

**PACTS Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)**

July 11, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Approved Meeting Minutes

Seat	Representative	Attendance
PACTS Southern – Municipal	Diana Asanza	
PACTS Southern – Planning/ Economic Development	Emily Cole-Prescott	
PACTS Southern – Public Works/ Engineering	Tom Milligan	Y
PACTS Central – Municipal	Matt Sturgis	
PACTS Central – Planning/ Economic Development	Nell Donaldson, chair	Y
PACTS Central – Public Works/ Engineering	Melissa Hutchins	
PACTS Western – Municipal	Bob Burns	
PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development	Amanda Lessard	Y
PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering	Katherine Kelley	Y
PACTS Northern – Municipal	Nathan Poore	Y
PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development	Erin Zwirko	Y
PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering	Adam Bliss	Y
Transit	Hank Berg	Y
Transit	William Gayle	Y
Transit	Tom Reinauer	Y
Transit	Chad Heid, vice chair	Y
MaineDOT	Ryan Neale	Y
Maine Turnpike Authority	Rebecca Grover	Y
Active Transportation Specialist	Jason Day	
Environmental Specialist	Christian MilNeil	
Community Transportation Leader	Guy Mpoyi	Y
Community Transportation Leader	Cheryl Oldfield	Y
Private Sector Trade Association	Eamonn Dundon	Y

**1. Welcome**

Nell Donaldson opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **3. Approval of the June 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Rebecca Grover moved to approve the June 6, 2023 meeting minutes as written; William Gayle seconded. Hank Berg, Adam Bliss, Katherine Kelley, and Tom Reinauer abstained. All other members present were in favor. (Vote: 9-0-4)

### **4. Elections**

PACTS Bylaws dictate that Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) officers' terms be based on the GPCOG fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Nell Donaldson (Portland) has served as Chair for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. Chad Heid (BSOOB) has served as Vice Chair for the second half of fiscal year 2023. GPCOG staff requested nominations for fiscal year 2024 officers and received nominations for Nell Donaldson and Erin Zwirko (Yarmouth) as RTAC Chair and for Chad Heid as RTAC Vice Chair. Since Nell Donaldson is ready to step down from her role as Chair after more than two years, GPCOG staff recommend Erin Zwirko as Chair and Chad Heid as Vice Chair for fiscal year 2024.

#### *Public Comment*

None.

#### *Committee Discussion*

Rebecca Grover confirmed that transit agency representatives' terms on RTAC have been aligned with the fiscal year, allowing them to serve as officers.

#### *Motion*

William Gayle (NNEPRA) moved to elect Erin Zwirko as Chair and Chad Heid as Vice Chair of RTAC for the 2024 GPCOG fiscal year; Rebecca Grover seconded. All were in favor. (13–0)

### **5. Staff Report**

Aubrey Miller (GPCOG) issued a "thank you and farewell" to William Gayle who has accepted a position at MaineDOT and will be replaced on RTAC by Natalie Bogart. Aubrey also welcomed three new members of RTAC—Guy Mpoyi and Cheryl Oldfield as Community Transportation Leaders and Jason Day as the Active Transportation Specialist.

GPCOG staff asked all PACTS committee members to take part in a survey asking for contact information and demographic information by July 31. This information will help GPCOG comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

MaineDOT is developing a Carbon Reduction Strategy, which will provide an overview of MaineDOT's plan to reduce Maine's carbon emissions from transportation and identify different types of Carbon Reduction Program funding-eligible projects that could support those efforts. The Carbon Reduction Strategy is required by the federal Carbon Reduction Program, as a part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

*Public Comment*

None.

**6. Portland Brighton Avenue: Update and Scope Change**

In 2017, the PACTS Policy Committee approved funding for a preliminary design report (PDR) for the Portland Brighton Avenue Project from Rowe Avenue to Dartmouth Street, which was scoped to include multimodal improvements, ADA ramp accessibility improvements, signal improvements, transit signal priority, and enhanced bicycle facilities.

At the time of the project application, the project cost estimate was \$4.6 million for design and construction. An agreement to allocate \$195,000 for PDR was executed in 2018 but is set to expire September 20, 2023. While the project has had enhanced project scoping, a PDR has not started. Recent cost estimates put the project cost over \$11 million. In 2020, the PACTS Policy Committee did approve partial construction funding for this project, which added \$2,007,200 to the previously approved PDR funding.

Now, the Brighton Avenue corridor is being examined as a potential part of the PACTS Rapid Transit Study. With the Rapid Transit Study outcome uncertain, thus making it difficult to design the multimodal improvements planned in the original project, Portland is requesting a change of scope to the Brighton Avenue project to focus on a conversion of the Rosemont Corner intersection of Brighton Avenue, Woodford Street, Columbia Road, and Colonial Road to a single-lane roundabout. The proposed roundabout would be capable of accommodating transit as part of the Rapid Transit Study.

*Public Comment*

None.

*Committee Discussion*

Eamonn Dundon (Private Sector Trade Association representative) asked if the roundabout would be compatible with rapid transit and Nell Donaldson (Portland) responded that it would be.

