

PACTS Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

October 3, 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	Y
PACTS Central – Public Works/ Engineering	Melissa Hutchins	Y
PACTS Western – Municipal	Bob Burns	
PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development	Amanda Lessard	
PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering	Katherine Kelley	Y
PACTS Northern – Municipal	Nathan Poore	
PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development	Erin Zwirko, chair	Y
PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering	Adam Bliss	
Transit	Hank Berg	
Transit	Natalie Bogart	Y
Transit	Tom Reinauer	
Transit	Chad Heid, vice chair	Y
MaineDOT	Ian Gorecki	Y
Maine Turnpike Authority	Rebecca Grover	Y
Active Transportation Specialist	Jason Day	
Environmental Specialist	Christian MilNeil	Y
Community Transportation Leader	Guy Mpoyi	Y
Community Transportation Leader	Cheryl Oldfield	
Private Sector Trade Association	Eamonn Dundon	Y

1. Welcome

Erin Zwirko opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of the September 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Nell Donaldson moved to approve the September 5, 2023 meeting minutes as written; Chad Heid seconded. Rebecca Grover abstained. All other members present were in favor. (Vote: 11-0-1)

4. Staff Report

PACTS is planning to launch a call for Transit System Enhancement Projects in early November. Initial project proposals will likely be due in mid-December, full applications due in January, and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) review in May. The funding will be between 12-20% of the annual allocation of Federal Transit Administration 5307 funds—between \$1.7 million and \$2.8 million.

Public Comment

None.

Committee Discussion

Tom Milligan (Biddeford) asked if the funding is only for transit projects. Aubrey Miller (GPCOG) confirmed it is.

Motion

This item was for information only.

5. 2024-2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

PACTS is federally required to create a Unified Planning Working Program (UPWP) that documents the region's transportation planning activities. The UPWP is only eligible for planning, not design or construction, and it can be modified or amended throughout its life. The anticipated budget is \$3.5 to \$4.0 million and will be 80% Federal funding, 10% State funding, and 10% Local match funding.

In July 2023, staff presented draft concepts to RTAC ([link here](#)) and the Policy Board ([link here](#)) for input. The concepts were developed based on regional plans, which included robust community input (Connect 2045, surveys of PACTS committees/boards), as well as federal and state guidance.

Following the July meetings, staff further categorized the draft concepts into “tasks” and “elements” (or projects) and developed preliminary cost estimates for each element. Tasks are intended to reflect broader groupings while elements reflect specific investment priorities. The four UPWP tasks are 1) Coordinate, Engage, and Evaluate; 2) Feed the Project Pipeline; 3) Implement Plans and Projects; 4) Plan for the Future.

In September 2023, staff presented draft concepts and budgets to RTAC, the Transit Task Force, and Policy Board and published the full draft document on September 13th for 30 days. Staff also shared the draft with partners at the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and MaineDOT. The draft 2024-2025 PACTS UPWP can be reviewed [here](#).

Public Comment

None.

Committee Discussion

Christian MilNeil (RTAC Environmental Specialist) expressed appreciation that the UPWP addressed the importance of Maine Won't Wait planning but requested that the RFP (request for proposals) process include language requiring applicants to have prior experience with climate mitigation and successful track records with mode shifts and adhering to project budgets. Chris Chop (GPCOG) acknowledged that those ideas could be incorporated.

Tom Milligan (Biddeford) asked if a final draft would be presented to the PACTS Policy Board in October and, if so, what the procedure would be if the current draft is revised before the Policy Board approves it. It was clarified that any significant changes would be reviewed by RTAC in November. Tom followed up by asking why there seemed to be a rush to get the UPWP approved in October. It was pointed out that MaineDOT would need to approve the budgets, and pushing approval to November allows less time for MaineDOT to review the UPWP. Additionally, GPCOG cannot bill any time in 2024 to the UPWP until it is approved by MaineDOT.

Chad Heid suggested including a condition of approval that limits the budget variance to +/- 6 percent.

Motion

Christian MilNeil (RTAC Environmental Specialist) moved to recommend approval of the 2024-2025 UPWP with the understanding that staff will return to RTAC in November with the following information: 1) a summary of the public comments received and if/how those comments impacted the final UPWP; 2) any other notable changes to the document; and 3) final budgets; Nell Donaldson (Portland) seconded. All were in favor. (12–0)

6. Pilot Program to Position the Region for Discretionary Funding

In June 2023, the PACTS Policy Board directed GPCOG staff to develop a pilot program for identifying and evaluating, with PACTS member community input, projects that would help position the region for discretionary funding. GPCOG staff held a meeting in each of the four PACTS subregions to review project lists and discuss priorities and readiness.

Based on discussions at the subregion meetings, staff recommend: 1) Using Connect 2045 as the instrument for identifying projects for discretionary funding and incorporating "readiness" into the Connect 2045 call for projects, 2) Prioritizing the Route 1 corridor study and preparing a grant-ready project, and 3) Convening annual subregion meetings.

Public Comment

None.

Committee Discussion

Eamonn Dundon (RTAC Private Sector Trade Association) sought clarification on the pilot program's purpose. Aubrey Miller (GPCOG) indicated it was a proactive approach to ensure the region has projects appropriate for different funding sources. Eamonn followed up by confirming that municipalities are not precluded from going out on their own to seek funding and referencing Connect 2045 as regional support.

Nell Donaldson (Portland) asked for more information about the emphasis on prioritizing the Route 1 corridor study. Aubrey noted the Northern Subregion towns were all working toward creating a multi-use path along, and complete streets on, Route 1. They are trying to coordinate their work and want a regional funding approach to Route 1. The focus on Route 1 aligns well with “Reimagining Route 1”—a corridor study from Freeport to Arundel—in the Draft 2024-2025 UPWP.

Tom Milligan (Biddeford) noted that consideration should be given to existing projects in Connect 2045 that align with the staff recommendations. Aubrey clarified that those projects would be at the top of the list.

Eamonn Dundon asked if this would become formal policy or just general staff practice. Aubrey noted that some aspects like “readiness” would be formal policy through Connect 2045 but subregion meetings would not be formal policy.

Eamonn Dundon and Erin Zwirko (Yarmouth) both expressed a desire to see regularly scheduled subregion meetings, up to twice a year, based on the call for project schedule. Chris Chop acknowledged this was a possibility but noted it would take significant staff time.

Natalie Bogart (NNEPRA) asked for clarification on the lifespan of the pilot program. It was clarified that the pilot would be examined after one year.

Motion

This item was for information and feedback only.

8. Adjourn

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned.