



Technical Committee Meeting Notice

June 10, 2008
8:30 a.m.

PACTS, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Minutes of May 6th Meeting
4. Nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, Policy and Executive Committee(s) Positions
5. Traffic Signal Study Overview and Update
6. MPO/ Service Center Challenge Fund
7. Information and Other Business
8. Adjourn.

Next Meeting: July 8 at 8:30 a.m.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland Urbanized Area

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PACTS Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
May 6th, 2008 – 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Bill Bent, MTA; Mike Bolduc, Saco; Bob Burns, Gorham, Chair; Jim Carmody, Portland; Julia Dawson, SMRPC; Eric Dudley, Westbrook; Doug Fortier, Windham; Dan Jellis, Yarmouth; Mike Laberge, MaineDOT; Al Presgraves, Freeport; Gretel Varney, Portland; Jim Wendel, Scarborough; David Willauer, GPCOG.

Absent: Dana Anderson, So. Portland; Don Chaisson, No. Yarmouth; Mary Ann Conroy, Old Orchard Beach; Jennie Franceschi, Vice-chair, Biddeford; Bob Hough, MaineDOT; Bob Malley, Cape Elizabeth; Dale Mitchell, Policy Committee Appointee; Dave Redlefsen, Public Transit; Skip Varney, Falmouth.

Staff and Guests: Mimi Cerveny, MDOT; Pete Coughlin, MDOT; John Duncan, PACTS; Carl Eppich, PACTS; Sue McIntyre, GPCOG; Paul Niehoff, PACTS; Gina Pelletier, MDOT; Shawn Smith, MDOT.

1. **Call to Order.** Bob Burns, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.
2. **Adoption of minutes of April 8th, 2008 meeting**
Dan Jellis made a motion for approval of the April 8th, 2008 minutes, seconded by Eric Dudley. Vote taken. All were in favor. Minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **MaineDOT Project Development and Procedures Review**
Shawn Smith directed the group to a flow chart on the conference room wall and provided an overview of the MaineDOT's Project Development and Procedures Review process. He noted that the process was in direct relation to the FHWA presentation that was given at last month's meeting. Each component shown in red on the chart represents a milestone in the process. One item that has changed since the chart was drawn pertains to roundabouts. If a project is going from an existing intersection to a new roundabout, a third party independent review is required. This process involves three "milestones" such as the scoping level, the PDR stage, and then, a final step that includes advertisement of the final review. For the most part, the old program as well as the new program will be following this process. With regards to overlays there are components that will not need to be completed up front and the PDR would be scheduled about halfway through the project on the development side. The entire process can take up to two years.

More detail was described in a PowerPoint presentation. (A disk has been provided to Paul that includes the entire process.)

Key items noted in the presentation:

- Each red box is a milestone
- Once a milestone is achieved and approved, they normally do not go back to it and revisit it.
- The "kick-off" is 100% the project manager's responsibility whom sets up a template project schedule.
- Tasks such as the researching of zoning, property reports, mailings, etc. are then completed
- Utility coordinators are then included. If the project includes reconstruction, a questionnaire is sent out asking if there are any subsurface utilities.
- Each team member has a process to follow to get ready for the first initial team meeting.
- The project then goes to a town meeting where the project particulars are reviewed.
- The survey is started.
- The utility coordinator and right-of-way coordinate with the survey crew.
- The designer in the meantime is gathering data for the initial team meeting.
- All of this comes together at that team meeting.

Phase I – Initial Team Meeting

Phase I is where they apply for permits to have this project advertised. They also sample wells at this point, and review whether a change in drainage or blasting is involved. The initial team meeting includes the designer, detailers, environmental coordinators, geo-tech appraisers, mappers, etc. It also includes a survey, with a crew or coordinator. The agenda includes any existing right-of-way issues and ownership with team members. They go through preliminary data gathering, etc. This step also provides for discussion for rough scheduling. Items expected to be known at the initial team meeting include understanding who the proper contacts are, a scope and/or rough idea of projects and to make sure that everybody is on the same page.

After the initial team meeting, they begin looking at more detailed items with respect to right-of-ways, surveys, design, etc. This step also includes team interaction and field review as well as a review of utility responses and of the survey plan.

The next step is the preliminary traffic design. Many of these are intersection projects, roundabouts, adding traffic signals, etc. This is a very significant piece and the work is done with the consultation staff and engineers.

Phase II – Environmental evaluation

This phase consists of feedback on drainage, wetlands or other things found during a field review. Are there hazardous wastes or anything else that might be detrimental to the environment? The designer becomes more integrated with each team member as the process continues. With respect to geo-tech and drilling, borings are completed. This is followed by the preliminary alignment design and whether changes are required. They need to make sure that the designer has the right information.

