

**Public Comments Received So Far Regarding the**  
**First Draft PACTS Ranking of 2009 High Priority Project Candidates**  
**January 2008**

We have received emails from a Portland City Councilor and numerous members of the public. They learned of our draft ranking directly or indirectly from our meeting packets sent to the Planning, Transit and Technical Committees. Several people copied our Congressional Delegation.

Please consider reading these 29 pages of letters. The summary below significantly understates the breadth of the opinions expressed.

1. Markos Miller (Portland) – Supports the transit and passenger rail proposals, and the Veterans Bridge proposal with bike/ped improvements. Opposes all the other road proposals.
2. Kevin Donoghue (Portland City Councilor) – Same as Mr. Miller.
3. Christian McNeil (Portland) – Same as Mr. Miller.
4. Kiya Smith (town of residence unknown) – Same as Mr. Miller.
5. Derek Pelletier (Portland) – Same as Mr. Miller.
6. Ken Whitney (Cranberry Isles) – Same as Mr. Miller and Mr. McNeil, and proposes bus lines to Gorham/Windham and Freeport/Brunswick.
7. Sarah Cushman (Portland) – Similar to Mr. Whitney.
8. Jon Graback (Portland) – Recommends higher than 8<sup>th</sup> priority for passenger rail. Supports some improvements to I-295. Has heard of a possible legal challenge under the STPA and NEPA regarding any plans to widen I-295. Questions some of our cost estimates.
9. Fred Dillon (Portland) – Opposes the widening of I-295 and supports the transit and passenger rail proposals, and the Veterans Bridge proposal with bike/ped improvements.
10. Elizabeth Trice (Portland) – Sees the Veterans Bridge rebuild as a great opportunity to create a good bike and pedestrian crossing.
11. Mark Sauerwald (Cumberland) – Same as Ms. Trice.
12. John Brooking (Westbrook) – Same as Ms. Trice.
13. Amy Chamberlain (Bath) – Promotes alternatives to automobile-oriented projects.
14. Dan Jenkins (Portland) – Supports bike/ped improvements and alternative modes. Supports passenger rail to the north and opposes all I-295 widening.
15. Kristin Crosby (Portland) - Supports public transit options to the north.
16. Patricia Banks (Portland) – Supports mass transit and opposes highway widening on I-295.
17. Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Portland) – Supports the Veterans Bridge proposal with bike/ped improvements and transit proposals. Opposes all the highway proposals.
18. Emma Holder (Portland) – Supports rebuilding Veterans Bridge with bike/ped improvements. Supports mass transit and believes widening I-295 and building the Gorham Bypass is the wrong approach.
19. Ken Whitney (Cranberry Isles) – Supports the development of a viable public transportation system in Portland and recognizes it as a first step for Maine to

- thrust transit services northward to areas that would benefit those of us in eastern Maine.
20. Diane Holcomb (Portland) – Supports investment in transit infrastructure and services that would lessen the demand for an increase in road building.
  21. Laura Belladur (Portland) – Supports inter-city bus/rail transit services. Opposes highway-widening options.
  22. Sam Frankel: Supports rebuilding Veteran's Bridge, but bike/ped access must be a priority.
  23. Joan Ingram (Portland) – Encourages a bike/ped path with replacement of the Veteran's Bridge and supports keeping buses, ferries and transit vehicles as a priority.
  24. Alexander Maybarduk (Portland) – Move passenger rail to Brunswick to #3 on the list. Would be just as happy to see an expansion of bus services.
  25. Zachary Barowitz, Vice-Chair Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility - Applauds the proposed earmarks for buses, ferries, paratransit vehicles. Opposes widening of I-295.
  26. Melanie Horton (Portland) – Supports the transit and passenger rail proposals, and the Veterans Bridge proposal with bike/ped improvements. Opposes 295 widening.
  27. Phin Sprague (Portland) – Important to preserve the right of ways for future rail transit.
  28. Alan Caron – Consider emerging models for new rail transit.
  29. Phin Sprague – Responding to Alan above.
  30. Anthony Dater (Kennebunk) – Opposes widening I-295.
  31. Erik Osborne (Portland) – Supports the passenger rail proposal, objects to any additional capacity for streets and highways, and echoes many of the sentiments expressed by the other writers.

### **Markos Miller**

Friends at PACTS,

I wanted to share with you my thoughts on the PACTS list of priorities for funding.

The only acceptable priorities on this list are the funding for: buses, ferries, and paratransit vehicles at \$15 million, and Passenger rail to Brunswick: \$100 million

Of the proposed road projects, Rebuilding Veteran's Bridge is the obvious priority. This must include improvements for bike/ped access across the Fore River and Long Creek, opening up access to the Clarks Pond area.

The other road projects listed are problematic, and should not be moved on. The need for these road projects has not been adequately demonstrated. Nor have the possibilities of alternative modes for these areas been fully explored, as is mandated by the Sensible Transportation Policy Act. For example, the Plans for the Gorham bypass have a total of three pages that address buses or train. I do not believe this has been properly explored for the 295 corridor either.

Finally, I would add that it is a shame that we are not looking to fund a more robust alternative transit system. When oil is costing over \$80 a barrel, SOV pollution is harming our environment, and our state does not have enough money to maintain our existing roads it seems ridiculous that we make the expansion of our roadways our top priorities. Studies have shown that there are

viable transit corridors to the north and south of Portland; we should be moving on these. We should be funding a bus system that reaches to Gorham and Freeport and Windham, and support our towns and cities to take a stand on more cars and more parking.

Gorham bypass, phase II (northern connection between West Gorham and Moser's Corner): \$35 million

Widen I-295 through Portland's Bayside and Libbytown neighborhoods: \$30 million

Widen I-295 through Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Freeport: \$50 million

Rebuild Exit 20 in Freeport: \$11 million

Philbrook Road area (between the Maine Mall and the Turnpike): \$10 million

Looking at this list, I'd say we have our priorities wrong. Please reconsider.

### **Kevin Donoghue**

Hello Julia,

I'm writing to add my voice to those opposing seeking Congressional earmarks at this time for the widening of I-295. Should we ever seek to benefit from the largesse of the Federal government in Greater Portland, I pray it should be for the sustenance and expansion of AMTRAK Downeaster and for better metropolitan transit infrastructure - or an expanded new fleet of buses for METRO. I also understand that there was to be an effort by PACTS to incorporate principles of Context Sensitive Solutions into its study scoping and direct funding. I hope that those efforts are proving productive and that I may be of help in one way or another. I'd be please to speak with you more here.

### **Christian McNeil**

Dear PACTS planners,

I'd like to register my disappointment with your agency's draft list of 2009 "high-priority" project candidates. While I can't quibble with critical infrastructural needs like the Veteran's Bridge (although I do hope that the existing sidewalk might lead someplace other than a freeway on-ramp when it gets rebuilt), I do find it distressing that three projects to widen I-295 between Brunswick and Portland are ranked high above passenger rail, whose capital costs are essentially equivalent, in the same corridor.

Any kind of transit (it shouldn't have to be rail) would more effectively and economically address the problems of rush-hour and weekend congestion on I-295. Our region also happens to be on the verge of noncompliance under the Clean Air Act, and new freeway lanes coupled with tighter standards currently under consideration will almost certainly incur the Act's punishment, which is a loss of federal highway funding. Furthermore, new freeway lanes face much stronger opposition than you suspect, especially in Portland, where the existing four-lane freeway is already a strongly resented neighbor.

The same arguments would apply to the Gorham Bypass - where is the inexpensive suburban bus service that was promised in that project's Environmental Impact Statement?

In general, this highway-centric list seems strikingly out of date, more like a product of the slum-clearing 1950s than of the global-warming 21st century. While I generally admire the planning work that PACTS does, I'm afraid that this list of priorities widely misses the mark of the region's real priorities.

**Kiya Smith**

To the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee:

I would like to comment on the draft list of 2009 federal funding priorities. In general, while the draft list offers some exciting opportunities to build a modern and diversified transportation network, I would hope that PACTS amend the draft list's dangerously outdated emphasis on new highway capacity.

At the top of this list I find that the Veteran's Bridge replacement project is a worthy top priority that maintains existing infrastructure. However, I would like to request that the rebuilt Veteran's Bridge include a bike/pedestrian path with connections to bike routes on Danforth St., the Fore River Parkway path, and the expanding Clark's Pond trail network.

The Veteran's Bridge spans one mile between the Portland peninsula and the dense neighborhoods of Redbank and the jobs of the Maine Mall area; however, the existing bridge's sidewalk path ends on a hazardous freeway on-ramp, within sight of but impossibly isolated from the new mixed-use Brickhill development on Long Creek.

A safe, well-designed bicycle and pedestrian facility that crosses the rebuilt bridge and links into the emerging trails network around Clark's Pond could also ameliorate short-trip traffic congestion on I-295 by providing residents and workers on both sides of the harbor with a pleasant alternative to driving.

I also believe that maintaining the region's transit and ferry fleet is a priority that deserves its high position on this list.

As for the rest of the draft list of priorities, I am gravely disappointed with PACTS' continued insistence on considering new and expanded highway projects. MDOT already struggles to maintain existing roads. By 2009, gas prices are likely to exceed \$4 per gallon, stricter ozone regulations will put southern Maine out of compliance with the Clean Air Act, and a cap-and-trade program on greenhouse gases from the transportation sector will be imminent. In this context, then, this list's focus on dirty, expensive, twentieth-century- style highway projects is baffling, and it will also be extremely vulnerable to legal challenge under state and federal environmental policy laws.

We therefore request that you remove the Gorham Bypass Phase II and I-295 widening projects from this list entirely. I also would like to offer these ideas as alternative means to the same ends: establish frequent-service commuter bus service between Gorham, the Mall area, and Portland (as stipulated in the Gorham Bypass Environmental Assessment), establish commuter bus service to Yarmouth, Freeport, and Brunswick as an immediate precursor to commuter rail, and reconfigure the inefficient, unsafe, and outdated cloverleaf ramps on I-295 in downtown Portland into

pedestrian-friendly , space-efficient diamond interchanges (the latter could include lucrative redevelopment opportunities in the Bayside, University, and Libbytown neighborhoods) .

A modern, diverse, and efficient transportation network is critical to the success of our region in the changing conditions of the 21st century. We therefore hope that you will reconsider your devotion to outmoded highways and embrace these citizens' recommendations.

**Derek Pelletier**

Dear Ms. Dawson:

As a citizen who lives and works in Portland, I am submitting this letter to the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee to provide my comments on the draft list of 2009 federal funding priorities.

I support your number one priority project, the replacement of Veteran's Bridge. I believe that replacing the bridge presents a valuable opportunity to improve non-motor vehicle transit options between Portland and South Portland. Of the three possible routes that exist between Portland and South Portland (Casco Bay Bridge, Veteran's Bridge, and Outer Congress Street), only the Casco Bay Bridge provides reasonably safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians. This is not a practical route for the many Portland (and South Portland) residents that do not live on the peninsula.

Therefore, as part of the bridge replacement, I strongly favor including bicycle and pedestrian friendly routes over the new bridge with safe connections to Danforth St., the Fore River Parkway path, and the expanding Clarks Pond trail network.

I rely on the Metro transit system to get to work throughout the winter and, therefore, I support the maintenance of the transit fleet as another high priority on your list.

I strongly oppose, however, the inclusion of new and expanded highway projects that make up much of the rest of the draft list of priorities. Countless cities and regions have learned that building more and bigger highways never solve traffic congestion in the long run. Indeed, they have only ever served to make traffic problems worse. Cities such as Los Angeles and Atlanta have attempted to build their way out of traffic congestion and are now top lists for regions with the worst traffic congestion in the country. Instead of relying on the standard example for transportation infrastructure provided by places such as Los Angeles, Atlanta, or New Jersey, I urge you to think about much more long-term solutions to the region's transportation issues.

I recommend you consider the model provided by a city such as Portland, Oregon. In the past three decades they have adopted significantly more forward thinking solutions to their transportation issues such as improving bus infrastructure by providing bus only lanes through downtown, removing a major highway that bisected the city, installing light rail service, and improving bicycle access infrastructure throughout the city. As a result, the bus system provides reliable robust service throughout the city and enjoys high rates of rider-ship, valuable real estate and public access areas have been opened up to the community, new-light rail lines have helped revitalize previously isolated neighborhoods, and thousands of citizens cycle or walk to work.

I believe that now is the time to think about alternatives to the tried and failed expansion of highways as a means for alleviating traffic pressure. I, therefore, strongly urge you to remove the Gorham Bypass Phase II and I-295 widening projects from this list entirely. In their place, I recommend that PACTS consider significant improvements in the bicycle and pedestrian access to the Portland peninsula from other areas of the city (e.g., redesign the I-295 interchanges at

Congress and Forest Ave, improvements to Outer Congress Street) and development of rail or other mass transit alternatives for the I-295 corridor.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to learning of your decision.

**Ken Whitney**

Ms. Larson:

I have recently viewed the PACTS's draft list of funding priorities for transportation projects for 2009. The projects your agency has listed, and the order in which they are listed, are not only are socially and environmentally irresponsible, but they distinctly contradict the provisions of Maine's Sensible Transportation Act.

Freeway "improvements" (or widening and destruction) should not dominate the list. Transportation networks dominated by automobiles are disproportionately harmful to the environment, and they are detrimental to the cohesion and livability of adjacent neighborhoods and towns. Note how Portland neighborhoods adjacent to I-295 have declined in the years since its intrusion.

The State of Maine has been analyzing and studying the expansion of passenger rail to Freeport and Brunswick since the mid-1990s, with increased emphasis since 2000. Passenger rail, under Amtrak's operation or through the creation of a viable Greater Portland commuter rail network, is more logical for the following reasons:

1. Passenger rail is more environmentally friendly. The right-of-way induces minimal habitat destruction, the operation of the corridor releases fewer greenhouse gases per passenger, and public transportation supports smart growth and development, instead of the urban sprawl that continues to dominate development in southern and coastal Maine.
2. With gas expected to reach \$4 by 2009 (and perhaps \$5 in 2010), Mainers of marginal financial circumstances will NOT benefit from increased highway development. Additionally, Maine is aging, and the elderly cannot benefit from highways. Passenger rail can benefit all.
3. Freeway widening and construction INDUCES congestion. Building roads leads only to more cars on those roads. How much longer will intelligent people continue to invest state funds in foolish, short-sighted propositions?

Please consider reorganizing your list of priorities. Buses, ferries, and paratransit vehicle investment should remain at the top of your list. Creation of bus lines to Gorham/Windham and along the Freeport/Brunswick corridor should also be included near the top of the list. Instead of your 8th "priority", however, passenger rail extension to Brunswick (and beyond) should be seriously considered as a top candidate for federal funding.

**Sarah Cushman**

Dear Ms. Dawson:

My husband, Rob Levin, and I are writing to ask you to revise the draft list of PACTS 2009 transportation funding priorities.

I was born and raised in mid-coast Maine and we specifically chose to move to Portland to because it was more friendly to one-car (or even no-car) families. We have many friends who have made similar choices. We have a daughter now, 11 months old, and the three of us regularly walk, bike & bus in Greater Portland to meet our transportation needs -- and to enjoy our surroundings. Your draft list will have a big impact on our options.

Here are our concerns:

- We know the replacement of Veteran's Bridge is currently your number 1 priority -- and that is as it should be. But it must include a bike/pedestrian path that has good connections on both the Portland and South Portland side. As people trying to bike to South Portland (e.g., our dentist is in the Redbank neighborhood) we don't have the courage to cross Veterans Bridge in its current state -- and the Casco Bay Bridge or Congress Street force bikes and pedestrians to go way out of their way. We also love to do weekend trails walks and we bike or take public transit to them as well -- we are excited about the new Clark's Pond trail network and would like to be able to have access to them, too.
- All I-295 expansion projects should be removed from the list. The freeway is not a good neighbor. It is loud and dirty and a real transportation barrier to those of us walking and biking to get on and off the peninsula on a regular basis. It slices the city in two, disconnecting us from our neighbors to the north. Any attempts to expand the freeway through downtown Portland and Falmouth will be met with intense resistance from us, including legal challenges under Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act and the federal National Environmental Policy Act.
- However, redesigning and rebuilding I-295's inefficient and outdated cloverleaf ramps into a more urban, diamond interchange design is a worthy project. For several years I commuted on foot regularly on Forest Avenue and had to go under the 295 overpass -- and across the on and off ramps -- at my peril. I have seen the "diamond interchange" example and it would greatly enhance traffic flow for motor vehicles, improve bicycle and pedestrian crossings, open up really interesting redevelopment opportunities, and mitigate how ugly those cloverleaf's make the very center of our fair city.
- Replacing the region's transit fleet is a priority that needs to maintain its high position on this list. We are regular bus riders on every route (including the South Portland bus service)! If anything we should be looking for ways to expand transit, but at least the existing fleet should be maintained and improved.
- Development of passenger rail or some other sort of passenger transit service to Brunswick should take the third position in this list of priorities. With my roots in the Midcoast, we are regularly frustrated by the fact that there is almost no public transportation even to Brunswick (Concord Trailways schedule is too intermittent and usually not an option). We have friends and family in that area who would definitely use public transit to commute to Portland if it existed -- and obviously the reverse applies as well. Passenger rail or other forms of transit should supersede I-295 expansion projects as a more cost-effective, flexible, and environmentally benign solution to rush-hour and weekend congestion in this corridor.

- The second phase of the Gorham Bypass should not go forward until regular passenger and commuter bus service between Gorham village, the Mall area, and downtown Portland is established, as stipulated in the Environmental Assessment for the project. Several members of our church commute from the Gorham area and are looking for public transit options. We have another friend who is about to start a reverse commute out that way and will need to buy a car to do so. Bus service is several times more cost-effective than a new highway. We need our leaders to complete their agreed upon task -- or we need to challenge them legally.

With rising gas prices, clear concerns about climate change, and stricter air quality regulations (and potentially greenhouse gas emissions trading soon), the list for our region needs to be focused away from the highway projects of yesteryear. We need to think about our kids' futures. We all like to think we are a forward-thinking community -- and PACTS exists to be forward-thinking for this region. Please make the 2009 transportation priorities reflect our true needs.

Thanks for including our input and for all your work!

**Jon Graback**

John:

I would like to submit a public comment about GPCOG's "Preliminary Draft List of High-Priority 2009 Project Candidates", which as I understand it includes the following projects, in order of priority:

1. Rebuild Veteran's Bridge (Route 1 between Portland and South Portland): \$30 million
2. Buses, ferries, paratransit vehicles: \$15 million
3. Gorham bypass, phase II (northern connection between West Gorham and Moser's Corner): \$35 million
4. Widen I-295 through Portland's Bayside and Libbytown neighborhoods: \$30 million
5. Widen I-295 through Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Freeport: \$50 million
6. Rebuild Exit 20 in Freeport: \$11 million
7. Philbrook Road area (between the Maine Mall and the Turnpike): \$10 million
8. Passenger rail to Brunswick (requires operational funding and completion of a 2-year study): \$100 million

I think that Item 8 should be swapped with Item 5, in terms of priority. As I have found in proposing or voicing support for several possible highway projects in the Portland area, there is rather intense local opposition to virtually any major new highway construction (not to mention new tolls - LOL!) at this time, for a variety of environmental and budgetary reasons. Since energy costs have spiked, public sentiment both locally and nationally has shifted radically in the last few years, away from new highway construction and toward more mass transit (especially rail). I think you are going to have trouble getting the widening of I-295 past the public; there seems to be much more support to make bus and rail transit improvements a higher priority, particularly in that corridor. In fact, I have heard through the grapevine that Maine's environmental community is planning to file a legal challenge, under Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act and the federal National Environmental Policy Act, to any plans to widen I-295.

Personally, I feel that some widening and improvement to I-295 through downtown Portland (Item 4) is necessary, for safety as well as congestion mitigation reasons, but I think adding more lanes north of Portland (Item 5) should be a lower priority than extending passenger rail service (either commuter or intercity) to Brunswick. It also seems to me that the \$100 million estimate for the 30-mile passenger rail extension is rather high (almost twice the initial cost of the 114-mile Portland-Boston Amtrak project, in fact), and the \$50 million estimate for widening I-295 from Falmouth to Freeport is unrealistically low. In fact, it would seem closer to right if these two numbers were reversed! The 2-year "New Starts" study (I believe it is) for the rail project is currently underway, and more federal operational funding may well become available in the next federal budget (assuming that the current Democratic Congressional leadership prevails). In recent years, most new rail projects have ended up moving more people than was projected when the project was planned. Let's see if widening I-295 north of Portland is still necessary after we have passenger rail operating in that corridor!

Also, on Item 1, wasn't the Veteran's Bridge just rebuilt about 10 or 15 years ago? Why do we need to do it again?

Thanks for considering my comments.

**Fred Dillon**

To the PACTS Planning Committee:

As a long time Libbytown Neighborhood resident in the City of Portland, I would like to express my concerns with the PACTS 2009 High Priority Project list. In particular, I am most concerned with the proposals to widen I-295 from Portland to Freeport before seriously considering transportation alternatives as required by the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act. With a continuing and indefinite increase in gas prices, it is becoming increasingly apparent that a primary reliance on single occupancy vehicles is utterly unsustainable. Therefore, significant improvements to our mass transit system are an absolute necessity and should be undertaken in lieu of highway expansion. As transportation planners, you all undoubtedly know the numerous social, environmental and economic benefits to mass transit over SOVs.

Additionally, an expanded I-295 would even further exacerbate the negative quality of life impacts already imposed upon the neighborhoods in the proposed project areas. I have spoken with several elderly residents in Libbytown who sadly recounted the destruction of a large swath of their neighborhood to make way for I-295 in the early 1970's. And as a regular bicycle commuter, I can personally attest to the difficulty and danger of navigating the Congress Street interchange by bike (let alone by foot). Libbytown and other affected locales in the proposed project should not be forced to sacrifice even more for an ill-considered and ill-conceived notion to widen I-295. We need more mass transit and fewer cars. Therefore, we should be investing in buses, ferries, paratransit vehicles and trains instead of wider roads.

We also need to create more opportunities for human powered forms of transportation. The replacement of the Veteran's Bridge would be timely and could provide just such an opportunity. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities on a reconstructed bridge could establish important linkages from the Portland Transportation Center via the new Fore River Parkway path to Clark's Pond and the Maine Mall area in South Portland, which are both now effectively inaccessible by bike and foot. The South Portland Land Trust has created a remarkable vision of an interconnected trail network around the Mall area and beyond. Reconstructing the Veteran's Bridge could become a critical and integral part of this vision. It would also provide real quality of life benefits

for the numerous residents of the Redbank and Brickhill neighborhoods, as well as to the neighborhoods along the trail network whose residents might opt to bike or walk rather than drive to the Mall.

For all these reasons, I hope PACTS will decide in favor of more economically and environmentally sustainable transportation projects rather than relying on the outmoded transportation planning paradigms of the last century.

**Elizabeth Trice**

Hello Dave,

I saw in the PACTS notes that rebuilding the Veteran's Bridge is a high priority project for the near future. As a bicyclist who bikes 20-30 miles a couple times a week for recreation and transportation, I find that the Veteran's Bridge and Tukey's Bridge are the two largest obstacles to mobility throughout the region. Both bridges are Route 1 which should be passable by pedestrians and bicyclists, and both have sidewalks, but neither are appropriate for a commuting bicyclist moving 15-20 MPH.

The Veteran's Bridge in particular is difficult as there is not much room for a bicyclist on the road, and the sidewalk is not wide enough for a bicyclist. The sidewalk literally ends at the South Portland end of the bridge. A bicyclist is left with the choice to either cross two lanes of heavy traffic to continue on Route 1, or stay illegally in the right lane for an additional mile on 295 before exiting via Western Ave. The result is that Western Ave and Brick Hill which at four miles should be a 15 minute ride from my home in Parkside seem essentially unreachable.

I see rebuilding the Veterans' Bridge as a great opportunity to create a bike and pedestrian crossing. Once on the South Portland side, there are opportunities to make connections to Brick Hill, the Maine Mall, Route 1, and provide access to the green space along the creek and the road that runs between the airport and the Fore River. I encourage you as my city councilor to support the reconstruction and ensure that a new bridge include safe passage and connections for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Mark Sauerwald**

Dear John

I am a bicycle commuter, riding from Cumberland to South Portland and back daily. I have heard that 'they' are considering replacing Veterans Bridge and I wanted to take this occasion to write concerning bicycle access to the Portland Peninsula, and how the bridge replacement may be an opportunity to improve it.

Currently the best access from Portland to the mall area is via outer congress street, which is not a model of bicycle friendly infrastructure. Theoretically you could use veterans bridge for this however in it's current realization it has some shortcomings:

- 1) The lanes are too narrow to share, so cyclists are forced to take a lane position near the center of the right hand lane. The steep curb makes it dangerous to move much further to the right, which would also encourage motorists to attempt to pass in the same lane, when there is not sufficient room. Most cyclists are uncomfortable doing this.

- 2) If traveling southbound, then when you reach the southern end of the bridge you are forced to cross two lanes of high speed traffic which is entering I-295, in order to take a long detour through South Portland before getting back to the area where you started.
- 3) Northbound access to Veterans bridge from the mall area is inconvenient at best.

I have a couple of suggestions as to how this could be improved:

One possibility is to simply provide wide outside lanes on a new Veterans bridge, so that the lane could be shared by cyclists and motorists. For Southbound traffic allow cyclists to ride on the shoulder of I-295 to the next exit and get off there onto Western Ave. The shoulder is wide, and this would be far safer than the currently legal option of crossing two lanes of highway bound traffic to avoid using I-295.

