

January 21, 2022

To: Members of the PACTS Policy Board and Regional Transportation Advisory Committee
Cc: PACTS Officers
Subject: ARPA Transit Funding – Scoring and Selection Process

Dear PACTS Board and Committee Members:

GPCOG staff received suggestions to provide additional clarity to the process for scoring, evaluating, and selecting projects for the region’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) transit funding. The intent of this memo is to do just that – remind committee/board members of the process approved by the PACTS Policy Board and provide clarity on the composition and intent of the scoring committee.

In August 2021, the PACTS Policy Board unanimously approved a process for allocating the region’s \$8.1 million in ARPA funds. This process is detailed in the [August 24 Policy Board meeting packet](#) and discussed in the [meeting minutes](#). In addition to establishing a “call for projects” and outlining key milestones (deadlines, presentations, evaluation), the process identified the [PACTS Transportation Funding Framework](#), approved in April 2021, as the mechanism for scoring projects. The funding framework includes quantitative and qualitative scoring through a scoring committee.

Although the process outlined GPCOG staff as the project scorers, our team, in consultation with the PACTS officers, felt it would be prudent and inclusive to invite external partners to serve on the ARPA scoring committee. GPCOG staff identified several candidates who have demonstrated a strong understanding of regional transit and whose respective organizations/municipalities do not have a *direct* stake in the outcome of any projects. The scoring committee includes Bruce Hyman (City of Portland), Ryan Neale (MaineDOT), Maureen O’Meara (Town of Cape Elizabeth), Kevin Sutherland (regional resident and former City Manager of Saco), and Dean Williams (SMPDC).

On Tuesday, January 25, the transit agency sponsors will have the opportunity to present their projects to the scoring committee (webinar scheduled posted [here](#)). While the webinar will not offer public comment at this stage, interested parties are welcome to listen in. Scoring committee members will be asked to pledge to be neutral and objective in their approach to scoring, and to base scores on the rubric laid out in the PACTS Transportation Funding Framework. Scorers shall recuse themselves from scoring any applications that they personally helped develop.

In efforts to provide additional transparency, GPCOG encourages project sponsors or other parties to submit, *in writing*, any concerns they have as it pertains to the objectivity and impartiality of the scoring committee. Concerns should be specific and evidence-based and directed to Chris Chop and the PACTS Officers (cc’d). In the event that issues are raised, scoring committee members will have the opportunity to share their perspectives. The PACTS officers, in consultation with GPCOG staff, will determine the appropriate course of action.

Finally, project scoring is one input in the project evaluation and selection process. The RTAC and Policy Board, which includes all seven (7) public transit providers, will make the ultimate determination in recommending and selecting projects for the region's ARPA transit funding. Barring any setbacks, these committee/board conversations will occur in March 2022. RTAC and Policy Board members can review the project applications and funding requests (totaling \$7.9 million) [here](#) in advance of the March meetings.

Thank you for your time and thank you for working together to improve public transportation in our region.

Sincerely,



Chris Chop
Transportation Director
Greater Portland Council of Governments
cchop@gpcog.org

Cc: PACTS Officers: Matt Sturgis, PACTS Chair; Hope Cahan, PACTS Vice Chair; Nell Donaldson, Chair of PACTS Regional Transit Advisory Committee

Bcc: PACTS Policy Board, PACTS Regional Transit Advisory Committee, PACTS ARPA Scoring Committee