PACTS Executive Committee Agenda

February 4, 2020
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

GPCOG Office - 970 Baxter Boulevard, 2nd Floor, Portland
Conference Call Number: 515-604-9300, Passcode: 415821

1. Welcome – Matt Sturgis, Chairman

2. Acceptance of January 7, 2020 meeting minutes
Note that the minutes are included as Attachment A, and the Community Transportation Leaders materials are included as Attachments B and C.

3. Public Comment
Residents are welcome to provide up to three minutes of public comment on any issue, including items on the agenda.

4. Staff Report (Attachment D) – 5 minutes

5. Overview of Transit Funding – 15 minutes

Staff Report
The Committee will receive a presentation on the sources of funding for transit in the region, as well as the use of those funds. The discussion will help inform PACTS’ future decision-making on transportation funding prioritization process and the selection of transit investments for 2021.

Proposed Action: For information only.
6. State of the Region Project (Attachment E) – 15 minutes

Staff Report
On March 25, 2020 GPCOG will host its first ‘State of the Region’ event. The event will also precede the 2020 series of subregional meetings to gather input from municipal and community leaders for Transit Tomorrow and the update of Destination 2040, the region’s long-range transportation plan.

The State of the Region will present a wide-ranging look at how our region is doing on a variety of issues, like housing, economy, workforce development, climate and the environment. At the center of making progress on so many of these priorities is transportation.

PACTS members will provide input on the proposed organizing theme of the event: the region needs more transportation funding. See Attachment E for the proposed outline of the State of the Region.

*Proposed Action: Review, modify as needed, and endorse a theme for the 2020 State of the Region event.*

7. PACTS Bylaws Review – 15 minutes

Staff Report
With the PACTS/GPCOG merger approved by the PACTS Policy Committee on 1/23/20, there are some PACTS bylaws changes that are necessary. There may also be other improvements and clarifications to the bylaws that the Executive Committee may pursue. The Executive Committee will be asked to decide the topic areas it wishes to revise. At the next Executive Committee meeting, PACTS will workshop proposed changes. These proposed changes will be drafted and presented to the Policy Committee for adoption in April.

In ascending order of complexity staff has identified these possible bylaw changes by topic area:
1. Quick fixes necessary to reflect the merger
2. Reorganization of the bylaws to make the bylaws more understandable
3. Addressing inconsistencies and filling silences regarding appointments, terms, and selection of officers
4. Updating quorum requirements
5. Defining the responsibilities and powers of each of the committees, including, possibly revisiting the division of responsibilities between the Policy Committee and the Executive Committee

*Proposed Action: Identify the bylaws improvements to develop from the above list.*

8. **Portland Transportation Center Relocation - 45 minutes**

**Staff Report**
MaineDOT is leading a study to evaluate the existing Portland Transportation Center from a customer and transportation system perspective. The principal stakeholders who have participated in the study include Concord Coach Lines, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, the City of Portland, and METRO.

MaineDOT will provide the PACTS Executive Committee with an overview of the study purpose and schedule, and discuss the alternatives being studied. Alternatives include separating the intercity bus and rail stations; co-locating the intermodal transportation center at another location on the mainline; and co-locating the intermodal transportation center at the current Portland Transportation Center location on Thompson’s Point.

Today, the PACTS Executive Committee will decide if and how PACTS might provide input to the project. Possible options include:

1. Provide no comments but keep informed about the Portland Transportation Center study.
2. Provide feedback on the region’s needs and the proposed alternatives for MaineDOT and the major stakeholders to review and incorporate.

*Proposed Action: Decide whether PACTS will provide input to be incorporated into MaineDOT’s study of the Portland Transportation Center.*

9. Adjourn

**Upcoming Meetings:**
- February 6, 9:00 a.m. – PACTS Planning Committee
- February 11, 8:30 a.m. – PACTS Technical Committee
- February 13, 9:30 a.m. – PACTS Transit Committee
- February 25, 1:00 p.m. – PACTS Transit Committee Workshop
## PACTS Executive Committee

### MINUTES

**January 7, 2020**

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

### In attendance:

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<tr>
<th>Committee Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Brickett</td>
<td>MaineDOT/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope Cahan, Vice Chair</td>
<td>Falmouth/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Erin Courtney</td>
<td>Maine Turnpike Authority/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Eric Dudley</td>
<td>Westbrook/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Greg Jordan</td>
<td>METRO/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Matt Sturgis, Chair</td>
<td>Cape Elizabeth/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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### Guests

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<td>Syed Ahmed</td>
<td>FTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denise Beck</td>
<td>METRO</td>
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<td>Hank Berg</td>
<td>Casco Bay Island Transit District</td>
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<td>Chris Branch</td>
<td>Portland/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td>Peter Butler</td>
<td>FTA</td>
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<td>Brandon Burns</td>
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<td>Chris Chop</td>
<td>Maine Medical Center</td>
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<td>Robert Currie</td>
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<td>Tony Donovan</td>
<td>Maine Rail Transit Coalition</td>
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<td>Theo Holtwijk</td>
<td>Falmouth</td>
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<td>Bruce Hyman</td>
<td>Portland</td>
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<td>Janel Knightly</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<td>Peter Mills</td>
<td>Maine Turnpike Authority</td>
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<td>Kate O'Brien</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
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<td>Patricia Quinn</td>
<td>NNEPRA</td>
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<td>Marty Rooney</td>
<td>MaineDOT</td>
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<td>Tony Scavuzzo</td>
<td>BSOOB Transit</td>
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<td>Leah Sirmin</td>
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<td>Kate Snyder</td>
<td>Portland/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
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<td><strong>GPCOG</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephanie Carver</td>
<td>Planning Director/Interim Transportation Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristina Egan</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryan Neale</td>
<td>Transportation Program Manager</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Roberts</td>
<td>Transportation Engineer</td>
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<td>Sara Zografos</td>
<td>Transportation Director</td>
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1. **Welcome – Matt Sturgis, Chair**
   Matt opened the meeting at 8:41 a.m. He thanked Sara Zografos for her work. Brief introductions were done around the table.

2. **Acceptance of 10.01.19 meeting minutes**
   Hope Cahan made a motion to accept the minutes, and Greg Jordan seconded. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Matt invited any members of the public to comment at this time. Tony Donovan asked if there would be an opportunity for the public to comment on specific agenda items. Matt told him that the opportunity for public comments was now. Tony referenced agenda item 7, Portland Transportation Center (PTC) Relocation Analysis. He said that the impact of a 15-minute delay only affects the route from Brunswick and Freeport. People disembarking in Portland will not be affected. He said the proposed cost of moving the PTC is $30 - $40 million; the park & ride in wells is a $29 million proposal; the Falmouth park & ride is $8 million. The State is estimating a total cost of $2 million to connect Lewiston-Auburn with rail. Tony said he is concerned that movement of the PTC is not the best investment relative to the Lewiston-Auburn connection. Bifurcating of bus and train modes is a concern. Given the need to combine all modes of transportation, it seems odd to consider bifurcating. Tony suggested that rail be included in the “Expands Mobility” section of the Transit Tomorrow draft vision
statement. He suggested attention be given to connecting downtown Portland and downtown Lewiston.

3. Staff Report
Sara Zografos summarized the staff report included in the packet. The Technical Committee is continuing work on the collector paving analysis and different treatments given the high bids and our funding situation. The Technical Committee is also looking at the Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) program. The next round of MPI project selections are due in a month and subregions should be working to select those projects.

The Regional Traffic Management System (RTMS) Request for Proposals will be released. RTMS was rated as a high priority for PACTS. Elizabeth Roberts is working on this.

Kristina noted that the PACTS Policy Committee on January 23 will consider the merger of GPCOG and PACTS, specifically the governance phase to combine the organizations. Three members of both organizations were appointed to work on the governance phase of the merger. The GPCOG Executive Committee will be considering this on January 8. The original intent was to have this done by June so it is ahead of schedule.

The farewell party for Sara will be on January 15. We are recruiting for Sara’s position with applications closing on February 3. Attendees were asked to share the announcement which was in the Executive Director bulletin and on the GPCOG website.

Hope Cahan asked if under RTMS streetlights will be able to adjust if, for example, a pedestrian is crossing slowly or quickly. Sara said the recommendations could identify areas where such adaptive signals may be appropriate. Elizabeth said adaptive signals are a goal we are working toward. Hope said this helps with traffic flow and helps the system to meet everyone’s needs. Chris said the latest detection equipment picks up all forms of transit. Portland’s systems are set up to be adaptive systems and are in a few locations. These systems also allow for bus prioritization. The new systems are better and open up new possibilities to facilitate all modes of transportation.
4. Project List
The updated UPWP project list is included in the packet. Sara noted that most projects are complete. MaineDOT has allowed some projects (Commercial Street, Westbrook Transit Hub, Brighton Avenue) to be carried over to 2020 with no cost extensions. Staff will prepare a presentation for the January 23 Policy Committee meeting.

5. Transit Tomorrow Vision Statement
Steph Carver noted that the outreach on Transit Tomorrow has been more involved and extensive than past efforts. Five Project Advisory Committee meetings have worked on elements of the plan. The vision is aspirational but hopefully achievable and is based on feedback from the survey, events, and stakeholder meetings. The Project Advisory Committee includes a broad range of stakeholders, including business, social service, the public, transit agencies, and MaineDOT.

The 30-year vision includes improved efficiency, a system that works better for everyone, and connecting land use and public transportation. Specific goals address economic development, enhancing great places, reducing climate pollution, expanding mobility, and elevating the customer experience. Today staff is asking for the Committee’s endorsement of the vision.

Jennifer Brickett asked about public transportation as a viable alternative to automobiles. The reduction of climate pollution is more obvious. Steph responded that public transportation being competitive with cars was heard from riders and businesses and that it is about helping connect workers to businesses by providing more transportation options.

Chris Branch said that transit needs substantial subsidies to be viable and where the funds come from is a key issue. There are several other interests that compete with transit for funds. Portland, for example, is trying to build a new shelter. We need to come up with a plan for funding that will move transit forward. Reduced headways would be very helpful but there is no funding for that. Bringing people to and from the peninsula by means other than cars would be helpful.

Greg Jordan said the Transit Tomorrow project and report is necessary to define the system and is a tool to help support a campaign to the public and private sectors for increased funding. Greg also said we have to aspire to make public transit as fast or
faster than cars in dense areas at least even without a lot of additional funding. This is more challenging in less populated areas.

Hope noted that the vision statement says that public transportation is faster and more affordable than driving a car. That broad statement allows us to continue to refine the details and when and where certain approaches make sense. The inclusion of the wording “funded sustainably” indicates that we’ll look at coming up with a plan for funding and use of funds for all of the transit agencies. Hope said she is happy with the vision statement being broad and we can work on the details later.

Steph said that the Transit Tomorrow work is moving forward with details. Recommendations are expected to come back to PACTS in the spring, with the plan to be adopted in late fall 2020.

Matt Sturgis noted that the vision statement is aspirational and appropriately broad and is a job well done.

Hope Cahan offered a motion to endorse the draft vision statement, and Greg Jordan seconded. The draft vision statement was endorsed unanimously.

Matt welcomed the FTA Region 1 guests who took a moment to briefly introduce themselves and thank the Committee for the opportunity to visit.

9. Transportation Improvement Program Funding Update
Matt asked that this item be taken out of order and there were no objections.

Sara said that last year, project bids came in at 30% to 60% over estimated and programmed funding amounts. An ad hoc emergency meeting was held in late spring with MaineDOT. The decision was made to shift some projects out a few years to fund the deficits that were known for 2019. Projects with deficits were brought up to engineer’s estimates for funding. The PACTS policy is that if projects come back with engineer’s estimates or bids over the programmed amount, a municipality can request up to 10% of the original programmed amount if that amount is available in the holding WIN. The rest of the deficit is the responsibility of the municipality.
Sara said that last year was a unique situation. Bids were high across the board and it was decided to take a comprehensive approach to the entire program. Part of today's conversation is to get a sense of where municipalities are with programmed estimates and bids. We have received a few requests for additional funding which staff was not comfortable bringing forward without this larger discussion. This also ties to Chris' specific request regarding the Brighton Avenue roundabout.

