

# PACTS Transit Task Force

September 1, 2022  
10:30 am–12:00 pm  
Meeting Agenda

---

***In-Person:***

*Greater Portland Council of Governments  
970 Baxter Boulevard, Room 201, Portland*

***Remote:***

*Webinar link: [us02web.zoom.us/j/87036313394](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87036313394)  
Phone: (646) 558-8656 | Webinar ID: 870 3631 3394*

---

This meeting is being recorded and will be made available at [gpcog.org/AgendaCenter](https://gpcog.org/AgendaCenter).

**1. Public Comment 5 minutes**

Members of the public are welcome to provide up to three minutes of public comment.

**2. Connect 2045 Transit Projects Workshop 85 minutes**

Review of transit projects submitted and discussion of alignment with *Transit Tomorrow* and opportunities for regional collaboration. (Attachment 2-A).

## Upcoming Meetings

- Regional Transportation Advisory Committee—September 6, 9:00–11:00 am
- Funding Framework Task Force—September 12, 12:00–2:00 pm
- Policy Board—September 22, 11:00 am–1:00 pm
- Transit Task Force—October 6, 10:30 am–12:00 pm

Board and committee members, the public, and other stakeholders are encouraged to subscribe to the PACTS calendar at [gpcog.org/Calendar](https://gpcog.org/Calendar).

### Connect 2045 Transit Projects

Transit Tomorrow Recommendation	Project Submitted	Project Sponsor	Project Description	Project Cost	Project Readiness	Notes
Make Transit Easier	<b>Real Time Information Signage</b>	METRO	<p>As time passes, we present and consume information differently. Transit systems no longer convey schedules exclusively on paper. METRO provides printed paper schedule brochures, prints large posters for public display, and provides schedule information on our website. As the system expands and (hopefully) buses get more frequent, printed schedules may no longer be practical in their current form. Services that run every 15 minutes or faster may not need printed schedules at all; ideally, wait times are so short that a schedule isn't necessary. All that said, real-time arrival information can be extremely valuable. Passengers who know exactly when their next bus is arriving can feel more confident in their travel plan. If passengers have some time before a bus arrives, they may be able to make a quick errand while they wait. Currently, real-time information is available to passengers via the Umo Mobility app; however, most current riders do not use this app, and METRO will continue to allow passengers to ride using other methods of payment. Requiring a smartphone to view this information is also an equity barrier.</p> <p>Displaying real-time information at bus stops provides this valuable information to all riders. Additionally, this information increases the visibility of the system and provides useful information that may help people realize that the bus service may be useful to them. Currently, bus stops are equipped with a sign with a route number; only a few have more information than this. Providing real-time information at major bus stops will provide destination, direction, and arrival times to all passengers. At stops serving multiple routes, or both directions on the same route, this signage will make it clearer as to which bus will be the next to arrive.</p>	\$1.2M	Requires Preliminary Design, Engineering, and Construction	Expand to other sponsors
Make Transit Easier	<b>Stop Improvements (accessibility and amenities)</b>	METRO, BSOOB, Transit	<p>Bus stops are an important factor in the rider experience, both supporting existing rider's safety and increasing engagement among non-traditional riders. Boosting ridership among the regional public transit network is a critical component to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. Investing in improved bus stop spacing, stop infrastructure and shelter design and implementation are all the key goals of this project. (BSOOB)</p> <p>Many of METRO's bus stops are not ADA-compliant, either because they are located along sidewalks that do not provide adequate clear areas or compliant sidewalks and ramps, or because they are not located along accessible walkways at all. Accessibility at 100% of bus stops is a requirement for a system to truly be accessible for all users. In addition to accessibility, bus stops should be safe, dignified, and comfortable places to wait for transit. Bus stops with significant boarding activity should be equipped with shelters where possible. In constrained situations, bus stops can be equipped with other, smaller treatments, including benches or lean bars. Where possible, bus stops should allow for multimodal transfers by providing bicycle racks.</p> <p>This project aims to achieve 100% ADA compliance at all of METRO's existing and future bus stops. This project would also fund procurement and installation of bus shelters and other amenities so that waiting for the bus is safe, comfortable, and dignified.</p> <p>METRO will soon conduct a systemwide inventory of our bus stops and develop standard design templates for each, which will inform future budgets and grant applications. (METRO)</p>	\$540K (BSOOB)  N/A (METRO)	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study (both)	Expand to other sponsors
Make Transit Easier	<b>South Portland Microtransit</b>	SPBS	<p>South Portland has several low-density communities where operating fixed route bus service may not be the best use of transit resources. operating demand response service in these places may provide better service to transit dependent populations. Over the next 5 years South Portland Bus Service would like to deploy micro transit to provide first/last mile connectivity in two to three zones connecting to fixed route service along our dense corridors and high use stops.</p>	\$720K	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study	Expand to other sponsors (Transit Together rec forthcoming)

