

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee

High Priority Projects Committee Meeting Notice

January 18, 2007
11:30 a.m. – Lunch will be provided.

PACTS, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approve notes from September 13th meeting
3. FY 2008 Congressional Annual Appropriations Earmarks
4. FY 2009 to 2014 Reauthorization High Priority Projects
5. Next Steps
6. Adjourn

The Policy Committee's Charges to this Committee

In July the Policy Committee directed staff and the 2009 High Priority Projects Committee to report to the Policy Committee on a monthly basis and do the following by December 2006:

1. Develop a project selection process
2. Develop a 2009 Reauthorization High Priority Projects list.
3. Develop a promotion plan.

In November the Policy Committee added a second charge: to recommend an FY 2008 annual appropriations earmark proposal(s) for PACTS to submit to our Congressional Delegation in February 2007.

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland Urbanized Area

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Notes from September 13, 2006 Meeting

The following people attended: Dan Jellis, Dave Cole, Mike McGovern, Mike Bobinsky, Tom Milligan (for John Bubier), Donna Larson, Tom Meyers, Larry Mead, David Willauer, Eric Ortman, Julia Dawson and John Duncan

The members decided that the Committee does not need a Chair.

John suggested that the aggressive Committee schedule outlined in the meeting packet be dropped and that we focus on the charge from the Policy Committee rather than try to address also the needs of MaineDOT's "strategic corridor investment priorities" effort. David W. added some explanation about the MaineDOT's process. After several questions and comments, the group agreed to stick to their specific charge.

There was no discussion of the staff's "worksheet" in the meeting packet during the course of the meeting.

John briefed the group on what we learned earlier this year regarding the High Priority Projects process:

- Congressman Michaud, a member of a key committee in Congress, will be Maine's key person in seeking High Priority funding in the 2009 reauthorization. At our annual luncheon he told us that Southern Maine's hopes for more High Priority money in 2009 than in 2004 rest on an increase in the total 2009 reauthorization amount for the country.
- MaineDOT's Gary Williams suggests that a short list of High Priority proposals would be better than a long list. Marc Ouellette, Congressman Allen's Chief of Staff, suggests rather that we focus on developing "good" projects.
- Federal transportation policies in the 2009 reauthorization will likely be quite different from the policies adopted in 2004.
- We are starting our work with a lot of time to spare. Serious attention by the Congressional Delegation to our proposals will begin in early 2009.

The members discussed the items above and the draft list of guidelines in the meeting packet.

- Dave C. said that our Delegation members want to support proposals for which proponents are passionate. He also encouraged us to develop flexible lists of guidelines and proposals. He encouraged the development of a short list of top priorities, with a supplemental list that the Delegation could work with.
- Mike M. suggested that PACTS needs to work to develop "standing" as a new participant in the complex process for securing High Priority funds. He also encouraged use of the Eight Guiding Policies of *Destination Tomorrow*.
- The members discussed the merits of using a minimum project cost threshold as a guideline.
- While several members agreed with the comments above, there was no formal consensus reached.

- The participants generally liked the draft guidelines in the meeting packet, and offered the following additional guidelines for consideration:
 - Projects related to the environment (such as alternative fuels).
 - Projects that support economic growth.
 - Projects that benefit multiple towns.
 - Projects financed in partnerships with, for example, the Turnpike and the private sector.
 - Projects that enhance intermunicipal collaboration (such as a multi-municipal public works garage).

The members agreed on the following nine-month work plan:

- Develop a list of guidelines for selecting proposals for the list.
- Draft a list of proposals and share it with the PACTS membership.
- Review comments received and then submit a revised list of proposals to the Policy Committee. (The group discussed the merits of seeking endorsement for the regional list from all PACTS municipalities and transit systems. No consensus was reached.)
- Develop a promotion plan.

