

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Joint Transit-Planning Committees Meeting Notice

Thursday September 2nd, 2010 – 10:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.
PACTS/GPCOG,
68 Marginal Way, Portland

- 1. Call to order**
- 2. Minutes of the June 3rd Joint Transit & Planning meeting**
- 3. PACTS regional initiative kicking off soon:
a.k.a Transit Focused Region**
- 4. Updates**
- 5. Public Comments**
- 6. Next Joint Meeting Date(s)**
- December 9th
- 7. Adjourn**

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Agenda Item 2. Minutes of June 3rd 2010 Joint Committees Meeting:
Joint Meeting of the PACTS Transit and Planning Committees
PACTS Joint Planning-Transit Committee Meeting

June 3, 2010

9:00 A.M.

In attendance: Patricia Quinn (NNEPRA), Marina Douglas (NNEPRA), Marc Nahorney (University of New England), Brooks More (Windham), Connie Garber (YCCAC), Sandra Mowery (Gorham), Judy Harris (Portland), Tom Meyers (South Portland), Peter Morelli (Saco), Robert Kahn (Train Riders Northeast), Dave Redlefsen (Metro), Mike Laberge (MaineDOT), Sara Trafton (RTP), Ed Clifford (ShuttleBus/ZOOM), Greg Tansley (Biddeford), Sara Devlin (MTA), Peggy Killmer (Yarmouth), Elizabeth Trice (Cumberland County), Molly Just (Westbrook)

Staff/guests: Sue Moreau (MaineDOT), John Duncan (PACTS), Carl Eppich (PACTS), Steve Linnell (GPCOG), Rebeccah Schaffner-Tousignant (GPCOG), Rebecca Lambert (GPCOG), Lynne Powers (GPCOG), Art Handman (private consultant), Steve Horowitz (member of public)

1. Call to order

Greg Tansley called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

2. Minutes of the December 10, 2009 Joint Planning-Transit Meeting

Peter Morelli made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 10 meeting, and **Tom Meyers seconded**. The **motion passed unanimously**.

3. New Planning Committee officers

Dan Bacon was nominated as chair of the Planning Committee, and Brooks Moore as vice-chair. Their terms would be for two years. **Peter made a motion to accept the nominations and Sandra Mowery seconded it**. The **motion passed unanimously**.

4. Portland North Project - MaineDOT

Sue Moreau from MaineDOT gave a presentation on Portland North, which is a study analyzing the potential implementation of rail or bus rapid transit service between Portland and destinations north of it. Phase one of the study has been completed, with public meetings held in all locations and MaineDOT screening the possibilities of locations and modes of travel from 30 down to six. Some of those possibilities included Lewiston/Auburn to Portland or Brunswick to Portland rail or bus rapid transit. The project is currently in phase two, with MaineDOT looking at station locations and layouts, road and rail infrastructure, economic development around stations, environmental effects, and costs. The options of building a new bus lane or using the St. Lawrence rail line have already been eliminated. The department is coordinating with stakeholders and the FTA. In July, the options will be pared down to one route coming from a particular destination, and the decision will be made on bus or rail.

Sue said that she had heard strong interest in commuter rail, concern about highway widening (which would not be done for this project, though there could be some accommodations made for buses in the breakdown lane), and cost/funding concerns. There are currently three service alternatives being considered: Yarmouth, Brunswick/Bath, and

South Auburn. The options being looked at for bus service are exclusive right of way, bus on shoulder, and mixed traffic scenarios. There are five potential locations for train stations in Portland: Union Station, Center Street, India Street, Bayside, and the Portland Transportation Center. A train would have two cars with the seating capacity for 100-150 people; it cannot be longer than that, as it could not impede intersections. The scenario as currently modeled would feature 22 trips per day, with the first trip arriving in Portland at 6:45 A.M. and the last departing at 10:55 P.M.

