

Appendix G – Expansion/Enhancement Policy and Application Process

PACTS Regional Transit Expansion & Enhancement Procedures

June 13, 2019

I. Introduction

The Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) shares the responsibility with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the initial programming of projects funded with Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administration (FHWA and FTA) funds in the PACTS Funding Area. The PACTS Transit Committee is composed of five designated recipients and two sub-recipients, two Executive Committee appointees, a representative of the Planning Committee and a staff member from both MaineDOT and Maine Turnpike Authority (all of whom are voting members). The Transit Committee is responsible for recommending to the PACTS governing bodies the apportionment of FTA funds to eligible projects within the PACTS region. The PACTS Funding Area covers parts or all of the following eighteen municipalities: Arundel, Biddeford, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Gorham, Falmouth, Freeport, North Yarmouth, Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Raymond, Saco, South Portland, Scarborough, Standish, Westbrook, Windham and Yarmouth.

This document describes the administration of the PACTS Transit Enhancement & Expansion Procedures, and its role in the allocation of Urbanized Area Formula Program funds known as Section 5307 available for transit operations, planning¹ and capital improvements. The majority of 5307 funds are allocated through an extensive asset management plan that seeks to maintain current levels of service throughout the region with adequate capital replacement and operating funds. These Procedures were created to govern the evaluation and selection of transit enhancement or expansion projects in the PACTS region for which Federal or State funding support has been requested and may be eligible for the Regionally Administered Discretionary Transit Program (RAD Program).

The PACTS Transit Committee Workshop oversaw the development of these Procedures, and the Procedures were adopted by the PACTS Transit Committee on June 13, 2019.

II. Programming Procedure

A. Organization Eligibility

Administrative officials from the following organizations may propose projects through the PACTS process:

- Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit Committee (Shuttlebus)
- Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD)

¹ Planning funds are for individual provider projects as well as for Regional projects that have not been included in the 5303 portion of the biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

- Greater Portland Transit District (METRO)
- Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)
- Regional Transportation Program (RTP)
- South Portland Bus Service (SPBS)
- York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC)

All others who wish to propose projects through the PACTS process must have the sponsorship of at least one of the organizations listed above.

The RAD application process occurs once each year, based on the following timeline:

- May 28 – The Transit Committee Workshop reviews proposed revisions and makes a recommendation to the Transit Committee
- June 13 – The Transit Committee reviews and endorses the revised process and materials for PACTS Executive or Policy Committee
- July – PACTS Executive or Policy Committees approve the revised process and materials
- July – GPCOG staff solicits proposals from eligible organizations
- August – Applications are due; a non-staff scoring committee scores applications based on the revised criteria
- September – The Transit Committee reviews and approves or denies selected applications
- October – PACTS Executive Committee approves applications, and revisions to the Six Year Capital and Operating Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, and Split Letter, as needed

B. Project Eligibility

Proposals for the RAD Program must be for projects that are eligible for Federal Funds under the PACTS MPO Allocation Process. Proposals must also be endorsed by the applicant's Governing Body and/or Municipal Council(s) with formal commitment of local match.

The following list presents most of the eligible purposes.

- Improving existing core service
- Enhancing customer service
- Expanding service beyond the existing system
- Improving agency facilities to support improvements to existing core service, meet projected increases in ridership demand, and/or support expanded service

In the event that a question arises regarding the funding eligibility of a proposal, PACTS, Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) or Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) staff will consult with MaineDOT, and/or FTA.

C. Proposal Requirements and Scoring Process

Applications will be due on August 16th. Final submissions that omit data or show incorrect data used in the scoring process will receive zeroes in those categories. Applications that fail to meet the requirements listed below will not be considered.

Proposals for funding must include a purpose-and-need statement that describes the conditions that warrant the proposed project and explain the intended benefits of that project.

Note: Projects that involve maintenance or replacement of existing equipment exclusively, that will be “operations neutral”, and that have necessary local match in place, will not be evaluated as part of this process. Instead, these projects may be “fast-tracked” for evaluation and approval by the PACTS Transit Committee for inclusion in the Six-Year Transit Capital Plan and recommended for approval by the PACTS Executive Committee for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Scoring

A panel of individuals who are knowledgeable about public transit and are not GPCOG, PACTS, or SMPDC staff carefully evaluate and score all proposals for use of transit funds. Scored proposals are brought to the PACTS Transit Committee as a non-binding input. The Transit Committee will reach consensus on a final project(s) selection recommendation for consideration and ratification by the PACTS Policy Committee. Selected projects will be added to the TIP.

The scoring and ranking processes involve policy and technical criteria that were developed and adopted by the PACTS Transit Committee.