Erin Zwirko (Yarmouth) asked if the scope change would reduce PACTS' liability and Elizabeth confirmed that the roundabout would likely cost about half the currently estimated \$11 million for the full

project. Eamonn confirmed the full \$11 million was included in the PACTS future funding commitment figures the committee reviewed in May.

The original Brighton Avenue Corridor Project was selected for funding using the scoring process that preceded the existing funding framework. Nathan Poore (Falmouth) requested that in future instances of significant scope changes, the original scoring tables and rationale for selection be included in the agenda.

#### *Motion*

Eamonn Dundon moved to recommend Policy Board approval of the requested change of scope for Brighton Avenue; Rebecca Grover seconded. All were in favor. (16–0)

### **7. Board Structure Review: Governance Research**

At its December 2022 meeting, the PACTS Policy Board directed staff to investigate transit agency representation on PACTS boards compared to similar metropolitan planning organization (MPO) boards around the country. During the Funding Framework Task Force, some transit providers had voiced concerns that transit agencies were not adequately represented on RTAC and the Policy Board, and that the roles of the PACTS Policy and Executive Boards were not clearly articulated.

Ron Landis (GPCOG) provided an overview of the research conducted by GPCOG staff, which included a summary of national resources and publications, an overview and summary of case studies for similar MPOs, a summary of MPO governing bodies, a summary of MPO advisory committees, and a review of the Policy and Executive Board roles. The research was also presented to the Transit Task Force on July 6.

#### *Public Comment*

None.

#### *Committee Discussion*

William Gayle (NNEPRA) asked whether other MPOs gave weighted voting to transit agencies. Chris Chop (GPCOG) noted that national research suggests it is difficult to weight votes for non-municipal entities because it is difficult to develop a formula that can be applied across different agencies such as Departments of Transportation. William requested GPCOG staff provide additional information to the Policy Board about how weighted voting is implemented in the three case studies where it is present (including who is included and how votes are weighted).

Chad Heid (BSOOB) asked how the PACTS RTAC compared to other advisory boards around the country, noting that RTAC appears to have a unique structure. Ron confirmed that only 2 of 11 MPO

examples from the case study research featured both technical and specialist seats, similar to RTAC. Kristina Egan (GPCOG) provided additional context, noting that before the PACTS Board restructuring there were three separate committees (Technical, Transit, and Planning) which limited communication between groups.

## **8. 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) like PACTS are required to have a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) that documents the region's transportation planning activities. The UPWP identifies planning priorities; design, engineering, and construction are not eligible for the UPWP. The PACTS UPWP spans two years and the budget is expected to be between \$3.5 million and \$4 million, which will be approximately 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% local contributions.

Staff drafted potential concepts for the 2024-2025 PACTS UPWP using federal and state guidance along with regional input. Broadly, the potential concepts include: 1) Coordinate, Engage, and Evaluate; 2) Feed the Project Pipeline; 3) Plan for the Future; and 4) Implement Plans and Projects. Details on each of these four concepts are available on pages 33 and 34 in the [July 11 RTAC meeting packet](#).

In September 2023, PACTS RTAC and Policy Board will be asked to review the draft UPWP. Following a 30-day public comment period, RTAC and Policy Board will be asked to approve—or provide additional input on—the UPWP in October.

GPCOG and MaineDOT recently signed an agreement to add supplemental funding to the 2022-2023 PACTS UPWP, which is expected to be available to roll over for use in the 2024-2025 PACTS UPWP. Those funds will be for the continuation of 2022-2023 UPWP activities in addition to activities programed for the 2024-2025 UPWP.

### *Public Comment*

None.

### *Committee Discussion*

Rebecca Grover asked if the 2020 Census Urban Areas will impact UPWP funding levels. Chris Chop (GPCOG) responded that it won't have a dramatic impact, but we may see minor reductions.

William Gayle asked if we expect to carry over 2022-2023 UPWP funding to the 2024-2025 UPWP. Chris indicated that we do, and we will continue some of the current UPWP activities in the next UPWP cycle while also beginning work on the new priorities. On a broader level, staff anticipate a lot of consistency from one UPWP to the next.

Hank Berg asked if planning activities funded through 5307 transit formula funding need to be included in the UPWP. Chris indicated they do not. (Upon further research, it may be prudent to document the activities even if they are not directly funded through the UPWP.)

Eamonn Dundon asked if the municipal-sponsored plans and studies listed in the UPWP draft concepts are reflected in Connect 2045. Chris indicated they are not directly called out, but there is a connection to the region's Complete Streets and Vision Zero work.

Several members expressed a preference to emphasize the "feed the project pipeline" and "implement plans and studies" categories. Others highlighted the importance of data collection, analysis, and reporting. Several members also highlighted that housing and housing choice, with consideration for transportation + housing affordability, should be considered.

Erin Zwirko (Yarmouth) noted that she would like to see reporting to the region as a part of measuring progress regarding plans, projects, and all uses of funding. She also expressed an interest in seeing how transportation relates to housing costs. Kristina Egan (GPCOG) mentioned that GPCOG had recently hired a new Outreach Manager who has a background in evaluation. Kristina also mentioned the inaugural PACTS Year in Review, which provided an overview of GPCOG's achievements. GPCOG welcomes feedback from members on ways to improve measuring progress.

## **9. Other Business**

None.

## **10. Adjourn**

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned.