

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

April 13, 2021

8:30 am

Meeting Minutes

Seat	Representative	Attendance
PACTS Southern – Municipal	Larry Mead	Y
PACTS Southern – Planning/ Economic Development	Denise Clavette	N
PACTS Southern – Public Works/ Engineering	Tom Milligan	Y
PACTS Central – Municipal	Matt Sturgis	Y
PACTS Central – Planning/ Economic Development	Nell Donaldson	Y
PACTS Central – Public Works/ Engineering	Doug Howard	Y
PACTS Western – Municipal	Bill Giroux	Y
PACTS Western – Planning/ Economic Development	Amanda Lessard	Y
PACTS Western – Public Works/ Engineering	Bob Burns	Y
PACTS Northern – Municipal	Bill Shane	N
PACTS Northern – Planning/ Economic Development	Theo Holtwijk	Y
PACTS Northern – Public Works/ Engineering	Adam Bliss	N
Transit	Hank Berg	Y
Transit	Patricia Quinn	Y
Transit	Donna Tippett	Y
Transit	Robert Currie	Y
MaineDOT	Tom Reinauer	Y
Maine Turnpike Authority	Rebecca Grover	Y
Active Transportation Specialist	Jean Sideris	Y
Environmental Specialist	Christian MilNeil	Y
Community Transportation Leader	Leeann Brionez	N
Community Transportation Leader	Mireille Kabongo	Y
Private Sector Trade Association	Eamonn Dundon	Y

1. Welcome

Chris Chop opened the meeting and invited Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) members to introduce themselves.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

3. Staff Report and Orientation

Chris Chop provided background on the Greater Portland METRO Peninsula Reboot **and METRO's** decision to pause the effort. In 2019, Greater Portland METRO began an effort to evaluate service on the Portland Peninsula. In late-2020 and early-2021, PACTS decided to pursue a regional transit network design process as part of Transit Together, an upcoming study. Transit Together will evaluate opportunities throughout the PACTS region to realign routes and schedules to better serve transit users across the region. METRO is pausing its Peninsula Reboot so it can integrate any changes with the region-wide effort.

Chris also delivered an overview of PACTS. PACTS programs approximately \$25 million in transportation funds annually. MaineDOT also funds a significant amount of transportation work in the PACTS region. Chris gave brief introductions to various funding programs and plans in PACTS, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Unified Planning Work Program. The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) provides staff support to PACTS.

Zoe Miller presented on PACTS' efforts to improve public engagement in the transportation planning process. Zoe noted the *Inclusive Transportation Planning Toolkit*, the Community Transportation Leaders Program, and designated seats for Equity Advocates and Community Transportation Leaders.

Christian MilNeil suggested including a future agenda item on transit funding and thanked Zoe for her presentation on public outreach. Christian also encouraged PACTS staff to keep in mind that community volunteers are not paid to participate in the PACTS process and urged mindfulness of that fact.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Aubrey Miller introduced the item, noting that the RTAC Chair and Vice Chair will serve until the end of June 2022. The RTAC Chair will also serve as a representative on the Transit Task Force, a PACTS ad hoc committee.

Aubrey Miller opened the meeting up to nominations for Chair. Hearing no immediate nominations, Aubrey opened the meeting to nominations for Vice Chair. Hearing no immediate nominations for

either role, Kristina Egan commented that the Chair's primary role would be meeting facilitation, and staff would help coach anyone.

Christian MilNeil nominated Nell Donaldson for the role of Chair and Bill Giroux seconded the motion. Nell expressed a desire to discuss the role and responsibilities with staff prior to accepting the nomination. Theo Holtwijk and Matt Sturgis supported Nell's request for time to discuss the role with staff.

Matt Sturgis motioned to table the nomination of Chair and Vice Chair until May 4 and Tom Milligan seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Aubrey added that the PACTS Policy Board includes a representative from RTAC, which does not need to be the RTAC Chair. Tom Milligan expressed willingness to serve in that role if nominated.

5. Transit Vehicle Electrification Strategy

In the interest of time, Chris Chop revised the agenda order to hear Agenda Item #8, Transit Vehicle Electrification Strategy, next.

Sara Mills-Knapp presented briefly on the regional transit vehicle electrification strategy. Sara identified several points that would require future discussion, including a baseline assessment and how to coordinate statewide. Sara added that it would be important to synchronize timing to avoid getting out ahead of other agencies.

Nate Moulton of the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) spoke about the MaineDOT's efforts to update their 2015 transit study and electrification strategy. MaineDOT will be hiring a consultant for their electrification strategy. Nate also discussed what he had heard from Vermont in regards to their transit electrification efforts, which have included some issues related to cold weather.

Craig Pendleton of Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit provided an update on BSOOB Transit's efforts. BSOOB Transit is looking to install two charging stations at the Saco Transportation Center.

Greg Jordan of Greater Portland METRO noted that this will be a generational investment. Greg recommended that the consultant conduct a baseline conditions assessment and the consultant's work be coordinated with METRO and BSOOB Transit's vehicle roll out.

Christian MilNeil asked if the study would include the ferries and trains in the region. Christian also asked if the study could focus on decarbonization as opposed to strictly electrification, since some

modes of transportation may require alternative fuel sources. Sara mentioned **support for Christian's** points. Hank noted the passenger ferry has been using biodiesel for several years and the new ferry will have an electric and biodiesel hybrid propulsion system. Hank added that peak demand prices for electricity make it cost prohibitive for the passenger ferry to charge during peak demand time.

Tom Milligan urged awareness of short- and long-term maintenance costs. Maintenance and operations can result in significant long-term costs.

6. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

Postponed until a future RTAC meeting, tentatively May 4.

7. **Overview of "Complex Project"** Selection Process

Postponed until a future RTAC meeting, tentatively May 4.

8. 2022 PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative – Project Submissions

Postponed until a future RTAC meeting, tentatively May 4.

9. Introduction to the PACTS Six-Year Capital and Operations Plan (SYCOP) Process

Postponed until a future RTAC meeting, tentatively May 4.

10. Other Business

The was no other business discussed.

11. Adjourn

Tom Milligan moved to adjourn; Bob Burns seconded. With no objection, the motion carried.