

PACTS Executive Board

February 22, 2022

9:00–10:30 am

Meeting Minutes

Affiliation	Member	
Policy Board Chair	Matt Sturgis	✓
Policy Board Vice Chair	Hope Cahan	✓
Central Subregion Rep.	Keith Gray	
Central Subregion Rep.	Kate Lewis	
North Subregion Rep.	Bill Shane	
South Subregion Rep.	Jim Bennett	✓
West Subregion Rep.	Eric Dudley	

Affiliation	Member	
MaineDOT	Dale Doughty	✓
Maine Turnpike Auth.	Erin Courtney	✓
Active Transp. Specialist	Kara Wooldrik	✓
RTAC	Tom Milligan	✓
Transit Representative	Hank Berg	✓
Transit Representative	Greg Jordan	✓
Transit Representative	Jack DeBeradinis	

1. Welcome

Matt Sturgis opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

Ken Capron of Portland noted that some meeting minutes and recording have not been uploaded to the website.

3. Approval of the December 14, 2021 Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Hope Cahan moved to approve the December 14, 2021 meeting minutes as written; Erin Courtney seconded. All were in favor.

4. Staff Report

GPCOG hosted a public meeting for the Transit Together project on February 17. The consultant team presented background data and initial analysis, and received feedback on different aspects of the region's transit system. The consultant team also announced that route profiles—detailing ridership data, challenges, and opportunities for each route—have been published on the website, and encouraged attendees to review, provide comment, and share with their wider networks.

After reviewing proposals and holding interviews, a scoring committee has selected a preferred consultant for the Portland-Westbrook-Gorham Rapid Transit study. Staff are working through contract negotiations with Nelson\Nygaard and hope to be underway soon.

At its August 2021 meeting, the Policy Board unanimously voted to allocate the region's \$8.1 million in ARPA funds via the Funding Framework. An independent scoring committee scored the ten applications received. The results will be discussed at the upcoming March RTAC and Policy Board meetings.

5. Connect 2045 Project Update

Work continues on Connect 2045, the upcoming update to the region's long-range transportation plan. Staff will soon be hosting meetings with the region's municipalities and transit agencies to discuss challenges and opportunities with the transportation system. Staff are also developing a call for projects to informed a fiscally constrained project list to be prioritized and included in the plan, and an unconstrained project "wish list" should additional funding opportunities become available.

6. Approval of Transfer of Funds for Portland Projects

In 2017, FACTS allocated funding to three sidewalk projects in Cape Elizabeth, Portland, and South Portland, collectively held in a regional sidewalk WIN. The projects in Cape Elizabeth and South Portland are ready for advertisement, but Cape Elizabeth identified a budget deficit. At their October 2021 meeting, the Policy Board transferred \$200,000 in capital funding to the Cape Elizabeth sidewalk project from the Regional Sidewalks WIN, which reduced the funds available for Portland's project.

In 2018, FACTS allocated funding to Portland for a pavement rehabilitation project on Congress Street. Portland has been coordinating with utility provider Unitil, but has learned that Unitil may not replace a gas line under this segment until 2024. Portland requests to cancel this project and transfer the funding to its York Street Sidewalk project.

Jim Bennett asked whether there was any policy to guide the decision, noting policies in the past related to transferring funding between competitively scored projects. Staff noted there is no formal policy for this situation, and added that the Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI), which funds the projects in question, allows broad discretion for the municipalities to collaboratively identify subregional priorities.

Jim moved to approve the funding transfer as presented; Tom Milligan seconded. All were in favor.

7. 2022–2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment

MaineDOT notified staff of updated funding amounts for FACTS' 2022-2023 UPWP. The changes result in a reduction of \$18,243 in federal funding and associated local match. A revised version of the UPWP also incorporated the Policy Board's decision at its January meeting to develop a regional Vision Zero policy.

Jim moved to approve the UPWP amendment as presented; Hope seconded. All were in favor.

8. Community Transportation Leaders Presentation

In 2019, GPCOG launched the Community Transportation Leaders program to support and incorporate the views of people with lived experience of transportation challenges in the region's transportation decision making. The program has four goals:

- To help community members to gain the knowledge and tools needed for meaningful participation in transportation planning and decision making
- To provide a peer-to-peer network to assist participants in acting on the goals they set
- To enable decision makers to hear directly from participants about the transportation needs and experiences of underrepresented communities.
- To act as a gateway for participation in transportation decision making

The program's second cohort—comprised of 14 members—has been working to identify solutions to their top transportation challenges. These include:

- Installing real-time information displays showing bus locations and arrival times, and forming a public outreach working group; to help better communicate information to riders
- Improving reliability and the scheduling system of the region's paratransit service, to better serve the communities that rely on it
- Providing communications and information in multiple languages, to improve accessibility for people with limited English proficiency
- Improving maintenance and accessibility at bus stops, and increasing the frequency and hours of service; to increase opportunities for the region's residents to access critical services and needs

The board thanked the Community Transportation Leaders for their presentations. Matt asked about representation from communities outside of Portland. Staff noted there had been an outreach effort to all parts of the region. Matt asked how this information could be relayed to the region's transit agencies to implement changes. Staff underscored GPCOG's role as a regional convenor and ability to work directly with transit agencies. There is also an opportunity to integrate this work with the ongoing Transit Together study. Hope suggested the group provide additional information to Metro's Ridership Committee.

Several suggested staff produce additional material to help formally track long-term progress. Staff intend to do that, and noted the recently completed program handbook which documents the process and can be shared with other regions interested in starting similar programs.

9. Request of Transfer of Funds for Biddeford Project

Biddeford's signal project at Hill, Main, and Water Streets has construction funding of \$1,450,500, but the lowest bid received was \$2,272,837. Based on a revised project cost of \$2,812,012, Biddeford has requested an additional \$340,000 from PACTS and \$340,000 from MaineDOT. This request to PACTS exceeds PACTS' policy of limiting the funding of construction cost overages to 20 percent of available construction funding. PACTS' Holding WIN does not have sufficient funds for the request, and PACTS would need approval from MaineDOT to withdraw from a minimum reserve. Staff noted significant overages for signal projects in the region is a common recent trend.

Jim explained that this project started in April 2015 because the intersection was deemed to be dangerous. Later, the criteria for determining an intersection to be dangerous changed, and the project was no longer a priority. The project went out to bid in 2021 and the bids came in very high. The project was put back out to bid with reduced project costs, reducing the highest bid by roughly \$500,000. He felt it was appropriate to request assistance from PACTS and MaineDOT to cover the cost overruns.

Staff noted that allocating an additional 20% to the project would require \$93,557 from the Holding WIN minimum reserve. Allocating an additional \$340,000 would require \$215,982 from the Holding WIN minimum reserve. Dale Doughty said MaineDOT will require additional discussion with staff.

Matt asked what steps could be taken to replenish the funds if PACTS were to withdraw from its minimum reserve. Staff explained that last year the Policy Board decided to allocate additional funding for the Westbrook signal project from PACTS' 2024 allocation. However, that funding is not available in time for use with the Westbrook signal project. So, the Policy Board then allocated the additional funding from the Holding WIN and the unallocated 2024 funds are in a separate WIN that can be used in 2024 or possibly 2023. Jim confirmed that Biddeford intends to construct the project this year.

Hope moved—because of the project's unique circumstances and delays caused by issues beyond Biddeford's control, and as a one time exception not to be precedent-setting—to transfer \$340,000 of capital funds to Biddeford's Hill, Main, and Water Streets Signal Project (WIN 18574); contingent upon staff working with MaineDOT for approval to withdraw from the minimum reserve, and securing \$340,000 funding from MaineDOT; Erin seconded. All were in favor.

10. Other Business

Matt acknowledged Casco Bay Lines' award of \$3.6 million in discretionary grant funding to support the purchase of a replacement vessel. Hank Berg noted that this award will free up regional funds for other purposes.

11. Adjourn

Hope moved to adjourn; Dale seconded. With no objection, the motion carried.