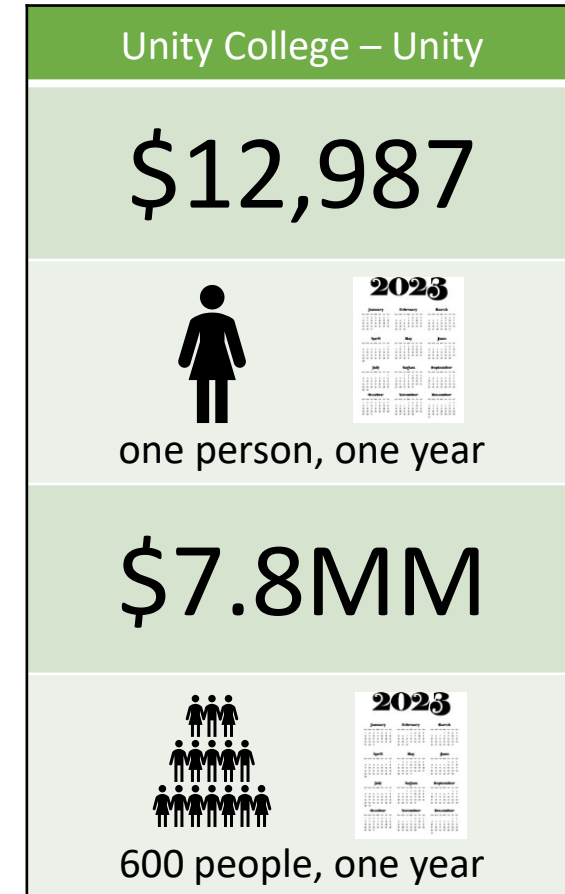
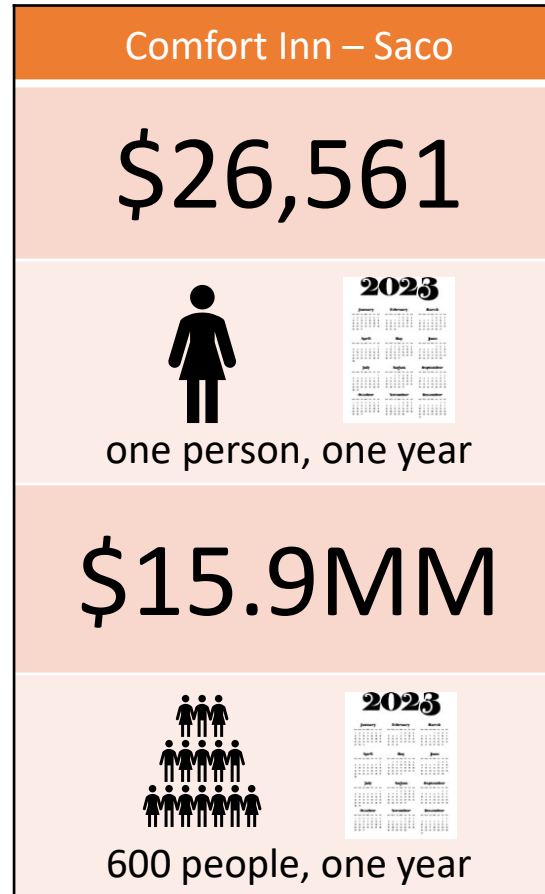
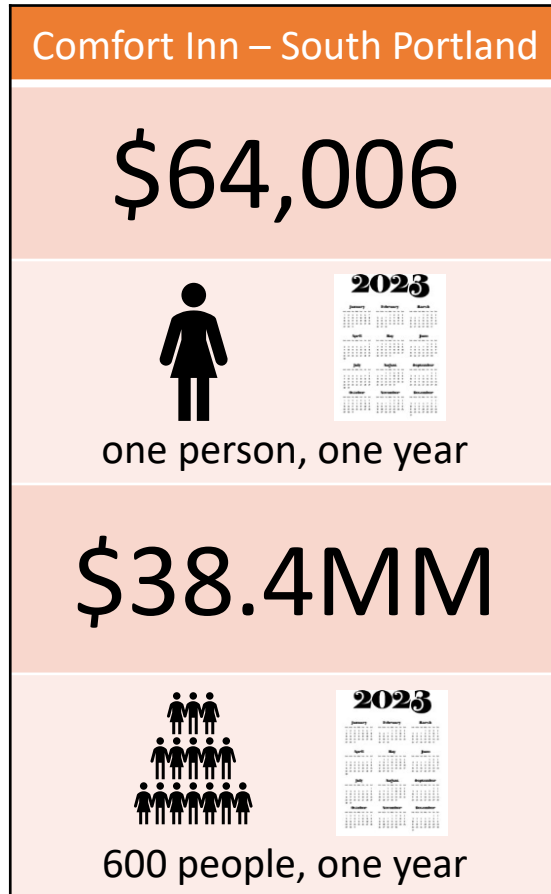
Comfort Inn – South Portland	
\$5,334	
	