Eligible proposals are scored according to three categories:

1. Type of Project (up to 30 points)

Projects are divided into four main types, and only one option may be selected:

- a. Improves existing core service – e.g. Increasing frequency, extending service hours along existing transit routes, or linking two or more routes to provide faster, more direct service between major destinations (up to 30 points);
- b. Enhances customer service – e.g. Improvements to ticketing equipment, upgrades to call-in centers, automatic vehicle location (AVL) & real time passenger information (RTPI), wireless internet (WiFi), bus stop improvements and amenities, etc. (up to 24 points)
- c. Expands service beyond the existing system – e.g. Creating a new route or extending an existing route into new territory (up to 18 points)
- d. Improves agency facilities to support improvements to existing core service, projected increases in ridership, and/or expanded service – e.g. Improving an existing facility or constructing a new facility to meet a demonstrated need to serve existing and projected new riders (up to 24 points)

Project types are listed and scored in order of importance to the regional transit system. Improving existing core service, for example, has been deemed a higher priority for the region than expanding service beyond the existing system. Consequently, a project that proposes improvements to existing core

service can earn a greater overall number of points in this category (up to 30) than a project that would expand service beyond the existing system (up to 18 points).

2. Financial Sustainability (up to 30 points)

a. Supported by additional level of committed local funding

The minimum requirement for local match (including state contribution) is 15% for ADA accessible buses, 20% for all other Capital expenditures, and 50% for Operating expenditures. Proposals that have secured local funding that exceed these minimum requirements will receive additional points in this category, as they will make more efficient use of limited federal funds. (up to 11 points).

b. Leverages other federal/state/local funds for operations or capital

Utilizing multiple funding sources to support a single project will make project funds go further and increase that project's financial resilience. Any proposal that utilizes additional federal, state or local funds (beyond the standard federal 5307 and municipal local match funds) to diversify financial support for the project will receive additional points in this category. (up to 11 points).

c. Continuing financial commitment for local match

Projects that are successful over the long term require ongoing, dedicated local match. Projects that have a commitment of continuing local match will receive higher scores than those projects that only have committed local match for the first year of operation. If a project fails to achieve its projected performance levels the provider of local match will not be held to their commitment unless all parties agree to extend the effort. (up to 8 points).

3. Demonstrated Need (up to 40 points)

a. Projected performance of new or enhanced service after 3 years

Projects that address a significant need and are anticipated to provide a greater positive impact on transit system performance will be scored higher than those with a smaller impact. Performance metrics for new or enhanced service may be compared against industry or regional standards, and/or against the provider's existing service. Performance may be demonstrated by metrics such as (but not limited to) projected changes in: Increased Boardings, Decreased Fuel Consumption, Reduced Maintenance, and Improved Staff Efficiency

Qualitative assessments may also be used for projects not conducive to quantitative estimates (such as customer service improvements). (up to 11 points).

b. Supported by long-range plan, study and/or modeling

Proposed projects that demonstrate support from existing long-range municipal or regional plans, studies or modeling will be scored higher than those without support. Applicants pursuing points in this category must demonstrate in their application how their proposed project is supported by existing long-range municipal or regional plans, studies or modeling (up to 11 points).

c. Addresses regional priorities

Proposed projects that address existing regional priorities (such as improved passenger safety & security, and those laid out in *Destination Tomorrow*, the *Regional Transit Coordination Study*,

Moving Southern Maine Forward, or other relevant regional policy documents), will be scored higher than those that do not address these priorities. Projects which advance the guiding principles developed at the December 2018 Transit Committee retreat related to addressing the needs of the region and the user will score higher than those which do not. Applicants pursuing points in this category must demonstrate in their application how their proposed project addresses existing regional priorities. (up to 11 points).

d. Addresses local priorities

Proposed projects that address existing local priorities (such as those laid out in one or more municipal Comprehensive Plans, or other relevant local policy documents), will be scored higher than those that do not address these priorities. Applicants pursuing points in this category must demonstrate in their application how their proposed project addresses existing local priorities. (up to 7 points)*.

e. Proposed projects which advance the guiding principles developed at the December 2018 Transit Committee retreat related to coordination and communication among agencies and other partners will be eligible for up to 5 bonus points. Applicants pursuing these bonus points must demonstrate how they coordinated and communicated with other transit agencies and other relevant entities on this project. Evaluators will consider the extent to which an applicant is able to coordinate and communicate with other transit agencies and other entities on this project.

*Note – Regional priorities are given greater scoring weight than local priorities, due to the regional nature of the PACTS transit system.

Evaluators will determine the score of each sub-category listed above by selecting a value from a 0 - 5 rating scale, and scaling that value up relative to the maximum number of points available for that sub-category.

For example, a project expected to make a considerable enhancement to customer service may be given a rating of “4” (out of a possible 5) for the Type of Project category. Because customer service enhancement projects are eligible for up to 24 points within the project type category, a rating of 4 (out of 5) would result in a category score of: $(4 \div 5) = 0.8 \times 24$ maximum points = 19.2 points.

Eligible proposals will receive an overall score between 0 and 100, and are expected to achieve a minimum score of 70 to be considered for funding. This minimum score is intended to ensure that the PACTS region will make the most efficient use of their limited federal transit funds by selecting only strong proposals for financial support. If no proposals submitted during a given funding period meet the minimum requirements as determined by the PACTS Transit Committee, none will be awarded financial support during that period, and those funds will be rolled over into a future funding period.

Please review the application form for specific information pertaining to the various project categories.