

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

January 10, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Approved Meeting Minutes

Seat	Representative	Attendance
PACTS Southern – Municipal	Diana Asanza	Y
PACTS Southern – Planning/ Economic Development	Jessa Berna	Y
PACTS Southern – Public Works/ Engineering	Tom Milligan	Y
PACTS Central – Municipal	Matt Sturgis	Y
PACTS Central – Planning/ Economic Development	Nell Donaldson, Chair	Y
PACTS Central – Public Works/ Engineering	Melissa Hutchins	Y
PACTS Western – Municipal	Bob Burns	
PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development	Amanda Lessard	Y
PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering	Katherine Kelley	Y
PACTS Northern – Municipal	Nathan Poore	Y
PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development	Erin Zwirko	Y
PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering	Adam Bliss	Y
Transit	Hank Berg	
Transit	William Gayle	Y
Transit	Tom Reinauer	Y
Transit	Chad Heid, vice chair	Y
MaineDOT	Ryan Neale	Y
Maine Turnpike Authority	Rebecca Grover	Y
Active Transportation Specialist	Jean Sideris	
Environmental Specialist	Christian MilNeil	
Community Transportation Leader	Leeann Brionez	
Community Transportation Leader	Mireille Kabongo	
Private Sector Trade Association	Eamonn Dundon	Y

1. Welcome

Nell Donaldson opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of the December 6 Meeting Minutes

Matt Sturgis moved to approve the December 6, 2022 meeting minutes as written; Rebecca Grover seconded. Chad Heid, Katherine Kelley, and Nathan Poore abstained. All others were in favor.

4. Staff Report

The comment period for MaineDOT’s Family of Plans—long-range transportation plan, active transportation plan, transit plan, etc.— is open at www.maine.gov/mdot until the end of January.

PACTS did a call for complex roadway/multimodal projects and transit system enhancement projects and received initial project proposals for seven roadway/multimodal and five transit projects. Those

initial project proposals can be viewed at www.gpcog.org/587/Call-for-Projects-2022-2023. Full applications are due January 31.

On Friday the Complete Streets Subcommittee had its final meeting, reviewing the complete streets policy along with its implications for the PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) and Collector Paving programs. Staff will be bringing recommendations to the Policy Board later this month.

The U.S. Census came out with information on the 2020 urban areas. The biggest change is that they are using housing density as one of the metrics for defining urban areas. Maps have not been released but staff will share them when they are public. PACTS will then reevaluate its capital management area, which determines eligibility for funding.

Eamonn Dundon asked if PACTS plans to submit formal comments on the MaineDOT Family of Plans. Chris Chop, GPCOG staff, replied he did not believe there was enough time for RTAC or the Policy Board to provide comments but encouraged individuals to review and comment.

5. Additional UPWP Funding (2022-2023)

As a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), PACTS is federally required to create a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP identifies the metropolitan transportation planning activities to be performed. Funding in the UPWP can be used for planning, but not for design, engineering, or construction. Planning includes ensuring the MPO meets federal/state requirements, coordinating with partners, staffing committee/boards, providing data services/analysis, and conducting the planning required to leverage federal capital funding.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is providing an infusion of planning funds which, for MPOs, will flow through the UPWP. PACTS expects to receive approximately \$1.2 million in *additional* funding for the *current* 2022-2023 UPWP. Given that PACTS is already a year into the two-year UPWP cycle, PACTS needs to determine the highest and best use of this funding for the 2023 calendar year; staff also expects to request to carry over funds for the 2024-2025 UPWP.

GPCOG staff considered federal and state guidance; Connect 2045 regional goals, objectives, and actions; and input provided by RTAC and the Policy Board over the past year when drafting a budget for the additional funding. A detailed table of recommended funding increases can be found on Table 5-2 on pp. 11-14 of the [January 10 RTAC Agenda](#).

Nell Donaldson noted RTAC will be looking at the 2024-2025 UPWP in about six months and asked how staff sees that effort integrating with the review of the 2022-2023 UPWP budget. Chris Chop, GPCOG staff, replied that the goal is to look at the existing budget at around the same time and make adjustments to the 2022-2023 UPWP budget as needed.

Nell asked for clarification on whether future UPWPs will be similarly expanded by approximately \$1.2 million and Chris responded affirmatively. Kristina Egan, GPCOG staff, added that the plan is to ask for carryover and spread the \$1.2 million plus \$1.2 million across 3 years (2023-2025) to avoid expanding and contracting staffing and to ensure steady workflow.

Amanda Lessard asked if municipal match will increase. Chris Chop answered that staff are waiting for confirmation on what the state match amount will be, but since the federal amounts have increased, the municipal amounts will most likely increase as well.