Transit Tomorrow Recommendation	Project Submitted	Project Sponsor	Project Description	Project Cost	Project Readiness	Notes
Make Transit Easier	<b>Downtown Portland Transit Hub</b>	METRO	<p>The current Portland transportation hub facilitates transfers between METRO routes and South Portland Bus Service and Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach Transit (BSOOB). This hub is somewhat decentralized, as numerous METRO routes do not utilize the Monument Square bus stop (transfers must cross between Monument Square and Elm Street). While Elm Street provides a layover area, most routes that travel through the area do not stop at METRO PULSE. As bus activity increases as outlined in Transit Tomorrow (and as proposed by METRO in these Call for Projects), the curbside transfer points at Monument Square and PULSE are likely to become too congested to.</p> <p>A centralized downtown bus hub would be a central location for transit riders to wait for and transfer between any bus service that runs into downtown Portland, and provide as many routes as possible with a layover space. A central hub could be designed to provide shelter from the elements, large waiting areas, real-time arrival information, public restrooms, etc.</p>	N/A	Requires Planning/Feasibility Study	
Make Transit Easier	<b>Redbank Mobility Center and Mini Hub</b>	SPBS	<p>To create a Mobility Center/Mini Hub at Redbank that will serve as a multi-modal hub and on-route vehicle charging facility. This project has been part of the Transit Stop Access Project for the construction of a mini hub at this site. As South Portland Bus Service transitions to battery electric buses we will need locations for on-route charging infrastructure. Given the strategic West End location, the city's ownership of the property and existing utilities, we have proposed this location for charging layovers. Having on-route infrastructure will increase the in-service hours for our BEB fleet.</p>	\$9.3M	Requires Planning/Feasibility Study	Includes on-route charging
Make Transit Easier	<b>Downeaster West Falmouth Station</b>	NNEPRA	<p>Downeaster stations in the PACTS region provide convenient access to major travel corridors, including Route 1 and I295, in Brunswick, Freeport and Portland. Travelers who live north and west of Portland must travel to Portland station either via congested city streets, such as Washington Avenue, or travel I-95 to Exit 46 in South Portland to reverse direction north on I-295 into Portland. This requires Downeaster passengers to travel additional miles by car, and discourages some from choosing the train completely.</p> <p>NNEPRA is exploring a new Downeaster station in West Falmouth, adjacent to the West Falmouth Crossing shopping area and Route 100/26, and conveniently across the street from Exit 53 of the Maine Turnpike.</p>	N/A	Requires Planning/Feasibility Study	
Make Transit Easier	<b>Downeaster Portland Station Relocation</b>	NNEPRA	<p>The current Downeaster station in Portland is located at the Portland Transportation Center (PTC). In order to access this location, Downeaster trains must deviate approximately 1 mile off the mainline track. This requires an inefficient reverse move for Downeaster passengers as they travel to or travel from Brunswick, adding 15 minutes of travel time to the schedule, and negatively impacts the movement of freight trains through the area. In addition, the single platform stub ended configuration of the PTC station does not allow for Downeaster trains operating on opposing directions to meet, creating bottlenecks and scheduling impediments, and requires trains to block Thompson's Point Road for extended periods at times. Further, the current station is not convenient to major employment or population centers, is not served by most regional transit providers, and is not appealing to Portland-bound visitors.</p> <p>NNEPRA plans to relocate the Downeaster station in Portland to a double track section of the railroad freight mainline which runs parallel to St. John Street between Congress Street and W. Commercial Street. The new location will eliminate the need for the reverse maneuver, reduce travel time, and create more schedule flexibility and reliability. Additional benefits include improved access to job and population centers, tourism destinations and transit connections while improving operating efficiency (and costs) and reliability.</p>	N/A	Requires Planning/Feasibility Study	
Create Frequent Connections	<b>Systemwide Frequency and Service Upgrades</b>	METRO	<p>METRO currently operates with peak headways of 30 minutes. In order for passengers to be able to use transit without extensive trip planning and scheduling, headways should be 15 minutes or better. Transit Tomorrow, GPCOG and PACTS' long-range transit planning document, prescribes headway and service hour improvements as a top priority. METRO proposes 15-minute headways on all major, existing transit corridors. This represents a 100% (or more) increase in METRO's service frequency. METRO also proposes extending service hours so that all routes start and end around the same</p>	\$21.6M	Other: Equipment and Operator Costs	Expand to other sponsors

