

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

PACTS Executive Committee Meeting Notice

February 3, 2009
8:00 a.m.

GPCOG, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Approve minutes of January 6th meeting
4. Economic stimulus package (8:05)
5. Committee updates (8:20)
6. TIP Administration Topics (8:40)
7. PACTS planning budget for next biennium (9:00)
8. Scarborough's Dunstan Corner project (9:20)
9. PACTS annual earmark proposal for FY 2010 (9:30)
10. Updates on other topics (9:40)
11. Policy Committee agenda for February 26th (9:50)
12. Adjourn at 10:00

Next meeting: March 3rd at 8:00 a.m.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland Urbanized Area

68 Marginal Way • Portland, Maine 04101

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Minutes of January 6th Meeting

Attendance: Bill Shane, Chair; Mike Bobinsky; Bob Burns; John Bubier; Ed Clifford; Greg Tansley

Staff: John Duncan, Carl Eppich, Paul Niehoff, Maddy Adams

1. **Call to Order.** Bill Shane called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.
2. **Public Comment.** None.
3. **Approve minutes of December 2nd meeting.** *Bob Burns made a motion to approve the December 2nd minutes, seconded by Mike Bobinsky. All were in favor.*
4. **Federal economic stimulus package.** Bill congratulated John on the success of the legislative breakfast and for pulling it together in a few short weeks. John said that he had a discussion with Kat Fuller about whether or not MaineDOT should send PACTS a suballocation as part of the stimulus package to decide upon. They are thinking they might do that but Kat wasn't sure where that was going. Bill strongly recommended that we stick to the plan; let's not start taking on new projects but rather stick with our priorities. Mike B. agreed but would add some caveats. The Outer Forest Avenue project went from \$800,000 to \$1.5 million. If that is not part of the stimulus package, wouldn't it make sense to look at some relief to those communities that have substantial increases in local match costs for projects? Let's revisit some of the projects that need money. Paul mentioned that they might not be eligible; projects with PIN's are not eligible. The stimulus money will be for brand new projects and the parameters are fairly tight. The projects cannot be under construction.

Bob said he would like to hear more feedback from the state. They put together a list in Gorham and Route 112 was one of the projects. Kat's response was that it could not be done in 180 days; Bob disagrees. Kat said it would be part of Part B – the six-year plan. If there is a need for a local match, then many of the towns would not be able to pursue their projects. Greg asked why the stimulus money couldn't be used to relieve the local match entirely. Paul said that it was his guess that a match will not be required. They want contractors excavating in a short time frame – 90 days or 180 days -- the information keeps changing. Greg agreed that a lot of work was put into prioritizing the TIP projects and that we should work from that list. Ed asked about the transit allocation. Bill said that transit was mentioned a lot at the Ocean Gateway legislative breakfast and there was a lot of support. It is difficult to make decisions because we just don't have the details. Will there be local shares? If so, that will be a problem. Bill recommended that staff keep the current TIP list up to date and be ready to go should the money come in. Have the local match numbers ready just also in case. Keep regional projects in mind.

5. **Committee updates.** Ed reported that the Transit Providers are working on a regional pass system and will be meeting again on Friday. The Transit and Planning Committees will be meeting jointly on Thursday regarding transit-oriented development (TOD). A regional map and timeline is being worked on also. All of the providers are using the same automatic vehicle software. Right now they all have individual units. The League of Young voters are also looking into AVL (through Google Transit) so that people will know when and where a bus will be arriving.

There is a concern about the quality or lack thereof of buses. The vehicle procurement process appears to be a problem. There have been some meetings about this. The process that is currently being used to purchase buses is extremely slow; Ed has been waiting four years.

Lewiston Auburn may need to shut down service due to lack of buses. Ed mentioned that a group of people including Tom Meyers met with Barbara Donovan, the purchasing agent from the state and others to discuss how to make the vehicle procurement process more efficient. Bill said that if the problem is at the state, we should get our state legislators involved to get the process moving. John Bubier noted that MaineDOT is putting more money into projects rather than rolling stock. He suggested that he, Ed and John D. should talk to Senator Damon about this. Mike asked if the TIP Committee should be looking into this issue. Carl said that he has heard that some of the stimulus money will go to transit. Greg added that the stimulus money will probably look toward projects like light rail because it will employ more people. Capital investment for buses probably won't happen. Bus manufacturing companies would be happy to employ more people.

