

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Committee
MINUTES
September 15, 2020**

Attendance:

Name	Affiliation	Attendance
Committee Members		
Hank Berg	Casco Bay Lines	N
Chris Branch	City of Portland	Y
Lori Brann	MaineDOT	Y
Jay Chace, Vice Chair	Town of Scarborough	Y
Erin Courtney, Chair	Maine Turnpike Authority	Y
Robert Currie	York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC)	N
Jack DeBeradinis	Regional Transportation Program (RTP)	Y
Patrick Fox	City of Saco	N
Bruce Hyman	City of Portland	Y
Gregg Isherwood	Custom Coach & Limousine	N
Alex Jaegerman	Town of Yarmouth	Y
Greg Jordan	Greater Portland METRO	Y
Maureen O'Meara	Town of Cape Elizabeth	Y
Patricia Quinn	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)	Y
Marty Rooney	MaineDOT	Y
Tony Scavuzzo	Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit	Y
Bill Shane	Town of Cumberland	N
Donna Tippett	City of South Portland Bus Service	Y
Guests		
William Gayle	Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA)	
Rebecca Grover	Maine Turnpike Authority	
Tom Milligan	City of Biddeford	
Ken Capron	MicroRail	
For GPCOG		
Chris Chop, Kristina Egan, Aubrey Miller, Ryan Neale	GPCOG	
Michael Ahillen, Price Armstrong, Jill Cahoon, Raymond Hayhurst	AECOM/FHI	

1. Welcome—Erin Courtney, Chair

Erin Courtney opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

2. Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

3. Acceptance of July 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Bruce Hyman moved to accept the minutes of the July 21 meeting; Jay Chace seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried.

4. Preliminary Design Report Set Aside Project Selection

Staff provided additional information regarding the scores in the Subregional Priority category. After GPCOG staff had scored the project applications, staff from Cape Elizabeth and Portland indicated they would like to allocate the Central Subregion's 10 points to Portland's Forest Avenue: Marginal Way to Park Avenue project. If those 10 points were added, the Forest Avenue: Marginal Way to Park Avenue project would move from 4th to 1st, with 83 points, and Biddeford's project would move from 1st to 2nd, with 76 points.

Staff also noted the PACTS Planning Committee's suggestion to transfer funds from the Holding WIN (Work Identification Number) to fund a second project for preliminary design report (PDR), adding that staff had discussed the idea with MaineDOT staff and supported the transfer. Marty Rooney added that, if approved, the Holding WIN funds would be available as soon as the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) are amended, whereas the funds from the 2023 FHWA allocation would not be available until the new TIP and STIP are approved, likely in February or March.

After some discussion regarding the timing of the Central Subregion's project prioritization, the value of funding two projects for PDR, and the readiness of projects to begin PDR, Chris Branch made, and Jay Chace seconded, a motion to recommend Biddeford's Elm, Spruce, and Pearl Street Intersections Improvement Project as the first priority project to receive PDR funds and Portland's Smart Corridor/Route 302 Study Implementation: Forest Avenue from Marginal Way to Park Avenue as the second priority project to receive PDR funds. He also moved to recommend transferring \$150,000 from the Holding WIN (with \$50,000 local match) to enable PACTS to fund two projects for PDR. If the Holding WIN transfer is approved, he moved that Biddeford would receive the Holding WIN funds and Portland would receive the funds from the 2023 FHWA allocation. If the Holding WIN transfer is not approved, he moved that Biddeford would receive the funds from the 2023 FHWA allocation. All were in favor with Lori Brann abstaining; the motion carried.

5. Funding Framework

After reviewing the details of threshold assessment, weighted scoring, evaluation criteria, and scoring rubric, and noting changes made since the TIP Committee's last review, the AECOM team asked for feedback on the revised categories and scoring. Committee members said the following:

- The process is still too complicated for most towns in the PACTS region.
- The ¼ mile distance to transportation hubs, employers, etc., is too low and should be ½ mile. The Brighton Avenue corridor, for example, brings people into downtown Portland and is a significant transit route, but its outer end is not within ¼ mile of anything.
- The point totals for Regional Access are too low. Giving tourism and entertainment a maximum of 1 point seems too low.
- The points for Environmental Sustainability are too high.
- The increased points for Environmental Sustainability are good.
- Within the Environmental Sustainability category, consider moving 1 point from Climate Resilience to Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs), for a 5-3-4 distribution among the subcategories.
- We need a definition of transit-oriented development (TOD).
- Agree that we should strengthen the GHG category to better balance what are essentially mitigation and adaptation—Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Resilience.
- To address the ¼ comment, consider replacing “project” with “corridor.” For example, a Breeze upgrade affects the entire corridor from Brunswick to Portland, even if frequency is increased only between Yarmouth and Freeport, for instance.
- Under Environmental Sustainability, consider consolidating Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs) for a total of 5 points, since they are correlated and could be double counting, and reallocating 2 points to Regional Access.
- In addition to a definition for TOD, we also need to know the data source for mapping.
- Under Efficient Land Use, recognize areas that already have enough density to make transit work. Incorporate zoning to recognize communities that have implemented their plans with zoning and regulations to support them.

Jill Cahoon noted the scoring rubric was changed to expand to ½ mile in rural communities. In response to a question, she said there is no minimum score for a project to receive funding.

Chris Chop noted that VMT and GHGs were separated to capture alternative fuel and alternative energy projects.

The AECOM team asked for feedback on requiring project applicants to give presentations. TIP Committee members were in favor of presentations, expressing satisfaction with the process used for the PDR applications in which applicants presented to GPCOG staff and TIP Committee members were invited to attend. Committee members felt that seeing brief presentations is a more valuable use of members' time than reviewing all the applications. Chris Branch suggested limiting the number of presentations, based on the initial scoring, to reasonably match the level of funding available. In response to a question, Kristina explained that, based on the current draft committee restructuring proposal, there will be no separate TIP Committee in the future. A single regional transportation advisory committee will, among other tasks, recommend funding allocation and advise the governing committees. A poll confirmed, with all 10 votes in favor, that the TIP Committee would like applicants to give presentations to GPCOG staff, with members of the proposed transportation advisory committee invited to attend.

AECOM explained the set asides, noting that set asides are proposed in part to address fears about disruptions to funding in the TIP that is used to "keep the lights on." In response to a question, Aubrey Miller provided the following approximate annual dollar figures associated with the set aside percentages:

<u>Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)</u>	
40% Set Aside	\$1.6 million
Remaining 60%	\$2.5 million
Total	\$4 million
<u>State funding</u>	
PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative	\$1.6 million
<u>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</u>	
75% Set Aside	\$8.2 million
Remaining 25%	\$2.75 million
Total	\$11 million

In response to a question regarding how transit funding currently gets allocated and how it will be allocated in the future, Price Armstrong explained that currently the transit agencies negotiate a project list, with many of the costs somewhat fixed or rotating; this process would remain in place for the 75% set aside. Chris Chop pointed out that transit operations will eventually be subject to the full framework, once better data is available. Currently, route-specific data is not available to allow for accurate allocation of resources for transit operations. In response to a question from Erin Courtney, Chris said that some portion of the set aside would likely remain in place for things like preventative maintenance.

There was some discussion about whether the transit figures were based on the annual apportionment of 5307 funds or on the total amount available in a year, i.e. whether carryover is included in the calculation. Staff will clarify this in the updated framework.

There was also discussion about whether the 75% is intended to be a hard ceiling or if portions of the 25% could be used to fund existing operations. Kristina indicated the TIP Committee will have to decide whether it is a hard ceiling or a soft ceiling.

Greg Jordan felt there should be a quantitative/qualitative evaluation process for the 75%. It is the wrong direction to let the existing system continue without real analysis and evaluation to ensure federal funding is advancing the goals of the region. Greg requested the document state that the intent is for all transit projects to be evaluated through the framework once data allows. He also requested a timeframe and milestones. Erin Courtney agreed that the framework should apply to more than just 25% of transit funding, once better data is available.

Lori Brann advised making clear that discretionary grant awards are not included in the 75% set aside.

Bruce Hyman requested that the 75% be broken down into categories in the document. He concurred with the milestone suggestion and asked that the framework also be applied to FTA Section 5337 funds. Committee members clarified that, while Casco Bay Lines and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) are the only two agencies currently eligible for 5337 funds, additional agencies could be eligible with the addition of modes such as light rail or bus rapid transit.

Bruce asked if there will be a firm line between FWHA and FTA funds, or if they could be blended to fund projects. Jill Cahoon confirmed the intent is to allow blending where applicable.

The Committee was then polled on what should happen with the PACTS Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI):

- Keep MPI separate with existing subregional process – 2 votes
- Score projects with the new framework regionally – 2 votes
- Score projects with the new framework by subregion – 4 votes

Committee members expressed feeling conflicted about MPI, wishing for all of PACTS investments to be regionally focused, but wanting to maintain simplicity.

The Committee elected to postpone recommending adoption of the framework and to review a revised version at the next meeting. Kristina pointed out that some of the comments received are conflicting, which is not surprising in a process like this, but staff will not be able to accommodate every comment. Regarding MPI, she said that while

there is clear direction, there is a split vote, and staff may want to talk to more members before making a recommendation.

In response to a question, Aubrey said that staff will move forward with preparing a project application form to keep up with the timeline. Kristina asked for, and received, general approval from the TIP Committee for staff to move forward on items with time constraints.

6. Adjourn