Transit Tomorrow Recommendation	Project Submitted	Project Sponsor	Project Description	Project Cost	Project Readiness	Notes
			time, every day. These improvements would require approximately 20 additional vehicles, exclusive of any additional vehicles that would be needed for service expansion (discussed in other applications).			
Create Frequent Connections	<b>Greater Portland METRO System Expansion</b>	METRO	Greater Portland METRO seeks to expand service over the next 20-25 years in order to better serve existing latent transit demand, and to grow along with the Greater Portland region. METRO envisions expanded service within the Greater Portland area, possibly including a crosstown route within Portland, microtransit services in less dense areas of the District, and on-demand nighttime service. Expansion may also include rapid transit corridors as identified in Transit Together, though this depends on future planning decisions related to mode and operating agencies for each proposed route.	\$709.86M	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study	<b>Expand to other sponsors</b> (METRO application includes micro-transit, rapid transit, and on-demand service)
Create Frequent Connections	<b>Transit Signal Priority</b>	METRO	<p>One of the major reasons why many people prefer to drive their own vehicle rather than take transit is the perception that driving is so much faster. And, despite carrying up to 40 times more people than a single-occupancy vehicle, buses are treated like any other vehicle at signals. Transit Signal Priority helps improve bus travel time by calling for traffic signals to hold green lights longer, or end red lights sooner, when a transit vehicle is approaching. At congested intersections, and/or where buses approach an intersection from a side street (such as Bedford Street at Forest Avenue), transit signal priority can shave minutes off of each bus trip. On a large scale, TSP can save enough travel time to enable more logical trip timing (clockface timing) and even run more trips using the same number of drivers and vehicle.</p> <p>METRO is eager to implement TSP on two major corridors (Forest Avenue and Washington Avenue, which serve Route 2 and Route 9). We are awaiting ARPA funding to be unlocked for this to proceed. Estimates suggest that equipping 25 intersections would save over seven hours of bus travel time per day.</p> <p>This project would allow for consultant analysis, equipment, and installation of transit signal priority along all transit routes served by METRO routes. It would also allow for future METRO buses to be equipped with the necessary transponders. Regionally, METRO recommends this project be extended to cover all fixed route service in the PACTS region. Ideally, the same vendor would be used throughout the region so that all signals are compatible with all buses.</p>	N/A	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study	<b>Expand to other sponsors</b> (FTA/FHWA funds eligible)
Improve Rapid Transit	<b>Biddeford BRT Feasibility Study</b>	BSOOB Transit	<p>Biddeford is growing in density and traffic is a concern. Identifying two primary terminals, the Saco Transportation Center, and Biddeford Crossings, there is a corridor that may be viable for high-frequency, BRT style transit, which includes advanced technology and improved transit amenities. Noting that the density of the Biddeford TOD will likely include reduced automobile ownership, there is a need for the transit network to provide superior transit service.</p> <p>This is a 4 mile corridor that with BRT may lead to reduced congestion, improved environmental outcomes, and will support great places and place making. Looking at examples throughout the Americas and China, a 4 mile BRT corridor can work to enhance regional transportation through coordinated schedules and transit stations. The Saco Transportation Center is already suited to this objective.</p> <p>This project would follow the model for previous regional rapid transit studies, a consultant would work with the transit operation and municipalities to develop a feasibility study and provide preferred alternatives for the BRT corridor.</p>	\$720k	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study	<b>Expand to other sponsors</b> (As part of a Biddeford-Saco to Portland alternatives analysis)
Other	<b>Fleet Electrification</b>	METRO	METRO's goal is to be emissions-free by 2040. METRO introduced two battery-electric buses to our fleet in 2022, but in order to achieve our emissions goals, METRO's entire fleet must be electrified. Given the 12-year lifespan of buses, in order to be emissions-free by 2040, METRO can no longer procure buses that run on diesel or compressed natural gas after 2027.	\$45.36M	Other: Implemented Over 15 Years	<b>Expand to other sponsors</b>

Transit Tomorrow Recommendation	Project Submitted	Project Sponsor	Project Description	Project Cost	Project Readiness	Notes
			<p>In 2022, battery-electric buses cost approximately 80% more than a diesel bus. It is likely that this disparity will be reduced over time as battery technology and electric vehicles become cheaper to manufacture. However, there is likely to be some discrepancy extending into the 2030's. This project is intended to fund the difference in cost to replace diesel buses at the end of their useful life with battery-electric buses.</p>			
Other	<b>On-Route Charging Infrastructure</b>	METRO	<p>METRO has committed to run an emissions-free fleet by 2040. In order to achieve this goal, METRO will only be procuring battery-electric buses by 2027. These buses, while advantageous in many ways, have some disadvantages; primarily, they lack the ability to operate a full 16-hour day without charging, which, without on-route charging, requires hours in a bus depot. Because METRO will be unable to maintain a spare ratio over 20% once the fleet exceeds 50 buses (per FTA regulations), most buses will require charging during the workday. On-route chargers will allow buses to charge for brief periods of time throughout the day, extending buses' range to last throughout the day. Chargers would most likely be located at layover points, typically at the turnaround point between outbound and inbound trips (e.g. USM Gorham, Brunswick, Maine Mall, etc.).</p>	\$9M	Requires Planning/ Feasibility Study	Expand to other sponsors
Other	<b>Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility</b>	METRO	<p>METRO's current transit depot and offices are over 50 years old, is constrained, and will not support METRO's future expansion needs, specifically with regard to fleet capacity and electrification.</p> <p>A new facility would have capacity to eventually park and maintain a fleet of 100 buses; would be equipped to support battery charging infrastructure for the full fleet; would support an appropriately upsized administrative staff, and would support METRO's commitment to be emissions-free by 2040.</p>	\$36M	Requires Preliminary Design, Engineering, and Construction	

More information about each project can be found in this [summary of projects received](#).