The group asked staff to solicit proposals for the list from our members as follows:

- Send a letter to city/town/transit system managers describing the Committee's charge.
- Ask for proposals – as many as they wish to submit – for which they feel there is strong public support.
- Request that proposals be submitted by November 1st.
- Do not include any of the guidelines discussed today, nor any cost thresholds.
- Allow towns to propose projects in other towns.
- Attach the Eight Guiding Policies of *Destination Tomorrow*.
- Attach a form so that the submissions all include the same basic information.

John asked if the members would consider the submissions as the universe of proposals eligible for the final list. The consensus was no – that other proposals would be considered too.

The Committee will meet in November (no date set) to review the results of the solicitation and a second draft set of guidelines.

Agenda Item 3: FY 2008 Congressional Annual Appropriations Earmarks

Here is some background.

1. Rick Michaud, Mike Bobinsky and John Duncan talked last week with Senator Snowe's staff in a videoconference. We did the same with Senator Collins staff in October. In both discussions the Senators' staff spoke of the important role of MaineDOT in the earmarking process. Terry McNaughton (Snowe) said that he wants to see projects that can be done easily and completely.
2. John has also spoken recently with MaineDOT's Gary Williams, and with Congressman Allen's transportation staffer in D.C.
3. It appears that Congress will not fund any FY 2007 transportation earmarks.
4. Proposals for FY 2008 earmarks are due at the end of February. The application forms have not been developed yet, because Congress is developing new requirements designed to make the earmark process more "transparent".
5. MaineDOT staff met with Delegation staff last week in D.C. John will talk with Gary Williams before we meet.

Staff proposes the following decision-making process:

1. Review staff's proposed selection criteria and five project ideas.
2. Decide today on project selection criteria and, if necessary, the process for soliciting more proposals from our members.
3. We brief the Policy Committee at this afternoon's meeting.
4. Staff to meet with MaineDOT to review our work done today.
5. Recommend a project(s) for action by the Policy Committee on February 15th.

Staff proposes the following selection criteria for the 2008 earmarks.

1. All concepts on the next page are well under the PACTS staff estimate of \$1,000,000 or \$2,000,000 available to Maine.
2. Regional in scope and/or benefit
3. Public appeal (environmental, high-tech, transit, bike/ped)
4. Level of MaineDOT support
5. Extent of technical analysis support
6. Should we have a second list of larger projects just in case an opportunity arises in Congress later this year?

Using the criteria above, staff also offers the following five projects as candidates. The first one is a staff proposal based on a recent meeting with GO MAINE staff. The second one is also a staff idea. The final three are proposals submitted to us by our members in November.

1. Purchase five vans for the GO MAINE vanpool program. \$175,000

Comment: GO MAINE, the statewide commuter service administered by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, currently manages a commuter vanpool fleet consisting of nine vehicles and several spares. Seven vanpool routes operate between Greater Portland and the Augusta area, while two vanpools operate between Lewiston-Auburn and the Augusta area. Each vanpool carries one driver and eleven riders for a total of 108 in the GO MAINE program. MaineDOT is expanding the GO MAINE vanpool fleet with the purchase of 10 new vehicles in early 2007. Of these, 3 will replace older vehicles while the remaining 7 will provide service on newly created routes and increasing existing service. Data from a public vanpool interest survey (2006) indicates strong demand from service to and from Greater Portland, to and from Lewiston-Auburn, to and from Augusta, to and from Bangor, and from York County north. *The new vehicles will help meet a portion of this growing demand for economical, efficient and comfortable commuter vanpool service, but will leave considerable unmet demand.* Five additional vehicles would, therefore, be a significant addition to the fleet. Capital for the purchase of five vehicles would provide the needed “jump-start”, once a vehicle is purchased, vanpool passenger fares typically pay to operate, maintain and replace the vehicle. Please contact Carey Kish at GO MAINE for further information: 207.774.9891 or ckish@gpcog.org.