Northbound access is more difficult to envision, but perhaps a similar approach with a bicycle lane running along side I-295 from Exit 3 to Exit 4, and then providing access to Veterans bridge would also work.

Another possibility would be to take the new Jetport plaza road, which runs parallel to the runway on the south side, and extend that as a bike/pedestrian path down, and across Long Creek to the point where Veterans Bridge and the I-295 Bridge meet, then have a separate but parallel bridge which runs parallel to

I-295 to carry pedestrian and bicycle traffic across the river. This would provide a good bicycle/pedestrian connection between the Bus/Train terminal and the Mall/Airport area.

I would specifically advocate against a solution such as was done on Tukeys bridge with a narrow multiuse path running alongside the highway. The large amount of mixed traffic (dogs, joggers, skateboarders and cyclists) going in both directions is an invitation to crashes, and the barrier falls below the center of gravity for a cyclist which means that it would be very easy for a cyclist running into a dog to be flipped onto the highway. I view this as one of the most dangerous pieces of infrastructure in the area!

I would very much like to see improved access to the Portland Peninsula from both the North and the South. I would like to be able to find a bicycle route to take me home which allows me to stop at one of the shops or restaurants on the peninsula without having to make a huge detour, ride an unsafe route, or ride illegally, which are my only options right now.

I imagine tens of thousands of non-motorist tourists arriving in Portland via our new cruise ship terminal, and being stranded on a small portion of the peninsula because we have an infrastructure which is so unfriendly to any non motorist modes.

Thank you for considering these ideas.

**John Brooking**

Ms. Julia Dawson,

I am a year-round bicycle commuter between Westbrook and the Mall area of South Portland, and a member of Portland's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. I am writing to you to advocate for consideration of an upgrade of Veterans Memorial Bridge (Route 1) as a high-priority project for the PACTS Policy Committee. In particular, I want to stress the need to create a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly design of this bridge. I and other bike commuters in the area have been frustrated for a long time about the difficulty of accessing the Portland peninsula

from both the south and the north. One of the major problem areas is getting between Portland and the Maine Mall area.

I don't know if you have tried cycling between these two points, but if not, here are the three basic options you would currently have. You can take the Casco Bay Bridge, which brings you into South Portland pretty far north of the mall, but at least has bike lanes on the bridge and offers a portion of the Greenway trail. But to continue to the mall, you have to get off the trail when it crosses Broadway and continue on Broadway to Westbrook Street, whose four narrow lanes of car traffic exiting and entering I-295 make it a challenging stretch of road to cycle on. The other primarily-used option is Outer Congress Street, which I'm sure you know has its own bicycling issues, particularly between the Stroudwater crossing and the airport. Finally, I and a few other hardy commuters will sometimes brave the current Veterans' Bridge. It is probably the most direct route, but with highway-speed traffic driving on narrow shoulder-less lanes, riddled with potholes and storm grates along the side where a cyclist would normally ride, it is not for the faint of heart. Additionally, both directions require crossing two lanes of car traffic at some point either entering or exiting.

On the south side of the bridge, there appears to be plenty of open land available near the airport for a bike path leading to the airport, mall, and shopping centers along Westbrook and Western Streets. To the north, a connection could be easily made with the existing trail going to the train/bus transportation hub or to Commercial Street. If we can only GET THE BIKES ACROSS THE WATER, the possibilities for useful bike/ped transportation modes open up considerably.

With the need for less petroleum-intensive modes of transportation becoming clearer every day, and the opportunity to promote such modes that a Veterans' Bridge project would afford, at I think little additional cost, I believe we can hardly afford to pass this opportunity up. In any case, this is the best opportunity we will have for some time to improve this important community connector which is currently woefully inadequate for non-motorized transportation. I strongly urge you to consider such a project in your list of high priorities. Thank you.

**Amy Chamberlain**

PACTS Committee,

I hope that when you finalize your 2009 funding priority list, you'll consider the thriving and growing contingent of Southern Maine commuters who want to use alternative transport, be it public transit, bicycle transit, or even foot transit (it's true). I hope you'll consider that Portland is in an exciting position: to be a leader in Maine in developing and refining its transit systems; it has the opportunity to join the progressive cities in the rest of the country who are scaling down on their auto traffic and expanding their citizens' commuting options. This kind of expansion adds to, rather than detracts from, a city's beauty, its appeal, and its self-esteem. How excited people are to discover a new bike-ped path in their city! If only these much frequented, feel-good exercise paths were thoroughly networked to be practical for commuters as well. Bike-pedestrian routes that are truly connected by safe, traffic-free linkages are one progressive, attractive, relatively low-expense, low-maintenance alternative to bigger highways. Easy-to-use and extensive commuter train (everyone loves trains) and bus systems are time-tested, effective - not to mention social, community-minded, and ecological - alternatives to bigger highways. Why not be leaders and do something great? The answer isn't freeways; the answer is MORE ways.

Thanks, and good luck,

**Dan Jenkins**

Hello,

When considering the projects to be put forward in the PACTS priorities, I strongly urge you to focus on pedestrian, bicycle and alternative transportation means. It is important that major road projects, like the veterans memorial bridge, have bicycle and pedestrian lanes included and are connected to other bicycle and pedestrian paths. I strongly urge that the widening of the highway through Portland is not included. We need thoughtful long term transportation needs met, not feeding the hungry appetite, and expanding lanes, of conventional freeways, however reworking the highway on ramps to a more community friendly diamond shape ramp should be considered. Rail to Brunswick should be prioritized. All in all it is necessary that we look forward when creating out transportation priorities rather than focusing on last century's technology and reliance on fossil fuels for single passenger travel. Please consider these concerns and adjust the priority list as a result.

Thank you

**Kristin Crosby**

Dear John and Jill,

I received a message from a colleague at work and was encouraged to contact you. I, along with many other folks employed by Bates College, are forced to take to the road each day, commuting approximately 80 miles round trip from the greater Portland area. Many of us have family members who work in the Portland area and cannot entertain the option of moving closer to our jobs here in Lewiston.

I would like to encourage you to continue to press for support of investment in \*transit options \*\_instead of road building and development. While I understand that Maine is a very large state with highways and bridges that need constant updating due to weather and vehicle usage, I think that we are sorely lacking in public transportation options. I would absolutely use public transportation to commute between Portland and Lewiston or Auburn if it were available. Even if it cost the same or even a bit more, it would still be worth the convenience, the opportunity to relax instead of get more stressed out, and increased safety not having to battle the many tractor trailers that use the turnpike or drive in unfavorable weather conditions. I think it should go without saying that with today's gas' prices, and growing public interest in the environment, it's time to cut back on our dependence on cars. But I have no option - riding my bike 37 miles on the highway is just not an option for me. My boss will not allow me to telecommute. I have carpooled with people in the past, but can't seem to find reliable car pooler - they move away, go on maternity leave, etc.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Patricia Banks**

Dear Julia Dawson and members of the PACTS Planning Committee,

It has come to my attention that PACTS is taking public comment on its list of top project priorities for 2009. I can't help but notice that the list is chock-full of highway projects. In fact, there are two separate points for widening I-295 alone. Only when the reader gets to the very bottom of the list does she or he see anything that has to do with providing more rail service in

the area of PACTS jurisdiction.

To put it bluntly, these priorities are ridiculous. Here we are facing the prospect of severe climate change over the course of the next century and PACTS is proposing projects that will only encourage the pumping of more carbon into the atmosphere? Need I point out that widening 1-295 through Portland's Bayside neighborhood conflicts with the Downeaster's proposed right-of-way when that service is finally extended to Brunswick? The idea of widening that awful highway should have laughed out of the room. (However, replacing the cloverleaf ramps with better-designed diamond-shaped intersections with improved pedestrian and bicycle rights-of-ways should be a top priority.) Seriously, this list doesn't exactly include a lot of choice for the teeming masses of commuters in Southern Maine who would much rather not have to drive their cars to and from work every single day. Perhaps you've already heard what Jon Graback of Portland has to say about that particular matter:

Several major national polls I have seen over the past few years basically say the same thing - people want less highway spending, but more for mass transit and other non-car alternatives. And by wide margins, people want more freight to shift from heavy trucks to rail.

So why the lack of choice in PACTS list of priorities? The last thing we want is to see our cities, towns, and countryside chopped to bits by superhighways even more than they already have been these past 50 years. It is high past time our transportation authorities stopped enabling sprawl, pollution, and the erosion of our neighborhoods by cars. It's high past time we had more and better public transit options – not just in Maine but nationwide.

By more transit options, I speak not just of better bus and train service (though train service to Brunswick should be among your top priorities); we travelers also want to see more respect for pedestrians and bicyclists. For instance, the Veterans Memorial Bridge replacement must include separated pedestrian bike paths that connect to Danforth St., the Fore River Parkway path, the Clarks Pond trail network, and the Redbank/Brickhill neighborhoods. I also suggest you not move forward on the next stage of the Gorham Bypass until after you establish commuter bus service between Gorham Village and downtown Portland.

I implore PACTS to set its priorities straight and listen to We The People. We aren't going anywhere, we vote for your employers, and we won't leave you alone until you listen to us.

Cordially yours,

**Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee**

To the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee:

The Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee would like to offer these comments, concerns, and modifications to the draft list of 2009 federal funding priorities. In general, while the draft list offers some exciting opportunities to build a modern and diversified transportation network, we must also request that PACTS amend the draft list's dangerously outdated emphasis on new highway capacity.

At the top of this list, we find that the replacement of Veterans' Bridge is a worthy top priority that maintains existing infrastructure. However, our Committee would like to request that the Veterans' Bridge project description include new bike and pedestrian facilities that safely and conveniently connect to bike routes and sidewalks on Danforth Street, the Fore River Parkway path, and the expanding Clark's Pond trail network.

The Veterans' Bridge is a critical link in the short mile that separates the Portland peninsula from

the Redbank neighborhood and the jobs of the Maine Mall area; however, the existing bridge's sidewalk path ends on a hazardous freeway on-ramp, within sight of but impossibly isolated from the new mixed-use Brickhill development on Long Creek.

A safe, well-designed bicycle and pedestrian facility that crosses the rebuilt bridge and links into the emerging trails network around Clark's Pond could also ameliorate short-trip traffic congestion on I-295 by providing residents and workers on both sides of the Fore River with a pleasant alternative to driving.

Our Committee also believes that maintaining the region's transit and ferry fleet is a priority that deserves its high position on this list.

As for the rest of the draft list of priorities, our Committee is gravely disappointed with PACTS' continued insistence on considering new and expanded highway projects. MDOT already struggles to maintain existing roads. By 2009, gas prices are likely to exceed \$4 per gallon, stricter ozone regulations will put southern Maine out of compliance with the Clean Air Act, and a cap-and-trade program on greenhouse gases from the transportation sector will be imminent. In this context, then, this list's focus on dirty, expensive, twentieth-century- style highway projects is baffling, and it will also be extremely vulnerable to legal challenge under state and federal environmental policy laws.

We therefore request that you remove the Gorham Bypass Phase II and I-295 widening projects from this list entirely. We also would like to offer these ideas as alternative means to the same ends:

- Establish frequent-service commuter bus service between Gorham, the Mall area, and Portland (as stipulated in the Gorham Bypass Environmental Assessment);
- Establish commuter bus service to Yarmouth, Freeport, and Brunswick as an immediate precursor to commuter rail;
- Reconfigure the inefficient, unsafe, and outdated cloverleaf ramps on I-295 in downtown Portland into pedestrian-friendly, space-efficient diamond interchanges (the latter could include lucrative redevelopment opportunities in the Bayside, University, and Libbytown neighborhoods);
- Fast-track other transit service expansions in order to reduce the region's congestion and transportation costs in general.

A modern, diversified, and efficient transportation network is critical to the success of our region in the changing conditions of the 21st century. We therefore hope that you will reconsider your devotion to outmoded highways and embrace these citizens' recommendations.

Yours,  
The Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

**Emma Holder**

Dear Sir or Madam, PACTS, and the Bike/Ped Group of Maine,

My name is Emma Holder, and I have lived in Portland since 1997, and am a fitness instructor and massage therapist by trade. I do own a car and a trans pass, but do most of my local commuting by bicycle and walking.

This contributes not only to my health, but also that of the city, and it's residents.

With Climate Change and population growth an understood fact, and the growing education and awareness of these issues by the general (voting!) public, it is imperative for upcoming development projects to integrate an ethical and far-seeing stance. Infrastructure built today must reflect the values and requirements of future communities, not just 5 years from now, but 50. It must be able to withstand and nurture changes that will inevitably be part of this city. Sea level risings and changes in climate will affect the longevity, location, and possibly building materials of certain projects, for example those low to the water table.

(Building a Walmart on a swamp, for example comes to mind as a rather short-sighted endeavor). The transportation system in general must also reflect the growing awareness, values and health of the community, such as a release from the dependence on personal automobiles, and support of cleaner, more responsible and sustainable ways of getting around, not to mention the reduction in health care costs if everyone walked or rode their bike more. If we can do this now, then other communities in this country will be able to model their traffic and transport patterns on our model. Change is never easy, but it is a necessity to improve the quality of life not only for Portland. We have a responsibility that reaches far beyond the city limits. It would be great to provide a far-seeing model of transportation for other communities to appreciate and copy.

I'd like to comment on a few of the upcoming transportation issues facing this city and citizens.

1) The rebuilding of Veterans Bridge;

This important artery must include safe alternative transportation access (pedestrian and bike) to communities on both sides. When I go to the mall, it's by bike, and it feels very dangerous! I and many other alternative commuters would appreciate a safer way of getting from Danforth st. to route 1 in So Portland.

2) Buses, ferries and transit vehicles;

I just returned from England to visit my Grandmother, and took the train everywhere. Their population density has required the development of a system to move large numbers of people without the use of personal single driver vehicles. The bus and train system are fast and effective, and on time, as they are able to move large numbers of people independently of normal traffic (rail lines, or HOV lanes). This model should be examined and adopted here, instead of encouraging a higher number of single engine polluters into our city. For example buses that go between co-commuting cities like Portland and Augusta and Portland and Lewiston, among numerous others.

3) The widening of 295, and the Gorham bypass; As mentioned above, the use of more sustainable and far seeing multiple-people-use vehicles should be adopted instead of the short-sighted encouragement for more cars. This does not solve the transportation problem, just lengthens it. Its like building a higher smokestack to distribute the pollution wider. Short-term, the effects are diluted, but long-term an even wider are is poisoned. It'll take more time to dismantle, and climate-wise, we don't have that time. A better vision is needed.

Please take the time and energy to think ahead of immediate car-related congestion concerns. We don't need a short-sighted system that boosts car absorption into our neighborhoods. We need a transportation system that encourages change and growth and sustainability for our cities and citizens. It will require strength to withstand the grumbling of those who can't see past their own conveniences and requires a more global view. Its time to be a community leader, not a follower. With vision, patience and strength of purpose, PACTS can create a system that will work for everyone in the future, not kowtow to the short-sighted. Car sharing, improved and affordable Bus, Rail and Ferry travel between cities and towns, alternative and healthy travel options highlighted and encouraged – all these things will improve the life of the citizens of this area.

PACTS can be the organization that asks people to get their head out of the sand and look blinking into the light of the future.

My thanks for reading this letter, and good luck. Know that you have an ever increasing pool of concerned and informed citizens who will support your endeavors to improve the health and transport of our community.

Cheers,

**Ken Whitney**

Thank you for including me on your e-mail list to receive the public input of the PACTS transportation proposals. Although I live in Cranberry Isles, the development of a viable public transportation system in Portland is recognized as a first step for Maine to thrust transit services northward to areas that would benefit those of us in eastern Maine. Bus and rail services are almost non-existent in our region, and the growth of such services in southern Maine will gradually inch north and benefit us. I recognize that my input has (and SHOULD have) less clout than citizens of the greater Portland area. But please be informed that the decisions of the Portland area impact members of the state as a whole.

I sincerely appreciate your response.

**Diane Holcomb**

To The Members of the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee:

I am writing to voice my support for investment in transit infrastructure and services that would lessen the demand for an increase in road building and increase a robust and functional bus or rail system to connect rural areas to Portland.

**Partners in Ending Hunger** is extremely concerned about the working poor who have moved to the outlying towns and continue to work in Portland. They are struggling with the high cost of gasoline, home heating oil, and the increase in food costs. Eliminating the necessity to maintain a car would be a tremendous personal option. **Partners in Ending Hunger** is a network of over 2500 individuals.

As a resident of Portland, I am fortunate to be able to walk to work, to my corner market, and to downtown. I am personally distressed when public transportation doesn't connect me with my health providers. I don't want to have a car because I want to decrease my carbon imprint and increase the air and environmental quality of living in Portland.

Please consider the options that will make Portland accessible to all with a focus on public transportation. A fully realized regional transportation system would benefit everyone.

**Laura Balladur**

I'm writing to add my own comments to the PACTS "high priority" recommendations.

Given oil prices, current trends, and moves towards sustainability, I am appalled that priorities are not being given to inter-city public rail transit options; instead highway-widening options are supported and encouraged.

I moved to Maine a few years ago and am surprised at the amount of commuting people do between Portland, Lewiston, Brunswick, Augusta, and beyond, and this without adequate public transportation. It is a shame that in a state that reveres its wide-open spaces, people drive so much.

I am one of many Portland residents who work and commute to Lewiston. In this list of “high priorities”, where is there even a mention of the Portland-Lewiston-Augusta corridor, one that would be a perfect candidate for rail and/or bus transit options? So far, there is no mention. Instead, PACTS recommends three widening of I-295 projects. It is a shame to see such nearsightedness. By giving priority to highway widening projects over inter-city bus/rail, PACTS is supporting increased passenger vehicle usage over alternative transportation models. I strongly oppose these widening of I-295 projects.

**Sam Frankel**

To Whom It May Concern At P.A.C.T.S.,

My name is Sam Frankel and I thought I'd share with you some thoughts regarding the list of funding priorities that was recently released.

Just some background on me, I'm a non-car owning resident of Portland who moves around predominately by bicycle, four-seasons (the trick is to layer your clothing).

I love the idea of rebuilding Veteran's bridge, but bike/ped access must be a priority. Appropriate bike (and pedestrian) lanes that connect to existing trail networks would significantly expand a bicyclists easily accessible range, so good on y'all for that one! The ferry projects also strike me as worthy, since that effectively gives the non-boat owning parts of Portland access to the islands as well as ensuring Island residents access to Portland.

But as far as the car-oriented and highway projects go, none would offer benefit to myself or my peers that would compare favorably to their cost and accompanying problems. We are already having difficulty paying to maintain our existing roads, adding more seems counterproductive, to say nothing of air pollution and the rising cost of gasoline. Let's take this opportunity to invest available Federal money in projects that will (a) reduce congestion on existing roadways, (b) reduce air pollution, (c) increase public access to affordable and convenient transportation, and (d) avoid consuming our cities and towns in massive highway projects.

Having talked to some other folks about this, I will defer to those more knowledgeable than myself regarding what specific strategies should be pursued to grow our transportation system in a positive manner. However, I will add personally that expanding bus or rail (which I realize is a larger endeavor) access to the greater Portland area and working to connect trail networks would do the most to alleviate the transportation issues I face as a year-round cyclist.

Thank you very much for your time and the opportunity to provide comment

**Joan B. Ingram, MPH, Portland**

To the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee:

I am writing to you in regards to the upcoming discussion of the draft list of 2009 federal funding priorities. I am a fairly new Portland resident, having lived here for about a year and a half, and I have the pleasure of walking and biking around the city in order to meet most of my needs. In the past year I have relied mainly on foot for most of my in city adventures and commuting, but as I have become more familiar with my surroundings, I have begun to use my bike more often. As someone still becoming familiar with the Portland streets, I have found it to be very exciting and encouraging to be able to bike where there is infrastructure in place to support bicycle and pedestrian use; on the contrary, it is quite intimidating and discouraging to adventure on to streets where there is little in place to support this alternate use.

I am a strong supporter of creating an environment that makes it easy for individuals to make healthy choices. In an age where we face grave challenges of obesity—due to poor nutrition and a lack of physical activities—I believe it is important to create opportunities to increase physical activity. How scary that research shows today's generation of children will be the first to have a *shorter* life expectancy than their parents, due to obesity. Making our region's infrastructure more bike and pedestrian friendly allows for lifestyle changes that would fight obesity and reduce health costs.

I am also a concerned environmentalist, and I am eager to see communities do all they can to reduce vehicular emissions. I believe we should be supporting alternative means of transportation, and certainly having more people on bikes and on foot is a very basic but very effective way to reduce car use.

As I increase my own biking and commuting around the city, I am very excited about the potential routes that can be created and the healthy lifestyle that could be encouraged for so many residents. I realize there are several transportation funding development topics and priorities that PACTS is considering. I strongly urge and hope that you support and keep in mind the true needs of our communities, specifically:

- 1) The Veteran's Bridge replacement—If this development occurs, I would strongly encourage a separated bike/pedestrian path with connections to bike routes on Danforth Street, the Fore River Parkway path, the Clark's Pond trail network, and the Redbank/Brickhill neighborhoods. As the bridge currently stands, it is one of the areas I would consider discouraging for bikers and pedestrians and would prove very beneficial to accommodate alternate transport infrastructure.
- 2) I would also support keeping buses, ferries and transit vehicles as a priority. These alternate means of transportation will encourage people to commute in other ways than driving individual cars. Supporting transit vehicles will also encourage those that use bikes to travel and adventure in this great region of ours.

Thank you for your time and for supporting a healthy lifestyle and environment.

**Alexander Maybarduk**

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in regards to PACTS proposed 2009 transportation funding priorities.

While I was pleased to hear discussion of the potential for new buses and passenger rail to Brunswick, I was disappointed to see that the majority of the proposed high-priority projects continued to encourage usage of single occupancy vehicles.

It is very frustrating to be a resident of the highest density region of the state (Portland Metro) and still be inextricably tied to my car. One would hope that living in the biggest city in Maine would allow me the pleasure that every other resident of major cities in this country is afforded, to live car-free in a well-integrated public and alternative transportation system.

Contrary to popular belief, consumers do not want to be forced to own and use cars. As many a Maine resident, I struggle just to pay the basic bills each month and would be exhilarated to trade the costs of car payments, maintenance, parking, gas and insurance for the fees of utilizing public transport and a regular bicycle tune up.

Unfortunately the consistent prioritization of single occupancy vehicle infrastructure means that both the state and consumers like me are left with bills they cant afford. The state cant afford to maintain the existing highways we have and the consumer can't the afford the ever increasing costs of gas and car ownership.

With that in mind, I would suggest that the passenger rail to Brunswick be moved to **third** on the list of PACTS transportation funding priorities. Though as a frequent commuter, it does not have to be rail service. I would be just as happy to see an expansion of bus services to areas of frequent travel to and from Portland.

Lastly, I know that Veteran's Bridge needs to be a top priority due to the current shape it is in, but isn't possible to make that crazy sidewalk actually go somewhere?

**Zachary Barowitz**

Hi John & Jill,

Markos Miller told me that you are coordinating citizen responses to the local transportation earmarks that are being considered for congressional action. Please include the following comments in any communiques.

Although I applaud the proposed (if under allocated) earmaks for buses, ferries, paratransit vehicles, the proposed widening of I-295 is distressing as it sets the wrong priorities environmentally, regionally, and economically.

As rising fuel costs push automobile user's cost well over \$.50/mile it remains a pittance compared to the the actual social costs which reside in the range of \$10/mile. Non-automobile solutions would seem to be a priority. Unfortunately rail is not only prohibitively expensive (in terms of infrastructure and investment), but the devoted rail bed is ecologically less sound than intercity bus routes, which loaded with passengers burns about as much fuel as two SUVs.

What the region needs is a plan for high quality, frequent, comprehensive, subsidized bus service. Aside from relieving traffic, the cultural and economic development will be manifest by a more fluid and communicable region

Thank you

**Melanie M. Horton**

Dear PACTS Planning Committee,

I am a 25 year old car owning resident if Portland. I have been a car owner since the age of 17, though I make an effort to walk, carpool and ride the Portland Metro when I can. Given the cost of gas and the environmental implications of driving an automobile, I have become increasingly dissatisfied and disturbed by the priority that town, state and regional planners still place on our highways and road projects at the expense of more environmentally sustainable transportation options and incentives for those using existing ones.

Widening 295 as proposed will only increase traffic, congestion and air pollution while failing to address the need to promote "greener" forms of transportation. As the saying goes, "if you build it, they will come". By widening the highway, more cars will use it. I have heard of that happening elsewhere and am sure Maine is no different. Besides, the more roads we build the more money needs to be spent on maintaining them. By prioritizing the automobile, PACTS will enable the public to ignore the global warming and oil depletion crises we will inevitably face.

I encourage you to put the Brunswick rail line higher up on your list of priorities as it would alleviate congestion on 295 while providing a more sustainable option for commuters. I'd also like to see you take a serious look at other forms of public transit that could alleviate the traffic into Portland from areas like Windham, Gorham and Grey. I see so many single occupancy vehicles entering this city on their morning commute and think to myself that there has to be a better way to get people around the region that is more sustainable!

As far as your other funding priorities go, I support rebuilding Veteran's bridge, though bike and pedestrian access must be a priority there, as they should be in general. The ferry projects are also important for Islanders to be able to access Portland.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments. I urge the committee to make this region an example for the rest of the state and the nation in terms of environmentally conscious, effective and affordable transportation planning.

Sincerely,

**Phin Sprague**

Greetings, I was added onto the e-mail below and was disappointed by Tony's analysis. If you know me at all you know that I sincerely believe that it is important to preserve the right of ways for future rail transit. These right of ways once lost can never be recovered. My suspicion is that in spite of all of the Legislation and State acquiritors removing the passenger transit rail option by making it unfeasible to re institute the corridors.... is the unspoken plan. I submit it is a BAD plan. One sees bad plans adopted on a daily basis. It is allowed!

There is a serious infrastructure crisis in our future. Unfortunately we are not going to solve it in the long run by ONLY throwing more money at passenger car capacity. The solution is not one dimensional. A parking garage costs \$22,000 per CAR! In a city a parking garage as opposed to an office building or a business, is an unproductive waste of resources and space. New rail corridors after old ones are lost cost in the range of 20 M per mile. Fundamentally we are looking at a resource crisis driven by the multiple economic costs of automobile commuting, The high opportunity cost surrounding a personal commuting vehicle system diminishes our economic strength. This is a practical problem of over 100 years in the making with out an easy solution. We are watching the deterioration of the highway infrastructure as we have to at the same time expand it..... Because there is no responsible transportation alternative, we ! face the unavoidable growth of personal commuting vehicles using the highways. This choice of personal transportation favors a suburban growth model with low population density that can not support transit and will overcome the present highway system on many levels, cost and capacity are only two. We had this structural problem before the energy cost crunch. Every one knows that there is a problem yet there is little practical motion towards fostering an alternative. I too would like to see a couple of paragraphs on rail.

Since the federal legislation in 1986 which allowed the Maine DOT to purchase rail lines, Governors, the Legislature, our Congress people, and the Federal Government have been clear in that they would like to see another potential model at least be preserved. Examining specific action in the last 20 years as far as I can tell this over view is not playing well in the trenches. I am not sure why. A solution is not instant gratification and one dimensional.

Just for the sake of having done so I am inclosing parts of two studies that are well known but have not had much circulation.

I harbor some faint hope that before all rail infrastructure is destroyed there will be an incremental shift in the planning oversight.

Thanks for your service and thanks also for taking a look at preserving an alternative.

### **Alan Caron**

One of the advantages of having an unexpected day off is getting to read things that you otherwise might not get to, like this interesting conversation. I'll add my two cents, for what they are worth...

With general agreement on Phins analysis of the slow-motion breakdown of the transportation system that we're living through, there are some emerging models for new rail transit that attach themselves to newly-created denser neighborhoods around transit stops, and rely on public rights of way. The SouthCoast rail project in Massachusetts is a good nearby example. The critical element in that project, and in some others, is to think outside the existing rights of ways to new, straighter and more efficient lines that are, just as with highways, wholly owned by the public. And, for that matter, to think outside the transportation box itself. A new line in the 296 corridor (replacing a new lane) might be an example, with stops around which new communities are designed. In the Massachusetts model, transit oriented development and redesigned planning in all affected communities are being moved forward together, as one integrated package.

It seems hard to imagine how any serious future commuter rail option could work, in Greater Portland at least, if all we're thinking about is the existing rail infrastructure. That would be similar to envisioning the interstate highway system in the 1950's but only allowing it to be built

on existing local or state roads. Commuter rail requires speed and efficiency. Existing lines weren't often built that way. A ride through Portland's Woodford's neighborhood demonstrates the problem, as the rail line crosses street after street at grade.

Especially northward and westward of Portland beyond Westbrook, the commuter rail of the future, if its going to be a viable alternative to the single occupancy automobile, is going to need a new vision of newly-built lanes, where possible built in conjunction with with existing or even new limited-access highways. That's not to say we can't have Amtrak service from Boston to Brunswick over existing right of ways, but that service isn't time-critical in the same way that commuter service must be.

This conversation doesn't seem to be happening yet, as near as I can tell, but the time is fast approaching when it may be necessary. The paradigm of decentralized suburban living is straining us both personally and socially. It is a great system for \$1 dollar a gallon gasoline and unlimited public dollars. But that's about all.

### **Phin Sprague**

Greetings all, I appreciate Alan's public response. I am hoping that there is some motion. i have recieved private responses and the essence is that we all know this crisis is coming but we don't yet know how we are going to deal with it. Or get the ball rolling to figure it out ..there is inertia.

My hope is that the dialogue will get started in a productive problem solving mode before the relatively inexpensive and perhaps cheaper but less efficient, as Alan points out, alternatives are eliminated. Who knows what the answer will be until the challenges are appropriately vetted. There is a huge amount of planning that is going on now with long range social implications.... without addressing the social-economic role of commuter rail transit as a component even where it has been identified as presently viable. (See 1996 Maine Turnpike Alternative Transportation Study)

This group is the best constituency to examine all of the ramifications, all of the perspectives but first it needs to reach some consensus that this is a worthy subject for it's resources. It is really the only way I can see that a professional and considered investigation and dialogue can get started. I beg for analysis not politics! We have demonstrated too many times that with out good analysis we could vote to keep the tide out! Politics should be expected later to refine or choose among viable plans!

I want to leave you with a few interesting numbers: there are around 11,500 students commuting to the Gorham, Portland and Auburn USM campuses. Maine Medical Center has about 5900 employees commuting daily and Portland itself swells by around 68,000 each day. I challenge you to take out your calculators and estimate the WHOLE cost of what we are at this moment locked into. Just in Portland. \$22,000 per parking space for a TIFED garage! What is the opportunity cost of a flat parking lot in downtown Portland? If you then look at the projected growth that is required and estimate that cost it is astounding..... maybe not sustainable with a high quality of life.. This waste represents an incredible loss of potential economic strength and revenue on every level from the individual struggling student right up through the government's ability to find resources to invest in needed programs.

It has taken us one hundred years of focus and love affair with the automobile to get here. From where we all sit it doesn't look as if we have a good long term solution. This consensus doesn't threaten any specific transportation segment, there will be capacity issues for every one and

therefor opportunities. What it does predict is a break down, which is a universal challenge shared equally. Depending on who you talk to the crisis is either here today or right around the corner or 10 years from now... There is also bi-partisan political consensus that a problem is coming, The public knows this to be the truth, I submit the serious academic search for a solution probably should get started now rather than later..

I apologize for giving you an ear full..enough from me. I am concerned for our children and the long term economic strength of our community. A few more shoulders on this "rock" and we might get it moving. What you decide on this issue will make a difference. Why not start the process now?

Thanks again for being at the place where important decisions are being made. Please consider showing your concern and support for putting small resources into serious forward thinking!

Cheers!

**Anthony Dater**

See next three pages

Followed by two pages from

**Erik Osborne**

Anthony W. Dater  
53 Fletcher Street  
Kennebunk, Maine 04043  
<sacrorivplnrs@yahoo.com>  
January 14, 2008

John Duncan  
PACTS  
68 Marginal Way  
Portland, Maine 04101

RE: Public Input to I295 Study - January 30, 2008 Public Meeting

Dear John,

I noted with interest and alarm Priority #4 of PACT's List of Long-Range Projects described in the December 16 issue of the Maine Sunday Telegram. I write as a private citizen, a user of I295 and the Maine Turnpike, not as a representative for any municipality or group. The following is citizen input into the January 30 public meeting.

Widening I295 within Portland would be a total disaster. This would make road building and (single occupant vehicle) automobile travel trump all other land use, sustainability, aesthetic and livability objectives for the city. If planners have learned anything the past 30 years it is that road widening within cities merely induces more single-occupant vehicle trips. A widened I295 would further split the Peninsula from the rest of the city and depress the value, both aesthetically and monetarily, of roadside land uses. The increased noise, pollution and glare of extra-wide limited-access roads within cities cause blighted roadside neighborhoods. Why would USM want these blighting influences next to its campus?

Cities cannot out-build traffic and its consequences. They can, however, manage it to the benefit of residents and commuters alike. On the spectrum from automobile speed-dominance in suburbs and countryside on one side, the emphasis moves to the other side of the spectrum in cities to pedestrian-dominance. Roads on the auto-dominant side are regarded by some as 'facilities' or 'infrastructure' thus morally freeing road design from pedestrian/ bicycle and aesthetic objectives. In cities, by contrast 'complete streets' are the design objective serving a multiplicity of objectives including vehicle flow. In short, streets in cities become land uses - not facilities or infrastructure - and are part and parcel of the rich fabric of land uses and aesthetics of the city.