The costs would include capital (track, bridges, train sets or buses, signals, stations) and operating (management, fuel, maintenance). The bus is far cheaper. There is a Powerpoint presentation with more cost information available on the MaineDOT website, at:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/portlandnorth/presentations.htm>

MaineDOT has been calculating potential ridership. Sue said that there was no modeled preference for rail over bus, and that having to walk more than 10 minutes after arriving at a station was a barrier to ridership. She said that there was not a great deal of interest in Lewiston/Auburn in commuting to Portland; many people who live in the area also work in the area. The higher ridership projections were for Bath/Brunswick, and those routes had lower projected costs as well. The highest ridership projection for a Portland station was at Center Street.

The project could be eligible for 50% funding from the FTA's Small Starts Program, for dedicated fixed guideway. MaineDOT will be applying in July.

5. ***HUD Sustainable Communities planning grant application development update***

Rebecca Schaffner-Tousignant spoke about the HUD sustainable communities grant that GPCOG and a number of organizations and municipalities have been working on. The advanced NOFA regarding the opportunity came out in February and the stakeholder group has been working since March. They will be applying for regional planning funds. They are brainstorming major issues facing the region and have not settled on specific geography, for which communities and areas will be included in the grant, just yet. It depends on who wants to partner in the project. HUD is looking for regional projects with a wide geographic range.

Rebecca said that the application is being drafted now, and that the stakeholders want to hold a series of round tables to extend the audience. The final NOFA was due in April but has not been released yet, which does not leave the group with a lot of time to prepare the application. The regional HUD director will be at GPCOG meeting with the stakeholder group tomorrow. There is no minimum dollar value, and HUD is looking for large scale projects. GPCOG is the convener for this area's application. Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, Cumberland County, the Midcoast Economic Development County, the Mid-coast Council of Governments, and a number of other entities are involved, and others are currently deciding whether they will join the effort. Judy expressed concerns that in the process of spearheading the grant application, GPCOG staffs are doing work for non-member communities that have not paid COG dues.

6. ***Updates***

There were no updates.

8. ***Next joint meeting dates (taken out of order)***
September 2 and December 9

7. ***Public comment (taken out of order)***
There was no public comment.

9. ***Adjourn***
The meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

**Agenda Item 3. PACTS regional transit initiative kicking off soon:
a.k.a Transit Focused Region**

Hopefully you all recall that we have a funded, regional project that will involve both planners and transit agencies with the task of developing a foundation and vision for collaborative land-use planning and transit service growth throughout the region. We have hired a team with transit-economics expertise, as well as transit AS a tool for economic growth expertise. Coupled with region-wide implementation (at the municipal level) of the new **Transit TIFs**, this initiative is intended to bring all the tools we currently have together to develop a vision and path to region-wide, sustainable transit operations, and transit-oriented development growth. It is also intended to bring to the surface the barriers and opportunities in realizing a comprehensive, and reliable transit system throughout the region.

The timing is just right to begin as a number of studies are concluding, or projects about to begin that have transit components THROUGHOUT the PACTS region;

- ◆ Expansion of the Amtrak Downeaster to **Freeport** and **Brunswick**, and the completion of the **Portland North Study** (through **Falmouth, Cumberland, Yarmouth**)
- ◆ The Gorham East-West Corridor Study with its “Urban to Rural” land use scenario and tested comprehensive regional transit system, (**Gorham, Westbrook, Scarborough, South Portland**)
- ◆ The Tri-Community Transportation Plan – **Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach**

With much of this work completed and available to our consultants and the general public, the “Transit Focused Region Initiative” will build on these works and involve the municipalities

Attachments:

- Chosen proposal from Nelson\Nygaard and HDR
- Gorham E-W Transit 2035 scenario **map**
- Gorham E-W Transit 2035 Recommendations (descriptions of routes)

At this meeting we would like to (1) get your input on how to make this effort most productive, (2) how to ensure your involvement, and (3) who from the public we might reach out to involve on a project committee.

Agenda Item 4. Public Comments

This Agenda Item is reserved for any comments the public or anyone attending may wish to share with the committees.

Agenda Item 5. Next Meeting Date

December 9th?

Agenda Item 6. Adjourn