Once the preliminary design is complete, the public meetings begin. Some lighter scope projects may require only one meeting. The preliminary hearings include a rough concept design. One meeting is conducted with the final plan. If public many concerns are expressed, there may be 3 or 4 hearings. However, not every project goes to public hearing. For instance, if the project is a simple overlay and doesn't require any property acquisition. If it is purely a maintenance or preservation activity, then it is also done through letters of communication or the MaineDOT may show up at a council meeting.

Once the alignment is complete an alignment meeting is held. Prior to accepting the alignment, a team meeting is held to go through the data that has been accumulated up-to-date. ***Among items discussed at this stage are:*** improvements, site distance, intersection alignments, drainage done in the right-or-way, etc. The last step is to sign-off on the alignment. It was noted that right-of-way issues should be addressed as soon as possible.

Once they have gone through the alignment stage, work is begun for the PDR. They try to get the draft PDR and whether it should be about 65% design. Some of the gross impacts may mean that a property may need to be purchased. The preliminary right-of-way mapping is done next. Most times a reconstruction may require a new right-of-way or widening. The R.O.W Manual indicates what the corridor width should be with regards to the physical structure of the utility. Changes will be forthcoming on this topic as well as clarification. They are trying to work through a process where MaineDOT responsibilities end and when the utility responsibilities step in. This step is followed by a preliminary plan development. Each change may affect delivery down the road and appraisals may not begin until public hearings have been held.

Phase III – Environmental Evaluation

- Historical features, wetlands, etc. are reviewed for any potential impacts.
- Results of borings are reviewed.
- Items are processed with the designer.

- Discussions are held on any potential gross impacts.
- Funding is discussed and what will be needed to move funding for the project.

The draft PDR distribution phase includes team reviews for comments, sign-offs from a formal public hearing, a full blown hearing with a lot of detail, then the PDR gets signed off and there is a final design sign-off.

Once the formal public hearings have been held, transcripts are reviewed as well as public comments. They need to make sure that 4f and 106 have been satisfied. Then you can start with the R.O.W. process. Shawn pointed out that a full 4f can take from 4 to 6 months, and, if there is any wetland mitigation, it could be up to a year. Part of the draft PDR is an updated construction budget. If they know that there is a budget issue, another team meeting will be called before they go back to the public. They could also have found a hazardous waste issue, for instance. If so, they could talk about options and if there is a budget concern, the scope could be reduced. This is when a decision is made on whether to move ahead or not with the project. The final public hearing is the last step. Sometimes, even if everything looks good at the public hearing, and they open the bid and the bid is over, they may still not build the project.

During the next steps everything else is talked about, for instance budgets, the approved design report, and, comments from the public hearing. Environmental issues are discussed as well, and right-of-way impacts are finalized. Any utility relocation strategies are known and then constructability is reviewed followed by the final design. The final design is defined as when all the details are put in and a geo-tech report is written. Items must be depicted properly on the plan. Same with traffic design and the highway design. This last step insures that coordination is taking place with the designers and plan impacts are known. Permits are submitted then final review is completed followed by an appraisal and a firm schedule.

Shawn explained that when permits have been received contractors are given a disk summarizing instructions. This makes it complete along with the contract package. The right-of-way needs to be certified as well as other items such as utilities. This includes a relocation plan for utilities that must be moved prior to completion of the project. Environmental approvals are completed as well as the PS & E. Once the package is complete, it goes to advertising through the website for three weeks. After three weeks they have 30 days to award the bid, if the bidding comes in within reason. Following this, a pre-construction meeting is held and then construction begins. A final team meeting is then held where the team “walks-thru” the project to make sure that everything is acceptable, as well as, what went well and what could be improved upon. At this point, invoicing still needs to be done and any right-of-way disputes must be resolved. Disputes go on until there is resolution. That begins following the completion of construction. Once all of the above are done, they can close the PIN. If there is any mitigation monitoring or well issues the PIN must stay open for 2 to 5 years depending on the issue. Shawn added that there are some changes coming with regards to roundabouts. For instance, on a full reconstruction job, the process could be between 18 month and 2 years.

John said there had been discussion about adding MPO steps into the flow chart. This could be discussed at future meetings.

Bob thanked Shawn for coming in and for his presentation on the MaineDOT project Development Process.

4. Federal Functional Classification Review

An overview of road classifications, the RRI program and the URIP program was provided by Pete Coughlan, Director of the Community Services Division at MaineDOT. *Among key highlights:*

- The federal function class ties into federal definitions of arterials, major collectors and minor collectors.
- Minor collectors do not exist in a federal urban area, they are considered major.
- The Federal definition of “urban” has to do with capital funding related to population.
- The State definition “urban” is about compact lines and is strictly a maintenance issue.
- Definition and criteria pertaining to boundary lines between federal and state.
- There are three boundaries to a town. The “town line” is the “city line”. The federal line’s purpose is for funding. The State line on the boundaries map is green and could be the same or different than federal line.
- The City line is the same as the urban boundary in some cases and is defined by the census.
- Federal urban boundaries change every 10 years according to census.
- Compact lines abide by Title 23 definition of “compacts” and must have a population of 7500 minimum.
- Urban compacts have to meet the U.S. definition, not the state definition.