2. Upgrade, coordinate and interconnect xx traffic signals in Portland and adjacent municipalities. \$500,000

Comment: Similar to Reauthorization High Priority proposal to PACTS from Portland in November.

3. Coordinate the six traffic signals on Broadway in South Portland between Waterman and Cottage. \$500,000

Comment: Primary purpose is to address this significant High Crash Location corridor. Similar to the Reauthorization High Priority proposal to PACTS from South Portland in November. MaineDOT might fund with Safety Program funds.

4. Reconfigure the Old Orchard Beach intersection of Ocean Park Road and Smithwheel Road, and rebuild a merge lane from I-195. \$400,000

Comment: Purposes include diversion of trucks from neighborhoods, improved access to industrial park, and slowing the traffic coming off interstate into densely populated OOB. Also a Reauthorization High Priority proposal to PACTS from Old Orchard Beach in November.

5. Buy and install an electronic message board for the I-295 corridor. \$250,000

Comment: A Reauthorization High Priority proposal to PACTS from Portland in November. A recommendation in MaineDOT’s I-295 corridor study.

Agenda Item 4: FY 2009 to 2014 Reauthorization High Priority Projects

In September we agreed on the following draft work plan:

1. We develop a list of guidelines for selecting proposals for the list.
2. We draft a list of proposals and share it with our membership.
3. We review comments received, and then submit a revised list of proposals to the Policy Committee.
4. We develop a promotion plan.
5. The Policy Committee adopts a projects list and a promotion plan.
6. We promote the projects list to all the PACTS area councils and transit system boards in order to seek their endorsements.
7. We promote the projects list to the public at large, and we work with MaineDOT and our Congressional Delegation in 2008 and 2009 as Congress develops the 2009 federal transportation reauthorization act.

We also added some more criteria (6 to 10 below) to an initial list of criteria (1 to 5 below) for selecting projects. We only just got started on this item. We need to work on this today.

1. Projects with a minimum cost of \$5 million. (During the meeting we discussed producing a list of big and little projects in the event that Congress might fund both kinds. The list on the next page uses a \$10 million threshold between big and little projects.)
2. Projects that would get financed only with special funding.
3. Regionally significant projects – particularly key intersections (a high priority of *Destination Tomorrow*).
4. Projects not potentially funded by Turnpike Authority.
5. Projects for which a need/feasibility study has been done.
6. Projects related to the environment (such as alternative fuels).
7. Projects that support economic growth.
8. Projects that benefit multiple towns.
9. Projects financed in partnerships with, for example, the Turnpike and the private sector.
10. Projects that enhance intermunicipal collaboration (such as a multi-municipal public works garage).

Note that MaineDOT is developing a long range transportation plan built around “strategic corridors”. We might need to incorporate our project proposals into MaineDOT’s corridors format.

The concepts listed on the next page offer us a good place to start in applying a set of selection criteria – after we adopt the criteria.

Please note that all of the \$10+ million concepts are still in some phase of study (except for the Turnpike interchange concept which is still just in the pre-feasibility-study phase). While we have been advised that we need to submit a short list of proposals to our Delegation, it may be advisable during the next six months to work with a long list because so many of our \$10+ million concepts are in in some phase of study.

A PACTS Staff Working List of 2009 High Priority Project Candidates

No order of priority is meant or implied in these lists.

All concepts below were submitted in November by a PACTS municipality or the Transit Committee, except those with a #.

Please remember that in 2005 Southern Maine got \$50 million in SAFETEA "earmarks" (including match). At our 2006 annual meeting Congressman Michaud told us that the best way for Southern Maine to get more in 2009 is to work to increase the overall federal authorization for transportation.

Projects \$10 million and over (\$340 million total)

\$30,000,000	Widen I-295 in Portland #
\$50,000,000	Other I-295 capital improvements per recent MaineDOT Study #
\$35,000,000	Build Phase II of the Gorham Bypass
\$20,000,000	Build new Turnpike Interchange at Route 1, