

## **Portland North Small Starts Alternative Analysis**

Stakeholder Coordination Meeting

March 20, 2008

Freeport Town Hall

Attendance: Roger Bergeron, PanAm Rail; Rick Cloutier, Auburn/Lewiston Municipal Airport; Marina Douglass, NNEPRA; Mathew Eddy, Town of Brunswick; Judy Harris, PDOT; Alex Jaegerman, City of Portland; Dana Knapp, Concord Coach; Jonathan LaBonte, MTA; Donna Larson, Town of Freeport; Jeff Monroe, PDOT; Bill Needleman, City of Portland; Gordon Page, Maine Eastern Railroad; Nathan Poore, Town of Falmouth; Rebecca Schaffner, Town of New Gloucester; Robert Thorpe, LA RC; Don Craig, AVCOG;

Staff: Jay Duncan DMJM Harris; Matti Gurney, GPCOG; Chris Mann, MaineDOT; Anna Price, MaineDOT; Bob Thompson, AVCOG, Joan Walton, AVCOG; David Willauer, GPCOG

Welcome & Introductions: Anna Price opened the meeting with a brief introduction of the Small Starts process and introduced Jay Duncan from DMJM Harris.

Presentation: Jay Duncan presented the following key items for FTA Small Starts

- Purpose of Study
- Scope of Study
  - Purpose and Needs Statement
  - Fatal Flaw Analysis – transportation, economic, and environmental costs
  - Preliminary evaluation – transportation modeling
- Summary of Prior Alternatives
  - Existing corridor overview
  - Bus/Transit Stop locations
- Small Starts Process
  - FTA small starts criteria
    - Overall project rating, project justification criteria, local financial commitment, cost effectiveness, land use, other factors – economic development
- Public Participation
  - Stakeholder meetings, public informational meetings, website, and newsletters
- Study Schedule
  - 18 month process

### Questions & Discussion:

- Is the high frequency of service (10 minutes peak/15 minute off-peak) negotiable? And are High Occupant Vehicle (HOV) lanes considered part of the “at least 50% dedicated lanes” requirement?
  - There is no negotiation with the frequency
  - HOV lanes are not considered dedicated lanes but could be used in conjunction with a dedicated right-of-way
- Explain the fatal flaw analysis.
  - The alternatives analysis required by FTA will be a two step process whereby the first phase will be more qualitative in nature and the second more quantitative. The first phase will be the fatal flaw analysis whereby a range of alternatives will be screened down to those deemed feasible. The second will refine the alternatives further and result in the selection of a preferred alternative. Traffic modeling, environmental, cost, economic and FTA Small Starts factors will be considered in both phases. The alternatives analysis process is required in order to compete for federal funding.
- How will previous studies be integrated into this one? Can a tiered approach be used, as was described in the Bus Rapid Transit Study?

- All of the work completed to date will be reviewed and taken into consideration as we move forward. A tiered/phased approach is a possibility. However, a comprehensive evaluation will be conducted of the cumulative impacts will be completed regardless of project phasing.
- Are Amtrak funds considered?
  - Extending the existing Amtrak Downeaster service will be considered as an alternative. However, other bus and rail options (such as commuter rail) that are distinct from the Amtrak service will also be evaluated.
- The movement of business into the suburbs has increased and continues to increase. Will this be considered?
  - In order to properly address the potential transit ridership levels, a transportation model will be developed that will take into account future development. This will be accomplished by developing regional build out analysis which assumes a growth rate for commercial and residential users in study area over a 20 to 25 year period. Existing zoning regulations will be used as the basis for developing these projections. Also any plans that communities have to encourage transit-oriented development around stations will assist greatly as we move forward.
- Will service interfere with freight?
  - Existing and planned freight traffic will be taken into consideration. In order to accommodate both uses within corridors, it may be necessary to improve signal systems and provide additional trackage and/or passing sidings within rail corridors in order to maintain adequate freight traffic capacity.
- How will the fatal flaw analysis be developed?
  - The fatal flaw criteria will be developed with the stakeholder group.
  - Goals will be established to determine fatal flaw criteria
- What are the expectations of the stakeholder/technical committees
  - Stakeholder meetings will be held frequently, technical committee meetings will be held less frequently but members will be called upon for expertise via email and conference calls. All meetings will be planned to coincide with the development and completion of work products, in order to maximize their effectiveness.