

## PACTS Executive Committee

January 5, 2021

8:30 am

Meeting Minutes

Name	Affiliation	Attendance
Jim Bennett	Southern Subregion	Y
Chris Branch	Central Subregion	Y
Jennifer Brickett	MaineDOT	Y
Hope Cahan	PACTS Vice Chair	Y
Erin Courtney	Maine Turnpike Authority	Y
Eric Dudley	Western Subregion	Y
Greg Jordan	Transit Committee Chair	Y
Matt Sturgis	PACTS Chair	Y
Sarah Tracy	Northern Subregion	N
Guests	Affiliation	Attendance
Hank Berg	Casco Bay Lines	
Will Gayle	NNEPRA	
Donna Tippet	South Portland Bus Service	
For GPCOG		
Chris Chop, Andrew Clark, Kristina Egan, Ryan Neale		

### 1. Welcome

Matt Sturgis opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

### 2. Public Comment

No public comment was received at this time.

### 3. Acceptance of December 1, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Chris Branch moved to accept the December 1 meeting minutes as written; Jim Bennett seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

#### **4. Staff Report**

Staff are finalizing the draft of *Transit Tomorrow*, the region's upcoming long-range transit plan. The plan will be released for a three-week public comment period on January 18. Staff encourage members of the committee to review and submit comment. Staff have scheduled presentations to the boards of several of the region's transit agencies, including METRO, South Portland Bus Service, RTP, and Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit (BSOOB). Staff are working to schedule presentations for the boards of Casco Bay Lines and NNEPRA. YCCAC will distribute materials to its board members. Staff will incorporate feedback received into the final plan and will host a wrap-up event in early March.

Donna Tippet noted some agencies' board presentations were close to or after the close of the public comment period and asked whether the comment period would be extended for transit agencies. Chris Chop said it was not the intent to extend the public comment period, adding the transit agencies have all been made aware of the deadline and have been encouraged to review and submit comment. Jim asked whether BSOOB was aware that their presentation was after the comment period closed. Chris said they were, and that staff and BSOOB were unable to schedule the presentation any earlier. Kristina said these presentations serve as a courtesy to keep board members involved so they can be knowledgeable of the plan and help with future implement efforts. The general managers of the transit agencies are members of the project advisory committee and staff's expectation is they have been keeping their boards informed.

#### **5. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Phase III Funding Allocation**

In March 2020, the PACTS region was allocated \$53 million in CARES Act funding to support continued transit operations during and after the pandemic. This funding has since been allocated in six-month increments, with approximately \$31.5 million remaining. Staff and the transit agencies have worked to refine the methodology for reporting the financial projections that inform CARES fund requests. The Phase III allocation includes \$9.1 million for Priority One, *Maintaining Regional Service*; \$920,000 for Priority Two, *Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency*, and \$1.1 million for Priority Three, *Transit System Innovation*. The variation in requests shown in Priority One reflect the differing operating models and characteristics of the transit agencies. The

comparatively large requests for Casco Bay Lines and NNEPRA are due in part to their heavier reliance on fare revenues. The Executive and Transit Committees have previously discussed the funding for Concord Coach Lines' Portland to Boston operations. Priority Three includes projects that have been reviewed by the Executive and Transit Committees.

The attending transit agencies were invited to comment on this agenda item. Hank Berg noted that Priority One and Two funds are a lifeline for the agencies, especially Casco Bay Lines and NNEPRA which both rely more heavily on fare revenue. He added that although the table as presented does not show full projections for future phases, it should not be implied that there will be no future need in that time period.

Hope Cahan moved to approve the recommended allocation of approximately \$11.1 million in CARES funds as presented, and to authorize the corresponding CARES Act Phase III split letter; Jim seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

## **6. Updated Safety Performance Targets**

The Federal Highway Administration requires metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to establish and monitor annual safety performance targets for five metrics:

- Number of roadway fatalities
- Number of serious injuries
- Fatalities per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled
- Serious injuries per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries

Maine MPOs report their targets each February to MaineDOT. Suggested targets for CY 2021 as derived by MaineDOT were provided to the committee. These targets reflect pandemic-related impacts.

Hope did not support the targets increasing over the five-year average baseline. She asked if the group could change the targets. Chris noted that the methodology used by MaineDOT to derive the suggested targets reflected reduced vehicles on the road due to the pandemic. However, fatalities and serious injuries have not reduced in tandem, leading to higher overall rates. Fewer vehicles on the road has led to more aggressive

driving. He said PACTS is free to adjust the targets. Hope suggested reverting to the five-year averages in cases where the targets were set higher than the five-year averages. Jim agreed.

Kristina noted that staff will soon begin an effort to implement the active transportation plan, which will provide an opportunity for PACTS and the region's municipalities to make progress on reducing the number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries.

Matt asked if the projected reduction in fatalities is due to the projected increase in serious injuries. Jen Brickett said she would connect with her colleagues at MaineDOT for more information.

Matt noted a marked increase in the number of cyclists on the road and the importance of efforts to improve safety and increase awareness for both drivers and cyclists.

Hope moved to revise the numbers for serious injuries and non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries to their five-year averages, rounded down to the nearest whole number; to recommend the revised performance targets for approval by the Policy Committee; and to have staff present an analysis of how to meet the targets at a future meeting; Matt seconded. Jen abstained; all others were in favor; the motion carried.

#### **7. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment for Regional Transportation Program (RTP) Facility Project**

MaineDOT notified staff of an intent to allocate \$280,000 in Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities funding to RTP's Westbrook facility project, which prompted an amendment to the TIP. The amendment was posted for a ten-day public comment period which will close on January 9. Staff propose approving the amendment subject to not receiving any substantial public comment. To date, no public comments have been received.

Matt asked if this is all MaineDOT funding. Jen and Ryan confirmed that is the case.

Hope moved to approve the TIP amendment as presented; Jim seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

## **8. Other Business**

Jim said the \$12,500 approved by the committee at its December meeting to support a Biddeford study is unlikely to be used based on discussions between Biddeford and MaineDOT.

Matt noted staff continue to work on a list of shovel-ready and shovel-worthy projects to prepare for potential stimulus funding. The deadline is January 29. Kristina added staff have called for transportation and infrastructure (broadband, wastewater treatment, or climate resiliency) projects from both PACTS- and GPCOG-member municipalities. Staff have advocated that the State create a project development fund supported with State funding to help advance projects from shovel-worthy to shovel-ready.

Chris Branch said that his staff have been notified of a policy change at MaineDOT forbidding workers standing on private property as work is conducted in the public right-of-way. This will result in needing to secure temporary easements, which can be costly and time-consuming for municipalities like Portland with limited right-of-way width. Jen Brickett said she would reach out to her colleagues for more information.

## **9. Adjourn**

With no objection, the meeting was adjourned.