Most urban areas in the State of Maine have not been reviewed for 15 to 25 years. Compact lines are not reviewed unless requested. Pete and Fred will be doing a compact review on a rotation of every five years to provide consistency and fairness. He noted that the section of road that becomes compact must be in good condition. This has been in the statutes for ten years. There have been several roads that have gone from local to state highway and towns have had to repair them to decent condition. Yet, there is nothing in the law to indicate that this needs to be done and this has created some confusion. This has since been clarified and the DOT now has to put that piece of new compact in new condition. That is to be worked out with the town and MaineDOT. This will also apply conversely. Good condition will apply in both situations. Further discussion followed on this topic as well as the PACTS funding area. When talking about federal boundaries, we are talking about the PACTS funding area. Erik Dudley noted that maps had been sent out with respect to the federal funding classification review and were very helpful but he would like to see an overlay of the state urban compact lines on that same map. Discussions continued on topics such as rural road initiatives (RRI) (outside federal urban areas) and URIP funding. Pete recommended that anyone wanting to see RRI projects and wishing to make any comments could send a letter to Marty Rooney. He assists with putting together the BTIP capital work plan every year.

With respect to URIP funding, the oversight committee reviews state programs, state offices, etc. When they reviewed the URIP funding program they stated in their report that it is working and achieving intended results. A copy of the OPEGA Report “Conclusions” was distributed among the group. Pete referenced the first paragraph on page 13 in the handout and noted that most of credit goes to Fred Hutchinson.

In the section entitled “Management Action” on page 15, the last sentence speaks of certification forms. MDOT will have Planners turn a “form” over indicating where the funds were spent and how many miles that included. The law states that when it comes to rural funds it must be spent on capital improvements. Urban URIP monies can be spent on virtually anything. The URIP website provides the definition. Towns are also encouraged to receive their URIP funds deposited electronically. It is much easier, quicker and less costly to the State.

Bob thanked Pete Coughlan for coming in. (If anyone has any questions, you may email Pete or Fred Hutchinson).

5. **Intersection Proposal Rankings**

A handout was distributed to the group describing the final intersection category rankings. John Duncan provided an overview of the spreadsheet. This is based on a set aside amount of \$500,000. The DOT has indicated that we will get an overall allocation of \$1 million more. If we do get that \$1 million that million goes for intersections set asides. It was noted that these rankings are also candidates for EPS studies. Discussion followed.

Dan Jellis made a motion to accept staff's recommendation on the Intersection Proposal Rankings with the caveat that it include the Cumberland Mills Triangle Project, seconded by ?Bob Burns. Vote taken. All were in favor. Motion carried.

6. Future Items:

- Carl Eppich will be providing an overview of the signal coordination findings and report recommendations at our June meeting.

- New nominations for Chair and Vice Chair will be voted on at our next meeting. The Chair may now choose to serve on the new Executive Committee.

7. Information and Other Business:

An overview of the informational items as described in the meeting packet was provided.

David Willauer attended a traffic coordination workshop in Baltimore, Maryland recently and distributed handouts to the group summarizing the event.

With respect to safety projects, if members have any intersections of concern, please sent to Paul Niehoff.

Pete Coughlan introduced Gina Pelletier from MaineDOT. She will be directly involved with all the classification issues or compact items. He also introduced Mimi Cerveny who will be the official representative for Region I. She has worked with MDOT for six years and has experience with project estimating. She is also comfortable in areas of design estimates and will be a good resource for Region I.

8. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Agenda Item 4. Technical Committee Nominations

The PACTS Technical Committee consisting of the current and past Chairs; Bob Burns and Bob Malley respectively, have nominated Jennie Franceschi for the position of Chair and Dan Jellis for Vice Chair. In addition, two PACTS bylaw revisions have resulted in a Technical Committee representative for both the Policy Committee and the newly formed Executive Committee. The positions are open to any Technical Committee member. Bob Burns has volunteered to represent the Technical committee on both the Policy Committee and the newly formed Executive Committee. If appointed, he will be a positive addition to those two committees given his knowledge and past dedication to the Tech Committee. **Please note:** no Super delegates were coerced, threatened or paid off during these deliberations.

