

PACTS Transit Task Force

October 5, 2023
10:30 am–12:00 pm
Meeting Agenda

In-Person:

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

Remote:

*Webinar link: us02web.zoom.us/j/87036313394
Phone: (646) 558-8656 | Webinar ID: 870 3631 3394
Phone participants: *9 to raise hand; *6 to unmute*

This meeting is being recorded and will be made available at gpcog.org/AgendaCenter.

1. Public Comment 5 minutes

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

2. Suballocating the Region's Transit Funding: Preliminary Framework 35 minutes

3. Regional Branding Study: Preliminary Project Scoping 20 minutes

4. Microtransit: Preliminary Implementation Strategy 20 minutes

5. Information Sharing 5 minutes

- TSAP Update
- FTA Emergency Relief Program for 2017 Disaster
- 2024 Transit System Enhancement Call for Projects
- Pursuit of Discretionary Grants

6. Future Agenda Items and Other Business 5 minutes

Upcoming Meetings

- PACTS Policy Board—October 26, 11:00 am–1:00 pm
- PACTS Transit Task Force—November 2, 10:30 am–12:00 pm
- PACTS Regional Transportation Advisory Committee—November 14, 9:00–11:00 am
- PACTS Policy Board—November 30, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

Board and committee members, the public, and other stakeholders are encouraged to subscribe to the PACTS calendar at gpcog.org/Calendar.

2. Suballocating the Region's Transit Funding: Preliminary Framework

At its September meeting, the Transit Task Force provided feedback on the region's effort to refine the process for allocating regional transit funding. Key points of feedback included:

- State of good repair, preventative maintenance, and ADA paratransit service are essential.
- Service metrics can incentivize efficiency. Some agencies felt metrics could account for regional variability in demographics, density, etc.
- A refined funding process should reflect the goals and recommendations of Transit Together.

Based on this feedback, staff have developed a preliminary framework for allocating the region's Section 5307 and 5339 funding. The framework is based on three "tiers":

	Potential eligible projects	Potential criteria
Tier 1	Fleet replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit Asset Management (TAM) plans • Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) • Fleet replacement schedules • Fleet age
	Preventative maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical allocations and expenses
	ADA paratransit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical allocations and expenses
Tier 2	Eligible capital and operating expenses	Service metrics as reported to NTD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridership • Ridership per vehicle revenue mile • Vehicle revenue hours • Vehicle revenue hours per operating expense
Tier 3	Transit system enhancements and regional initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Section 5307 set-aside process • Transit Together implementation

Annual programming discussions should also incorporate the broader funding picture, including review of grant close-out schedules and transit agency budgets, proof of pursuit of discretionary grants, and availability of local match. Transit agencies should also explore how to increase revenues.

Staff recommend the region's Section 5337 funding continue to be split based on directional route miles. Staff welcome further guidance on a process for the region's Section 5310 funding.

In addition to feedback from the Transit Task Force, staff will seek feedback from RTAC and the Policy Board at their November meetings.

Discussion:

- **What additional feedback do you have?**

3. Regional Branding Study: Preliminary Project Scoping

An important regional initiative identified in Transit Together is to develop a regional branding identity. This would help make the region's transit network easier to understand and use, and increase its visibility. At its September meeting, the Transit Task Force highlighted undertaking a regional branding study as a priority.

Staff anticipate needing consultant assistance to complete this work, and funding has been programmed into the 2024–2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for this purpose. Utilizing a consultant would both 1) ensure sufficient staff capacity for other priorities, and 2) leverage national best practice and lessons learned from other regions that have undertaken similar efforts.

In developing a scope of work, staff welcome feedback from the Transit Task Force—and will seek feedback from RTAC and the Policy Board in the coming months. In particular, as shown in the Transit Together Implementation Roadmap from the September Transit Task Force meeting, the core recommendation to conduct a regional branding study is closely related to several other recommendations, including:

- To develop regional bus stop signage specifications and design guidelines
- To develop regional route naming and numbering conventions (in turn closely related to the recommendation to develop regional service standards)
- To develop regional materials, such as a regional transit system map, schedule design templates, etc.
- To develop a regional microtransit brand
- To incorporate the regional brand on websites, maps, communication materials, signage, etc.

A comprehensive approach may be the best way to achieve cohesive deliverables and timely implementation.

Discussion:

- ***What feedback do you have as we develop a scope of work for a regional branding study?***
- ***What are the top priorities for your agency or organization?***

4. Microtransit: Preliminary Implementation Strategy

Another important regional initiative identified in Transit Together is to establish a regional microtransit program. This would provide on-demand service to areas with lower levels of transit demand but where the general public, including transit-critical populations, could connect to the regional network. The Transit Task Force identified microtransit as a priority during its September meeting.

Microtransit pilots were not part of the resource-neutral service plan in Transit Together. BSOOB Transit, GP Metro, and RTP have secured funding for microtransit pilots.

The Transit Together Implementation Roadmap from the September Transit Task Force meeting shows several recommendations related to microtransit:

- To create a Regional Microtransit Roadmap to guide microtransit pilot design
- To develop a process for assessing microtransit pilots, and to assess the pilots
- To develop a regional microtransit brand (possibly as part of a regional branding study)
- To identify a desired real-time information app for the region, such as transitioning from the Southern Maine Transit Tracker (SMTT) to Transit App
- To invest in automatic vehicle locator (AVL) technology for all fixed-route transit providers
- To develop a regional fare policy
- To develop a regional microtransit procurement strategy and prioritization framework for implementation

Discussion:

- ***What feedback do you have as we establish a regional microtransit program?***
- ***What are the top priorities for your agency or organization?***