PACTS Executive Committee Minutes
July 7, 2020

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<tr>
<th>Committee Members</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim Bennett</td>
<td>Biddeford</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Branch</td>
<td>Central Subregion</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Brickett</td>
<td>MaineDOT</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Hope Cahan</td>
<td>PACTS Vice Chair</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Erin Courtney</td>
<td>Maine Turnpike Authority</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Eric Dudley</td>
<td>Western Subregion</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Greg Jordan</td>
<td>Transit Committee</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Matt Sturgis, Chair</td>
<td>PACTS Chair</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Sarah Tracy</td>
<td>Freeport</td>
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Guests

| William Gayle          | NNEPRA                           |
| Patricia Quinn         | NNEPRA                           |
| Tony Scavuzzo          | BSOOB Transit                     |

For GPCOG

| Andrew Clark, Kristina Egan, Ryan Neale, Elizabeth Roberts |

1. Welcome—Matt Sturgis, Chair
Matt Sturgis opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Open Public Comment
There were no public comments during this portion of the agenda.

3. Acceptance of June 2 Meeting Minutes
Hope Cahan moved to accept the minutes of the June 2 meeting; Eric Dudley seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.
4. Approval of Additional PACTS Funding for South Portland’s Broadway Signals Project
The City of South Portland has requested additional funding in support of the Broadway signals project in light of receiving higher than estimated construction bids. PACTS policy is to contribute up to 20% of total construction costs; the City's request of $50,000 is under this threshold. These funds will also be applied towards engineering costs.

Hope moved to approve South Portland's request as presented.

Jim Bennett noted that in the past there was a penalty to disincentivize municipalities moving forward with under-funded projects. He said the rate at which municipalities have been seeking this contingency funding recently is higher than normal. He recommended reevaluating the process in the future. Chris Branch seconded Hope's motion. He said there has been no penalty in the four years he has served on PACTS committees, and added that the bid received by South Portland was not significantly over budget.

On the motion offered by Hope and seconded by Chris, all were in favor; the motion carried.

5. PACTS Transit Committee CARES Act Recommendations
Greg Jordan provided an update on the Transit Committee's recent work. The region was allocated $53 million in CARES Act funding to support transit agencies through the coronavirus pandemic. $14 million of that was allocated to the region's transit agencies to support operations from February 1 to June 30. The Transit Committee has been working on a framework to allocate the remaining funds. The first priority is to offset the loss of passenger-based revenue over the next three years. Other priorities include pandemic recovery, system innovation, and budget relief to municipalities that contribute local match to the region's transit agencies. The Transit Committee is refining its data collection methodology and expects to have a set of recommendations for the Executive Committee to consider at its August 4 meeting.

Hope commended the Transit Committee's efforts to incorporate system innovation in its prioritization. Matt thanked Greg for his update.
6. Consideration of Draft Language Regarding Greater Collaboration and Opportunities for Consolidation Among PACTS Region Transit Agencies

The PACTS Policy Committee adopted the draft recommendations of *Transit Tomorrow* at its June 25 meeting. Given the long-term aspirations of the plan, it was suggested that some reference to consolidation of the region's transit agencies be incorporated. This suggestion generated significant discussion, and staff was asked to draft language for the Executive Committee to further consider the issue. The suggested language is intended to initiate a process that would be exploratory, transparent, and grounded in data to identify opportunities for coordination, integration, and potential consolidation of the region's transit agencies.

Jim felt that assuming consolidation would result in improved efficiencies may be flawed. To avoid political hurdles, he urged that any analysis incorporate a better understanding of the transit system's existing efficiency and opportunities for improvement.

Hope asked how a study might be undertaken. Kristina noted that Jim's suggestion of clearly defining the problem would be an important piece, but staff has not done any significant scoping at this point. *Moving Southern Maine Forward* provides ridership and financial metrics that suggest the region's transit system could be improved, and staff had heard feedback from riders that the system's fragmentation is a barrier.