one person, one month	
\$175	
	
one person, one day	

Comfort Inn – Saco	
\$2,213	
	
one person, one month	
\$73	
	
one person, one day	

Unity College – Unity	
\$1,082	
	
one person, one month	
\$36	
	
one person, one day	

NOTE: All numbers for South Portland/Saco Comfort Inn based on 2022-2023 contracts with MaineHousing. Numbers provided by MaineHousing and City of Portland.

Annual Room & Board Cost Comparison by Model



NOTE: All numbers for South Portland/Saco Comfort Inn based on 2022-2023 contracts with MaineHousing. Numbers provided by MaineHousing and City of Portland.

Cost of Services on Site

- Costs at the two MaineHousing Comfort Inn models range from \$8 (Saco, 300 people) to \$15 (South Portland, 125 people) per person, per day.
- Given the infrastructure and amenities available on-site (gym, recreational areas, walking trails, open space, library, laundry, computer labs, space for worship, gatherings, conferences, presentations, interviews, etc.), and the proposed target population, providing similar services at similar staff-to-resident ratios in Unity would likely come in at or below the \$8 per person, per day rate.
- This cost estimate reflects the facilities available on campus in Unity and the obvious efficiencies achieved by co-locating a larger number of people.



Scoping Services on Site: Resources

While the services for Unity have not yet been scoped, the individuals and organizations listed below have extensive experience in this field and/or region and could assist in identifying key service providers and putting together a thoughtful and comprehensive plan.

- Kristen Dow & Aaron Geyer - City of Portland
- Mufalo Chitam, Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
- Charlie Gauvin, Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
- Claude Rwaganje, Prosperity Maine
- Michelle Lamm, Greater Portland Family Promise
- Julie Allaire, Catholic Charities
- Martha Stein, Hope Acts
- Cullen Ryan, Community Housing of Maine
- Quality Housing Coalition
- Jewish Action Maine
- Maine Council of Churches
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
- Capital Area New Mainers Project
- Maine Homeless Response System Service Hub 3
- Heart of Maine United Way
- United Way of Southern Maine

Community Preparedness

- It will be important to have proactive discussions with stakeholders in Unity to ensure the most welcoming environment and the smoothest transition from college campus to transitional housing campus.
- Focusing on single asylum seekers and families with children under 4 will minimize impacts to the school system.
- Community impacts could include increased calls for emergency services, and it would certainly behoove the community to have access to cultural brokerage.
- To smooth the transition, a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) could be proffered to the town of Unity. The institution itself (Unity College) is a nonprofit and does not pay property taxes in Unity, so a PILOT would surely be appreciated and could help the town cover any newly incurred expenses.

GPCOG is ready and willing to continue to convene discussions around the use of Unity College for transitional housing as needed to get this across the finish line.



Please feel free to contact us with questions. We
look forward to discussing this opportunity further.

Belinda Ray
Director of Strategic Partnerships
Greater Portland Council of Governments
bray@gpcog.org
207.671.4000

GPCOG
GREATER PORTLAND
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

June 12, 2023