

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee  
MINUTES  
April 21, 2020**

**Attendance:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Committee Members</b>		
Hank Berg	Casco Bay Lines	
Chris Branch	City of Portland	Y
Lori Brann	MaineDOT	Y
Jay Chace	Town of Scarborough	Y
Chris Chop	Maine Medical Center	Y
Erin Courtney	Maine Turnpike Authority	Y
Robert Currie	York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC)	Y
Jack DeBeradinis	Regional Transportation Program (RTP)	Y
Patrick Fox	City of Saco	
Art Handman	City of South Portland Bus Service	Y
Bruce Hyman	City of Portland	Y
Gregg Isherwood	Custom Coach & Limousine	
Alex Jaegerman	Town of Yarmouth	Y
Greg Jordan	Greater Portland METRO	
Maureen O'Meara	Town of Cape Elizabeth	Y
Patricia Quinn	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)	Alternate: William Gayle
Marty Rooney	MaineDOT	Y
Tony Scavuzzo	Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit	Y
Bill Shane	Town of Cumberland	Y
<b>Guests</b>		
Eric Dudley	City of Westbrook	Y
Rebecca Grover	Maine Turnpike Authority	Y
Chris Mann	MaineDOT	Y
<b>For GPCOG</b>		
Kristina Egan, Aubrey Miller, Ryan Neale, Elizabeth Roberts, Phaeng Southisombath	GPCOG	Y
Jill Cahoon, Price Armstrong	AECOM	Y

## 1. Welcome

Aubrey Miller opened the meeting. Ryan Neale reviewed the features of a Zoom Webinar.

## 2. Chair and Vice Chair

Aubrey Miller called for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. No nominations were made. Aubrey asked Committee members to consider nominations in advance of the next meeting.

## 3. Committee Charge and Committee Schedule

Aubrey Miller presented the item. Alex Jaegerman moved to approve the Committee Charge and Committee Schedule as written and Maureen O'Meara seconded. A roll call vote was conducted. All were in favor.

## 4. TIP Project Selection Overview & Update

Aubrey Miller noted, after the 40% collector paving set-aside, PACTS has just under \$3.3 million to allocate for preservation, modernization, and expansion projects. Projects currently in the pipeline include the Beth Condon Trail and the Brighton Avenue Improvements, which were both programmed for preliminary design report (PDR) funding in the 2018 TIP. The Beth Condon Trail needs approximately \$950,000 for construction and the Brighton Avenue Improvements project needs approximately \$4.2 million for construction.

Elizabeth Roberts explained the spreadsheet in Attachment D3, "PACTS Sponsored Projects that are Scheduled to Advertise 11/2019 - 4/2020." She noted that straightforward collector paving project bids have generally been coming in under available funds, while bids for intersection projects—especially those with traffic signals—have been coming in over available funds. The pandemic does not seem to be affecting bids at this point.

Chris Branch noted that Portland has hired Ransom Consulting to look at how to phase the Brighton Avenue project since the full length of the project—from approximately the University of Southern Maine Law School almost to Rand Road—will likely cost more than \$4.2 million. Portland plans to finish the PDR, with a phasing plan, within 12 months, and then move to bid with a \$4.2 million budget. He also noted Portland's experience that smaller construction projects are currently more competitive than larger projects.

Alex Jaegerman confirmed the \$950,000 estimate for the Beth Condon Trail, noting it includes a 25% contingency and some other costs. Yarmouth is ready to move forward with the project. He noted there are other projects underway, operating under the assumption that Yarmouth will be building the Beth Condon Trail. The plan is for the entire path to run from Cumberland to the Cousins River Bridge.

Chris Branch cautioned about the current decrease in gas tax money being collected. He added he had heard about a potential loss of \$125 million in MaineDOT funding in the next biennium. Marty Rooney said he had also heard about the potential \$125 million shortfall, but that MaineDOT planning staff has received no direction related to cutting any projects or adjusting any MPO (metropolitan planning organization) allocations.

Bill Shane commented he did not think PACTS should fund any bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) projects for the next 3-5 years until the region can catch up on the collector paving program, which currently has a deficit. He expressed concern that roads are not being properly maintained and said he was not comfortable doing anything other than collector paving with most of the PACTS allocation. He also suggested dividing the TIP Committee into subcommittees to deal with the specific pieces of the TIP process. He added that there are important regional projects on the horizon and PACTS should develop a better process for how the TIP is funded. He also suggested that collector paving be handled like MPI (Municipal Partnership Initiative) with greater funding and resources allocated to it, with just state and local money and no federal money.

Lori Brann agreed the TIP Committee should be split into an FTA side and an FHWA side.

Erin Courtney asked if PACTS would have to reduce collector paving funding if the region were to include any of the larger projects in the pipeline. Aubrey said no, but the larger projects would have to be funded in phases.

Marty Rooney noted that PACTS allocates money to three programs—MPI, collector paving, and “everything else.” PACTS may wish to fundamentally change those programs, but if not, then PACTS simply needs to take the money for “everything else” and allocate it between Beth Condon, Brighton Avenue, and any new projects.

Alex Jaegerman spoke to Bill’s prior comments. He appreciates the need to maintain a strong pavement management program but noted that is what the percentages do. He added that a wholesale revamp of the formula and the expectations communities have would not be a good idea. The TIP Committee only has two meetings to develop its recommendations. The Beth Condon project went through the process, developed a PDR, and deferred funding when other projects came in over budget. He said PACTS should stay with the program to the extent possible rather than fundamentally shifting resources. There are many priorities and bike/ped is one of them. It is important to emphasize other modes and the Beth Condon Trail has regional significance and can play a role in diverting trips from highways.

Chris Chop asked about the relationship between the \$3.3 million for preservation, modernization, and expansion, and the list of projects in Attachment D3. Elizabeth explained that the projects in Attachment D3 have already been funded; the attachment just shows how construction bids have been coming in compared to estimates.

Bill commented that the region has not done a lot of good work in planning for funding capital priorities in the region. He expressed his view that projects at locations with high traffic volumes should be higher priority than bike/ped projects. He said bike/ped should be more in the MPI category, funded with local match and state funding, and that such projects provide more local benefit than regional benefit.

Maureen commented that projects are funded to promote public safety. People travel in cars, on bikes, and on their feet, and we have pedestrian fatalities. Abandoning everything we have learned about complete streets to focus on paving roads feels like a huge step backwards. Maureen stated she agrees we should focus on regional priorities rather than making sure everyone gets some money. She encouraged the TIP Committee to focus on regional priorities and use the TIP process to ensure funding goes to projects important to the entire region, but not to abandon bike/ped projects.

Kristina Egan reminded everyone that PACTS went through a six-month process last year to develop its priorities. The list of five priorities includes improving intersections and maintaining roads, but also expanding sidewalks and bikeways, maintaining and improvement public transportation, and planning for growth in places that make sense. It is a balancing act to advance on all five, and there are varied opinions on the committee, but it was a PACTS-wide process to determine the five priorities. Kristina added that PACTS has been looking at BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) Transportation Discretionary Grants program opportunities, but PACTS does not have projects that are ready for such funds. Kristina expressed concern that PACTS may be missing opportunities because we have been spreading out bits of money rather than looking at bigger projects. As an example, BUILD grant projects need to be about \$6.25 million. Because we have been in a mentality of scarcity, we have not thought much about large discretionary opportunities. It is important to have complicated projects continue to go through PDR.

Maureen noted that during the last recession we had TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grants and there is some discussion at the federal level about a new infrastructure investment. She suggested possibly reopening requests for proposals to be prepared to take advantage of major opportunities at the federal level if they become available.

Chris Chop encouraged PACTS/GPCOG to, in the next long-range plan, include a fiscally constrained plan of projects out to 2045 and perhaps have a prioritization process included in that, where projects are phased in 4-6 year increments with anticipated financial resources assigned to them. It would help showcase some of the projects that could be in the pipeline. It could also include a list of vision projects that are not necessarily funded or anticipated to be funded but could be dream projects for discretionary funding opportunities.

Marty said that discretionary funds have stipulations on timing. He said that over the last 10 years or so, PACTS has funded various plans, but the recommendations in those plans have gotten lost. He has suggested having someone look at past plans, look at unfunded build recommendations, and come up with a pool of projects that could compete for more planning or for PDR funds. He also pointed out a complication with being ready for discretionary funding—an FHWA rule that if you design a project and 10 years go by without progress, you may have to return those funds.

Chris Branch agreed with Bill that the MPI process might be a better option for the Beth Condon project. He pointed out that Brighton Avenue is a multimodal project, not just a road project, and includes looking at bus priority along the route, bike lanes, sidewalks, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant curb ramps, etc. Portland sees all projects as multimodal projects. Chris also said that streets in Portland are falling apart and that streets are also necessary for transit and for bike lanes.

Maureen moved to not accept new projects. Chris Branch seconded the motion.

Bruce Hyman asked about the Washington Avenue project, which had funding removed to fund the Brighton Avenue Roundabout. Chris Branch explained that the City does not plan to request money from PACTS to complete Washington Avenue, but is instead considering a redesign with significant savings.

Elizabeth Roberts asked for clarification whether the motion means we are also not funding new PDRs, which are needed to move projects into the pipeline.

Chris Branch suggested using UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) money to fund PDRs. That would save money for construction.

Alex asked if the \$3.3 million includes the local share or just the federal share, and Aubrey clarified that it includes both. Alex indicated that he likes the idea of funding PDRs from the UPWP. He added that it would be good to fund PDRs to get some projects into the pipeline.

Bill said the expectation has been that projects that receive PDR funding will also receive construction funding, which he disagrees with. He said there are bigger regional priorities than the Beth Condon Trail. He said he does not want to fund more PDRs until we have a system to fund projects of regional significance, in places with the bulk of the traffic.

Kristina Egan suggested creating a short list of projects that advance PACTS Priorities to keep building a conveyor belt of projects. PACTS staff has already looked through the unfunded recommendations in various planning documents and developed a universe of projects. Kristina said she did not want to halt PDRs, except maybe for the time it would take to develop a top 5 or top 10 list. She said staff could work on the list and in the future we would already have regional agreement about priority projects. She noted that she has

also heard from Marty that we do not want to fund PDRs that we cannot back up with capital funding because that is a waste of PDR funding.

Maureen clarified that she was neither anti-PDR nor pro-PDR. She explained she made the motion to allow the committee to move forward. She asked for clarification that we currently have a certain amount of money and we have identified two projects that exceed that amount. Aubrey confirmed that is correct. Maureen asked for further clarification that Portland is fine with the amount of money that is available because they can phase their project and Bill Shane confirmed that is correct. Maureen suggested focusing on the projects we have and following up on Kristina's idea to develop a new list of current projects we want funded. She asked to move the vote and Aubrey confirmed the motion is to not accept any new applications for projects for construction or for PDR.

Marty Rooney noted that the funding we are deciding on now, whether for PDR or for Brighton or Beth Condon, is for construction year 2023. If PACTS does not add anything to the pipeline now, in a year we will again be looking at Beth Condon and Brighton, or possibly a project for which a municipality funds design on its own. He also noted that, while it is fine if PACTS wants to fund PDRs from the UPWP, the next UPWP will not start until 2022.

Maureen asked if new applications would be due in a month and Aubrey said yes. Maureen said that would be another reason to simply work with what we already have in the pipeline but to encourage communities to start thinking about new projects.

Kristina clarified that Maureen's motion does not preclude future PDR funding for other projects. She also said that in the meantime, PACTS staff will start working on developing a better short list of regionally significant projects.

Aubrey confirmed that the TIP Committee's vote is simply a recommendation and the PACTS Policy Committee has the final say.

A roll call vote was taken on Maureen's motion to not accept any new project applications this year. The second had been offered by Bill Shane. There were six abstentions; all others (9) were in favor.

## **5. Policies and Procedures Documents**

Aubrey introduced the item and suggested, in the interest of time, postponing the item until the next meeting. The committee agreed to postpone this item until the next meeting.

## **6. Funding Prioritization Framework**

Aubrey introduced the item and Jill Cahoon and Price Armstrong of AECOM. (AECOM's PowerPoint presentation is attached at the end of the minutes.) Jill introduced the full project team, which includes staff from AECOM and FHI, the same two firms working on

*Transit Tomorrow*. The consultant team includes multimodal and other experts to get a variety of perspectives. She discussed the schedule of tasks, starting with today's kickoff meeting to discuss the project plan and TIP Committee engagement. The second task is to research national best practices, including both peer and non-peer agencies. The third task is to obtain input, which will happen throughout the process; the consultant team will attend all TIP Committee meetings and conduct online surveys of TIP Committee members. Jill explained that the team will bring both a draft scoring framework and a final scoring framework to the TIP Committee for input.

Chris Chop expressed concern about a large committee assigning scoring criteria and weights and suggested electronic surveys to engage committee members on their own time and to allow input in a different manner. Jill said they anticipated the same concern and have scheduled electronic surveys at two points during the process.

Maureen asked everyone to try to keep this as clean as possible. She suggested including a short paragraph with any scoring criteria, explaining how to earn the total possible points.

Bruce commented that one of the positive aspects of the prior TIP funding process was the designation and tracking of the preservation, modernization, and expansion aspects of projects. For example, the flexible target of 60% for preservation echoed the priorities in the existing long-range transportation plan, which placed great importance on preserving the system, but also acknowledged the need for modernization and expansion. He said he would like a similar framework and tracking for those elements.

Chris Branch said he thought AECOM's work was going to be on the transit side rather than the road side, since there is a process in place on the road side but not on the transit side. Aubrey clarified that, while there may be more work to be done on the transit side, the goal is to take a comprehensive look at the system as a whole.

Alex recommended incorporating the work of the Maine Climate Council and the Transportation Working Group. As we look at the decision-making process for allocation investments in transportation, we should be cognizant of the goals for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Alex added that he believes PACTS should step up in the region and do what it can to work toward meeting targets for GHG emissions in the transportation sector.

## 7. Adjourn