There is an alternative to widening I295 within Portland. Go back to the drawing board and re-design I295 as a boulevard from the bridge over the Fore River to the Blue Star Memorial highway (Route One) exit. This urban segment could be re-named 'Portland Boulevard'. Provide a rich mix of street trees and shrubbery in the median, sidewalks - yes, sidewalks - on the shoulders and remove the glareful tower lights along the right-of-way and replace with aesthetic boulevard and pedestrian-scale street lights. Such a redesigned I295 would provide admirable traffic calming while integrating Portland Boulevard into the fabric of the city rather than splitting and oppressing it. I295 can seamlessly transition into Portland Boulevard at the north side of the Fore River Bridge and south side of the Blue Star exit by the appearance of street trees, shrubbery, sidewalks, pedestrian-scale lights and a sign - 'Boulevard - Max Speed 35 mph.' Motorists do respond to the signification of the land uses and design of roads. Barcelona, Spain provides an example of seamless transition of limited-access roads into boulevards upon entering the city.

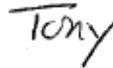
Great cities do not plan for supporting cars going 60 mph everywhere within the urban core. When they have done so they become Los Angeles. Do we want the City of Portland to dissolve into an

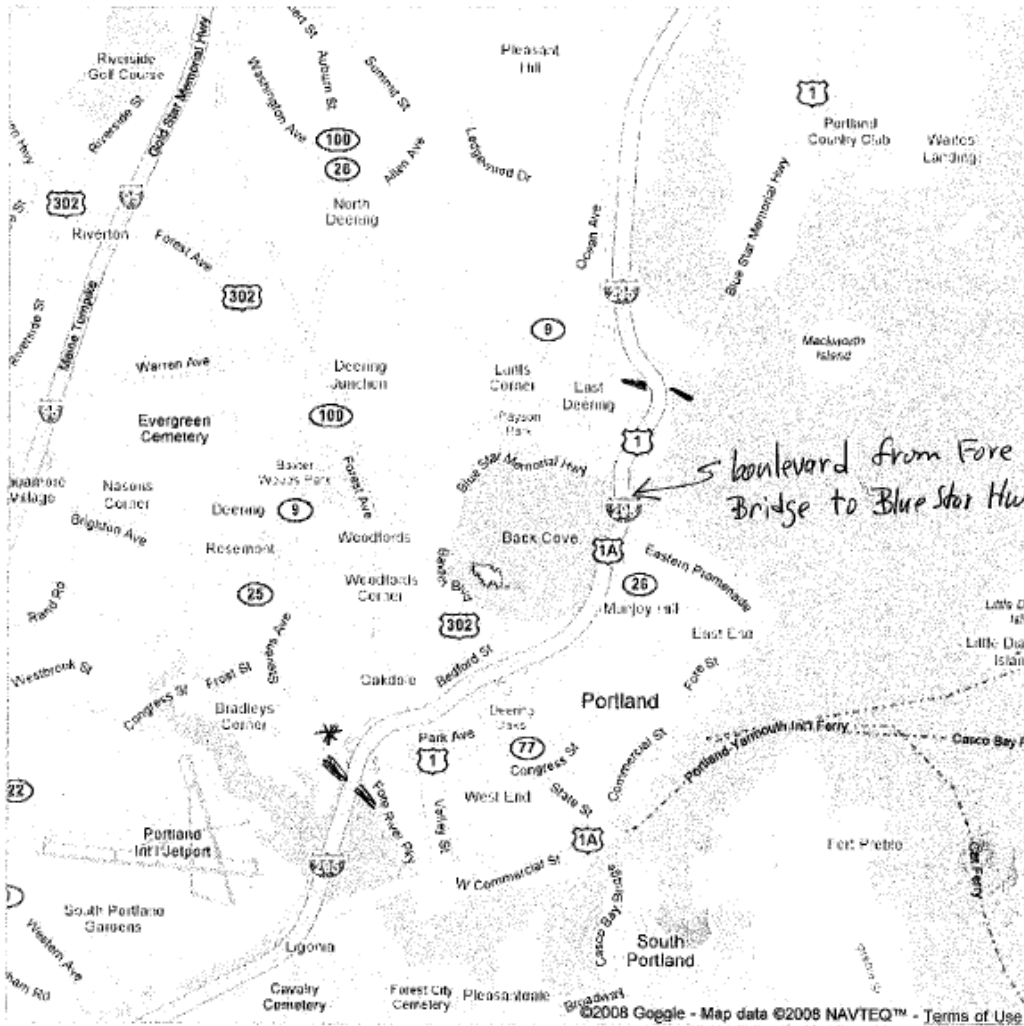
undifferentiated low density series of suburbs like Los Angeles from Freeport to Biddeford? It appears that the Maine Turnpike is already being widened to the west of City Center. Let that be the main arterial through the region; keep no tolls on it within the region (as has been proposed); and let I295 - Portland Boulevard - be the city center main street that it has the potential to become.

We are entering the age of sustainability - we have no choice as gasoline is inevitably climbing to \$4 a gallon and beyond (even without a carbon tax). It makes no sense to widen I295 within Portland just when good planning and the market dictate promotion of more multi-modalism, especially for commuters. We are supposed to be reducing (single-occupant) vehicle miles to help reduce greenhouse gases - let us responsibly be about that. Let's plan for the future, not the past.

Thank you and best wishes for the good work PACTS is doing, including your serious effort to encourage public input into your long-range priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



\* train station lot for commuter parking - continuous free downtown shuttle - loop every 15 minutes 7:30 - 9:30 AM and 4:00 - 6:30 PM during workdays

Erik Osborn  
62 Mabel Street  
Portland, ME 04103

31 October 2007

To The PACTS Planning Committee:

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the PACTS list of High Priority transportation projects for federal funding in 2008. This list should be focused on transit, biking, and walking. We should not spend another dime on additional automobile capacity until everyone in the Greater Portland area has access to viable alternatives to the automobile for getting from place to place. Specific revisions to the list should include:

- Prioritize extending passenger rail service between Portland and Brunswick.
- Retain the high priority for Veterans Bridge, but revise the project to include safety and accessibility improvements for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Replace 295 widening projects with projects that would provide the needed capacity through improved transit (including the rail extension mentioned above).
- Replace the Gorham Bypass Phase II project with a project to provide the needed capacity through improved transit.
- Include projects to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicycles crossing the 295 interchanges at Congress Street and Forest Avenue. Both of these interchanges are unpleasant and unsafe for walkers and cyclists, and both of these streets are part of Portland's bicycle network.
- Add a project to improve accessibility and capacity for bicycles on Tukey's bridge. The current path has insufficient capacity, and the connections for bicycles on either end are illogical and unsafe.
- Add a project to build on the local grassroots efforts to remake Franklin Arterial into a multi-modal, community-oriented street.

In addition, we should also:

- Retain the high priority for upgrading busses, ferries, and paratransit vehicles.
- Complete Portland's Peninsula Transit Study as soon as possible to help guide the above efforts.

These revisions are supported by our planning documents and our laws. Since the early 1990s "A Time for Change" and the "Maine Sensible Transportation Act" have urged us to invest in modes of transportation that reduce pollution and fossil fuel consumption, promote communities and public health, and make the best use of the limited financial resources of citizens and their governments.

Unfortunately we continue to ignore this wisdom, and spend millions of dollars to move more cars. As a result, surrounding communities spend millions more dealing with the consequences: stormwater pollution, respiratory diseases, obesity, parking shortages, fractured communities, fossil fuel dependence, global warming, and families trapped by the need for cars to conduct every aspect of their lives.

In the end projects that expand automobile capacity don't even help the drivers they intend to serve. As we know from countless experiences in Maine and throughout the country, building automobile capacity in lieu of other modes encourages development patterns that can only be served by cars. This development generates more car trips, which quickly fill the new capacity, leaving drivers stuck in worse congestion than before.

The best way to improve our transportation system for all users, drivers included, is to give as many people as possible the option not to drive. We need to make the best use of the capacity we already have by investing in buses, rail, biking, and walking. In so doing, we will create a transportation system that is better for people, the environment, and the economy. Here are just a few of the benefits we will realize if we take this approach:

- People will be able to choose to ride the bus rather burden their families with the costs of a second car.
- Employees will be able to choose to bike to work so they can fit exercise into their busy day.
- Those who are too young or too old to drive will have the freedom to get around on their own.
- Our travel will be more fuel efficient and less polluting.
- Transit will focus development on our traditional town centers.
- Land squandered on parking lots can be put to more valuable uses like businesses, homes, and parks.

It is time to stop building wider roads and start building sustainable communities.

Sincerely,



Erik Osborn  
Environmental Engineer (ME PE#10974)

Cc:  
Portland Transportation Committee  
Senator Susan Collins  
Senator Olympia Snowe  
Congressman Tom Allen