Greg agreed it would be important to clearly identify the problem and the parameters to evaluate possible solutions. He said that the pandemic underscored a tangible result of the system's fragmentation. Several agencies were forced to suspend service due to a lack of availability of drivers, not for any organizational shortcomings but for a lack of economies of scale. METRO did reduce service but due to their size was able to absorb some of the pressures from the pandemic. Greg believed agencies' suspension of service demonstrated a failure of the network due to the lack of integration.

Greg asked how the study might be structured within PACTS. Kristina referenced the structure of the *Transit Tomorrow* study, which is nested within the governing committees and advised by a standing committee composed of transit agencies and other stakeholders. She added that consolidation is only one option to improving customer service and system efficiency. Fare integration between METRO, South Portland Bus Service, and BSOOB Transit is a good example of coordination. A unified web portal and branding are examples of integration.
Tony Scavuzzo noted that 25% of transit agencies nationwide were forced to suspend service in response to the pandemic, including larger agencies in Portsmouth, Nashua, and Manchester, New Hampshire. He underscored the magnitude of the crisis, and disagreed with Greg’s characterization of the suspensions of service as a failure of the network.

Jim asked whether the study would be conducted by staff or by a consultant. Kristina said it would likely require a technical consultant to assist with the analysis and a skilled facilitator to help navigate the political considerations, all managed by staff. Jim felt an outsider’s perspective would be helpful. He said his main concern was the perception of a larger organization taking over the smaller organizations. He would like to see a more defined scope of work and better understanding of the methodology before moving forward. Kristina said the next step would be to identify resources to conduct the work and develop a more detailed scope to ensure stakeholder support.

Erin Courtney said that as Transit Tomorrow is a 30-year plan for the vision of transit service in the region, a statement addressing the issue of improved coordination, integration, and consolidation would be important to include.

Patricia Quinn recommended against conducting another consultant-driven study, but supported building on past momentum by supporting operators to find opportunities to work together.

Chris supported further integration of the system. He cited multiple fixed-route bus operators serving the same stops along Congress Street throughout the day as an example of inefficiency in the system.

Hope moved to adopt the draft policy statement as written; Erin seconded.

Greg felt the policy statement was broad enough to give direction to staff without leading towards any particular outcome. He stressed the analysis should be independent and objective so the committee can be comfortable with its findings.

Jim felt adopting the policy statement at this point would be a mistake. He noted an absence of pursuing strategic partnerships to help improve efficiency. He again recommended staff develop a scope in greater detail and allow the committee to
provide additional feedback. Matt suggested consolidation could take multiple forms, noting that different agencies may have different strengths. Jim agreed, but was concerned about the perception of local communities losing control. He gave several examples of failed attempts at consolidation of different local services.

Kristina suggested incorporating strategic partnerships into the statement and noted the importance of staff having general direction from the committee in order to move forward with developing a more detailed scope. Hope expressed her willingness to amend the motion and Erin noted her willingness to second. Chris recommended a vote today include staff returning to the committee with final language before moving forward with the work. Kristina clarified that work will not proceed until staff comes back with a revised proposal for the committee’s consideration. Jim clarified that he is comfortable with the current language as a draft. The final motion was to adopt the existing statement with the addition of strategic partnerships:

To make the best use of limited resources, improve efficiency, and create a cohesive and unified system for all users of public transportation, PACTS will identify, explore, and analyze opportunities for strategic partnerships, coordination, integration and/or consolidation in the region’s public transportation network.

All were in favor; the motion carried. This policy guidance will be used to develop a more detailed scope of work for a study that includes strategic partnerships, both subject to further revision by the committee.

7. Other Business
Staff will soon distribute a letter to member municipalities and transit agencies asking them to identify shovel-ready projects. This is to prepare for any potential federal stimulus funding and to help establish priorities for the region. Kristina noted that staff can offer technical assistance to members with this matter.

8. Adjourn
Hope moved to adjourn, and Chris seconded. With no objection, the motioned carried.