Nell Donaldson asked for public comment. Patricia Quinn, Executive Director of NNEPRA, attending as a member of the public, requested that an organization chart be shared to show how the UPWP funds have and will be used, and how headcounts and consultant contracts would change. Additionally, she asked if the additional funds from the UPWP could be used to support municipal and agency work; for example, could a municipality apply for some of this money to bolster its own staff or does it have to stay within GPCOG. Nell closed the public comment period.

Chris Chop stated that he will provide the organization chart. What will change is the hiring of a Community Engagement Manager, but that is embedded in the budget expectations and recommendations. He added that billing rates and budget expectations for salary and consultants were used to determine recommendations. He also noted that PACTS did a notice of funding to support municipalities with studies and plans that align with regional goals, but said he did not believe PACTS could use federal funding to scale up municipal staffing, but would check.

Nathan Poore stated that it is hard to tell where the funds are going in the organization. He also wondered if the hiring of the Community Engagement Manager would lower the amount of UPWP budget overall. Nathan also asked if there could be more consideration for funneling money for municipal planning. Kristina Egan answered that the CARES funding received a couple of years ago was used to bolster staffing. She added that the funds over 3 years will not buy much in terms of new staffing, instead it will help GPCOG maintain current staffing levels. Kristina also stated that the Community Engagement Manager position has been vacant for over a year and the funds budgeted for that position have been used to hire a Transportation Planning Manager and Data Analyst. In terms of using UPWP funds for municipal planning funding, Kristina stated that staff will investigate whether UPWP can be directed to local municipalities for their planning efforts. Nathan asked if the new UPWP funds are used to fund other projects. Kristina stated that the CARES funding was a huge infusion of funds, and many staff were brought on board as a result. She added that there has been an intention to find some funding sources to retain the workforce. Kristina added that providing a visual for staff breakdown will be challenging because of how GPCOG does its billing.

William Gayle wondered why staff are recommending more funds to projects that have not been expended by at least 50%. Kristina Egan answered that for some projects, the deliverables have increased and as such, the overall budget must increase as well to match. William asked if the budget increase covers the same amount of staffing and consultants. Kristina answered that the recommendations in Table 5-2 do not include CARES funding, since that money is almost expended. She added that the only new staffing is the Community Engagement Manager. William suggested that it would be helpful to have a background on how these projects were funded in the past and how the new UPWP is being used to fill in the gap left by the CARES funding. William stated that he is happy with the additional money going toward the Transit Task Force and hoped that with the Policy Board discussion there can give more detail as to where the money is going. Kristina replied that Transit Together has a bunch of things that it's asking the Transit Task Force to coordinate on the implementation of those recommendations.

Diana Asanza asked if RTAC will be able to see the requested detail before moving forward, and specifically a breakdown of labor, consultants, etc. Kristina answered by stating that staff can provide a high-level budget that shows how much is budgeted toward labor, consultants, etc. Diana asked if it could be provided before a vote.

Nathan Poore stated that it would have been better to present the proposed UPWP budget as partly used to bridge the gap of existing CARES funded projects. He stated that he sees the proposed funding, in his view, is closing gap left by CARES funding, adding the Communication Engagement Manager, understanding that it was previously budgeted but later used to fund other positions,

consultant work for new initiatives, and municipal projects. Kristina Egan stated that the attempt was to show what PACTS would be buying but will show that detail in the future.

Eamonn Dundon highlighted that the Funding Framework was approved recently with the understanding that staff would be able to do research on governance questions to report back to the Policy Board. He worries that any delays will throw off the timeline set by the Funding Framework Task Force. Kristina stated that staff can provide those levels of details to the Policy Board so as not to disrupt any timelines.

Chad Heid asked if the projects are all fully funded currently, what is the urgency in approving staff's recommendations.

Kristina Egan stated that if there is not a problem where the money is going then staff is looking for RTAC to recommend to the Policy Board to amend the UPWP to reflect staff recommendations along with the additional recommendations from RTAC, including how to show the numbers.

Nathan Poore asked what the CARES funding gap number is. Chris Chop answered that it is about \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Nathan stated that with that information he felt prepared to vote on this item.

Tom Reinauer asked if MaineDOT is ready to produce an assignment letter for the UPWP funds. Chris Chop stated that it would be January 2023. Tom also suggested that it would be helpful for staff to provide a quarterly report on the UPWP expenditure.

William Gayle wondered if there should be additional funding put toward Connect 2045 to cover the overage. Kristina Egan that it is too small to cover. William also asked if the recommended \$83,800 would be put toward the regional transit coordination for the rest of 2023. Chris stated that that is correct. William also asked if MaineDOT can deny carryover request for the UPWP. Chris answered that based on conversations they have had with MaineDOT, he expects them to approve.

