

PACTS Policy Board

October 27, 2022

11:00 am–1:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Municipal Members		
Arundel	VACANT	
Biddeford	Jim Bennett	✓
Cape Elizabeth	Matt Sturgis	✓
Cumberland	Bill Shane	
Falmouth	Hope Cahan, chair	✓
Freeport	Jake Daniele	✓
Gorham	Ephrem Paraschak	
North Yarmouth	Diane Barnes	
Old Orchard Beach	Diana Asanza	
Portland	Keith Gray	✓
Portland	Nell Donaldson	✓
Raymond	Nathan White	
Saco	Patrick Fox, vice chair	✓
Scarborough	Angela Blanchette	
South Portland	Kate Lewis	
Standish	Michael Delcourt	
Westbrook	Eric Dudley	
Windham	Barry Tibbetts	
Yarmouth	Scott LaFlamme	✓

Non-municipal Members		
MaineDOT	Dale Doughty	✓
Maine Turnpike Auth.	Erin Courtney	✓
Active Transp. Specialist	Kara Wooldrik	✓
Environmental Specialist	Allen Armstrong	✓
Transp. Equity Specialist	Andrew Blunt	
Transp. Equity Specialist	Yura Yasui	
RTAC Liaison	Tom Milligan	✓
BSOOB Transit	Chad Heid	✓
Casco Bay Lines	Hank Berg	✓
METRO	Greg Jordan	✓
NNEPRA	Patricia Quinn	✓
Reg. Transp. Program	Jack DeBeradinis	
So. Portland Bus Serv.	Donna Tippet	✓
York Co. Comm. Action	Tom Reinauer	✓

Non-voting Members		
SMPDC	Stephanie Carver	✓
Federal Highway Admin.	Rachel Levee	
Federal Transit Admin.	Leah Sirmin	

1. Welcome

Hope Cahan opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

3. Approval of the September 22 Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Matt Sturgis moved to approve the September 22 meeting minutes as written; Allen Armstrong seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 45–0; standard vote: 17–0)¹

¹ Per PACTS Bylaws, Policy Board votes are weighted by municipal population.

4. Chair's Report

There was no report from the chair.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Report

At its October meeting, RTAC reviewed the recommendations from the Funding Framework Task Force, and recommended them to the Policy Board for approval.

6. Staff Report

Staff released a notice of funding for plans, studies, data collection, and community outreach to be funded through the UPWP. Proposals are due November 23 and will be brought before RTAC for review and the Policy Board for approval at an upcoming meeting.

Aubrey Miller introduced Ron Landis who is the new Regional Transportation Planner at GPCOG.

7. Adoption of Funding Framework Task Force Recommendations

At its May meeting, the Policy Board formed the Funding Framework Task Force to review the Transportation Funding Framework—the process by which PACTS allocates funding to projects of all modes according to a series of metrics based on regional priorities—and make recommendations for improvement. After a project kickoff meeting, four review meetings, and a “redline review” meeting, the task force developed a series of recommendations to be incorporated into the framework and funding application. Several members also identified issues related to PACTS' bylaws and voting structure. The task force did not support making governance changes at this time. However, a review of all remaining underlying concerns will be provided to the Policy Board for the group's consideration.

At its October meeting, RTAC reviewed the task force's recommendations and recommended approval with two revisions: to retain reference to the State's climate action goals under the *Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions* scoring criterion; and to insert under the *Project Selection and Funding Allocation Process* section, “Any recommended project scope or budget modifications must be agreed upon by the applicant prior to submission to RTAC,” including additional corresponding edits under that section.

Hope Cahan asked for public comment. Ken Capron of Portland asked whether research funding would apply to the funding framework. Hope closed the public comment period.

Matt Sturgis moved to adopt the recommendations of the Funding Framework Task Force as amended by RTAC; Scott LaFlamme seconded.

Jim Bennett noted the revised framework had not been tested. He supported allowing PACTS' processes to unfold and allowing staff the flexibility to address issues as they arise.

Pat Fox asked if the revised framework would give comfort to allow the transit agencies to sign the split letter. Greg Jordan replied that GP Metro has already signed and remains committed to the split letter. With no other transit agencies providing their perspective, Hope Cahhan acknowledged the board is awaiting additional resolution.

Donna Tippettt felt there is not sufficient opportunity for the transit agencies to provide their input into PACTS' process.

Patricia Quinn stressed the need for better communication between staff and the transit agencies so recommendations that are brought to PACTS can be as strong as possible. She urged for PACTS to increase resources for the Transit Task Force. Staff hoped that additional funding will soon be available, subject to PACTS' committee restructuring which was intended to reduce the number of meetings and ensure decisions were made by a broader group of stakeholders. Greg Jordan underscored the advisory nature of the group.

On the motion, Donna Tippettt was opposed, Jake Daniele abstained, all others were in favor. (Weighted vote: 44–1; standard vote: 16–1)

8. Connect 2045 Project Update

On October 21, staff released a draft of Connect 2045—the region's upcoming long-range transportation plan—for a 30-day public comment period. The plan is comprised of an assessment of existing conditions, vision and goals guiding the region, objectives, actions, and performance targets to track progress toward the region's goals, and lists of projects based on anticipated funding levels and project costs.

Staff will seek additional feedback from RTAC and the Policy Board at their November meetings. The plan slated for final adoption by the Policy Board at its December meeting. Staff invited board members to provide feedback at any time.

9. 2022–2024 Supplemental FHWA Funding

MaineDOT suballocates a portion of its FHWA funding to the four MPOs in the state. Despite increased federal funding, these suballocations have remained flat for the past decade. The MPOs and MaineDOT have been developing a new metrics-based funding formula. In the short-term, MaineDOT proposes distributing funding to the MPOs based on outstanding project needs. Staff have sent a letter to MaineDOT detailing several concerns with this approach.

Dale Doughty acknowledged receipt of the letter. He noted the proposed suballocation was a short-term measure to assist projects hard-hit by inflation.

Jim Bennett urged the group to work toward closing the gap between limited funding and a significant queue of unfinished projects. He suggested total lane-miles as metric.

10. Update: GPCOG's Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study and MTA's Proposed Gorham Connector

In July, the Portland city council passed a resolution requesting GPCOG conduct a climate impact assessment of a rapid transit installation along the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland corridor as part of its rapid transit study, and that the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) conduct the same for its proposed Gorham Connector. The rapid transit study does not have funding for this assessment, but it will consider environmental impacts of various alignment alternatives.

Erin Courtney noted that MTA is part of the rapid transit study's project advisory group, and that an environmental analysis will be required as part of their project's permitting process.

The group urged GPCOG and MTA to work closely together as the two projects advance.

11. Other Business

Kristina Egan introduced GPCOG staff members Vincent Edwards and Dani Deason, as they will be providing PACTS additional support.

12. Adjourn

With no objection, the meeting was adjourned.