Bob Burns reported that the Technical Committee has been discussing the possibility of PACTS hiring an LPA consultant. Paul is trying to get a meeting together with MaineDOT to talk further about this. The Technical Committee also discussed the stimulus package, the regional traffic signal management system, and reviewed changes to the 2010/2011 project list.

Bill asked about the status of the Gorrill Palmer report and Paul responded that it is 95% done. A brochure has been produced. Bill would like to get the report out to the Policy Committee soon. He doesn't want it just to sit on a shelf somewhere. Bill would like to have it on the February agenda. The Policy Committee will be invited to the Technical Committee meeting to hear about the report. Bill also mentioned that our aerial photography is getting around three years old. It is a valuable tool. He would like to see the Planning Committee talking about this. Greg mentioned that Biddeford just got their aerial photography updated through SMRPC. Greg noted that in ArcView there is a swipe tool that allows you to look at 2003 aerials on top of 2000 aerials (overlays). John D. will talk to COG about the possibility of updating the aerial photography.

John Bubier reported that the TIP Process Committee had their first meeting. They will meet again on January 9th. There are nine topics that they will be addressing. They will focus on leveraging highway design guidelines.

6. **PACTS planning/administration budget for July 2009 to June 2011.** John D. explained that we usually start the process in January and adopt a budget in May. John reviewed the roles for each of the committees regarding the budget. We get federal money to do what we do and MaineDOT is constantly telling PACTS to be careful about lobbying. There is a fine line between educating and lobbying. MaineDOT money will now be included which would also us to do some lobbying – such as talking to the Congressional delegation and that sort of thing, however this would cost the towns more. John B. suggested that when managers and elected officials go to Washington, they should be doing the lobbying but John D. should be present. If you are delivering information, then that should not be prohibited. John D. suggested that we continue the way we are going but he will just need to not meet with the legislative delegation. Mike B. pointed out that we have worked hard to have a good dialogue between PACTS and the legislative delegation. It is important for PACTS staff to have good working relationships with the legislative delegation. We should have a conversation with Kat Fuller and Greg Nadeau about this.

John D. is recommending that the Planning Committee, rather than the Technical Committee, work with staff on ranking consultant studies. He explained why and the committee agreed. Regarding the LPA, Bill said we don't want to do it if it's going to cost the towns more money. John reviewed the budget. The dues estimate listed on page 10 was incorrect; the number should be more than what is shown. It should also include some of the consultant work; the balance

would be about \$150,000 or less. Bill asked if we have done enough with *Destination Tomorrow* to justify spending another \$100,000 for an update. Carl responded that an update needs to be done but we are not sure exactly what HAS to be done. More emphasis on transit and TOD would probably be included in the next update of *Destination Tomorrow*. Bill was concerned about an increase in the dues because the towns are so strapped right now. John clarified that only \$50,000 was spent on the last *Destination Tomorrow* update.

- 7. Updates on other topics.** John D. received an e-mail from John Melrose. He might get hired by BACTS and he is proposing that the MPO's work together to develop policy options for reforming urban compact legislation. Bill asked what constructive would come from that. He said to be careful about putting a lot of energy or staff resources into this. There was further discussion as to whether or not there was any benefit to PACTS doing this.

UPWP – solicitations for study proposals will be going out in the next week or two.

Bill reported that the employment contract for the PACTS Director would be restructured. He would like to bring something to this committee in February or March. A mid-term evaluation of the Executive Director will be done. According to the bylaws, it is the job of the Executive Committee to do an annual evaluation. The chairs of the PACTS committees can meet to do the mid-term evaluation.

A February meeting of the Policy Committee will be scheduled just to have a check-in. We want to keep the connectivity with the Policy Committee. Rather than dealing with operational issues that are being taken care of by the Executive Committee, we could have the Policy Committee talk about regional issues. By February we may know more about the stimulus package as well.

- 8. Adjourn.** *A motion was made by Mike B. and seconded by Bob Burns to adjourn the meeting at 9:50. All were in favor.*

Agenda Item 4: Economic Stimulus Package

While it appears that PACTS *might* have no further role in selecting Economic Stimulus projects, we will spend a few minutes on this subject. Possible topics include:

1. MaineDOT might publish a statewide list of projects this week or next for the purposes of sharing their work and for starting a federal requirements clock. The list will include more projects than will be funded.
2. MaineDOT intends to fund some existing projects with Economic Stimulus funds.
3. Mike Laberge can tell us what the Policy Committee will need to do, and when, in order to amend our TIP for the Economic Stimulus projects.
4. Update on the PACTS-initiated February 3rd meeting in Auburn of MPO's, COG's, MaineDOT, DECD and DEP. Postpone?
5. Update on work of Cumberland County?

Agenda Item 5: Committee Updates

Member Resource: Greg Tansley, Bob Burns, Ed Clifford and John Bubier

Staff Resource: PACTS and GPCOG Staff

Recommendation: Discussion only

- TIP Process Committee
 - Established a committee work plan
 - Discussed staff recommendation to change our Set Asides Policy percentages
 - Economic stimulus update
- Planning Committee joint session with the Transit Committee
 - Transit TIF legislation update and transit TOD-TIF education campaign
 - Staff analysis of potential locations for new transit oriented developments
- Transit Committee
 - Much exchange of information on many topics, including progress with the State regarding bus procurement
 - Regional route study and regional map/timetable
 - More work on possible changes to our formula for sub-allocation of the annual \$2,500,000 in FTA 5307 funds
- Technical Committee
 - Discussed staff recommendation to TIP Process Committee to change our Set Asides Policy percentages
 - Economic stimulus update

Agenda Item 6: TIP Administration Topics

Member Resource: Patricia Quinn of NNEPRA and Transit Committee

Staff Resources: John and Paul

Recommendation:

1. Endorse the NNEPRA request.
2. Accept Paul's report

NNEPRA Request

MaineDOT and NNEPRA need a "TIP Amendment" from us for the expenditure of \$2,195,000 in CMAQ funds which NNEPRA used to replace rail and upgrade/construct passing sidings on the Boston-Portland line. The TIP Amendment is to change the purpose for the CMAQ funds from operations to capital. The Transit Committee voted last month to support this. The Executive Committee has the authority to approve this.

January 8, 2009

PACTS
Attn: John Duncan
68 Marginal Way
Portland, ME 04101

Dear Mr. Duncan:

NNEPRA is respectfully requesting a change to our fiscal year 2009 CMAQ Grant funds. The total amount programmed from MaineDOT and PACTS to NNEPRA will not change. We are only requesting that the CMAQ funds currently programmed for Downeaster operations be modified to include capital expenses as well.

We are requesting these capital funds in the amount of \$2,195,000.00 to reimburse payments NNEPRA has made for the Capacity Project between Portland and Boston. The Capacity Project included the replacement of rail and upgrade or construction of passing sidings on which enabled NNEPRA to add an additional frequency to the Downeaster schedule and also reduced Portland-Boston travel time.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Patricia Quinn
Executive Director

Paul Niehoff Report on Collector Road Project Funding Transfers

PACTS Staff is currently working with the MaineDOT and our members to best balance currently funded collector road projects both within the existing parameters of PACTS policies and to potentially move outside the realm of current PACTS policies and procedures.

It has become very apparent a plethora of issues remain to fund projects which are imminent for the 2009 construction season. MaineDOT, particularly Region One, has been working very hard to get all existing MPO projects in the region bid by mid-February. Project scopes and funding situations are “all over the board”. We have received a number of requests to withdraw and/or substitute projects and project funding. We have also been able to transfer funds from a few completed projects as follows:

Pending Withdrawals

Jefferson Street, Biddeford (no longer eligible)	\$ 40,434
Garfield Road, Saco (Saco withdrawal request)	\$351,474
Pickett Street, S. Portland (short funded)	\$ 21,155
Desert Road, Freeport (only 0.04 mi. eligible)	\$ 92,205

Completed

Route 302, Westbrook	\$10,030
Auburn Street, Portland	\$57,668
Depot Road, Falmouth	\$25,000
Depot/Lunt Road, Falmouth	\$23,370

The total estimated amount (because financial figures can and do change daily) is \$621,336 consisting of Federal, State and local amounts.

PACTS current policy is to cover all under-funded amounts for 06/07 projects. At the present time for completed but not closed projects it appears there is a funding “need” of approximately \$53,674. For projects out to bid or remaining to be bid it appears we have an excess of approximately \$85,620 for a net surplus of around \$31,946. As the projects are developed estimated cost is known prior to bid, at the time of contract award, and construction when is complete with cost figures constantly changing. Only when a project is considered “closed” is the final cost realized. Therefore even though project costs are constantly changing, the good news is we currently have a positive balance for 06/07 projects.

For all other collector projects, most are under development and moving into the 2009 construction season so no clear cost information is available. The consensus is that bid prices will be lower than the 2008 construction season. If that holds true, our projects should be in great funding shape to be bid with construction completed close to current

funding. Aside from expected lower paving costs, funding levels should, for the most part, be within current levels because we transferred money to some projects at the height of high project costs, and we funded the 08/09 projects with a 25% contingency.

If projects other than 06/07 projects do come in under-funded then in accordance with our current policies the town is responsible for all additional costs with the option of “substituting” another PACTS project within the municipality to fund the project requiring funds. If a municipality does not have another project there are no other options. Especially under current fiscal constraints one of the concerns is projects may not move forward at all if additional local funds are not available. MaineDOT and PACTS staff feel strongly that viable projects must move forward to completion and relieve the back log of projects currently on the books.

Thus, with a balance of approximately \$621,000 in our holding PIN and staying within current policies the holding PIN funding cannot be used for most of these projects unless the projects are 06/07. *PACTS staff will bringing recommendations to the Executive Committee for the March meeting.*

Agenda Item 7: Planning/Administration Budget

Last month we discussed a staff proposal for developing our 2-year planning and administration budget and work plan, and we reviewed a budget worksheet.

Today staff recommends that the Executive Committee forward the following to the Policy Committee for endorsement on the 26th:

- The budget worksheet on the next page, and
- The budget and work plan development process on the following page.

Or shall we just tell the Policy Committee that this is the process and these are the issues that we are working on, and that we will share a final draft work plan and budget in April, and a final one for Policy Committee action in May?

The minor changes made to the budget development process on the next page reflect our January meeting discussion.

The budget worksheet on the following page is different from the one at our January meeting:

- The dues estimate is reduced, and the MaineDOT match amount is greater.
- It includes a detailed list of proposed activities.

There is a line item on the next page for a new “local project administration” function. This remains a work in progress that staff, MaineDOT and FHWA will focus on during February. Here are some points that lead us to this proposal:

- Federal/state road project delivery is a multi-year process with many standards and administrative requirements.
- MaineDOT continues to look to PACTS staff for more and more project administration. Paul Niehoff’s successes and workload in this area are less visible than most of the activities at PACTS. It has been a full-time job during the past few months.
- Paul did local project administration when he worked at MaineDOT, Auburn and Portland.
- MaineDOT has just laid off people for the first time ever. MaineDOT has also had a lot of retirement during recent years, and it will continue.
- Municipalities are laying off people.
- Portland’s Jim Carmody is retiring this week. Falmouth’s Skip Varney is leaving shortly.

Process for Developing the 2-Year PACTS Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Staff Roles

- Work with Committees as described below.
- Recommend staff work priorities and budget for the next two years.
- Solicited proposals from our members for new studies in January.
- Work with our members to refine scopes and budgets of proposals for new studies.
- Rank the members' study proposals and forward the rankings to the Planning Committee.
- Work with MaineDOT to maximize federal and state funding.
- Write and submit a UPWP (30 pages) to MaineDOT, FHWA and FTA.
- Sign a contract with MaineDOT based on the final UPWP.

Policy Committee

- Adopt this budget and work plan development process on February 26th?
- Adopt final budget and work plan on May 21st.

Executive Committee

- Work with staff on overall expense budget for PACTS-staff-and-COG-support.
- Work with staff and the Technical Committee on a staff proposal regarding new role in local project administration.

Transit Committee

- Work with PACTS, GPCOG and SMRPC staff to develop the transit planning component of the UPWP which is funded 80% with FTA funds.

Planning Committee

- Work with staff on the ranking of consultant studies proposed by our members to be funded with FHWA funds.
- Work with staff on an outline of an update of *Destination Tomorrow* next year.

Technical Committee

- Work with staff and the Executive Committee on a staff proposal regarding new role in local project administration.

Budget Worksheet for PACTS Planning and Administration for Next Two Years

FHWA-Funded Component Only

January 30, 2009

Draft Revenue Overview

Notes

FHWA "PL" Funds (80% share)	\$1,256,367	Same "new" funds as in current budget. We could make a pitch to MaineDOT for more. We will also "carry over" \$\$ for some studies.
MaineDOT match (13.5% share)	\$212,012	Per MaineDOT's Jan. 21st letter. Budget for existing biennium is \$126,000.
Local match for local and subregional efforts	\$41,092	20% of the four asterisk lines below.
GPCOG and SMRPC match	\$18,000	20% of three clustered lines below.
PACTS dues needed over two years	<u>\$60,988</u>	Budget for existing biennium is \$92,000.
Total	\$1,570,459	

Draft Expense Overview

PACTS staff plus COG support	\$1,050,000	Budget for existing biennium is \$970,000.
New project administration function?	\$100,000	A placeholder. Staff is looking into this.
New facilitation function?	\$0	Finance with funds from capital projects
Regional Collector Study Update	\$20,000	We paid consultant \$75,000 for 2009 Study. Need to collect data on truck travel patterns?
PACTS Model Applications	\$50,000	Same as budget for existing biennium. For studies, model calibration counts and Dest Tommorrow update.
PACTS Model Enhancements	\$20,000	A work in progress with MaineDOT and MTA. They will also contribute to enhancements of the model.
Transportation Finance Consultant	\$10,000	Contribute to review of state's urban compact policies.
Destination Tomorrow Update	\$25,000	We paid consultant \$50,000 for 2006 update work.
Maine Clean Communities	\$30,000	PACTS contribution is \$25,000 in current biennium.
GPCOG Planning Services	\$30,000	Budget for existing biennium is \$40,000.
SMRPC Planning Services	\$30,000	Budget for existing biennium is \$25,000.
Aerial photographs for region	* \$20,000	Contribute to a regional flight? \$200K for 15 muni's.
Enhanced Project Scoping	* \$25,000	We paid consultant \$20,000 for this in 2008.
Regional Traffic Signal Coordination	* \$25,000	Further consultant study after our current study?
Balance for other consultant efforts	* <u>\$135,459</u>	<i>We'll get \$300K to \$500K in requests?</i>
Expense total	\$1,570,459	

Agenda Item 8: Scarborough's Dunstan Corner Project

At our meeting staff will describe Scarborough's new study to look at major change to a project for which we just programmed \$263,000 for preliminary engineering and for which we committed significant construction funds from our 2012/2013 program. This study is a great idea, and the resulting capital improvements might need less PACTS contribution from our 2012/2013 program. Staff recommends that we stick with our \$263,000 commitment and our 2012/2013 commitment.

Scarborough sent this letter. We will have a map at the meeting.

January 15, 2009

Mr. John Duncan, Director
PACTS
68 Marginal Way,
Portland, Maine 04101

Re: Dunstan Corner

Dear John,

We'd like to thank you and Paul for meeting with us yesterday to discuss our new concept for improving Dunstan Corner/Payne Road and we appreciate your initial feedback and words of support. Knowing that you'd like to provide the Executive Committee with an overview, I've provided a description of our intentions and have also enclosed a map.

Overview of Alternative Concept for Dunstan Corner & Payne Road

Transportation improvements to Dunstan Corner have been contemplated for a decade or more, with the aim of improving the Route One / Broadturn / Pine Point intersection as well as realigning Payne Road to intersect Route One further to the east of Dunstan Corner. These improvements would increase the level of service at both intersections and enable the intersections to function more safely and efficiently. But under this approach, improvements to Payne Road proper remain challenging given the alignment of the roadway through the Marsh as well as the residential nature of the roadway to the southwest of the intersection with Haigis Parkway, Exit 42 and points east.

Given this, the Town has been exploring an alternative approach that would route thru / commuter travel on Route One and Haigis Parkway and design this southwestern portion of Payne Road to serve only local, neighborhood traffic and no longer act as an arterial street. This approach would still require the same improvements to the Route One / Broadturn / Pine Point intersection that have been historical planned, but would not involve a realigned and expanded Route One / Payne intersection. Instead, improvements are likely to be necessary at the Route One / Haigis Pkwy intersection. This approach also will likely involve disconnecting Payne Road at an appropriate location. In the big picture, regional traffic would use Route One and Haigis Parkway to Payne Road (east), which are built for such use and their corridors are zoned commercially, instead of Payne Road (west), which is narrow, exhibits frequent curves and is zoned rural and residential. Some of the other potential benefits of this alternative may be easier environmental permitting as well as lesser construction costs.

This alternative concept is only a concept though, and we plan to conduct further study and engage town leaders and area property owners over the coming months to determine its feasibility. Our intentions are to complete this study and outreach this spring and early summer so that we will be prepared in later summer to pursue engineering of either this new approach or the original, historical plans.

We will keep you abreast of our progress and we thank you for forwarding this concept to the Executive Committee.

Sincerely,



Daniel Bacon
Town Planner

cc: Thomas Hall, Town Manager
Bill Bray, Transportation Consultant

Agenda Item 9: PACTS Annual Earmark Proposal

Staff recommends that on February 26th the Policy Committee direct staff to submit an FY 2010 “annual earmark” request to our Congressional Delegation for \$1,000,000 in regional traffic signal capital improvement. The deadline is February 27th.

We have just begun a regional study which will recommend improvements that will exceed this amount in Portland, Scarborough and Westbrook.

In 2007 and 2008 we twice submitted these three proposals: \$500,000 for “key” signal upgrades in Portland, \$359,000 for three signal upgrades in South Portland and \$400,000 for an intersection upgrade in Old Orchard Beach. None of these were funded in this earmarking process, but the South Portland signals have been funded by MaineDOT with other funds.

We will describe this further at our meeting. Please note that this is an idea that we just came up with and we recognize that we have some work to do on it.

Agenda Item 10: Updates on Other Topics

1. The Turnpike Authority is going to kickoff in February a major **Gorham East-West Corridor Study**.
2. **The Governor has omitted state funding for the Downeaster** operation in his FY 2010 budget.
3. Six councils, three transit system boards and the Board of the Portland Regional Chamber have endorsed our **High Priority Project** three final candidates. Next steps are:

- Scarborough Council action tomorrow night.
- John will present to the Portland City Council on February 16th.
- Action by RTP Board, YCCAC Board and NNEPRA Board soon?
- Action by Councils in Biddeford, Gorham, Windham, Old Orchard Beach, Cape Elizabeth, Westbrook and Cumberland soon?
- *Policy Committee adoption of final list this spring for submission to our Congressional Delegation and MaineDOT.*

4. Recent and upcoming staff meetings:

- With Steve Hinchman of the Conservation Law Foundation regarding an LD entitled **The Climate Planning and Review Act**.
- Carl at the Legislature with Tex Haeuser regarding the **TOD TIF legislation**.
- Carl, Paul and MaineDOT staff hosted a workshop in the fast track planning of the reconstruction of the **Veterans Bridge** with a large stakeholders group.
- **Quarterly meeting in Augusta** with MaineDOT and the all the MPO's.
- With Turnpike, HNTB, MaineDOT and Kevin Hooper regarding **enhancements to the PACTS model**.
- Carl and Steve with FHWA, MaineDOT, EPA, DEP, ATRC and KACTS regarding quarterly meeting of Maine's Air Quality Conformity Group. They discussed their **recent scoring of CMAQ proposals**.
- John with Neal Allen and the Cumberland County Managers regarding TABOR II and the **excise tax cut referendum**.
- Paul with Gretl Varney regarding **Portland projects**.
- Paul and John with Steve Gunty and his staff in **Old Orchard Beach**.
- Paul and John with Tom Hall and his staff and Bill Bray regarding **Dunstan Corner**.
- John with **Judy Harris** regarding RTP METRO and other topics.
- Carl and John with Mike Bobinsky and others regarding our **regional traffic signals study**.

Agenda Item 11: Policy Committee Agenda for February 26th

1. Economic stimulus updates and possible supporting vote for the projects chosen by MaineDOT.
2. Endorse the UPWP budget worksheet and development process per Agenda Item 7 above.
3. Endorse submission of an FY 2010 annual earmark proposal.
4. Report from our TIP Process Committee.
5. Presentation by John Melrose on urban compact policy, or by Rob Elder on freight service expansion.

Last month we talked about bringing in a speaker at the February Policy Committee meeting. Please read below in order to advise if you think one of these speakers would be good.

Rob Elder Presentation on Freight Development in our Region

Rob Elder runs MaineDOT's Office of Freight and Business Services. Rob has 20+ years of experience at MaineDOT. He met recently with John to encourage PACTS to help MaineDOT, our municipalities and our freight industries enhance freight transportation capacity in our region. He also spoke at our recent quarterly MPO's meeting with MaineDOT staff.

Rob is a very good speaker and could offer the Policy Committee some thoughtful ideas on this regional transportation topic.

John Melrose Presentation on State's Urban Compact Policies

We discussed this briefly at our January meeting. Is the State's Urban Compact law and MaineDOT's URIP program as fair to urban compact areas as to rural areas? If not, then develop proposals to address it. John Melrose is talking with the staffs of the four MPO's on this. John could speak to the Policy Committee on this (as he has to BACTS and ATRC). Here is rough draft scope of work that BACTS might contribute to this spring.

This project will begin with an examination of key features of existing public policy, practices and procedures that define the distribution of responsibilities within the urban-MaineDOT relationship including:

1. Are there opportunities within urban areas to realize more cohesive inter modal and multi modal transportation delivery systems than currently exist?
2. Determine the relative equity of the current arrangement whereby urban compacts are responsible for the summer and winter maintenance of state and state aid

highways within the compact and are provided assistance to meet these responsibilities through URIP. Is the amount of URIP aid sufficient and is it equitably distributed. If URIP aid is insufficient, is the deficit created for compacts at least proportional to the deficit experienced with URIP assistance offered to non compact areas?

3. Municipalities receive state reimbursement through URIP for local road mileage outside of a compact area. No such reimbursement is provided for local roads within a compact area. What is the rationale behind this policy and is it defensible?
4. Municipalities also receive URIP reimbursement for minor collector roads. However, by definition there are no minor collector roads within urban compacts. Are urban compact communities disproportionately disadvantaged by this policy?
5. It has been said that the urban compact laws evolved during a time when Maine's largest communities had relatively greater ability to pay through their tax base than rural communities. Is this rationale still defensible or are some adjustments warranted to achieve equity based upon an ability to pay yardstick?
6. It has been asserted that MaineDOT has treated capital improvements for state and state aid highways within urban compacts as a lower priority than similar roads located outside urban compact areas. The reason for this assertion has been that the MaineDOT has the summer maintenance responsibility for roads outside the compact areas and the winter maintenance responsibility for the state highways outside of the compact areas and therefore gives preference to capital improvements on these roads. Do the facts support this assertion?
7. Historically, MaineDOT has required a local match for capital improvements within compact areas. The status of this policy today is unclear but, due to the scarcity of funds for capital improvements, some assert that urban communities, as a practical matter, must financially support transportation capital improvements if they are going to move forward at all. What is the current MaineDOT policy in regards to cost sharing within and outside of urban compact areas and is it sound?
8. Are the definitions used to determine the boundaries of urban compact areas justifiable today and might alternative definitions yield more efficient and effective outcomes? Might there be better models to use in delivering service when urban compact areas of more than one community are contiguous?
9. Are the current policies and practices pertaining to urban areas contributing to higher tax rates in urban compact communities? If so, does this circumstance create an obstacle for citizens that wish to locate in proximity to their jobs and critical services?
10. Given the jurisdictional responsibilities of urban compacts and the financial resources needed to meet these responsibilities, what, if any, additional means of financial assistance should be offered? Should there be any new local option revenue sources established or should there be changes in roles and responsibilities or both?
11. What exactly is the current legal and financial status of the MPO in Maine? Do the MPO's possess the tools they need to respond to the transportation needs of the areas they serve? Setting aside the federal considerations, are there other areas of Maine where urban areas should have the option to collaborate similar to the MPO model?