

PACTS TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES July 23, 2020

Name	Affiliation	Attendance
Hank Berg, Vice Chair	Casco Bay Island Transit District	Y
Lori Brann	MaineDOT	Y
Robert Currie	YCCAC	Y
Jack De Beradinis	RTP	Y
John Duncan	City of South Portland	Y
Amy Geren	Portland Downtown	Y
Rebecca Grover	Maine Turnpike Authority	Y
Bruce Hyman	Planning Committee Appointee	Y
Gregg Isherwood	Custom Coach & Limousine	N
Greg Jordan, Chair	METRO	Y
Patricia Quinn	NNEPRA	Y
Tony Scavuzzo	BSOOB Transit	Y
Guests		
Price Armstrong	AECOM	
Ben Blunt	Concord Coach Lines	
Doug Morison	BSOOB Transit	
For GPCOG		
Chris Chop, Kristina Egan, Rick Harbison, Carole Martin, Ryan Neale		

1. Welcome

Greg Jordan opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Open Public Comments

There was no comment from the public.

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3. Acceptance of June 30, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Bruce Hyman moved to accept the minutes of the June 30 meeting as written; Hank Berg seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

4. Election of PACTS Transit Committee Officers

In June 2019, Greg Jordan and Hank Berg were approved to continue in their roles as Chair and Vice Chair for another year.

Jack De Beradinis nominated Tony Scavuzzo for the role of chair. Tony appreciated the consideration, but did not feel ready for the role at this time and declined the offer.

Bruce nominated Greg and Hank for another year as Chair and Vice Chair; Rebecca Grover seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

Kristina thanked Greg and Hank for their continued hard work. Greg thanked the committee members for their support.

5. Follow-up Presentation on the Medium- and Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19

At the July 9 Transit Committee workshop, staff and consultant AECOM provided an update on their work examining how the pandemic may impact the future of transit in the region. Two key uncertainties have guided the work: how quickly a vaccine is developed and future levels of federal funding for transit. These two uncertainties were combined into four possible future scenarios that have been used to generate a series of recommendations. This research is intended to inform the committee's thinking as it allocates CARES Act Phase II funds, and will be incorporated into *Transit Tomorrow*, the region's long-range public transportation plan. The recommendations are:

1. Adapt service to better serve transit-dependent populations.
2. Plan to deliver lower levels of service to stretch dollars further.
3. Diversify and expand local funding to anticipate reduced public funds.
4. Invest in no-touch mobile technology to protect public health.
5. Expand digital communications and marketing to rebuild ridership.
6. Invest in data collection to make nimbler decisions.

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7. Support street spaces for bike lanes, walking, and outdoor retail and dining to keep transit relevant.
8. Redouble efforts to locate housing in walkable villages and downtowns to reduce longer-term ridership losses.
9. Implement more efficient rural demand-response to cost-effectively maintain access.

Based on these recommendations, there are several investments worth pursuing, including:

- no-touch mobile ticketing
- automatic vehicle locators (AVL) and automatic passenger counters (APC)
- additional data analysis tools and staff capacity
- multimodal integrations—for example, a unified transit and bikeshare fare
- first- and last-mile solutions
- targeted service enhancements
- expanded communications and marketing capacity
- strategic built environment investments to compliment expanded public space

Bruce asked whether any of the recommendations were urgent for the next six-month period. Price noted the future is unclear, especially regarding continued telecommuting. Improved data collection and analysis will be important to inform decision making.

John Duncan underscored the importance of recommendation #9 to the region. Kristina noted staff included \$60,000 in the proposed CARES Act Phase II funding allocation to support improving access for populations that face barriers to using the transportation network.

Greg cautioned against retrenching to a social service model. He felt building new systems and infrastructure to serve a broader population would ultimately better serve the transit-dependent population.

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6. Transit Stop Access Project Adjustment to the 2020 Six-Year Capital and Operating Plan (SYCOP) and Split Letter

Phase II-B of the Transit Stop Access Project involves preliminary and final design of accessibility improvements at a selection of the 120 bus stops identified in Phase II-A. The consultant budget for this work was \$250,000; however, the selected consultant's cost proposal came in at approximately \$465,000. Rather than significantly reducing the scope of the project, the project team recommended transferring construction funding from Phase III to fully cover preliminary and final design for Phase II-B. This will ensure the work is shovel-ready when future construction funding is identified. Transferring this funding between project phases necessitates a revision of the 2020 SYCOP and FFY 2019–2020 Split Letter.

Bruce asked how the change would affect the construction schedule. Greg said if final construction documents are ready by early next spring—and it is not clear at this point if that schedule is feasible—work at some locations could begin in summer of 2021.

Hank asked if a new Split Letter was necessary. Greg said it would be, because funds will be moved from FFYs 2021 and 2022 to FFY 2020. Hank added that CBITD's terminal renovation has been on hold and will be starting back up. The project notes a need to include a new bus shelter somewhere in the area. CBL staff will connect with METRO staff on this issue.

Lori Brann said she was unsure if the change to the Split Letter would require TIP or STIP adjustments, but asked to be informed so she could coordinate that process.

John Duncan moved to approve the adjustment of the SYCOP and revision of the Split Letter; Bruce seconded. Lori abstained, all others were in favor; the motion carried.

7. Transit Committee Recommendation on the Allocation of CARES Act Phase II Funds

The PACTS region received approximately \$53 million in CARES Act funding to support transit during the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately \$14 million of that was allocated in Phase I to address immediate cash flow needs for the period of February to June 2020. The Committee has been developing a process to allocate CARES Act Phase II

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funds. Priority One has been ensuring continued operations. Staff have met with the region's transit providers to understand their unique circumstances and to ensure a consistent approach in collecting financial projections. Priority One funding requests total \$4.8 million (this figure does not yet include any funding request from YCCAC) for the region's transit operators and \$1.6 million for Concord Coach Lines.

Jack asked whether the requested funds could be used for micro-capital improvements, such as installing plexiglass to shield drivers, or other purposes. Ryan said the cleaning and vehicle upgrades would be handled through a supplementary Split Letter so staff could explore opportunities to pursue any services or products regionally. Greg noted that the intent of the Priority One funding was to offset losses due to reduced rider-based revenues. Kristina added that staff have been working on a report on best practices for cleaning and sanitation procedures and vehicle equipment upgrades.

Additional Phase II priorities totaled approximately \$7.5 million, leaving a balance of \$31.7 million.

Greg noted that Concord Coach Lines had been asked for and submitted additional data and documentation to accompany their request. Ben Blunt said their target date for relaunching service had shifted from August 2 to August 16.

Kristina provided some background on the Efficiency Study. Scoped at \$380,000 for one year, the study will look at adjusting routes and schedules in light of the post-pandemic recommendations, and opportunities for coordination, strategic partnerships, integration, and consolidation among the region's transit providers. In response to a question from Patricia Quinn, Kristina said that additional scoping would be necessary, but the study will require a consultant and will be directed by the Executive Committee.

Patricia urged that the agencies and GPCOG coordinate on marketing and communications to avoid duplicating efforts and to leverage what has been invested in.

Bruce said that Portland has a strong interest in pursuing a transit signal priority (TSP) project. He suggested \$50,000 be added to the upcoming six-month period for system

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innovation. Greg suggested TSP could be discussed with the sanitation and vehicle upgrades supplementary Split Letter. Bruce supported that idea. Staff will work with Bruce and others to develop material for the Committee's consideration in August.

Bruce moved to approve the CARES Act Phase II funding framework as presented, subject to YCCAC's funding request being added after staff can meet with them; Patricia seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

8. Other Business

Hank announced that CBITD received a \$3.2 million Federal Transit Administration Passenger Ferry Grant program grant to implement a diesel-electric hybrid propulsion system in their new vessel.

9. Adjourn

Amy Geren moved to adjourn the meeting; Tony seconded. With no objection, the motion carried.