

PACTS Transit Task Force

April 15, 2021
12:00–2:00 pm
Meeting Agenda

*Zoom webinar: us02web.zoom.us/j/84166681783
Phone: (646) 558-8656 Webinar ID: 84166681783*

1. Review of the SYCOP and Split Letter Process

Discussion of the process used to allocate the PACTS region's annual apportionment of FTA Section 5307 and 5337 funding.

2. Review of Upcoming PACTS Funding Milestones

Discussion of the upcoming milestones that PACTS committees and boards will need to meet to ensure funding is approved in a timely manner. (See Attachment A.)

3. Review of Transit Agencies' Projected Needs

Presentation by the region's transit agencies of projected financial needs for 2021–2025.

- Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit
- Casco Bay Lines
- Greater Portland Transit District (METRO)
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
- South Portland Bus Service
- MaineDOT (RTC and YCCAC)

Upcoming Meetings

- Transit Task Force, FYCOP Meeting #2—April 22, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

Attachment A

Memo

To	PACTS Board and Committee Members
From	Chris Chop, Transportation Director
Date	April 7, 2021
Re:	Upcoming PACTS Funding Milestones

Executive Summary

As the region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO), PACTS is responsible for allocating state and federal funding to projects that maintain and improve the transportation system in the greater Portland region. This memo describes the upcoming milestones that PACTS committees and boards will need to meet to ensure funding is approved in a timely manner and funding delays are avoided.

Beginning this year, funding allocations will be informed by the new Transportation Funding Framework. This framework was developed to ensure funding is allocated to projects in a way that is consistent, data-driven, more transparent to the public, and aligned with regional goals. The final framework was approved by the PACTS Executive Committee at its April 6 meeting.

With the framework adopted, PACTS will allocate funding to projects via five key processes this spring:

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding will be allocated via two processes:
 - 1) Through the Collector Paving Program (CPP), working groups will select collector paving projects. The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) will review the selected projects and the Policy Board will approve the projects for funding.
 - 2) "Complex projects" will be selected for funding via an application and scoring process. A scoring committee will score the applications, RTAC will review the scores and recommend projects for funding, and the Policy Board will approve the projects for funding.
- 3) State funding will be allocated via the PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI). PACTS subregions were asked to select MPI projects for their subregions by March 1. Municipalities will have an opportunity to apply for any remaining funds after projects are selected by the subregions. RTAC will review the selected projects, and the Policy Board will approve the projects for funding.
- 4) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding will be allocated via a Five-Year Capital and Operations Plan (FYCOP), which will be developed by PACTS and the region's transit agencies, reviewed by RTAC, and approved by the Policy Board.
- 5) The region's 2020 CARES Act Phase IV funding will be allocated via a process similar to that used in previous phases, with review by RTAC and approval by the Policy Board.

These processes are described in detail below. See Table 1 (pg. 4) for a detailed schedule.

1. FHWA Funding—Collector Paving Program

Through the PACTS Collector Paving Program (CPP), roadway segments are ranked based on a pavement condition index, average annual daily traffic, and whether they are part of a transit route. From this ranked list, CPP-subregion¹ working groups will select projects for funding. Beginning this year, projects will be selected three years in advance on a three-year rotating schedule.

Year	CPP Subregion	Construction Season
2021	Southern	2023
	Central	2024
2022	Northern	2025

RTAC will review the working groups' selections and recommend projects for funding. The Policy Board will review RTAC’s recommendation and approve the projects for funding.

After approval, staff will submit the list of projects to MaineDOT. The projects will be included in PACTS' Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and MaineDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

2. FHWA Funding—Complex Project Selection

Complex projects² will be selected for funding, as in the past, via an application and scoring process. This year the application and scoring criteria were developed using the new Transportation Funding Framework.

A scoring committee will review and score the applications. RTAC will review the scores from the scoring committee and recommend projects for FHWA funding. The Policy Board will review RTAC’s recommendation and approve the projects for funding.

After approval, staff will submit the list of projects to MaineDOT. The projects will be included in PACTS' TIP and MaineDOT's STIP.

3. State Funding—PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative

Through the PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI), PACTS subregions and municipalities submit projects for PACTS’ annual allocation of state funding in two rounds. For the first round of project solicitation, project are selected by each subregion, with a deadline of March 1. (Next year the deadline will be February 1.) PACTS maintains a goal of allocating \$400,000 in state funding to each subregion. If unallocated funding remains after the initial subregional selection (with a minimum surplus of \$75,000), staff will notify Policy Board and RTAC members of the additional MPI funding available for a second round of project solicitation. In the second round,

¹ The three subregions described under the PACTS Collector Paving Program Policy are distinct from PACTS' four municipal subregions used for other purposes.

² A “complex project” is one that PACTS programs in two phases: 1) Preliminary Design Report (PDR) work funding in one year; and 2) construction funding a year or more later after PDR is complete.

all PACTS municipalities will be eligible to submit projects for the remaining MPI funding. PACTS will accept municipal project applications until May 1. (Next year the deadline will be April 1.) In the event that the second round of project solicitations exceeds the MPI funds available, eligible projects will be scored by PACTS staff. If less than \$75,000 remains after the first or second round, the remaining funds will be distributed to projects that have a greater than 50 percent local match. If funds are still unallocated, the remaining funds will be transferred to the MPI Holding WIN for future allocations.

PACTS staff will review the subregional projects, identify any potential eligibility concerns, and share the project information with RTAC. RTAC will review the list of eligible projects and recommend projects for funding. The Policy Board will review RTAC's recommendation and approve the projects for funding.

4. FTA Funding—Five-Year Capital and Operations Plan

In the past, PACTS and the region's transit agencies have collaborated to a) identify operations, maintenance, and capital funding needs for each transit agency, and b) determine the distribution of the region's allocation of FTA funding to address those needs. This had been done through annual updates to the region's Six-Year Capital and Operations Plan (SYCOP).

Due to timing constraints, staff recommend completing a five-year plan (FYCOP) this year; to focus on finalizing projections for 2021-2025, but to forego generating new projections at this time for what would be the sixth year, 2026. This is aligned with PACTS and the transit agencies' commitment to evaluate the performance of the funding framework with regard to transit funding in advance of 2026.

The draft 2021 FYCOP will be reviewed by RTAC and approved by the Policy Board. After approval, staff will generate a document known as a *split letter*—which documents the region's agreed upon split to each transit agency of FTA funding—and submit it to the FTA. The FTA strongly recommends transit agencies' funding requests be prepared by the first week of June.

5. FTA Funding—CARES Act Phase IV

The region received \$53 million in 2020 CARES Act funding to support transit service through the pandemic. The former Transit Committee had been allocating this funding in six-month phases according to four priorities:

1. To replace lost revenues due to ridership declines
2. To fund needed equipment upgrades, cleaning or sanitation supplies, or staff resources in direct response to the pandemic
3. To fund system innovations intended to spur post-pandemic ridership rebound
4. To provide budgetary relief to municipalities that contribute local match funding for transit service (Phase II only)

For the upcoming Phase IV, staff recommend PACTS and the region's transit agencies identify funding needs for Priorities 1 and 2 only, and develop final projections through 2022. Based on these projections, the Policy Board will continue to allocate in six-month phases through 2022.

Staff recommend limiting Phase IV system innovation projects (Priority 3) to those which had been under consideration by the Transit Committee through Phase III. Additional future system innovation projects may be

proposed by the transit agencies, by PACTS committees and boards, or through some other call for projects, and evaluated according to the funding framework in Fall 2021 in advance of Phase V. Phase IV is scheduled to be approved for July 2021.

Upcoming Milestones

Table 1 provides a schedule of key milestones to ensure funding is approved in a timely manner and funding delays are avoided.

Table 1: Upcoming PACTS Funding Milestones

Funding Program			
Meeting	FHWA, MPI	FTA 5307	CARES
04/06 Executive Committee	Approve PACTS Transportation Funding Framework		
4/15: Meeting #1 Transit Task Force		Agencies submit projected funding needs for draft FYCOP	
4/22: Meeting #2 Transit Task Force		Agencies agree to collective projected funding needs for proposed FYCOP	
05/04 RTAC	Review proposed projects	Review proposed FYCOP	
05/06 Transit Task Force			Agencies submit projected Priority 1 and 2 funding needs for draft CARES IV
05/18 Transit Task Force			Agencies agree to collective projected Priority 1 and 2 funding needs for proposed CARES IV
05/25 Policy Board	Approve final projects	Approve final FYCOP	
06/01 RTAC			Review proposed CARES IV
06/22 Executive Board			Approve final CARES IV