Chris Branch said that Portland has three projects out for bid this year. One bid came in right around the estimated level, one was slightly over and only had one bidder. The third only had one bid and came in close to the 2019 estimate. The feeling is that construction prices are going up around 10% this year. A leading contractor did not bid on some projects, either because they are at capacity or they are only selectively bidding on projects. Smaller projects with many contractors may be fine. Larger projects may be a challenge as contractors know there is little competition and may raise prices. We are likely to have an issue again and may need to use the same approach as last year, but hopefully be more proactive than reactionary.

Sara said this issue is timely because over the next six months PACTS has to select 2020-2021 Municipal Partnership Initiative, 2022 collector paving, and 2023 federally funded capital projects. If we need to consider shifting resources, we should do it now before projects are selected. Sara asked if the Committee would like PACTS to reconvene the same group that met last year or to move forward with the traditional funding selections.

Eric Dudley advised that we proceed cautiously. He noted that crude oil prices and liquid asphalt escalators are up. Even bids that have come in may go higher. Sara said we added 30% to all collector paving projects last year.

Sara suggested we assemble a working group to address this situation. She recommended that PACTS subregions move forward with selecting MPI projects. There is no harm in selecting projects which can be reconsidered if necessary. The issue relates more to federal funding because that is extended further into the future.

Marty Rooney suggested that we move forward cautiously. MaineDOT has had to reset estimates twice in 20 years. PACTS altered its policy last year and used federal funds to make up for shortfalls rather than municipalities. If this is the new reality, we may need
a new and sustainable policy. MaineDOT is happy to participate in a group. Staff and PACTS committees should define the group’s purview and how municipalities are represented. He noted that some municipalities felt slighted last time around based on which projects were selected.

Sara noted that Elizabeth Roberts will be the lead staff on this going forward and Sara would help to bring Elizabeth up to speed on what transpired last year and PACTS’ policy and potential changes.

8. Community Transportation Leaders Presentations
Matt Sturgis welcomed the Community Transportation Leaders (CTL) members. Sara gave a brief introduction of the CTL program and her involvement with it.

Zoe Miller thanked PACTS for supporting the CTL initiative and the members and guests for the opportunity to present. She noted that PACTS adopted a new Public Involvement Plan this past fall and a part of that was to better engage underrepresented communities, including older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and people of color. The CTL members represent populations who have shared transportation barriers but are underrepresented in decision making. A transit system that works better for our most vulnerable populations works better for everyone. Engagement that works better for underrepresented communities also works better for everyone. Providing multiple opportunities for engagement works better for everyone.

We need to build bridges for meaningful involvement of underrepresented populations. The process started two years ago with the creation of the mobility liaison positions. She introduced GPCOG mobility liaisons Mireille Kabongo and Karen Perry. Mobility liaisons helped to develop, design, implement, and find funding for the CTL training.

The hope is that the CTL presentations will intrigue and inspire people. Participants have moved from complaining about challenges to better understanding the issues and contributing to solutions. Participants would like to be part of the solution, whether it’s serving on committees or being involved in the roll out of new technologies.

Mireille introduced herself. She said that all people should have access to opportunities and that people who are unable to drive face unique challenges in getting
to work, school, grocery stores, and medical appointments. Mireille said she is here because she needs an efficient public transportation system.

The CTL groups gave brief presentations on specific topics. A summary of the topics and list of group members is available as a separate document.

Group 1 suggested that all bus routes be extended for one more night run. This would improve access to housing, groceries, and tourist attractions. A 15- or 20-minute gap between buses would reduce wait times and improve access to the community.

Group 2 focused on transportation barriers for new immigrants. The group noted that new immigrants are arriving all the time and it is a process to learn English or improve their skills. Providing information about transit in other languages can help immigrants integrate and connect. Rules, such as being asked to move to accommodate disabled riders, can seem like discrimination if they are not fully understood. A solution is to provide information, such as the METRO map and schedule, in many languages and include fliers in different languages inside buses.

Group 3 notes that some bus stops have high volumes of vulnerable populations but lack shelter from the elements. The group thanked METRO for its ongoing efforts to add shelters but said that may more are needed. A possible solution is a public-private partnership across the system. This could follow the Chicago model which uses advertising funds. Mireille noted that disabled or elderly riders have trouble standing but are unable to sit if stops do not have shelters.

Group 4 focused on the built environment in the region. Brick sidewalks are unsafe in the winter. The group noted that walking is the most sustainable form of transportation and improving access to sidewalks and intersections improves access to the community. The group would like to see a comprehensive approach to addressing challenges in the built environment for seniors and those with disabilities. The group recommended that the region consider adopting a Vision Zero goal of zero pedestrian fatalities.

Group 5 focused on expanding the use of transit planning apps. Transit and Google apps are helpful, but many people do not know how to use them or are confused or overwhelmed by them. As a result, many people are still using paper schedules.
Possible solutions include instructions on using the apps or having riders teach other riders how to use them.

Group 6 focused on expanding transit coverage and options for communities outside Portland. Options in Gray, New Gloucester, and Cumberland would enable to connect to Windham, Portland, and Falmouth, and make other connections. People may be dependent on friends and can go weeks without getting out into the community. Many people cannot afford Uber and Lyft. One group member mentioned that she could not take an overnight job due to transportation issues. It was noted that the combined populations of South Portland, Gray, and New Gloucester is nearly as much as Portland and these communities need transit. A recommendation is to have South Portland Bus Service Routes 24A and 24B run hourly and on weekends.

Group 7 noted that seniors do not know where or how to get information on public transportation. The move to the electronic fare system is creating confusion. The Southern Maine Mobility Guide could be distributed to more places that seniors visit. Providing coaches could help older adults and people with disabilities use transit. A solution is a travel training program, including videos on how to use apps and testing for the electronic fare system.

GPCOG mobility liaison Derek O’Brien offered closing comments. He noted that he is a daily transit rider and is active on transit agency boards. The CTL participants are full of energy and ideas and are eager to help. They are active users with critical insights. His personal goal is to make the transit system better for one more person and the overall goal is to make our system work for people.