Nell Donaldson suggested showing where these funds could fund proto design work, like Complete Streets, and would be helpful if the Policy Board could also identify places in the UPWP where that work might exist. Chris Chop agreed and stated the Vision Zero and housing work are good examples of that type of work.

Tom Reinauer added that if municipalities are going to be asked for more local match, it would be great to point out the projects that support municipalities directly.

Eamonn Dundon motioned the amendment to the Policy Board. Rebecca Grover seconded the motion. Diana Asanza, Tom Milligan, and William Gayle voted no. All other members present voted in favor.

6. Roadway Safety Performance Targets

Roadway safety performance targets enable decision makers to evaluate the safety of the transportation system and make informed policy and investment decisions. Federal regulations require metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), like PACTS, to set annual safety targets for five metrics: number of fatalities, number of serious injuries, rate of fatalities, rate of serious injuries, and number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries. MaineDOT provides suggested safety targets, which staff recommends adjusting based on last year's Policy Board discussion and the region's commitment to evaluate at Vision Zero policy and action plan.

Progress can be achieved through planning (UPWP, Connect 2045), policy (Vision Zero, Complete Streets), and investments (PACTS funding programs, MaineDOT, discretionary funds). Staff plan to coordinate with the Transit Task Force on transit safety targets and will share input and recommendations with RTAC at a future meeting.

Nell Donaldson asked for public comment. Ken Capron of Portland stated that PACTS should consider adopting micro rail because it will help eliminate fatalities. Nell closed the public comment period.

Nathan Poore asked what the qualifications for serious injuries were. Chris Chop, GPCOG staff, answered that any injury that results in transport to a hospital is considered serious; the data is collected by the state via police reports.

William Gayle asked for clarification on when the motorized and nonmotorized fatalities would be projected to reach zero. Chris Chip said staff would check to make sure the visualizations are correct, but of course the 2023 targets are the focus.

William Gayle moved to recommend the recommendations to the Policy Board for approval; Chad Heid seconded. All were in favor.

7. Review of Transit Together Final Recommendations

Transit Together was undertaken to advance the goals of PACTS' long-range transit plan, Transit Tomorrow—create frequent connections, make transit easier, invest in rapid transit, and create transit-friendly places. Transit Together studied increased coordination and integration in the region's transit network to improve efficiency and cultivate a cohesive system for riders. The key tasks included a state of the system review to document existing transit demand and availability of service in the region, a network design exercise to align the network with current demand and available resources, and regional initiatives to improve the rider experience or increase administrative efficiencies through cross-agency collaboration.

The project was guided by four agency workshops, five project advisory group meetings, two meetings with GPCOG's Community Transportation Leaders, and 10 pop-up events with over 200 meaningful interactions with the public. Additionally, staff provided updates and received feedback at four RTAC meetings, two Executive Board meetings and three Policy Board meetings.

Final recommendations include a recommended service plan and regional initiatives. The recommended service plan outlines a network that best matches the demand for transit with the provision of transit service. Intended to be resource-neutral, the recommended service plan includes near-, medium-, and long-term actions agencies can take to implement the proposed network. Regional initiatives are opportunities to improve the rider's experience or increase administrative efficiencies through enhanced interagency collaboration, coordination, and integration. They include improved accessibility at transit stops and hubs, easier fare payment and trip planning, etc. Transit Together also includes an unfunded "wish list" of opportunities to improve the region's transit network, such as frequency upgrades and full microtransit implementation, should additional funding be secured.

Nell Donaldson asked for public comment. Ken Capron of Portland said micro rail should be considered because it is faster and cost efficient. Nell closed the public comment period.

Eamonn Dundon asked if the items on the unfunded list are included in Connect 2045. He also asked if Metro would be moving away from the Route 88 loop in Falmouth. Chris Chop, GPCOG staff, said the

transit projects in Connect 2045 were deliberately broad, so the frequency and span of service are consistent with Connect 2045. Nell invited Mike Tremblay, Director of Transit Development at Greater Portland Metro, attending as a member of the public, to speak. Mike stated that Metro plans to do a microtransit pilot in 2023; until then, Metro will retain the loops.

Chad Heid stated that Transit Together was very comprehensive and the outcomes are ready to be advanced but noted there is still work to be done. Every major service adjustment will require operators to perform analysis and outreach. Andrew Clark added that there is a timeline that needs to be followed to hit the 6-month and 12-month implementation goals.

Eamonn Dundon moved to recommend Transit Tomorrow to the Policy Board. Rebecca Grover seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjourn

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned.