

## Kick-Off Meeting for Southern Maine Regional Transit Plan

Southern Maine Regional Transit Plan / GPCOG et al.

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Date/Time: March 2, 2017 / 10:38 a.m. EST  
Place: Casco Bay Room, GPCOG, 970 Baxter Blvd., Portland, ME  
Next Meeting: April 4, 2017  
Attendees: Stephanie Carver (GPCOG); Art Handman (So. Portland Transit); Ben Lake (GPCOG); Gregory Jordan (METRO); Hank Berg (Casco Bay Lines); John Duncan (PACTS); Kristina Egan (GPCOG); Tom Reinauer (Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission)  
Stantec: Adam Catherine; Graeme Masterton; Sasha Pejic; Brian Putre; David Verbich  
Morris Communications: Carol Morris  
Absentees: Al Schutz, Carl Eppich, Jack DeBeradinis, Lori Brann, Maddy Adams, Marina Douglass, Robert Currie, Susan Moreau, Zoe Miller, John Gobis  
Distribution: Internal

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### 1. Introductions

Stantec staff introductions; GPCOG et al. introductions

### 2. What does success look like?

Stantec led the kick-off meeting by asking each attendee what a successful study looks like to them and what they would like to get out of this project and process. Stantec explained that it will be crucial to develop an agreed-upon goal and singular to vision that Stantec can deliver upon in a short amount of time for a constrained budget.

METRO's Greg Jordan explained that success for him would entail improved coordination and efficiencies among the service providers, as well as recommendations related to effectiveness and efficiency that may be implemented in the short-term as quick-wins.

South Portland's Art Handman would like Stantec to consider TOD-like economic growth and residential development and how transit service needs to be considered with land use.

Casco Bay Lines' Hank Berg would like Stantec to create a framework or evaluator tool to help prioritize projects and funding, and to validate processes and underlying decisions taken by GPCOG and participants.

Tom Reinauer, on behalf of YCCAC and Shuttlebus Zoom, would like Stantec to focus on solutions that are practical and achievable, especially as it relates to financial feasibility.

It will be important for Stantec to identify new projects that could be used for grant and funding applications.

Overall consensus is for wide public participation to understand desires and unmet needs, and garner buy-in and support for the resulting plan.

### Design with community in mind

Stantec and GPCOG et al. agree that it will be important to determine, as Stantec starts our work, whether this short-range plan will focus on recommending quick achievable wins, or focus primarily on laying groundwork for the long-range transit plan. Stephanie pointed out that Stantec's work on Task 10 of the assignment is likely what can best be leveraged for long-term planning efforts.

Funding is the most challenging issue; and finding creative ways to do more with less funding, maximizing value for money.

Another consensus is ensuring maximum connectivity for riders between agencies. Stantec stressed that we will take a rider's perspective to help prioritize service delivery recommendations, and that the focus of this study would be on the operations.

GPCOG's Kristina Egan raised the interesting point that paratransit service, given the aging population, is something Stantec will need to consider, particularly in more rural areas of the region. There is also an opportunity to explore options involving dynamic routing and innovative technologies as strategies to help boost ridership.

### **3. What should we be aware of?**

Stantec will review relevant plans (Destination 2040, comprehensive plans, etc.). Moreover, a 2006 Coordination Plan was mentioned. Stantec will require a copy or link to this plan. Shuttlebus Zoom is planning to rework its schedule and operations which Stantec will need to take into consideration during the development of its plan.

### **4. What led to this assignment?**

Culmination of what we discussed at the start of the meeting: desire for stronger coordination, objective frameworks, project identification for federal funding, laying a foundation for the long-term, more aspirational plan, etc.

### **5. Review of work plan**

Stantec revisited the work plan. We will start with a high level understanding of the region and its challenges, analyze data, site visits, stakeholder engagement (both riders and public at large). This will help Stantec identify needs and service concepts.

### **6. What we did so far**

Rode METRO and Casco Bay ferry. Engaged with operators, talked to locals, and site visits. This visit helped Stantec understand the local conditions. The issue of transit as an important quality of life issue for seniors who wish to move around without a car, but also millennials who, at least at present, are looking to car-free living arrangements. Service frequency vs. coverage is an important trade-off to be considered as well as the role of technology. A brief discussion of dynamic routing and a common electronic fare product was discussed.

### **7. Expectations**

Stantec outlined what GPCOG et al. can expect from us: drive the project, help shepherd a vision that stakeholders can coalesce around, and produce deliverable drafts for feedback in order to produce high-quality final products.

Stantec explained our expectations of GPCOG et al.; in particular, cooperation among the agencies and GPCOG will be necessary, as will agreeing upon a definition of success and Stantec's

scope. Finally, data requests and feedback on deliverables will need to be quick and efficient to keep the project moving.

### **8. Data requests**

Stantec provided a hand-out for data requests. We understand that not all data is available from all participants. Any data, particularly disaggregated data in Excel format and GIS shapefiles will help speed up Stantec's analysis.

Stephanie Carver has set up a Google Drive for data sharing, with folders by agency. Stantec encourages agencies to upload data as it becomes available so we can provide quick feedback if different data is needed.

Finally, organizational charts (both staff and regional organizational) are requested and will help Stantec understand financial, organizational and other constraints.

### **9. Next steps**

Stantec will set up meetings with individual agencies (phone and face-to-face).

As data becomes available, Stantec will review data and contact agencies if further data are needed. Stantec will begin reviewing relevant plans.

Carol Morris will liaise with GPCOG that is current carrying out transit stakeholder meetings. Could provide a good opportunity to reduce stakeholder fatigue from participating in too many varying outreach initiatives in a condensed timeframe.

Stantec will draft a stakeholder engagement plan and a project management plan to be shared with GPCOG et al.

**Next meeting to be coordinated for week of April 3, 2017**, where Stantec will provide an update on:

1. Project management plan
2. Stakeholder engagement plan
3. Preliminary data analysis and follow-ups

The meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m. EST

The foregoing is considered to be a true and accurate record of all items discussed. If any discrepancies or inconsistencies are noted, please contact the writer immediately.

**Stantec Consulting Services Inc.**