

**Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)**

October 11, 2022

9:00 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Seat	Representative	Attendance
PACTS Southern – Municipal	Diana Asanza	
PACTS Southern – Planning/ Economic Development	Jessa Berna	Y
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	Y
PACTS Western – Municipal	Bob Burns	
PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development	Amanda Lessard	
PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering	Katherine Kelley	
PACTS Northern – Municipal	Nathan Poore	Y
PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development	Erin Zwirko	Y
PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering	Adam Bliss	Y
Transit	Donna Tippet	Y
Transit	Patricia Quinn	Y
Transit	Jack De Beradinis	
Transit	Greg Jordan	Y
MaineDOT	Ryan Neale	Y
Maine Turnpike Authority	Rebecca Grover	Y
Active Transportation Specialist	Jean Sideris	Y
Environmental Specialist	Christian MilNeil	Y
Community Transportation Leader	Leeann Brionez	
Community Transportation Leader	Mireille Kabongo	
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 September 6, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Tom Milligan moved to approve the September 6 meeting minutes as written; Melissa Hutchins seconded. Rebecca Grover, Greg Jordan, Erin Zwirko, and Nathan Poore abstained; all others were in favor.

**4. Staff Report**

Staff thanked departing RTAC members Theo Holtwijk and Bill Shane, and welcomed new members Nathan Poore and Erin Zwirko.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has a variety of competitive grant programs for funding transportation projects and activities. A list of programs is available in the [FHWA Competitive Grant Funding Matrix](#). GPCOG staff recently submitted a grant application under one of these programs— Safe Streets and Roads for All—to support the development of a Regional Vision Zero Policy. Related to Vision Zero, staff created a [video](#) highlighting the human impacts of traffic crashes.

Christian MilNeil noted FHWA is interested in Vision Zero and Complete Streets policies. He said it is smart for GPCOG to get out ahead with its own policies.

In July, RTAC recommended, with minor changes, the Regional Complete Streets Policy for approval by the Policy Board. In September, the Policy Board voted to postpone the approval of the Regional Complete Streets Policy and directed staff to create a subcommittee to discuss issues related to implementation of the policy.

## **5. Funding Framework Task Force Recommendations**

In April 2021, PACTS adopted the Transportation Funding Framework, which allocates funding to projects of all modes according to a series of metrics based on regional priorities. It is currently used to prioritize projects eligible for the Complex Projects Program (60% of the region's FHWA funds) and transit System Enhancement projects (12% of the region's FTA Section 5307 funds).

In March 2022, the Policy Board approved a funding strategy for the region's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, including funding for several projects as prioritized by the framework and approximately \$1 million in operations and maintenance funding for Casco Bay Lines and NNEPRA. A split letter documenting this allocation must be signed by the transit agencies before the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will release the funds. Not all agencies have signed the split letter; four of the region's transit agencies outlined their concerns with the ARPA allocation process in a May 13 letter. Based on these concerns, and because the framework is subject to regular review, the Policy Board formed the Funding Framework Task Force to vet the issues identified in the May 13 letter.

After a project kickoff meeting, four review meetings, and a "redline review" meeting, the task force developed a series of recommendations that have been incorporated into the framework (Attachment 5-A) and the application for funding (Attachment 5-D). Since some additional edits were requested by email after the task force's redline review meeting, these communications are outlined in Attachments 5-B and 5-C.

Several members also identified issues beyond the framework itself, related to PACTS bylaws and voting structure. The task force chose to advance the framework recommendations separately from the bylaws-related issues so the revised framework can be used for November call for projects. The task force will meet in October to discuss and determine a course of action on the bylaws-related issues.

Nell Donaldson first invited task force members to speak about the process and the outcomes.

Donna Tippettt thanked staff for their work with the task force. She said she thought recommendations related to unanticipated funding should be reviewed by the Transit Task Force before going to the PACTS Governing Body. She added that her own preference was not to separate the framework recommendations from the bylaws-related issues. She said that, currently, a recommendation could be opposed by all transit agencies and still get approved by the Policy Board. Nell clarified that the Funding Framework Task Force would meet later in the week with hopes of making progress on the bylaws and voting issues before the Policy Board meeting. She also clarified that the language in the redlined framework related to unanticipated funding indicates every effort will be made to consult with

stakeholders such as the transit agencies, while still recognizing the reality of time constraints. Donna added her thought that, on the highway side, the voting block of public works and city engineers and city managers has the ability to influence the Governing Body, whereas the transit agencies don't have similar weight.

Patricia Quinn thanked staff and all members of the Funding Framework Task Force for their time and said we have a stronger framework as a result of the work. She requested that complex projects and transit system enhancement projects be added to the glossary. She agreed with Donna that those who have the opportunity to use unanticipated funding should have a clear voice in how that funding is used. Patricia also asked if the framework allows staff to make recommendations independently, and requested that options be presented to applicants before going to RTAC and the Governing Body. There was some discussion about how to clarify the language related to how staff develops funding options for Governing Body consideration, given that requests for funding exceed available funding.

Nell called for public comment; no public comment was made.

Christian MilNeil asked that reference to the state's climate goals, which had been removed by the Funding Framework Task Force for simplicity, be added back in.

Tom Milligan asked about the possibilities for amending the framework, particularly given the outstanding concerns about the bylaws. Staff explained that the PACTS Governing Body has the right to review PACTS policies at any time.

Christian MilNeil moved to endorse the Funding Framework Task Force's recommendations for Policy Board approval, with the two edits discussed—clarify language related to the project selection and funding allocation process ["Any recommended project scope or budget modifications must be agreed upon by the applicant prior to submission to RTAC."] and retain reference to state climate goals in the scoring criteria. Nathan Poore seconded the motion.

Tom Milligan asked if transit agencies be comfortable signing the split letter if the revised funding framework is approved. No one volunteered an answer.

Nathan suggested surveying all applicants about their experience with the application process. Staff supported this idea.

There were 12 votes in favor of the motion and one opposed (Donna Tippet). The motion carried.

## **6. Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

## **7. Adjourn**

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned.