

PACTS Policy Board

May 23, 2023

9:00–11:00 am

Meeting Minutes

Municipal Members		
Arundel	VACANT	
Biddeford	Jim Bennett	✓
Cape Elizabeth	Matt Sturgis	
Cumberland	Bill Shane	
Falmouth	Hope Cahan, chair	✓
Freeport	Jake Daniele	✓
Gorham	Ephrem Paraschak	
North Yarmouth	Diane Barnes	✓
Old Orchard Beach	Diana Asanza	✓
Portland	Keith Gray	✓
Portland	Kevin Kraft	✓
Raymond	Nathan White	
Saco	Patrick Fox, vice chair	✓
Scarborough	Angela Blanchette	✓
South Portland	Kate Lewis	
Standish	VACANT	
Westbrook	Eric Dudley	✓
Windham	Barry Tibbetts	
Yarmouth	Scott LaFlamme	✓

Non-municipal Members		
MaineDOT	Dale Doughty	
Maine Turnpike Auth.	Erin Courtney	
Active Transp. Specialist	Kara Wooldrik	✓
Environmental Specialist	Allen Armstrong	✓
Transp. Equity Specialist	Andrew Blunt	
Transp. Equity Specialist	Yura Yasui	
RTAC Liaison	Tom Milligan	✓
BSOOB Transit	Chad Heid	✓
Casco Bay Lines	Hank Berg	✓
GP Metro	Greg Jordan	✓
NNEPRA	Patricia Quinn	✓
Reg. Transp. Program	Jack DeBeradinis	✓
So. Portland Bus Serv.	Donna Tippet	✓
York Co. Comm. Action	Tom Reinauer	✓

Non-voting Members		
SMPDC	Stephanie Carver	✓
Federal Highway Admin.	Paige Melius	✓
Federal Transit Admin.	Leah Sirmin	

1. Welcome

Hope Cahan opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of the March 23 Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Allen Armstrong moved to approve the March 23 meeting minutes as written; Hank Berg seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 54–0; standard vote: 18–0)¹

¹ Per PACTS Bylaws, Policy Board votes are weighted by municipal population.

4. Chair's Report

Staff will soon pilot an AI application to assist with taking meeting notes and minutes.

5. Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Report

At its May meeting, RTAC recommended adoption of the Regional Vision Zero Action Plan and approval of the region's annual FTA and FHWA funding allocations by the Policy Board, and heard an update on the Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study.

6. Staff Report

Staff welcomed Paige Melius to the board as representative to FHWA, and Laura Qualey to GPCOG as a regional transportation planner.

Planning for the 2024–2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will begin soon. Staff will distribute a survey to board members seeking feedback to prioritize the action steps of *Connect 2045*—the region's long-range transportation plan.

The GPCOG Annual Summit will be held at Saint Joseph's College in Standish on May 25. All are encouraged to attend.

7. Committee and Board Appointments

Several specialists on RTAC and the Policy and Executive Boards have expressed a desire to step down. The chair recommends the following appointments effective July 1:

- Policy Board, Equity Advocate—**Kimberly Irish-Tarbox**, Westbrook; **Susan Wiggin**, Portland
- Policy and Executive Boards, Active Transportation Specialist—**Jean Sideris**, Portland
- RTAC, Active Transportation Specialist—**Jason Day**, Saco
- Policy Board, Environmental Specialist—**Allison Burson**, Freeport
- Policy and Executive Boards, RTAC Liaison—**Tom Milligan**, Biddeford (third term)
- RTAC, Comm. Transp. Leader—**Guy Mpoyi**, Scarborough; **Cheryl Oldfield**, Old Orch. Beach

Per PACTS' bylaws, the chair and vice chair may be reappointed for one consecutive year. Staff recommend reappointing both officers, effective July 1.

Public Comment

None.

Board Discussion

Jim Bennett recommended the board utilize a nominating committee to determine whether officers be reappointed, as is used to determine new appointments.

Motion

Jim Bennett moved to confirm all appointments as presented; Tom Milligan seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 53–0; standard vote: 20–0)

8. Additional Funding for Collector Paving Projects

Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough request additional funding for three jointly advertised projects whose lowest bid was \$285,370.50 over budget:

- **Old Orchard Beach, Saco Avenue**—\$63,200, equal to 20 percent of available construction funding; 75 percent (\$47,400) federal, 25 percent (\$15,800) local.
- **Old Orchard Beach, Union Avenue**—\$32,446.46, less than 20 percent of available construction funding; 75 percent (\$25,334.84) federal, 25 percent (\$8,111.62) local.
- **Scarborough, East Grand Avenue**—\$102,000, equal to 20 percent of available construction funding. 75 percent (\$76,500) federal, 25 percent (\$25,500) local.

Public Comment

None.

Board Discussion

None.

Motion

Diana Asanza moved to approve the additional funding as requested; Tom Milligan seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 52–0; standard vote: 19–0)

9. TIP Amendments: South Portland Bridge Painting, Windham Preliminary Design Report, and ARPA 5307 Transfer

MaineDOT requests two amendments to FACTS' 2023–2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- To correct an error associated with the WIN Type of WIN 27528.00 for bridge painting in South Portland on Ramp SP2 Bridge (#1377) over I-295 and Route 1
- To add a preliminary engineering project (WIN 026662.00) in Windham to complete a preliminary design report for East Connector Road, Middle Connector Road, Route 302 improvements, and Route 115 and 35 improvements, including a new roadway from Franklin Drive and extending south to Route 115; collectively the "North Windham Moves" plan.

Both amendments were posted for a 10-day public comment period on May 4; no comments were received.

The region's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was included in the 2022–2025 TIP and must be carried forward into the 2023–2026 TIP. This amendment was posted for a 10-day public comment period on May 18; staff recommend approval be contingent upon any comment received by May 28.

Public Comment

None.

Board Discussion

Eric Dudley did not support the North Windham Moves amendment, citing a recent MaineDOT arterial paving project in Westbrook, Scarborough, and South Portland that did not advance for lack of funding. He did not support funding for new roadways given the challenge in maintaining the existing network.

Staff noted the board's increasing desire to have a larger role in the selection of all federally funded transportation projects, per federal guidance and regulation.

Staff noted MaineDOT has submitted the North Windham Moves project for RAISE grant funding. The board discussed the implications of not approving the North Windham Moves amendment, and considered delaying further action until MaineDOT could provide more information on any impacts to its grant application status, the region's funding, and Westbrook's arterial paving project.

Motions

Eric Dudley moved to approve the South Portland Bridge Painting and ARPA 5307 Transfer TIP amendments; Hank Berg seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 53–0; standard vote: 20–0)

Jim Bennett moved to postpone the North Windham Moves TIP amendment to the next meeting; Eric Dudley seconded. Diane Barnes, Hope Cahan, and Jack de Beradinis were opposed; all others were in favor. (Weighted vote: 47–5; standard vote: 16–3)

10. Adoption of a Regional Vision Zero Action Plan

Staff presented the Regional Vision Zero Action Plan—entitled *Greater Portland Vision Zero: A Safe System Approach*—for adoption. The plan meets all criteria necessary to ensure the region is eligible for implementation funding under the federal Safe Streets for All grant program. The application deadline for the next round of funding is July 10.

Public Comment

- Paul Drinan of Vision Zero Maine expressed his support for the plan.

Board Discussion

None.

Motion

Jim Bennett moved to approve the plan as presented; Diana Asanza seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 53–0; standard vote: 20–0)

11. Approval of FTA Funding Allocations: 2023 FYCOP and Transit System Enhancement Projects

One responsibility of PACTS is the annual programming of FTA formula funding in support of the region's transit system. This is done through updates to the region's Five-Year Capital and Operating Plan (FYCOP). Staff presented the 2023 FYCOP for approval.

PACTS' Transportation Funding Framework requires the development and implementation of a “criteria-based process for allocating operating funds” by 2023; although other priorities prevented staff from initiating this work. Staff will work with the transit agencies and federal partners to develop a funding allocation process that is better aligned with federal regulation and national best practice, to be implemented in 2024.

The framework also establishes a policy of setting aside 12 percent—and a goal of setting aside 20 percent—of the region's Section 5307 funding for Transit System Enhancement projects. Three projects were submitted under the 2023 Call for Projects.

Public Comment

None.

Board Discussion

Hank Berg noted that a significant cost has been the new ferry replacement vessel; and that after this, a new ferry will not be needed for at least 12 years. Casco Bay Lines has been successful in the past with securing discretionary funding and will continue to pursue alternative sources.

Greg Jordan noted the 2023 policy deadline for a "criteria-based" allocation process. Staff confirmed that a reduced anticipated workload and additional capacity will ensure the work is completed by 2024.

Chad Heid identified increased local match as one challenge in submitting projects for the Transit System Enhancement projects set-aside. Staff noted GPCOG will soon begin working with municipal partners to explore the use of transit tax increment financing districts as a source of local transit funding. In addition, the Maine Transit Association has advanced policy proposals at the state level advocating for increased state funding.

Motion

Tom Milligan moved to approve the 2023 FYCOP and Transit System Enhancement projects as presented; Greg Jordan seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 53–0; standard vote: 20–0)

12. Approval of Complex Roadway/Multimodal Projects Allocation

One responsibility of PACTS is the annual programming of FHWA capital funding as part of its Complex Projects program. Municipalities can apply for preliminary design (PDR) and construction funding, or construction funding only. If a municipality applies for both, PACTS allocates PDR funding first, and commits to funding construction once PDR is complete. Six applications were submitted and scored by the Transportation Funding Framework.

Staff developed three funding options based on a number of considerations, including the region's future funding commitment, project readiness, application scores, local match contributions, discretionary grant opportunities, and Policy Board guidance. At its May meeting, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) unanimously supported "Option C".

Public Comment

None.

Board Discussion

Jim Bennett supported funding Biddeford's Alfred Street project, which is included in Option C.

Greg Jordan asked how staff weighted various factors in developing Option C. Staff noted new projects are ranked according to application scores, and existing projects are scored according to project readiness.

Motion

Scott LaFlamme moved to approve Option C as presented; Allen Armstrong seconded. All were in favor. (Weighted vote: 47–0; standard vote: 18–0)

13. Project Update: Gorham-Westbrook-Portland Rapid Transit Study

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

14. Other Business

None.

15. Adjourn

With no objection, the meeting was adjourned.