Agenda Item 5. Traffic Signal Study Report and Update

In 2007 PACTS staff (Julia Dawson) conducted a preliminary survey to identify opportunities for new and or improved signal coordination. FHWA studies have indicated as much as a 20% decrease in travel time and improvements in safety when signalized intersections are correctly coordinated. A formal study is currently funded to expand on work already accomplished. Carl Eppich will give a long awaited overview of the current status and the study intent.

Agenda Item 6. MPO/ Service Center Challenge Fund

The MaineDOT has reserved 3 to 4 million dollars of a 50 million dollar TransCap revenue bond to be utilized in service centers or MPO's. We will discuss projects which have potential for funding given the selection criteria outlined in Commissioner Cole's memo (attached).

Four projects seemingly have good potential; Portland, Warren Avenue and Forest Avenue, Old Orchard Beach, roundabout and Biddeford Route one.

Agenda Item 7. – Information, Potential Future Agenda Items and Other Business

1. As many members know, many projects have recently bid and awarded. This process necessitated many TIP amendments and fund transfers. Per the current PACTS policy, two 08/09 projects had to be cut: North Road in Yarmouth and Westbrook Street in Portland.
2. The next MPO quarterly meeting will be held July 9th. Please let a staff member know if any issues and/or questions need to be answered...
3. MaineDOT is currently scoping safety projects. The unofficial deadline was (is) mid June. We have received no candidates for that program. If your community has an intersection of concern that may not be under consideration by MaineDOT, please let us know.
4. We should discuss whether or not to proceed with an initiative to review and advocate for revisions to state and federal design or construction standards with the intent of lowering project costs.



JOHN CLASH DA TAQOT
GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
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04333-0016

DAVID A. COLE
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Maine Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Maine Service Center Communities
FROM: MaineDOT Commissioner David A. Cole
RE: MPO/ Service Center Challenge Fund
DATE: May 22, 2008

The recently concluded legislative session provided \$50 million in TransCap revenue bonding for highway reconstruction under 2007 PL Chapter 682 (formerly LD 2324). Although MaineDOT already selected seven highway reconstruction projects, MaineDOT reserved \$3-\$4 million to allow MPO and Service Center Communities to submit additional eligible project candidates for consideration. **This memorandum provides instructions for submitting candidates and how candidates will be selected under a July 10, 2008 submission deadline.** The July 10, 2008 submission date is necessary because MaineDOT needs to provide the State of Maine Bond Bank a comprehensive list of selected projects to facilitate the sale of the TransCap revenue bond.

▪ **Project Selection Criteria**

MaineDOT will use the criteria described below to select project candidates:

- a. **Deferred or Backlogged project** - was a previously deferred or previously approved backlogged project but did not move forward for lack of funds
- b. **Accelerated delivery** - project is far enough along in design to be delivered for advertising before June 20, 2009 or is a viable candidate for "design/detail build".
- c. **Useful Life** - the project has a 20 year useful life includes full reconstruction (rather than preservation) or major intersection work involving improvements that increase capacity and safe operations.
- d. **Public Support** - the public has demonstrated support for the project construction
- e. **Economic Stimulus** - the project will create jobs and is located on a corridor of regional economic significance; provides or has potential to provide a regional return on investment; will or has the ability to leverage additional funding from non-state sources.

▪ **How to Apply/ Application Review Process**

If candidate projects exist in your municipality for which you are interested in applying, please complete the attached application. MaineDOT must receive your signed application by 5pm, July 10, 2008. Please send them to MaineDOT, 16 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333 Attn: Martin Rooney. MaineDOT will review all applications based on the above criteria and the degree to which municipalities are willing to share in the financial risk of higher than currently foreseen costs or project delays



MAINE DOT

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- **Statutory Framework**

Chapter 682 and the TransCap revenue bonding mechanism established by 2007 PL Chapter 470 (formerly LD 1790) require that these funds be used for "highway reconstruction projects" (see Ch 682, Sec. 4) that have "an anticipated useful life of at least 5 years greater than the bond term" (see 23 MRSA, sec. 1604(3)). From the amount of the annual revenue stream provided by Chapter 682, a bond term of 15 years is required to support the issuance of a \$50 million bond. This means the useful life of the projects must generally be 20 years, which in turns means that the project must be major reconstruction that includes improvement to the road sub-base - i.e. major dirt projects. Paving alone and other lighter improvements are not appropriate. Further, LD 2324, the legislative document that led to Chapter 682, reads, in part, "infrastructure work must commence immediately to accommodate the construction season", meaning deliverability is a primary consideration. In sum, the applicable laws make clear that this funding is meant for major highway reconstruction that can deliver to advertisement quickly.

MaineDOT looks forward to participating with you in this opportunity. Please contact Kat Fuller or Martin Rooney in MaineDOT's Bureau of Transportation Systems Planning at 624-3300 with any questions.

Sincerely,



David A. Cole
Commissioner