

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)

April 4, 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 | |
| PACTS Central – Planning/ Economic Development | Nell Donaldson, Chair | Y |
| PACTS Central – Public Works/ Engineering | Melissa Hutchins | |
| PACTS Western – Municipal | Bob Burns | |
| PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development | Amanda Lessard | |
| PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering | Katherine Kelley | Y |
| PACTS Northern – Municipal | Nathan Poore | |
| PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development | Erin Zwirko | Y |
| PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering | Adam Bliss | Y |
| Transit | Hank Berg | Y |
| Transit | William Gayle | Y |
| Transit | Tom Reinauer | |
| Transit | Chad Heid, vice chair | Y |
| MaineDOT | Dale Doughty | |
| Maine Turnpike Authority | Rebecca Grover | Y |
| Active Transportation Specialist | Jean Sideris | Y |
| Environmental Specialist | Christian MilNeil | Y |
| Community Transportation Leader | Leeann Brionez | |
| Community Transportation Leader | Mireille Kabongo | Y |
| 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 March 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes

William Gayle moved to approve the March 7, 2023 meeting minutes as written; Erin Zwirko seconded. All members present were in favor.

4. Staff Report

Chris Chop, GPCOG, informed the committee that PACTS would be accepting applications for four seats on the Policy and Executive Boards—two equity advocates, one environmental specialist, and one active transportation specialist—and two seats on the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)—both community transportation leader seats. Chris also noted that applications were due Friday, April 14 at 5:00pm.

Aubrey Miller, GPCOG, added that PACTS would soon be seeking nominations for RTAC Chair, Vice Chair, and Liaison to the PACTS Policy and Executive Boards to serve from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

Chris Chop went on to provide an overview of transit ridership through November 2022. Rail and ferry ridership are near 90% of pre-pandemic levels, while bus and paratransit are around 70% of pre-pandemic levels. Chris added there is hope the half-fare effort will help spark additional ridership return throughout the summer.

Aubrey Miller summarized the Transit System Enhancement Project Scores and Complex Roadway/Multimodal Project Scores, which will be reviewed by RTAC on Tuesday, May 2 and considered for funding approval by the Policy Board on Tuesday, May 23.

Chris Chop then gave an update on the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which was approved by the Policy Board in March. PACTS also surveyed RTAC members and Policy Board members about transportation planning priorities as they relate to the actions in *Connect 2045*.

5. Review of 2024 PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative Projects

The PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) program allocates \$1.6 million per year toward rehabilitation, preservation, and multimodal improvements, which is evenly divided between the four PACTS Subregions. Municipalities are asked to meet with the other municipalities within their subregion to coordinate project selection. There is a minimum 50% municipal match requirement in the PACTS MPI program. There were no unallocated funds in the 2024 PACTS MPI program.

The PACTS Regional Complete Streets Policy does not apply to this round of PACTS MPI funding, because the window for submitting projects was open prior to the approval of the PACTS Regional Complete Streets Policy. The submittal form did ask municipalities how their project would benefit all users.

All three Western Subregion's 2024 PACTS MPI submissions were for additional funding for existing projects. Due to PACTS MPI Policy, GPCOG staff have proposed alterations to the original submissions from the Western Subregion. Westbrook, Pride's Corner Intersection Projects request of \$150,000 would exceed the 50% PACTS funding threshold, so the request was reduced to \$61,000 in 2024, for \$311,000 total PACTS MPI funding. Windham, Route 202 Sidewalks was previously awarded \$261,000 and requested \$150,000 through the 2024 PACTS MPI program. This would exceed the \$400,000 limit of PACTS MPI funding toward any single project, so GPCOG staff proposed reducing the amount to \$139,000 through the 2024 PACTS MPI program, for \$400,000 total PACTS MPI funding. Windham Route 302 Sidewalks had an original request for \$100,000 from 2024 PACTS MPI funds, but due to the funding reduction to the other two Western Subregion projects, GPCOG staff proposed increasing the 2024 PACTS MPI funding from \$100,000 to \$200,000, which would bring the Western Subregion total to \$400,000.

Christian MilNeil, RTAC Environmental Specialist, asked when the PACTS MPI Policy was last revised because the scoring criteria in the policy appears to heavily favor paving projects. Harold Spetla, GPCOG, noted that the policy was revised during the development of the Regional Complete Streets Policy, but the scoring criteria had not been addressed in several years. Scoring criteria is not usually used to select PACTS MPI projects, since there is inter-municipal collaboration, but GPCOG staff recognize the importance of balancing the scoring criteria.

Christian also asked why the Westbrook, Pride's Corner Intersection Project budget increased—whether there were scope changes or construction costs increased. Katherine Kelley, Westbrook, responded that the scope is to upgrade some obsolete equipment and to reconfigure the intersection to make pedestrian crossings at Route 302 easier. The additional costs are due to increased construction costs.

Eamonn Dundon, RTAC Private Sector Trade Association, asked for clarification about why the PACTS MPI program does not select projects through the PACTS Funding Framework. Aubrey Miller, GPCOG, responded that early in the process of developing the Funding Framework, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee made the decision to keep PACTS MPI and PACTS Collector Paving separate. Eamonn noted that the PACTS MPI selection process is less transparent than the Funding Framework selection process. He added that he would not allow that to influence his vote during this round of funding but noted that it was part of a larger discussion to be had.

Tom Milligan, Biddeford, moved that RTAC approve the 2024 PACTS MPI projects and recommend them to the PACTS Policy Board for funding approval; Eamonn Dundon seconded. All members present voted in favor.

6. Project Update: Draft Vision Zero Action Plan [34:45]

The draft Vision Zero Action Plan is beginning to take shape. The Vision Zero team has drafted the Introduction, Data Analysis, and Community Engagement portions of the plan in a Word document, and they are in the process of moving the plan into InDesign to make it a more visually appealing document.

Belinda Ray, GPCOG, provided a brief overview of a few pages from the plan, including Crash Analysis, Crashes by Mode, Equity, the High Risk Network, and the High Injury Network. The Vision Zero team has held several workshops around the PACTS region to gather public input to develop the action plan.

A Vision Zero Advisory Panel—a 15-member panel comprised of representatives from around the region from various organizations and roles—has also been established. The panel provided input to the team about how projects, tools, and strategies should be prioritized. The PACTS Policy Board endorsed the following criteria for prioritization at its March 23 meeting: 1) Level of Risk, 2) Public Identification; and 3) Equity. These criteria align with what is necessary to qualify for implementation funding.

The next steps are to move forward with identifying key intersections and corridors and developing a catalogue of strategies and countermeasures that can be used to improve safety.

Christian MilNeil asked how the Vision Zero Action plan will align with the Federal Highway Administration's Safe Streets for All (SS4A) and asked how the goals of Vision Zero would fit with the goals in PACTS' upcoming Congestion Management Plan. Belinda responded that PACTS applied for and was awarded funding through SS4A but has not yet received the funding. When the money is available, it will assist with finishing the PACTS Vision Zero process, but also allow other GPCOG members (outside of the PACTS boundary) to develop Vision Zero plans. PACTS has been following SS4A guidelines, because the Vision Zero Action Plan needs to follow SS4A guidelines to be eligible for implementation funding. Belinda added that reducing congestion through road-widening is not something that would be compatible with a Vision Zero plan.

William Gayle, NNEPRA, asked if there was a target date to reach zero deaths. Belinda explained that it is a requirement to either identify a target date or state a target reduction percentage—she added that PACTS has done both which, if met, should lead to zero deaths by 2045. William followed

up by asking if there was any action that would narrow the use of PACTS funds toward safety projects if a target reduction was not met in a particular year. Belinda responded that the idea had not been discussed, but it is something that can be discussed. She also emphasized that the plan is intended to be flexible.

7. PACTS Year in Review 2022

The concept for the *PACTS Year in Review* was identified during the *Connect 2045* review process as an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and reflect on the prior year. The idea was to create a report that could be shared with PACTS board and committee members, and could also be shared with the general public. The *PACTS Year in Review 2022* was developed to report on completed PACTS capital and planning projects, provide updates on projects underway, and to track progress and impacts on the region.

Ron Landis, GPCOG, provided a summary of the *Year in Review 2022*, which is available as Attachment 3-A.1 to the minutes.

Nell Donaldson, Portland, asked if there were any PACTS goals that were falling short due to under implementation. Ron noted that there are some performance measures that haven't had any progress, but many goals are long-range in nature and may not show acute progress.

8. Adjourn

With no objections, the meeting was adjourned.