

Transit Tomorrow Project Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 5, 2019

9:30am-11:30am

GPCOG, 970 Baxter Boulevard, Portland
2nd Floor Conference Room

Conference Line: Dial in (515)-604-9300, Access Code 415821

- 1. Welcome and Introductions – Exploring the Role of Public Transportation in the Region.**
Stephanie Carver welcomed everyone and introduced the team from AECOM – the consultant on this project. Participants were asked to share an answer to the question:

What do you consider to be the role of public transit in your community?

Topics mentioned included:

- Educational opportunities, climate change
- Expand opportunities, climate change
- All of the above
- Lifeline to islands
- Improving access and connections
- Connectivity; commutes and connections to jobs
- Opportunities for staff and patients
- Public health and active transit
- Environment, economy, equity
- Connectivity for those who can't drive, prevent social isolation
- Transit is integral to the economy, access to hobs, healthcare, recreation
- Change community perspective on transit
- Spatial planning as a reflection of culture and values, transportation is critical
- Public health, sustainability, access to housing, climate change

- Connect with other people
- Connecting land use and transportation
- Support Land Use and Promote Development
- Regional Connectivity
- Equal Access/Social Justice:

2. Transit Tomorrow Project Overview

Jill Calhoun of AECOM gave an overview of the purpose and goals for the project. Jill spent time explaining the scenario planning that will be conducted as part of this process. Scenario planning can be very complex, but the basic idea is to provide information that enables decision-makers to make “educated guesses.”

3. Introduction to the Transit Tomorrow Visioning Process

Jill presented an outline of the visioning process and the project schedule to the Committee. Several questioned from the PAC followed:

“Will data from cell phones be purchased to inform the process?”

GPCOG just purchased Street Light data; will be used for this study and other efforts. Origins/Destination data used as a base for travel destinations and overall travel patterns. We also have access to this information from previous plan

How will the project scenarios be developed?

We are looking at six alternative scenarios, variables include land use, transportation alternatives, compared to a baseline, no-build scenario. Scenarios will be based on PAC’s input and we will discuss them more at our September meeting.

Jill talked about the method around developing recommendations and strategies

- Include cost/life-cycle cost feasibility in recommendations
- Include revenue modeling
- Develop strategies to recalibrate for ideas that are not implementable

4. 10-minute Break and Activity 2: Transit Service Trade-Offs

The Committee participated in a hands-on exercise around tradeoffs.

- Coverage vs. Frequency
- Speed vs. Access
- Coverage vs. Span

The results of this activity are below:

More Frequent Service**Increased Service Area Coverage**

2	1	0	1	2
10	5	1	3	2

More frequent service: 25

Equally important: 1

Increased service area coverage: 5

Difference: More frequent service +20

Faster Service – fewer stops**More Access – more stops closer to your destination**

2	1	0	1	2
4	7	5	3	2

Faster service: 11

Equally important: 5

More access: 5

Difference: Faster service +6

Increased Service Area Coverage**Longer Hours of Operation**

2	1	0	1	2
3	4	2	6	6

Increased service area coverage: 7

Equally important: 2

Longer hours of operation: 12

Difference: Longer hours of operation +5

Jill explained that frequency and speed are critical to building ridership, many participants favored more frequent service over service area and faster service over more stops.

5. Introduction to the Transit Tomorrow Visioning Process

He next steps in the process include:

- PAC Meeting and Interactive Activities (today)
- Key Topic Area Webinars (May-early June)

- Survey PAC members to determine topic preference. PAC members will choose from the following:
 - Future of emerging technology and shared mobility and how that will change travel
 - Changing patterns of travel behavior and how that will affect the future of Southern Maine
 - Transit and economic development in the future of Southern Maine
- Visioning Workshop(s) (June, date/venue TBD) that will include stakeholders and public
- Public Survey (June)
- PAC Presentation (September/October)

6. Transit Priorities Exercise and Discussion

Jill explained the exercise to the Committee members. Members were given “\$10,000 Transit Tomorrow dollars” and asked to allocate them to priorities on a game board. Jill posed the question, “Trying to balance immediate needs with future needs, especially with regard to responding and planning for growth, what types of improvements, upgrades, etc., should be highest priority for the Region now and over the next 20 years?” The results from this exercise are below:

Investment Strategy/Game Board Choices	\$100,000 Investments
Connections to bike/pedestrian facilities	23
New modes	22
Shelters and benches at stops	14
Integrated fare system for region	14
Better connections between intercity buses	14
More local buses	12
More express service	11
Access to medical care	10
Increased service in rural areas	8
More rail service	7
Later evening service	7
Supporting applications of autonomous vehicles for transit service	6
Real time arrival information system	6
New vehicles	6
More buses going more places	5
More training for drivers and staff	3
Reduce transfers	3
Subsidized van pools	2
More commuter service	2

Investment Strategy/Game Board Choices	\$100,000 Investments
Wi-Fi on transit	1
Mobile fare payment/mobile passes on Smartphones	1

The group then discussed their choices. Reliability and accessibility were high. Other comments included:

- Real time information on arrivals
- If system is not reliable, users are less likely to use it
- Important to improve access to healthcare and jobs
- Some things are very important but already in progress, so priority given to longer range investments
- Training for bus drivers and staff – do they need it? Some things to consider are:
 - More sophisticated buses and equipment
 - Enable better resources/support for drivers
 - Safety
 - Drivers must simultaneously operate heavy equipment, use advanced technology, and provide customer service

7. Next Steps

We are still requesting transit/land use data from providers/communities. We hope to choose key topic areas for pre-visioning webinars. At the next meeting we will finalize a date/venue for visioning workshop. The next meeting is May 17, 9:30-11:30am at GPCOG. On the agenda will be:

- Civic Engagement Strategy
- Existing Conditions
- Visioning Workshop

8. Meeting adjourned.