

Project Update #4 for GPCOG/Southern Maine RTDP

Southern Maine Short-Term Regional Transit Development Plan / GPCOG

Date/Time: August 22, 2017 / 12:30 PM
Place: Casco Bay Room, GPCOG, 970 Baxter Blvd., Portland, ME
Next Meeting: TBD
Attendees: Stephanie Carver (GPCOG); Art Handman (So. Portland Transit); Gregory Jordan (METRO); Kristina Egan (GPCOG); Marina Douglass (NNEPRA); Other GPCOG invited guests
Stantec: Sasha Pejicic, David Verbich, Brian Putre
Absentees: Hank Berg (Casco Bay Lines); Robert Currie (YCCAC)
Distribution: Stantec and GPCOG, PACTS, et al.

1. Update on RTDP timeline and progress

Stephanie Carver introduced the work thus far and requirements for going forward, including the timing going forward and milestones

- Stantec will provide an updated timeline with milestones, proposed meetings (and topics), and deliverables
- Stantec will work to meet deadlines, and depends on operators for quick turnaround on deliverables and feedback

2. Updates on Task 3

Results from the stakeholder engagement activities to date are included in Task 4 – Background Analysis. Some stakeholder engagement activities are pending, including outreach to local elected officials.

Carol Morris suggested that we might have received more interest from employees had we looked at employers in the range of 10-50 employees that cannot afford to provide parking.

3. Update on Task 4 – Background Analysis

Task 4 contains a detailed and thorough background review and will be used to identify needs and rationalize recommendations in later steps. As well, a summary of main points from Task 4 will be included in the final report/plan.

This document is a work in progress, and will be updated as feedback is received from each operator.

4. Update on Task 5 – Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

Stantec submitted a draft and has received some feedback. We are waiting for more feedback to make modifications for a revised version.

5. Update on Task 10 – Prioritization Framework

GPCOG to develop initial Southern-Maine specific prioritization framework based materials furnished by Stantec. Stantec to review and comment once available. This task will be tweaked based on feedback from other tasks, most pertinently, Tasks 6 and 7.

6. Some key findings from the online survey

Stantec reviewed key findings from the survey including:

- Low opposition for a tax aimed at funding public transit in the region
- Lack of options to get to colleges and universities and thus low use for school trips
- Lack of cohesive and simple trip planning from the rider's perspective
- Dissatisfaction with transfers

7. Task 6 – Needs Assessment and Service Concepts

Stantec introduced a working draft/discussion guide it developed aimed at garnering feedback for the next task, the needs assessment.

This task isolates needs identified from previous tasks, and we discussed proposed themes and likely recommendations. Stantec introduced these items and invited feedback and candid discussion, and will build out more complete and rationalized needs for feedback from operators in the coming month.

The needs assessment yielded four main themes or topics. Highlighted discussion points from each theme include:

A. Service Planning and Delivery

- Stantec will provide clear recommendation regarding region-wide standards, i.e., segmented by mode, urban vs. rural, etc. Align with federal standards (MAP-21, etc.), which will help to obtain funding into the future, while also being cognizant that these standards should help improve service from the users' perspectives
 - Region wide standards will also help GPCOG track performance of regional operators
- Focus on items within the agencies' control, i.e., can't do much about accidents, construction, etc. related to running time and service delivery
- Connectivity: improve connectivity in general, not just between Maine Mall and Westbrook

B. Promotion and public awareness

- Already working on first and last bullets – helping people become aware of how to get into and out of downtown, with the intention to discourage 1-occupant vehicles on the road. RFP for multimodal mobility in downtown Portland has been issued.
- Coordinated distribution of regional user information is a good idea, and can leverage SMTT and other collaborative initiatives

C. Financial and funding

- Explore options, advocate for this. Develop a suite of options for policymakers to consider to address the challenge for possible federal funding dropoff
 - A review of tools and GPCOG will look to see how best to move this forward
 - Look at TIFs and P3s as options, if applicable
- Stantec will explore options for non-fare revenue sources, like advertising, and discuss pros and cons
- Bullet points for this theme will be re-ordered: 1, Split funds with proposed scheme from Task 10; 2, Explore addition revenue sources; and 3, Explore potential for local tax and dedicated funding

D. Integration and optimization

- Stantec will explore the case for better integration and coordination of transit services, with user and operator pros and cons

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- Stantec will modify recommendations and *explore* the case for a unified fare payment system, although this will be challenging given Amtrak's system of fare payment
- While the SMART initiative has its drawbacks, the idea of integration—at least from a new and different perspective—deserves a discussion
- Unifying branding will be challenging as well, and Stantec will *explore* the case for a unified brand, while acknowledging:
 - Past attempts to create a unified logo
 - Strong brands of Casco Bay Lines and the Downeaster
 - Potential to unify bus and paratransit brands

Finally, it was discussed that including a fifth theme related to land use integration and TOD and transit accessibility could be explored, or integrated within the other appropriate themes.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Stantec will revise and update working drafts of Tasks 4, 5, and 10 as feedback is received
2. Stantec will begin building out Task 6 and begin the iterative process of developing a scenarios modeling (Task 7)
3. Stantec will provide an updated timeline, including milestones, deliverables, and upcoming meetings
4. A next meeting, likely in September, will be coordinated with GPCOG

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

Stantec Consulting Ltd.