PACTS Executive Committee
MINUTES
February 4, 2020
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

In attendance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Members</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Branch</td>
<td>Portland/Central Subregion</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Brickett</td>
<td>MaineDOT/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Cahan, Vice Chair</td>
<td>Falmouth/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin Courtney</td>
<td>MTA/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Dudley</td>
<td>Westbrook/Western Subregion</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Jordan</td>
<td>METRO/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Sturgis, Chair</td>
<td>Cape Elizabeth/PACTS Policy Committee</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guests</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben Blunt</td>
<td>Concord Coach Lines</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Gayle</td>
<td>NNEPRA</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Godfrey</td>
<td>HNTB</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nate Moulton</td>
<td>MaineDOT</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Quinn</td>
<td>NNEPRA</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GPCOG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPCOG</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Carver</td>
<td>Planning Director/Interim Transportation Director</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristina Egan</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Hall</td>
<td>General Counsel and Director of Regional Initiatives</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Neale</td>
<td>Transportation Project Manager</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Welcome – Matt Sturgis, Chair
Matt Sturgis opened the meeting at 8:34. Patricia Quinn was designated as the Transit Committee representative for the meeting.

2. Acceptance of January 7, 2020 meeting minutes
Hope Cahan made a motion to accept the minutes, with a second by Chris Branch. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

3. Public Comment. There were no public comments.

4. Staff Report
Steph Carver briefly summarized the activities of the PACTS Planning, Technical, and Transit committees as included in the meeting packet.

5. Overview of Transit Funding
Chris Branch offered a motion to table this item, with Hope Cahan seconding. The motion was accepted unanimously.

The overview of transit funding will be included as an agenda item for the March 3 Executive Committee meeting.

6. State of the Region Project
Chris Hall noted there is considerable agreement on how to provide adequate funds to maintain the existing transportation system, much less make improvements. He noted that the included outline highlights roads and bridges, public transportation systems, mobility needs, and innovation as areas of focus.

Chris said the State of the Region event is an opportunity to focus the region’s attention on transportation funding, which ties to our economic, housing, demographic, and environmental challenges. It is difficult to advance the conversation on these issues in the absence of a fully funded transportation system.

Kristina Egan said that this general outline is being presented to both the PACTS and GPCOG executive committees. The theme grew out of the PACTS prioritization and reforms process last year. Transportation funding is critical to addressing many of our challenges. This idea is also consistent with MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note’s objectives. Transportation was also the top priority for GPCOG’s advocacy work. This is an opportunity for us to elevate the conversation and build support for transportation funding.
Chris Hall said the intent is to highlight the challenge but specifically avoid advocating for solutions. The event can be a pivot point for public engagement to explore where people are on different revenue options. Kristina said it is still to be determined whether GPCOG and PACTS' role will be to focus attention on the issue or to advocate for specific policy approaches.

Erin Courtney said the Blue Ribbon Commission's work is expected to be done by early March and there may be an opportunity for GPCOG and PACTS to identify options from that work. Chris said that the goal here is to elevate the need for transportation funding.

Chris Branch said the region will likely agree that we need additional transportation funding and that getting this area to support something as a bloc is always a good thing. Republican representatives on the Blue Ribbon Commission are generally opposed to the $100M annual transportation bond.

Kristina noted that other areas are organizing as blocs. This region is not easy to organize but doing so represents our region better at the state and federal levels.

Jennifer Brickett suggested that the draft outline reference that transportation funding is a statewide issue and conversations are happening at the state level also.

Chris invited members to share their thoughts with him and Kristina and noted that Tom Bell is working on promotional materials for the March 25 State of the Region event.

7. PACTS Bylaws Review
Kristina Egan said committee members may have history and perspectives that can be helpful to this effort. Staff's intent is to present levels of options for revising the bylaws.

PACTS has five standing committees, the TIP Committee, and the Transit Tomorrow advisory committee. We committed in the reforms process to exploring a more efficient way to organize our decision making.

Chris noted that the merger can proceed with no changes to the bylaws. There are layers to the bylaws that could be made clearer and reorganized without changing the substance. These are technical rather than substantive changes. Chris learned from John Duncan that the bylaws emerged in the mid-1990s and grew from there, and have not been looked at technically for some time.
Chris noted areas worth reviewing, including quorum requirements, especially as they affect a committee’s ability to get work done effectively, and overlap between committees, membership, and duties. Some things should be revised to be consistent with the merger. These are not things that need to be acted on immediately but are good to think about.

Kristina noted that there is not a clear process for determining Executive Committee membership. One PACTS member wanted to appoint a citizen volunteer to the committee. Elected officials are the members of the committee and can opt to designate staff members, but not volunteers. Not all PACTS communities are having elected officials appoint staff. We want to make sure we are following federal law and provide staff with a better understanding of committee membership, voting status, and responsibilities.

Matt Sturgis noted that some people are members of several committees. This may contribute to a meeting malaise and make it difficult to get a quorum when members have other responsibilities. This is a good opportunity to redefine committee duties.

Chris Branch noted that some municipalities have more staff than others and it is easier to divide the responsibilities among several staff members.

Kristina said that everyone is feeling meeting fatigue and noted that staff at times is preparing two committee packets per week which makes it difficult to get other work done and makes staffing the committees very expensive. There is an argument for efficiency in considering consolidating committees.

Chris Hall noted that the definition of the Planning and Technical Committee memberships is the same and the missions and duties overlap significantly. Many committees are made up of appointments from other committees.

Chris Hall said with the Committee’s guidance to move forward, staff could suggest some revisions. Kristina said that this could be done in a workshop format at the March Executive Committee meeting. The proposed bylaws changes would be presented to the Policy Committee in April and finalized before GPCOG considers its bylaws changes at the May annual meeting.
Matt authorized staff to move forward and find efficiencies where possible, noting that this is a good opportunity for a thorough review.

Chris said staff would provide the Committee with all options and the Committee could decide from there. In response to a question from Chris Branch, Kristina said staff will provide a marked-up version of the bylaws with comments as a starting point for a workshop session in March. Chris Branch noted that he may not be able to attend the March meeting. Kristina invited him to connect with staff to determine how to incorporate the City’s input. Chris Branch noted that cleaning up the pieces on the Policy and Executive Committee, for example, is a technical issue that staff can perform without Committee approval.

Staff will undertake a thorough review of the bylaws, provide a marked-up version with comments on issues to be resolved, and workshop with the Committee in March the options to resolve these issues. This may include one version that is technical fixes and another that is policy issues.

8. Portland Transportation Center (PTC) Relocation
Matt Sturgis thanked Jennifer Brickett of MaineDOT and Paul Godfrey of HNTB for being here.

Kristina Egan said that the study has been going on for a while. MaineDOT is leading the study and key stakeholders include NNEPRA, Concord Coach Lines, the City of Portland, and METRO. A lot of material has been developed. MaineDOT has said it wants to engage the public when appropriate. There has not been a regional vetting of the project yet. This is the first opportunity for PACTS to understand what may be proposed. Major stakeholders are still reviewing data so there is more to come. The Committee agreed at the last meeting to hear this presentation. PACTS may decide to offer written comments or weigh in on preferred alternatives.

Jennifer said MaineDOT is looking at several alternatives from a customer perspective and working with several stakeholders. There is a lot of data and analysis involved in working with both public and private sector partners.
Paul Godfrey of HNTB provided an overview of the project, with additional detail provided in the power point presentation. The existing facility needs renovation. Parking has been a challenge despite Concord’s lot expansion. The current station lacks adequate platform capacity for rail.

The current PTC is a public/private partnership. The current location is impeding ridership for rail passengers, has limited connections to transit services, and is removed from downtown. It offers immediate access to I-295 but limited bike/ped access.

There is a need address the potential for other PTC users and to identify long-term solutions to increase ridership, address parking, improve connections, and inform the PTC lease agreement.

The study mission is to conduct a high-level customer and transportation system assessment and make a recommendation to the principal stakeholders. The study is looking at keeping bus and rail at the PTC with improvements, bus and rail at new locations, and bus and rail at separate locations. Patricia Quinn clarified that “bus” refers to Concord Coach Lines intercity buses, not local bus systems.

Ben Blunt of Concord Coach Lines (CCL) joined the meeting and briefly introduced himself. Quick introductions were done around the room.

Paul described the data sources for the analysis, including CCL, NNEPRA, surveys, PTC interviews, Greyhound interviews, and other data. The parking analysis determined that most PTC users are dropped off or picked up. Parking duration varies depending on user destinations. CCL customers generally park the longest. The parking analysis was to understand the potential for long-term off-site parking and overall parking demand.

About 1/3 of PTC users are from Portland, Westbrook, and South Portland. Most users come from outside of the PACTS region. People from the area are more likely to use transit, be dropped off, walk or bike; those from further away are more likely to park.

Most PTC user trips started at home or from recreation/vacation/friend (the survey was done in the summer). Most groups travelling are one (61%) or two people (28%). Surveys looked at willingness to use off-site parking, a downtown shuttle, and frequency of use (70% are infrequent users).
Users of the PTC are 41% bus, 20% rail, and 39% bus and rail overall. Riders generally use the same mode for individual trips (rail down and back or bus down and back). The survey asked if it would matter if the bus and rail stations were in separate locations about a mile apart; 48% said no, 29% said yes, 23% were not sure.