Greg Jordan thanked everyone for their input and asked how these views can best be formally and regularly incorporated into PACTS’ planning process. Zoe the PACTS Public Involvement Plan calls for involving underrepresented populations on an ongoing basis. This could be done with dedicated seats on existing committees or with a separate committee. The important thing is to involve people in decision making and there are models around the country that could be informative. Greg suggested that the PACTS Executive or Policy Committees review options. It was suggested that people in leadership shadow people with transportation challenges to better understand and appreciate their challenges.
Matt Sturgis noted the importance of these comments and thanked Zoe and the CTL group. Incorporating these perspectives throughout the region is a stated goal of PACTS and one that we want to move forward.

6. Transportation Improvement Program Funding Request

Sara said the City of Portland’s request relates to the Brighton Avenue project which received $1.2 million of additional funding last year. The engineer’s estimate is above that amount and the City is asking to cover the deficit by moving funds from the existing Washington Avenue project which was funded from the holding WIN three years ago, a $1.4 million project.

Chris Branch said the Brighton Avenue project is out to bid. Indications are that it will be around $1.9 million, and the funding is $1.2 million. The goal is to use only the funds that are necessary. If the request is approved, the Washington Avenue project would possibly be rescoped and go back into the mix for future consideration of funding. If the Brighton Avenue project does not need additional funding, it would not be used, but the City would like to know funds are available for Brighton Avenue.

Eric Dudley said the original allocation for the Brighton Avenue double roundabout was just under $2 million in 2015. Eric said he expressed at the time that a double roundabout could not be done for $2 million and may not have supported the project at the time. Chris said the project is no longer a double roundabout.

Sara said that in 2017, during PACTS’ consideration of federally funded projects, the Washington Avenue project fell just below the funding amount. The Policy Committee decided to save up enough money from the holding WIN to fund the Washington Avenue project at whatever time the funds became available. The local match was 25%. At the time of the vote, the Washington Avenue project was thought to be important enough to save funds for. This drained the holding WIN below the required reserve amount. It has been built back up to some extent. The target for the funding amount was likely hit in 2017 or 2018.

Sara said holding WIN funds are available now. In response to a question from Chris, Sara said that PACTS at the time had a large amount of funds in the holding WIN and was encouraged by MaineDOT to spend it down past the reserve amount. In response
to a question from Eric, Sara said the holding WIN as of November 2019, minus the reserve, has just under $714,000 available ($650,000 federal, $63,000 state).

Chris said he did not want to use the holding WIN funds and felt it was more appropriate for Portland to prioritize itself the projects for which it has funds.

Eric asked about the status of the Washington Avenue project and Chris said it is in final design. Chris said the Brighton Avenue roundabout project is ready for this construction season, two steps ahead of Washington Avenue. Sara said that PROJEX shows that $120,000 is available for right of way and $14,000 of this had been spent. Chris said that is accurate. Sara said the Washington Avenue project received addition funding of $40,000 in the process last year. The Washington Avenue project is estimated at $1.8M now.

Marty Rooney said that MaineDOT’s Preliminary Design Review (PDR) policy discourages, at least at the staff level, MPOs from funding complex projects for construction without PDRs. This project is an example of that. The project was funded at $2.5 million 5 or 6 years ago and that money has sat there since. Complex projects with numerous stakeholders only get more expensive when they go out to bid. If it is a priority for the region it should go forward. Marty said he likes Portland’s approach but does not want to see a viable project in Portland cancelled if there is holding WIN money that will sit for a few years. The project is out to bid, but estimates could come in high and Portland may have to come back with a request for additional funds. Thus, a final remedy may not be possible today.

Chris said bids are expected in a few weeks and that an Environmental Protection Agency lawsuit was involved and delayed the project significantly. Chris said Portland can come back to PACTS later when bids are in but they would like to know if the shifting of funds is something the Committee will consider.

Greg Jordan said the Brighton Avenue project is very important from a transit perspective as it help to move multiple bus routes through the area quicker.

Eric clarified that he supports getting the project completed but is not clear on how to do it. The project is important for the region for several reasons. He supports Portland’s request but is concerned about losing the Washington Avenue project,
which is also important for the region. Other projects in the region may not be as important as these two.

Matt said allowing the City of Portland to reallocate funds based on priorities seems reasonable. The item could be carried over to next month, or a meeting could be added, to address this when bids have come in. Kristina asked if this issue could be considered in the context of the working group discussed earlier. The group generally agreed that it was outside the purview of that working group.

Marty said that MaineDOT will need a definitive process to give the City guidance. He noted that bids open on January 22.

Sara said it will be important for the Committee to understand how much money can be taken from the Washington Avenue project before it becomes non-viable. We would not want the City to have to come back to PACTS and ask for more funding for Washington Avenue. Chris said this can’t be answered until more is known. The bid for Brighton Avenue is likely to be around $5 million and there may not be enough in the Washington Avenue budget to cover it.

Matt Sturgis made a motion to enable the use of the Washington Avenue funds for the completion of the Brighton Avenue roundabout, with the understanding that if funds are spent so that the Washington Avenue project becomes untenable, the Washington Avenue project will go back into the mix for future consideration. Chris Branch seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Sara confirmed that we had a quorum earlier and that still applies once it applies.

The group confirmed that the Chair is able to offer motions.

Chris said Keith Gray will be the contact at the City while he is out at the end of January.

7. **Portland Transportation Center Relocation Analysis**
Kristina said that MaineDOT is leading a study to assess whether to relocate the Portland Transportation Center (PTC). Options are to keep everything where it is, to move Concord Coach Lines and NNEPRA onto the peninsula, and to bifurcate Concord Coach Lines from the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). A lot
of analysis has been done. Many of the stakeholders are in the room, including NNEPRA, METRO, the City of Portland, MaineDOT, and PACTS. Like the widening of the Turnpike, this is an issue of regional significance. PACTS is not leading the study but may want to weigh in on it. The question today is if and how PACTS would like to weigh in. PACTS has been monitoring developments. The materials are not yet public and there has been no public engagement yet. PACTS has offered to be a vehicle for public outreach. Options are to have a full presentation from MaineDOT to the Policy Committee and stop there, or to decide to weigh in either softly or more directly. Staff would like to offer the opportunity to get a better understanding of what the study means for transit in the region, for Concord Coach Customers, for NNEPRA customers, and for the region as a whole. The study has not come before this body yet. MaineDOT may be making recommendations as early as February.

Chris said that if the group wants to be involved, there is a need for a presentation. The Committee would reserve the option to weigh in formally after the presentation. There was general agreement on this. Chris said the City of Portland does not have a position at this time.

Kristina noted that there is not a clear path forward and it would be helpful for the group to understand the different perspectives.

The group opted for a presentation by MaineDOT with the intention of providing some real-time feedback to MaineDOT. The group also reserved the option to weigh in more formally with written comments.

10. Funding Prioritization Request for Proposals
Sara noted that the Committee discussed at its October meeting putting together a request for proposals for a consultant to assist in develop a funding prioritization framework for Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration funds. The RFP is included in the packet. This is an opportunity for the Committee to review the RFP and provide comments or approve it.

Chris Branch made a motion to approve the draft RFP, with a second by Eric Dudley. The motion passed unanimously. Matt commented that the RFP was very well done.
11. **Federal Transit Administration Updates and Discussion.**

Matt welcomed FTA Region 1 staff including Regional Administrator Peter Butler, General Engineer Syed Ahmed, Transportation Program Specialist Brandon Burns, and Community Planner and Environmental Protection Specialist Leah Sirmin.

Peter thanked the Committee for the invitation and the opportunity to hear the CTL presentations which were very impactful. He noted he appreciates hearing about the challenge that operators have in serving the diverse needs of diverse communities.

Peter acknowledged how successful the region is in attracting federal discretionary funds, including grants for mobility management, bus replacement, ferries and ferry facilities. Those funds are well spent and speaks to how well the state is able to cooperate and work together to prioritize and address needs. Peter thanked the region for being a great host during FTA’s visit.

The federal transportation appropriations bill is likely to include a 2% increase in formula funds. The Lo-No program for electric and low emission buses has a sizeable increase and agencies are encouraged to look at this. New FTA programs include $5.5 million for innovation and new technology, which Portland may be able to capitalize on, and $8.5 million for areas of persistent poverty. He did not have details on either of these two new programs but will share additional information as it becomes available.

Peter noted that the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans deadline is July 20, 2020. There will be a workshop in Providence, RI on January 15. MaineDOT is providing leadership to transit operators and others have opted out.

Leah said that FHWA and FTA do a certification review of all large MPOs every four years. Portland became a large MPO in the 2010 Census. The first review was in 2016 and there will be another this year. FTA will work with staff to schedule a visit. FTA will also reach out to PACTS committees and the public to see how the planning process is working. The site visit will be in the spring of 2020.

Peter said that some transit agencies have triennial reviews this year, including Casco Bay Lines. MaineDOT’s state management review is in late August.

The Tri-State Conference is in Woodstock, VT this year.
Peter thanked the group again for the opportunity to be a part of the conversation and for being gracious hosts when the FTA Acting Administrator visited.

Transit funding apportionment tables should be published very soon. The funding will be available in TRAMS by early February.

Greg Jordan asked how the system safety information due on July 20 is submitted. Peter said that FTA staff is available to provide comment on it.

Matt thanked Peter and the staff for the support they provide to the region.

In response to a question from Peter, Leah said that FTA Region 1 has 17 large MPOs under its jurisdiction. Portland and Nashua crossed the 200,000 population threshold in the last Census. Being a large MPO brings a lot more funding into the region.

**Adjourn.**

Chris Branch offered a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Greg Jordan. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.
COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION LEADERS

PRESENTATION OF IDEAS & CONCERNS

9:30-10:30AM, JANUARY 7, 2020
STATE OF MAINE ROOM, PORTLAND CITY HALL

• Welcome: Zoe Miller, GPCOG’s Director of Community Engagement
• Opening: Mireille Kabongo, GPCOG Mobility Liaison
• Presentations:
  o Group 1 – Patty Averill, Cecile Bitondo, Alfred Nyarwaya, Susan Fowler
  o Group 2 – Guy Mployi, Bénédicte Wonganombe
  o Group 3 – Bukuru Mutima, Patrick Nyenge (Mireille Kabongo)
  o Group 4 – Ed Ashley, Mike King, Dave Lawrence, Bud Buzzell, Abdigafar Said
  o Group 5 – Leann Brionez, Karen Perry
  o Group 6 – Jayne Chandler, Tyty Chila, Becky Johnson
  o Group 7 – Emily Murray, Cheryl Oldfield
• Closing Remarks: Derek O’Brien, GPCOG Mobility Liaison
• Q&A with PACTS Executive Committee and guests
THE INAUGURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAM

PRESENTATION OF IDEAS & CONCERNS FROM PARTICIPANTS

JANUARY 7, 2020

GPCOG
GREATER PORTLAND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PACTS
PORTLAND AREA COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
INTRODUCTION

THE INAUGURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION LEADERS TRAINING PROGRAM

In Fall of 2019, GPCOG staff worked with 23 engaged and energized participants who are learning about how to get involved with transportation planning and decision-making. The training is part of a larger effort by GPCOG and PACTS to advance the inclusion of underrepresented communities – including older adults, people with disabilities, and people of color. The pilot, including development of a curriculum for future use, was made possible with special funding from the Transit Planning 4 All initiative. Training program goals include:

- Supporting community members to gain the knowledge and tools needed for meaningful participation in transportation planning and decision-making.
- Providing a peer-to-peer network to assist participants in acting on the goals they set.
- Enabling decision-makers to hear directly from participants about the transportation needs and experiences of underrepresented communities.
- Acting as a gateway for participation in transportation decision-making.

The Community Transportation Leaders training participants are excited to present to PACTS about their top transportation concerns – including why they matter and their ideas for solutions. The presentation will be followed by time for PACTS members to ask questions and share responses. What follows herein is a written record of these presentations, as well as additional concerns and ideas from participants.
1. EXPANDING FREQUENCY - METRO BUS #8

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Patty Averill, Cecile Bitondo, Alfred Nyarwaya, Susan Fowler

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:

We believe all the bus routes could be extended to put one more run on at night. This small change could help many residents to have time to schedule work or plan for family times or activities in the Portland area.

Our group would like to talk about the METRO Route 8 – the peninsula route. The first thing that would be helpful would be for the bus to run until 8-9pm. Right now, the last bus is at 5:30pm and earlier on weekends.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

Bus 8 has become the busiest bus even beating out the mall in the last few years as our city grows in new businesses and residents. The City of Portland is the place to be.

Bus 8 is the only bus that goes to Franklin Towers, 100 State Street, Harbor Terrace, North School, and Pine Street – all home to senior and handicapped residents. The population of each place is between 400-500 people.

Also, Bus 8 goes to Maine Med and Mercy hospitals and projects on Spring and Danforth St. where 100 or so families of low income live.

With Paul’s Food Center gone, the seniors and handicapped residents now need to go to Hannaford and Trader Joe’s – the only grocery stores for this area of town.
With all of these changes to our city, it’s time to look at some needed changes for transportation for more residents of Portland. And when visitors to our city go around town they want to see the Old Port, the Victoria Mansion, they need the Route 8 as well. We would support a bi-directional circulator loop for Route 8.

PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:
We believe that several changes would help the rider population:

- Adding more buses to the routes so that busses come every 15 to 20 minutes. This will mean less wait time in bad weather. Another option is to use double-buses that are used in bigger cities around new England.

- Running the busses later so that workers, shoppers and people who live downtown have safe access to the community, and reliable transportation home.

More service will mean new riders who can help pay for the changes. Advertisements for rent inside the buses could also help generate revenue.

Thank you for your time and for listening to us. We are really happy that METRO is demonstrating interest in making changes to bus service on the peninsula so that people can access the community safely.
CTL CONCERNS & IDEAS

2. TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS FACED BY NEW IMMIGRANTS

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Guy Mpoyi, Bénédicte Wonganombe

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:

We are here to speak today about transportation barriers of immigrants, especially when first arriving here. The specific barrier is access to information about METRO and RTP, and how and when they operate, in languages that new immigrants can understand.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

This is important because immigrants are arriving in Portland all the time. Immigrants want to learn and improve their English, but it is a process that takes time.

In the immediate time of arrival, and in the transition to getting established here, having access to basic information about METRO and RTP in many languages would be very helpful for immigrants getting around and getting what they need. Bénédicte will give you a couple of examples.

Example 1 – "When I first arrived here, I encountered a problem that would have been preventable if I had had access to information about RTP. I was staying in the shelter, and the rules in the shelter say that when we wake up, we must leave because they need to clean. So, when I left the shelter on that particular morning, I fell down when I was walking because the sidewalk was slippery due to the weather. If I had known I could call to request an RTP bus to..."
take me to the library, I could have avoided that walk and wouldn’t have fallen down. There are many immigrants with disabilities who need to know about the RTP bus, just like I did.”

Example 2 – “An immigrant friend of mine told me that the first time he rode the bus, when he sat down, people on the bus told him to go to the back of the bus. He didn’t understand why. He felt bad, thinking it was due to discrimination, but in reality, he didn’t know the rules of the bus. If there were information in multiple languages inside the bus about how rules (in this case, the rules about dedicated seating for people with disabilities, where my friend was sitting), it would have helped him understand why he needed to move seats, that it wasn’t discrimination, it was about maintaining space for people with disabilities on the bus.”

PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:
Solutions we believe would address this barrier include:

- Creating informational materials in many languages for new immigrants
  - Create a METRO map in multiple languages besides English
  - Create the METRO schedule in multiple languages besides English
  - Create and post flyers inside the bus explaining METRO rules (i.e., how fares work, where to sit, getting off, etc.)

- Distribute these materials at places where many immigrants go, for example:
  - General Assistance office
  - Churches (St. Dom’s parish, others)
  - Any immigrant-supporting organization

Thank you for your time and consideration of these issues. We would love to assist you however we can.
CTL CONCERNS & IDEAS

3. FINANCING STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE SYSTEM-WIDE NEED FOR METRO BUS SHELTERS

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Bukuru Mutima (presenting), Patrick Nyenge, Mireille Kabongo

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:
The issue we are here to discuss today is the need for bus shelters across the METRO bus system. The specific barrier we’re highlighting is that certain bus stops, especially where there are high volumes of vulnerable populations waiting for the bus, lack a bus shelter.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:
This is important because people need protection from intense weather conditions that are common in Maine in all seasons (snow or rain, sun and heat, wind) while waiting for the bus.

Many people—children, pregnant women, elders, people with disabilities, and many other vulnerable members of our community—have difficulties waiting too long outside, unprotected, in the elements.

This can be especially problematic at times when the bus is full. The driver says it cannot accept any more passengers, and people must wait for the next bus.
We understand that METRO is aware of this bus shelter issue, and has been taking steps to increase the number of shelters across the system over the last few years. I speak for many bus riders when I say “thank you!” for that.

However, there are still many riders waiting without shelters, and we wish financing were not a barrier to fulfilling this need.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:**

The solution we would like to see is: METRO’s development and use of a public-private partnership financing strategy for bus shelters across its system like the one I found out about, which is used by the City of Chicago.

- To manage its bus shelters, the City of Chicago has engaged in a renewable five-year contractual agreement (which it has already renewed at least once) with a private company.

- The private company provides design, installation, operation, and maintenance of certain street furniture, including bus shelters, all over the city.

- The private company also manages advertising on the bus shelters, and pays the City of Chicago a fee for the privilege of selling and maintaining advertisements in keeping with requirements described in the agreement.

- The private company’s obligation to pay fees is independent of its revenues and all other obligations under the contractual agreement.

- The contract also contains a commitment to retaining Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises for work associated with this agreement.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We would like to assist you however we can.
CTL CONCERNS & IDEAS

4. A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CREATING A SAFER PORTLAND FOR PEDESTRIANS

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Ed Ashley, Michael King, Dave Lawrence, Bud Buzzell, Abdigafar Said

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:

The barrier we are here to discuss is how the built environment—sidewalks, roadways, and intersections—in Portland is unsafe in many places for pedestrians, especially children, elders, and people with disabilities who use have visual impairment or use mobility devices.

We are grateful for the City of Portland’s process of “piggybacking” on existing development and construction projects to get sidewalks, bike paths, and other improvements built as part of those projects. But we need to go further.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

This is important for numerous reasons. Here are just a few that matter to us:

- **It’s important for elders.** Maine is one of the oldest states in the US. Our elder population will continue to get larger. Fewer people have cars. Use of sidewalks is going up.
• **It’s important for people with visual impairment.** Every trip starts and ends with walking. For me, as a person with low vision, improving walkability means adding things like audible pedestrian signals at crossings.

• **It’s important for people using wheelchairs.** Existing sidewalks in places along Congress Street are difficult to navigate in my wheelchair, forcing me to go against traffic in the street.

• **It’s important for everyone.** Kids need to get to school. People need to get to work. If we don’t get out and about, our physical health can suffer. We can become isolated, and our mental health can suffer.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:**

We want to see Portland take a more comprehensive approach to creating a safer built environment for people who walk.

We know that Portland has already adopted a “Complete Streets” policy. That is helping to guide our community’s future investments in a safer built environment.

Portland could be a real leader by adopting Vision Zero. In cities that have adopted Vision Zero, lowering vehicle speeds has been shown to reduce pedestrian fatalities dramatically.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. We are eager to assist you in pursuing these actions however we can.
5. BUILDING METRO RIDERSHIP & INCREASING RIDER CAPACITY FOR UTILIZING THE BUS

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Leeann Brionez, Karen Perry

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:
We want to talk about how to get more people using the trip planning apps. It’s great that we have the Transit and Google Apps to plan bus trips but many people have challenges in using them. We are concerned that many people — especially older adults— are not using them because they don’t know how or because they find them confusing. Riders get overwhelmed by information on the Apps.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:
This is a missed opportunity because the app is a simple way to understand the schedule.

Many people are still using the paper schedules and have difficulty knowing when the busses are supposed to come.

Without understanding the schedule, people can’t also get to their appointments, they can’t visit family and friends, and they don’t have access to community meetings and events.

Not being able to use the apps, especially for older people, creates obstacles and barriers.
PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:
As a solution, we suggest hosting workshops to teach people how to use the transportation apps. We also suggest that the bus agencies encourage riders to teach other riders how to use the apps. Many of us would be interested in teaching other riders if the bus agencies want our help.

We thank you for hearing our concern.
6. EXPANDING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE TO PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES SURROUNDING PORTLAND

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Jayne Chandler, TyTy Chila, Becky Johnson

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:

We’d like to see communities outside of Portland gain access to more reliable public transportation options.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:

Expansion of service is important to many people living outside of Portland proper. Here are examples illustrating why this is important to each of us:

Jayne: As a resident of Gray, I’d like to see Gray & New Gloucester get public transportation to Windham and Portland. As a senior citizen, I have no public transportation options available. RTP only takes to my doctor appointments, but will not take me to pick up my scripts, get groceries, library, etc. I have to depend on a few close friends to give me rides where I need to go because I cannot afford alternative options like Lyft/Uber.

TyTy: I live in Westbrook and bus service in Westbrook is lacking. Infrequent bus service from Westbrook to South Portland has caused major inconveniences for me to be able to find work and keep a job. Either there isn’t a bus early enough to get to work, or a bus that runs late enough to be able to leave work and go home. Another concern I have is that Westbrook
doesn’t have a Metro ticket office where residents can buy bus passes.

**Becky:** I’m a South Portland resident with an Autistic 5 year-old son, and another one on the way. We need both bus lines (24A, 24B) in SoPo to run hourly, not bi-hourly, with extended night time hours. We also need more frequent 24B service on the weekends. Right now, the 24B has no weekend service. I live in a neighborhood with children and elderly residents, and with the cold weather upon us it makes it more difficult to live with inadequate bus service. No one wants to walk a half mile on the weekend to get the 24A bus, especially in bad weather. It also shouldn’t take 4 hours to do a Walmart run and come home. The South Portland buses from my experience tend to be unreliable and often late. This needs to change.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:**

Portland has a population of 66,882. The combined populations of SoPo, Westbrook, Gray, and New Gloucester are 57,975. These communities outside of Portland are in need of either new bus routes or expanded bus service, and we hope you will take this into consideration. Thank you.
CTL CONCERNS & IDEAS

7. SUPPORTING SENIORS & MAKING METRO EASIER TO USE FOR ALL

JANUARY 7, 2020

PRESENTATION BY:

Emily Murray, Cheryl Oldfield

BARRIER HIGHLIGHTED:
Seniors and people with disabilities struggle to know how to use public transportation. They don’t where to get information about transportation in general. And for those who already use buses, the transition to electronic fare collection is creating confusion.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT:
I’m Cheryl, and I live in Falmouth. I just recently moved in a 55 plus facility. I specifically chose that place because it’s a place where you can live and still be in the country but get into the city on the bus. My neighbors started asking me what I was doing taking public transportation. I started telling them and soon I was helping my neighbors learn how to use transit. I have one neighbor who gave up her car. Another kept her car but uses the METRO most of the time. I have helped them overcome their concerns about safety.

I’m Emily, and I live in Portland. My concern is that people will have a hard time adjusting to the new electronic fare system. I think it will be especially hard for the elders and for people who aren’t comfortable with technology. Right now, a lot of people are confused and worried about how it’s going to work.

PROPOSED SOLUTION OR IDEA:
Cheryl: I’ve realized that many people are not going to use transit unless they have another person helping them to figure it out. Older adults and people with disabilities need one-on-one
support. You have to work with them to help them be comfortable. I will keep helping my
neighbors and next year I’ll be working with GPCOG to develop a regional travel
training program. I would like to see PACTS support efforts like this to support
seniors in using transit.

Emily: I suggest that the bus agencies create videos to help explain how to use the
new smart cards and app. The videos could be played on public access TV and displayed
on screens in public places. I think people will need visual cues and reminders at bus stops
and on the bus. For example, there could be a sign that says “Do you have your Smartcard
today?” I’m going to be a tester for the electronic fare system and I am excited to teach other
people how to use the new system.

Thank you for listening to our concerns and ideas.
ADDITIONAL CTL PARTICIPANT CONCERNS & IDEAS

NAME: Bukuru Mutima
ISSUE/BARRIER: Infrequency of South Portland’s Bus 24A & 24B
WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Many people, especially immigrants, want to move to South Portland because of lower housing costs. Unfortunately, for those who make the choice to live in SoPo for its affordability, the trade-off is a transportation barrier, because bus service is not frequent enough to provide timely and efficient connections to Portland’s downtown and other important destinations.

NAME: Karen Perry
ISSUE/BARRIER: There is a lack of compassionate understanding among bus operators of the issues and needs of elders and people with disabilities who use the bus (e.g., not always enforcing rules around able-bodied riders moving to other seating for people in wheelchairs; securing wheelchairs in place before moving; putting the ramp down for each person boarding; etc.).
SOLUTION: Offer a training for bus operators that is delivered by people with disabilities (me and my fellow Mobility Liaisons would love to help!) and involves first-hand stories and context that illustrate the reasons why better, more consistent, more inclusive practices are needed.

NAME: Jayne Chandler
ISSUE/BARRIER: There is no public transportation in Gray/New Gloucester that connects to Portland and Windham.
WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Right now, seniors who are still active (like me), people with disabilities, families, and anyone who doesn’t own a car, are isolated and need transportation to work, study, connect with others, and/or shop. We need options that are safe, affordable, reliable, connected, and time-efficient.
Staff Report

PACTS Planning Committee
The Planning Committee met on November 7 to receive study updates on the following projects:
- Portland, Commercial Street
- Freeport, I-295 Bike/Ped Crossing Study
- Scarborough/Saco, Route 1 Complete Streets

The committee also heard an overview of the 2020 South Portland Mill Creek to Cushing’s Point Priority Corridor Study. The RFP for this study will be reviewed by the Planning Committee on February 6 and be released following recommendations.

At the upcoming meeting on February 6, the committee will also hear a presentation regarding the Maine Climate Council Transportation Working Group from Kristina Egan.

PACTS Technical Committee
The PACTS Technical Committee met on January 14 to discuss the future of the Collector Paving program. The committee tasked staff with exploring a life cycle cost analysis for alternative paving maintenance strategies. During the 2021 collector paving selection process, only about 3 miles of collector roads were selected for paving. Performing a life cycle cost analysis will allow the committee to consider treatment strategies that may prolong the life of pavement and in turn may extend the number of miles paved each year—possibly allowing each PACTS dollar to go further.

The Technical Committee also reviewed and approved the Regional Traffic Management System Request for Proposals. The RTMS RFP will include an assessment of 125 traffic signals tied into the RTMS network throughout the PACTS region, an assessment of the communications network (the server, communications hardware, fiber optic communications, the signal equipment, and all other non-specified equipment within the network), as well as continued response to municipal requests related to the RTMS signals within their communities.
PACTS Transit Committee
The PACTS Transit Committee has begun the process of programming federal transit funds for 2020. Each transit agency has submitted their initial requests for funds and supporting information on those requests. The Transit Committee Workshop scheduled for January 28 was cancelled due to concerns about attendance and to allow more time to review the region’s transit funding situation. The Committee’s February 13 meeting will focus on initial group review of the 2020 funding requests.
Attachment E

Thematic Outline for State of the Region

On March 25, 2020 GPCOG will host its first ‘State of the Region’ event at Ocean Gateway in Portland from 5 to 7:30 pm. The program will feature a wide-ranging look at how our region is doing, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay. We’ll have data to share on a variety of core issues, like housing, employment and the environment.

But our State of the Region program is meant to be more than a survey or catalog. We intend to **convene regional leaders** so they can understand our region’s overall condition, then **focus and prioritize** by addressing one pressing need that impacts all of us.

That need is for **more transportation funding** throughout our region.

The difficult reality is that today we are managing a transportation system in decline. In order to turn that around and make transportation the centerpiece of a more prosperous regional future we will need more funding.

Here’s what we’re facing today:

- **Our roads and bridges continue to deteriorate** as state transportation funding falls further behind regular maintenance and operating needs. Safety, vehicle operating costs and municipal tax burdens are all suffering as a result.

- **Our public transportation systems are limited** in their ability to sustain and expand service in rural, suburban and urban communities. As a result, congestion is increasing, and the costs of personal transportation are a rising burden for too many of us.

- **Our region’s mobility needs are underfunded**, from seniors who need transportation options, to millennials who don’t want a car, to everyone who’s trying to manage their transportation costs and reduce their carbon footprint.

- Finally, **innovation requires investment**. Without additional funding for transportation in our region our ability to take on new, efficient, smart transportation strategies will be limited or lost.

Transportation by itself is a top regional priority – we know because you have told us so in surveys, in focus groups and in many, many conversations.

But **transportation sits at the center of so much else** – consider the connections:

- **Transportation is critical to our current and future economy**. Goods, services and people need to move efficiently and safely – more investments in transportation will strengthen our economy today and tomorrow.

- **Transportation is deeply linked to housing choices**, helping to determine where we can afford to live and how we live our lives. New transportation investments can expand housing choices,
help reduce the costs of housing, and focus new housing growth in ways that build community and livability.

- **Transportation is essential to addressing our workforce and senior demographics.** As our region ages new transportation investments are needed to help seniors age in place, and as we add needed workforce, transportation investments will make sure new workers can get to and from work without choking our region on congestion.

- **Transportation choices will help shape our environment** from habitat fragmentation, to remaining open space, to greenhouse gas emissions levels. New investments in transportation can help move us toward a more sustainable environment by using innovation and advanced planning to reduce impacts and implement sustainable strategies.

Greater investments in every aspect of transportation in our region can unlock remarkable benefits – outcomes that preserve what we love best about our communities, and new initiatives to make them even better.

But most of those opportunities will fade if we cannot find a way to answer the central question:

**How can our region increase transportation funding?**

We can ask the question, and we can bring our region together to discuss all the implications the question raises, but we can’t answer the question by ourselves.

On March 25th we will convene the region to begin a 2020 exploration of how we can all come together to find answers to our transportation funding needs that work for every town and City, and for all the people in our region.

We plan on spending significant time during the rest of 2020 working with our members and partners to find answers, and we hope to bring their answers to our 2021 State of the Region event, where we can turn answers into action.