

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee

PACTS Policy Committee Meeting Notice

September 20, 2007
2:00 p.m. (NOT 1:30)

PACTS, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

- 1. Call to order**
- 2. Minutes of the August 16th Meeting**
- 3. Capital Funding Topics**
 - A. Act on a recommendation regarding our Collector Paving Set Aside
 - B. Act on a recommendation regarding the future programming of MaineDOT projects that are not part of the PACTS MPO Allocation
 - C. Report from the September 5th meeting of the High Priority Projects Committee
 - D. Report from the September 19th meeting of the TIP Process Committee
 - E. Report on the Legislature's LD 1790 Study Group
- 4. PACTS Process Retreat**

A preview of the purpose of and process for the October 19th retreat
- 5. The Portland Explorer Bus Service**

A presentation on the experiences of this pilot program which ends next month
- 6. Consent Agenda**
- 7. Adjourn**

Next Meeting: October 18th at 1:30

***The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland Urbanized Area
68 Marginal Way • Portland, Maine 04101
Telephone: (207) 774-9891 • Fax: (207) 774-7149 • www.pactsplan.org***

Attachments for September 20th Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes of August 16th Meeting

Members Present: Mike Bobinsky, Chair, Portland; Neal Allen, GPCOG; Jerre Bryant, Westbrook; John Bubier, Biddeford; Ed Clifford, Public Transportation; David Cole, Gorham; Kathi Earley, Portland; Jim Gailey, South Portland; Joe Gray, Portland; Jonathan LaBonte (for Conrad Welzel), MTA; Donna Larson (for Dale Olmstead), Freeport; Chris Mann (for Dale Doughty), MaineDOT; Mike McGovern, Cape Elizabeth; Rick Michaud, Saco; Ron Owens, Scarborough; Nathan Poore, Falmouth; Bill Shane, Cumberland; Jim Thomas, Old Orchard Beach; Scott Tilton, North Yarmouth; Nat Tupper, Yarmouth

Members Absent: Jeff Monroe, Portland; John Perry, FHWA; Anthony Plante, Windham; Paul Schumacher, SMRPC

Staff and Guests: Maddy Adams; GPCOG; Julia Dawson, PACTS; John Duncan, PACTS; Mike Laberge, MaineDOT; Steve Linnell, GPCOG; Tom Milligan, Biddeford; Paul Niehoff, PACTS; David Redlefsen, METRO; Dave Sherlock, MaineDOT; David Willauer, GPCOG

(1) **Call to Order.** Mike Bobinsky called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

(2) **Minutes of July 19th meeting.** *David Cole made a motion to approve the July 19, 2007 minutes, seconded by Kathi Earley. All were in favor.*

(3) **Capital Funding Topics**

3A. Adopt a PACTS TIP for FY 2008 to 2011. John Duncan provided some background. The list includes five projects (with a total cost of \$1,300,000) that address safety concerns in four PACTS municipalities.

A question was raised about non-MPO sponsored projects (starting on page 16). John explained that they are projects that are outside of the MPO allocation (pages 16-29). Mike McGovern pointed out that some of the projects are for PE for rather large projects and asked what the implications might be; could they put our projects in danger of not having enough money to do them? Mike noted that everything within the PACTS area is supposed to be included in the PACTS process but that we always see this list of projects late in the process. He cited an example of a highway reconstruction project in Saco (beginning at the OOB town line and extending 2.15 miles to Camp Ellis Avenue) at a cost of \$1,503,734. He felt that this is something that should be going through the PACTS process. Mike Bobinsky agreed that this topic is something we definitely need to discuss and we will try to get more information about this for the next meeting.

Rick Michaud moved to adopt the August 15th TIP Recommendations as presented. The motion was seconded by David Cole. The motion passed, with one opposition (Mike McGovern).

3B. Report from July 25th meeting of High Priority Projects Committee. John advised that they were looking at a list of 26 projects and have narrowed it down to nine. Consensus was reached that it would be the committee's goal to submit two or three regionally significant projects. The new list has not yet been distributed.

3C. Report on reconvening the TIP Process Committee. A few items have come up that show a need for reconvening a TIP Committee. We will be looking for volunteers from each of the four PACTS committees; Bill Shane will chair the committee. One of the things that we want to look at is how we define a collector paving project. The Technical Committee has a role to play in working on

that subject but the TIP process Committee would be a good place to discuss it. We also need to address the issue of costs going up and how that should be dealt with.

4. **PACTS Process Review.** The Policy Committee Retreat is being planned for either October 12 or 19 and it will be held at the Val Halla Banquet room. Steve Schuit will serve as the facilitator. Invitees will include Policy Committee members and the chairs of the Transit, Planning and Technical Committees. It was suggested that NNEPRA also be represented since their funding could impact all of us. Some of the topics to be addressed will include the structure of PACTS, communications, and ways to be more efficient. A handout was distributed regarding possible retreat topics. Mike B., Bill, John and Neal will be meeting again to discuss the topics of the retreat. Bill said that his personal frustration is whether or not this organizational structure is the best for all people, as PACTS has become much larger. Is there a better way to do it? Are we designing a structure that is efficient? Are we putting the funding in the right places? Should we be going in a new direction? It was noted that with the 2010 Census, PACTS might become a “TMA” and the structure will be different. It was requested that a summary sheet be prepared of what it will mean if PACTS becomes a TMA.

The Committee agreed that the retreat should stay away from the topic of funding because it would be too time consuming. Instead, the focus should be on the organizational items and how to better get information in a timely fashion. Tie agenda items 3 (PACTS Primer: Policies to Projects) and 4 Review current structure) together. Also, providing information on how other MPO’s are structured would be helpful. It was asked if the retreat could possibly be videotaped.

5. **Unified Planning Work Program.** A working group has been dealing with this topic. Bill reported that the Chairs of the PACTS Committees met with staff. If a project didn’t have regional importance, then it wasn’t considered. The Planning Committee met and reviewed the planning projects. Cuts in the amount of \$650,000 were made; everybody has to share in the pain. An updated list was distributed. The Planning Committee ranked the local studies. Mike Laberge described how MaineDOT will look for additional “obligation authority” to fund the local studies listed.

Mike McGovern pointed out that the Regional Land Use and Transportation line item had dropped from \$100,000 to \$20,000 and asked if that would be worth it for the product that we would get. Donna explained that the Planning Committee talked about the Regional Land Use and Transportation project and scaled it back and are looking at it more as a first step. They don’t want to eliminate it. There has been a change in scope. Mike McGovern said he would prefer to put that \$20,000 someplace where it could be put to better use. Mike pointed out that there is no money for the Stormwater User Fee Structure and that project is regional in nature. Ron noted that money was used for the Stormwater User fee project but they didn’t get very far. Jim Thomas noted that the last item on the list – OOB Downtown at \$60,000, is a dead project and can be pulled from the list. The Scarborough Running Hill Road project might be pulled from the list.

Mike McGovern made a motion to amend the list to delete the OOB Downtown project (\$60,000), seconded by Jim Thomas. The motion was approved.

A motion was made by Mike McGovern to remove \$20,000 from the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan to make it zero and that the funds (\$20,000) could be allocated to other projects as needed, at the discretion of the PACTS Director. Joe Gray seconded. All in favor, except John Bubier.

Nat Tupper moved approval of the amended list. The motion was seconded.

Bill Shane made a motion to reconsider the previous motion regarding \$20,000 being removed from the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan. The motion was seconded but was defeated.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the amended list with the OOB Downtown project removed and the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan changed from \$20,000 to zero. Nathan asked how the list was arrived at by the Planning Committee. Donna explained that the Planning Committee met and reviewed the projects, looking at scopes, etc. If projects had regional significance, they scored better. There were no established criteria. Nathan asked how many projects considered increasing the local funding. Donna responded that they talked about a 50/50 split but no one was sure if there was local money available to do that. Nathan observed that if you are not present at a PACTS meeting, you do not get funding in many cases. Bill said he did advocate for Falmouth's project at the Planning Committee meeting. David Cole pointed out that we should try to prioritize all of our projects; making decisions with little time is always a problem. Bill explained how the process worked.

Bill Shane made a motion to adopt the amended UPWP. The motion was seconded with all in favor.

6. **Consent Agenda.** Joe Gray moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.
7. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 3 – Capital Funding Topics

- A. Act on a recommendation regarding our Collector Paving Set Aside

Staff Resource: Paul Niehoff and Julia Dawson

Member Resource: Technical Committee

Draft Motion: To request that the Technical Committee (possibly in collaboration with the TIP Process Committee) use the following guidelines as they develop collector road funding policy recommendations this fall in preparation for setting priorities during 2008 for the programming of 2010/2011 capital funds:

- Our municipalities pay for simple overlays (to be defined this fall) on their collector roads with 100% local funds, and
- PACTS fund the more significant capital improvements on collectors.

Background

It has become apparent over the last year that the PACTS Collector Paving set-aside has become a source of funding (for communities who need) to rebuild collector roads that do not score well in the Rebuild set-aside. This has created an inequity between projects that are

now being funded through the set-aside. Additionally there are inconsistencies in the terminology – primarily the definition of maintenance - used by municipalities, the MaineDOT and PACTS. This misunderstanding has led to collector paving projects costing significantly more than originally estimated – cost increases that PACTS has agreed to cover. There has also been a misunderstanding of the state and federal requirements/standards that are applied when state and federal funds are used. At today's meeting staff will provide some project examples.

As we prepare to work on this during the fall, staff has drafted three options that will eliminate much, if not all, of the confusion and inequity that we currently experience. At today's meeting staff will also provide some estimates of the funding implications of these ideas.

Options:

1. Better define a Pavement Preservation Program (Built/Standard roads only) – For example, overlays and Level II resurfacing only. This could be 100% locally funded (as suggested above), or a PACTS program. Issues to consider are:
 - Would require agreed upon terminology.
 - Would prevent backlog roads being brought up to standard.
 - Would provide even equity.
 - Could potentially control cost; therefore, generate more projects.
 - Is this a wise use of federal funds?

2. Develop a Collector Highway Improvement Program (No preservation work) – For example, reconstruction, rehabilitation and reclamation. Issues to consider are:
 - Would require the municipalities to take on all preservation work.
 - Would free up fed funds to complete larger more costly projects.
 - Would allow the region to bring its collector roads up to standard.
 - Might negate the need for the Rebuild Set-aside.
 - Fewer projects would be delivered due to higher cost.

3. Develop a Hybrid Program (Built and unbuilt roads) – Preservation, and highway improvements. Issues to consider are:
 - Would provide some of the benefits from options one and two, but would also mean overall fewer projects would be complete than option one.
 - Again raises the question, should federal money be used to fund straight overlays.
 - A clear treatment eligibility list would need to be defined for each option.
 - Costly state and federal requirements would have to be met.

B. Act on a recommendation regarding the future programming of MaineDOT projects that are not part of the PACTS MPO Allocation

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Member Resource: Not applicable

Recommendations: To request that staff and the TIP Process Committee work with MaineDOT to agree on language to be added to our *TIP Policies and Procedures* document and to the *MPO Administrative Guide* (being drafted by the four MPO's and MaineDOT) regarding a schedule for when MaineDOT will share their pool of candidates for all FHWA and FTA projects under consideration for funding in the next biennium.

Background

At our August meeting, Mike McGovern suggested that MaineDOT should do more to collaborate with us in the programming of projects outside our MPO Allocation – such as federally funded bridge and interstate projects. He based his remarks on our programming authority and responsibility as an MPO.

We have discussed this subject in the past. The result has been that MaineDOT has shared their pools of candidate projects with us, and asked for our input. The intent of the recommendation above is to ask that this become a higher priority for MaineDOT's collaboration with us, and to ask that this also become a higher priority of PACTS staff.

C. Report from the September 5th meeting of the High Priority Projects Committee

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Member Resource: Rick Michaud (Chair of the Committee) and Dale Doughty

Recommendations: To accept the Committee's report

Background

The Committee met with two staff members from our Congressional Delegation and MaineDOT. Seventeen people attended the meeting. The members reviewed a staff ranking of the remaining nine candidate proposals. The members made some changes to the ranking, and asked staff to share the revised – and still preliminary – list with the Transit, Planning and Technical Committees during October. The members will review comments received at their October 31st meeting, and prepare a recommendation for consideration by the Policy Committee on November 15th.

The Committee is working toward a final list of 2 or 3 projects.

D. Report from the September 19th meeting of the TIP Process Committee

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Member Resource: Bill Shane, Chair of the TIP Process Committee

Recommendation: To accept the report from yesterday's meeting

Background

The report will include a schedule for submission of applications to PACTS staff for funding in the 2010/2011 biennium under our MPO Allocation.

The draft purpose statement for the TIP Process Committee is to work with PACTS staff and MaineDOT staff to develop a set of recommendations to further improve the programming and administration of PACTS "MPO Allocation" projects, and to address any other TIP-related subjects which the members deem relevant. The Committee will update the Policy Committee on a regular basis, and will submit a final report by December.

The Committee's members are:

1. Sara Behr, MaineDOT Bureau of Transportation Services
2. John Bubier, Biddeford City Manager (Policy Committee)
3. Bob Burns, Gorham Public Works Director (Technical Committee)
4. Kathi Earley, Portland Engineering Manager (Policy Committee)
5. Donna Larson, Freeport Town Planner (Planning Committee)
6. Dean Lessard (MaineDOT Region 1...invited)
7. Tom Milligan, Biddeford City Engineer (Policy Committee Alternate)
8. Nathan Poore, Falmouth Town Manager (Policy Committee)
9. Dave Redlefsen, METRO General Manager (Transit Committee)
10. Bill Shane, Cumberland Town Manager (Policy Committee)
11. Bob Skehan (MaineDOT Bureau of Planning)

E. Report on the Legislature's LD 1790 Study Group

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Member Resource: Dale Doughty and Conrad Welzel

Recommendation: To accept the report from John, Dale and/or Conrad who will describe the purpose of the "LD 1790 Study Group" recently created by the Appropriations and Transportation Committee.

Background

In June the Legislature passed LD 1790 (An Act to Secure Maine's Transportation Future) without funding to implement it (mostly). The new Study Group, composed of legislators, will report back to the Legislature in the next session.

On a related funding note, the Legislature continues to work on the possibility of reducing the use of Highway Funds to support the operations of the State Police.

Agenda Item 4 – PACTS Process Retreat

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Member Resource: Mike Bobinsky, Bill Shane and Neal Allen

Recommendation: To accept the report

Background

We are going to hold a half day retreat on October 19th at the Val Halla building in Cumberland. Steve Schuit, of the Greenshoe Group, will serve as facilitator. We currently expect 30 people to attend. **See below for the draft agenda.**

RETREAT GOAL - To identify and discuss organizational structure options and processes which best support PACTS effectiveness

AGENDA

Welcome & Opening (10 min)

- Present organizational rationale for today's focus (Why we are here today)
- Describe several current and pending challenges facing PACTS
- Introduce Steve Schuit, facilitator

Agenda Overview (20 min)

- Meeting Ground Rules
- Ice-Breaker (related to retreat goal above)

“Transportation Management Area”: Possible Future Scenario for PACTS (15 min)

- Q & A

Presentation/Discussion of Current PACTS Structure (20 min)

- Overview of current structure
- Discussion of “Pros/Cons”

Presentation of “EcoMaine Structural Model” (15 min.) - Q & A

Break (15 min)

Group Work Assignments (40 min)

- *“Consider the two models presented earlier. Identify other models or variations from your own extensive experience. In light of the challenges and change initiatives that PACTS must effectively tackle, which structural model(s) would be the best “Fit” for PACTS in fulfilling its mission?”*
- *Prepare a brief overview of the model which your group feels is the best fit; give it a working name, a brief description and a rationale for why the structure fits the challenges.”*

Report-Outs (30 min)

- Each group reports out. Questions for clarification after each presentation
- Discussion

Dot Voting and Break (20 min)/[Voting tabulation and ranking]

Large Group Discussion (30 min)

Next Steps (10 min)

Wrap & Thanks (10 min)

Agenda Item 5 – The Portland Explorer Bus Service

Staff Resource: David Willauer

Recommendations: To accept the report



Background



Portland Explorer 5-Year Report David Willauer, GPCOG Planning Director

Overview

The Portland Explorer is an express shuttle bus connecting Portland transportation terminals, select hotels, the Old Port and The Maine Mall. The service is administered by the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and operated by VIP Tour and Charter Bus Company.

Planning, Inter-Terminal Shuttle Report

Recommendations to implement a shuttle service connecting major transportation terminals appeared in the *MaineDOT Strategic Passenger Plan* (1995), and the *Inter-terminal Shuttle Report* (GPCOG, 2000). Such a service would make it possible for Car-Free vacation planning and packages. The GPCOG report estimated operations with both private and public operators.

Concept

The original concept for this service was to connect Portland's transportation terminals. GPCOG contacted hotels and other private partners for the matching funds. This way there would be no municipal operating funds. The service was extended to the Maine Mall at the request of hotel managers.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

GPCOG distributed an RFP in April 2000. METRO, Mermaid and VIP all submitted proposals for the service. Factors leading to the decision for the selection committee to choose VIP included the ability to operate on Sundays and Holidays, service directly to the Old Port and proposed operation costs.

Ridership: Over the five year period, ridership was as follows (with different fares):

Table 1
Portland Explorer Annual Boardings

Year	Boardings	Service	Fare
Year 1	8,000	12 months	\$3.00 one way trip, \$5.00 round trip
Year 2	9,000	9 months	Free
Year 3	3,000	5 months	\$2.00 one way trip
Year 4	3,000	5 months	\$2.00 one way trip
Year 5	3,000	4 months	\$2.00 one way trip
Total	26,000		

According to a survey conducted in 2004, the majority of explorer patrons were visitors, including day-trippers on the Downeaster and hotel visitors. Some people used the service to get to and from work. Others indicated they used the service for shopping trips.

Funding: Public/Private Partnerships In 2001, PACTS appropriated \$434,000 in CMAQ¹ funds for operations and \$250,000 in STP² funds to procure or lease vehicles.³ GPCOG raised 20% local match during the five year period from hotels and other private contributors. Table 2 below outlines private contributions each year of operation.

**Table 2
Private Contribution Funding Levels**

Private Partner	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	5 Years
Embassy Suites	\$9,996	\$4,500	\$2,750			\$17,246
Hilton Garden Inn	\$9,996	\$4,500	\$2,750			\$17,246
Eastland Park Hotel	\$9,996	\$4,500	\$2,750	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$24,746
DiMillos Restaurant	\$2,400	\$1,980	\$1,100	\$1,750	\$2,500	\$9,730
Sheraton Hotel			\$2,750	\$3,500		\$6,250
Marriott Sable Oaks			\$2,750	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$10,250
Fairfield Inn Marriott				\$3,500	\$4,000	\$7,500
Bay Ferries				\$3,500	\$4,000	\$7,500
The Maine Mall			\$2,750	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$10,250
Narrow Gauge RR					\$1,125	\$1,125
The Maine Mall			\$2,750	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$10,250
Downeaster*					\$18,900	\$18,900
Totals	\$32,388	\$15,480	\$20,350	\$26,250	\$46,525	\$140,993

* The Downeaster contributed during 2007 season (\$4,900) and for the whole last month of service (\$14,000).

Hours of Service

The Portland Explorer operated the first year with a 16 hour service day from 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. During the second winter, the service was scaled back to six hours from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. In May, 2004, the six hour service day was extended into summer with a free fare for all patrons. In subsequent years, the hours of service continued from 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. over the summer months from May to October.

Conclusion: The optimum service day for tourists, visitors and Downeaster patrons is afternoon service from 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. There is not enough visitor demand for year-round service.

Fare Collection

The fare was \$3.00 one way, and a \$7.00 day pass. After the first month, a \$5.00 round trip fare was established. During the second summer, passes were printed for hotel patrons to ride free. In subsequent years, the fare was \$2.00 for one way trips.

Conclusion: Explorer fares were perceived to be in competition with METRO fares, particularly for rail patrons at the PTC. The survey conducted in 2004 indicated visitors would pay \$2 to \$3 for service.

¹ CMAQ – [federal] Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Funds

² STP – [federal] Surface Transportation Program Funds

³ These are 100% figures and include the [private] local match

Routes

The service started in June 2002 with the most direct route between the Old Port and the Jetport along Congress Street, with stops at two hotels, and three transportation terminals. In October 2002, a third hotel and DiMillos Floating Restaurant joined to support the service. Trips to Vermont Transit and Scotia Prince were on demand only. Different routes were implemented around and through the Old Port using Franklin Arterial, State, High and Commercial Streets. At the end of the second year, the service was extended to serve The Maine Mall and a fourth hotel. In July 2004 the service was modified to include a fifth hotel. Other hotels signed on and off throughout the period. The I-295 option was added in 2006.

Conclusion: The Old Port was the most important destination, followed by the PTC. Major hotels fared well, smaller hotels fared poorly. The Jetport and Maine Mall did moderately well.

Advertising

During the second year, GPCOG developed a four part advertising plan with hotels and other partners to raise advertising revenues for the service. Briefly, this included (1) Larger route map with advertising, (2) advertising on bus exterior and (3) advertising on DVD video monitors in bus. In practice, only map advertising and bus exterior ads were developed. An agreement was reached to work with a video company to create the DVD advertising, but no businesses agreed to advertise.

Conclusion: Advertising was not successful raising significant additional revenues and was perceived as competition with other transit providers.

Buses

VIP Tour and Charter has provided vehicles to operate the Portland Explorer per the contract with GPCOG. These include a 21 passenger Ford van, 28 passenger Bluebird Bus, and a 28 passenger Orion bus. Efforts to procure a bus for this service were complicated by the type of fuel for the bus and the availability of buses depending on fuel source. In 2004, GPCOG opted to lease a vehicle from VIP for the service since VIP equipped vehicles with Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL).

Conclusion: The lease option worked well for the Portland Explorer service.

Transportation Information Display Systems (TIDS)

Alongside the Portland Explorer pilot project, GPCOG and the City of Portland developed the TIDS system which displays scheduled airline, bus, rail, and ferry arrivals and departures at 12 locations around the City. This brought visibility to all transportation options for travelers.

Conclusion: The TIDS system (and its parent website www.transportme.org) works moderately well to display traveler information. However, it only displays individual systems and does not help travelers use multiple systems. Delays are not always posted, leading to some confusion for travelers.

AVL Pilot Program

The Portland Explorer served as a demonstration project for automatic vehicle location (AVL). In 2004, VIP purchased AVL equipment for \$700 per vehicle and \$50/month for the cell service. GPCOG posted the map displaying the location of the Portland Explorer on 12 TIDS screens at Explorer stops throughout the city, including several hotels, the Maine Mall and DiMillos Floating Restaurant.

Conclusion: The Portland Explorer AVL Pilot Program demonstrated that AVL technology can work and reduce anxiety for patrons waiting for the bus. GPCOG also demonstrated that a web-based message board system can work to display schedule and emergency information to the public at key locations.

The Explorer and The Downeaster

Train patrons arriving in Portland from Boston benefited from the Explorer service over the past five years. NNEPRA also developed an on-line marketing video in July 2007 promoting the Explorer to help get visitors to the Old Port and enjoy Portland. For the last season, NNEPRA joined hotels in monthly contributions for the service. In September, 2007, NNEPRA decided to fund an additional month from Labor Day to Columbus Day and contracted directly with VIP to operate 6 hours/day between the PTC and the Old Port only. At the September 2007 PACTS Transit Committee meeting, NNEPRA asked the Committee to consider appropriating \$14,000 in FTA 5307 funds to cover 80% of the cost of this last month of service.

Agenda Item 6 – Consent Agenda

Portland and MaineDOT wish to change to scope of PIN 11587 from design to construction. The project is the \$15,000 Brighton Avenue streetscape work programmed in 2004. Endorsement of this in the Consent Agenda constitutes a Policy Committee “TIP amendment”.

The Planning Committee and staff are looking into the potential for increased use of impact fees in the region. Staff will brief the Policy Committee regularly on this effort. The Planning Committee will meet with MaineDOT’s Steve Landry and the traffic engineer, Tom Errico, on this in October. The investigation into impact fees is one component of the broader find-more-money priority of the Policy Committee. Staff will brief the Planning Committee on the broader funding issues and work-in-progress by the Legislature, MaineDOT and the Maine Better Transportation Association among others, but staff will continue to work primarily with Policy Committee leadership on the broader funding topics.

Last month the MaineDOT decided to not award the three PACTS paving projects in OOB and Saco for which a single very high bid was received. Last week the MaineDOT rebid the jobs at a lower specification in hopes of receiving more and less costly bids.

Staff and the Officers will meet soon with MaineDOT Commissioner Cole and his staff and representatives of Maine’s three other MPO’s.

MaineDOT will advise PACTS staff in October on their first quarterly look for obligation authority to finance the local studies per our August 16th proposal.

MaineDOT personnel changes: John Cannell is the new Manager of MaineDOT Region One. Dave Sherlock is the new Manager of MaineDOT’s bridge program. Jennifer Paul is the new Region One Traffic Engineer.

John Balicki is the new President of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.

GPCOG recently completed the USM Bus Study (report attached). The principal findings are:

1. The need for commuter express bus service from Gorham to Portland still exists as Portland continues to experience peak hour traffic congestion and parking pressures.
2. The model to expand the existing USM Bus contract with a companion Commuter Bus Service should be pursued.
3. GPCOG will continue to work with USM to secure federal funds for bus service.
4. The USM Bus Contract can serve as the local match for federal funds.
5. The USM would be a good candidate for an Electronic Payment System pilot program using “smart cards” for fare collection.

Recent Committee Meetings

The Planning Committee discussed the results of a survey of local experience with transportation impact fees. The next steps were described above.

The Transit Committee had a lengthy discussion of a report from a subcommittee developing a new formula for allocating the annual \$2,500,000 in FTA 5307 funds. The Transit Committee will recommend adoption of a formula by the Policy Committee later this fall. The formula will be used first for suballocating the FY 2008 FTA 5307 funds.

The Technical Committee had an excellent discussion with MaineDOT's Steve Harris regarding proposals to improve MaineDOT's local project administration process. MaineDOT is reviewing a set of proposals recently submitted by a subcommittee of the Technical Committee.

PACTS staff also briefed members on work underway to improve our Collector Paving Set Aside policies and procedures.

Attendance was very good (as usual), and the discussion was very productive.