Parking now and in the future is an important part of the analysis. 950 spaces are available now plus overflow and 1,365 spaces for ultimate peak are projected for 2040. Paul noted that moving the PTC to the rail mainline increases rail trips and reduces parking trips; that moving the PTC closer to downtown increases transit and bike/ped trips; and that moving the PTC farther from I-295 decreases bus trips and increases vehicle trips. Dropping off and picking up is expected to be the primary mode of access going forward.

The study has looked at some alternatives and will be exploring more as the study progresses. Alternatives include a no-build scenario, improvements to the existing PTC location for bus and rail (including additional parking and the Wye track), a new location for bus and rail on the rail mainline which provides advantages for NNEPRA now and going forward, and keeping CCL at the current PTC and moving rail to the mainline.

The study created a broad alternative summary matrix and rated initial alternatives against 34 measures of effectiveness in 10 categories:

- Safety, Mobility
- Environmental, Efficiency
- Customer Accessibility, Economy/Community Development/Future Vision
- Parking, Costs, Funding, Mission

Paul said the initial findings are not conclusive and no single preferred alternative emerged. The existing location is optimal for bus, but additional parking is needed. Alternative locations are helpful for NNEPRA. All alternatives require significant capital investment and funding sources have not been identified. There is continued discussion on having one or two stations for customers. Some potential new locations are no longer viable and others remain to be evaluated. No alternative has been identified yet to keep bus and rail together other than at Thompson’s Point. A new location would likely be a rail-only facility.
Kristina noted that the parking demand for rail and bus is part of the reason why the two can’t be co-located on the peninsula. Paul said there is demand for 1365 parking spaces between rail and bus. NNEPRA requires about 300, and the remainder is needed for CCL. If bus and rail are separated, finding adequate parking for rail only is manageable. Finding parking for bus and rail together is challenging.

Paul said next steps are seeking the City of Portland’s input on locations; scheduling a workshop with the principal stakeholders in February or March; an updated alternatives analysis in spring of 2020; and a draft/final report in late spring/early summer 2020.

Paul summarized that a lot of work has been done but more needs to be done to identify the best path forward.

Kristina said we wanted to provide CCL and NNEPRA, as two of the principal stakeholders, the opportunity to share their perspectives. She noted that the City of Portland has not yet weighed in.

Ben Blunt said that CCL and NNEPRA have a good relationship. The current facility is 25 years old. CCL is looking at long-term capital investments at the site and wanted to get some clarity on NNEPRA’s plans. CCL is happy where they are. I-295 is the mainline for CCL. 40-50% of CCL ridership is from outside the area and quick access to the facility is important. Being downtown would add inconvenience and time. A potential rider may be more likely to continue driving further south to continue their trip. Convenient and affordable parking is a huge driver for people choosing to leave their car. Parking in Boston is very expensive so this is an advantage and an incentive for CCL. Building deck parking is a challenge in terms of coming up with the initial capital and charging more for parking to offset the capital costs. CCL is adding 300 parking spaces which it needs whether the train stays or goes.

Patricia reiterated Ben’s comment that CCL and NNEPRA have a good relationship. NNEPRA’s situation has changed over the last 20 years. The terminus moving from Portland to Brunswick starting in 2012 and being finalized with all five trips in 2019 made the PTC somewhat obsolete. The PTC had worked well but no longer does.
NNEPRA is looking to provide more than just trips to Boston. NNEPRA is providing more support of local transportation needs and the mainline location is important for that. Ridership growth is not coming from Portland; it is mainly from Freeport and Brunswick. People from outside the region can start on the train in Freeport and Brunswick. Eliminating the 15-minute delay should encourage even more ridership. Approximately 80,000 riders don’t get out at the PTC at all, and are backing out of the station on their way to other locations. NNEPRA is looking at a station in West Falmouth that could decrease the need for parking. Parking is not the driving force for NNEPRA. NNEPRA is looking at how to support future services and economic development opportunities.

Patricia said it is frustrating that the City of Portland has not been more vocal in this. All the communities on the corridor support a new station except Portland. Access to downtown is helpful in supporting tourism and bringing people to Maine, which is an important market for NNEPRA. There is no clear solution and there is a lot of work to do, but there are business cases for thinking about separate locations. It is difficult to find a location that works for both CCL and NNEPRA over the next 20 years.

Kristina noted that co-location does not matter to most people. She said the additional 15 minutes on the train was a disincentive when she was traveling south. PACTS' Transit Tomorrow is looking to map the future of transit for the region. This decision will affect whether we have a light rail system in the future. The location of the PTC affects the potential for redevelopment and the location of jobs and housing. The current locations for a potential separate rail facility are not close enough to downtown to make a meaningful difference in bike/ped access. The PACTS reforms called for PACTS to be more involved in regional issues and the Unified Planning Work Program called for PACTS to be engaged in regional projects.

Kristina said she and Steph will continue to be involved regardless, but PACTS as a group has not determined if it wants to weigh in on this issue.

Matt Sturgis said as a user it is nice to have as much consolidation as possible. Including the METRO connection to downtown would be great. PACTS can likely weigh in more effectively in the spring.
Matt asked about the Rigby property in South Portland as a potential site for the station and complementary redevelopment. This is owned by Pan Am. Patricia said that passengers don’t like to get off in areas like this. Matt noted the potential for redevelopment. The site is likely a brownfields site.

Chris Branch noted that the City of Portland has taken no position on this. The City’s elected officials have not been engaged. Paul and MaineDOT will present to a City committee in March. He noted that costs, including the amount and sources, have not been discussed. He said we should consider if this is the highest priority and best way to spend our funds from a transit perspective; there may be other areas that can significantly increase the use of transit, such as increasing the frequency of local buses. He said he personally could not make a recommendation based on what we saw today as there is not enough information.

Kristina said that we are expecting Transit Tomorrow will address the question of the best way to improve our public transportation system with a set amount of funds. This becomes more complicated because certain funding can only be used for certain things.

Patricia said many of NNEPRA’s major projects have been done with rail-specific funding so they have not taken funds away from other regional bus projects. Prioritization may not be as big of an issue.

Matt left the meeting at 10:02 a.m. and Hope Cahan chaired the meeting thereafter.

Hope Cahan said that if funding was not a problem, elevated parking with mixed uses that would generate additional activity would be a solution. With a potential new location, a dedicated shuttle to and from downtown could be helpful. Costs and funding sources for solutions like this are unknown.

Erin Courtney noted that moving CCL away from I-295 would add additional time which may affect ridership. People going to Boston and further don’t want to pay for parking and don’t want to drive if there is an alternative. It may make sense for CCL and NNEPRA to be separate. CCL would benefit from staying at their current location and having additional parking and NNEPRA could benefit by eliminating the delay. She said a shared facility would be great but asked how it would be funded.
Kristina said one of the most striking things about the data is that the market segments for CCL and NNEPRA are quite distinct. The PACTS Transit Committee has been working to keep things together as much as possible. In this case, it may not make sense due to the different market segments. She noted that NNEPRA needs 300 spaces and CCL 1,100. Moving NNEPRA onto the mainline would not require structured parking. The demand for parking may be less if more people are accessing a new station by transit, bike/ped, or getting on the train at other locations.

Erin said visitors on the train may be more interested in accessing downtown than those coming up on the bus. Ben said NNEPRA is more focused on tourism and bringing people to Maine, whereas most CCL riders are Maine residents going south or to other parts of Maine. CCL is concerned about last mile connections but those are felt more acutely by NNEPRA.

Kristina said Greg Jordan of METRO is a stakeholder and has been weighing in on what METRO can provide.

Patricia noted that separate facilities are likely to be located within a mile of each other and could both be served by local transit. This situation works in Boston. Having separate facilities will be inconvenient for those using different modes for a trip. It would be optimal for CCL and NNEPRA to stay together but it would not be detrimental to either CCL or NNEPRA over the long term if they were separate and both would gain in terms of parking, control over the future, and reduced travel time for NNEPRA. She said NNEPRA and CCL are advocating strongly for separate facilities in the best interests of both.

Kristina said PACTS staff has been at the table but it would be useful for PACTS to officially weigh in with comments for MaineDOT to consider.

Hope asked if there was interest among the group in weighing in later. Erin said it would make sense to weigh in once there is more information.

Ben asked what more information needs to be looked at. Paul said they are still looking at viable locations but some are not available. A new rail station would be in Portland and the City’s opinion will be helpful in providing valuable guidance for understanding what potential locations are in play. Moving forward is difficult without knowing what is
on the table. Part of the challenge is that this is looking at specific properties that are owned by others.

In response to a question from Kristina, Paul said cost estimates are available for all options developed to date.

Kristina said cost, sources of funds, and the opportunity cost depending on the funding sources are very important considerations. She noted that Patricia has raised some questions about some of the data and that other cost estimates are coming.

Hope Cahan summarized that there is interest by the Committee for PACTS to weigh in once more is known. Kristina said it could be left open as to whether the input is in support of a recommendation or is a list of things to consider if a decision is made.

**Action:** This issue will be brought back to the Committee for consideration when more information becomes available from MaineDOT.

9. **Adjourn**
The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.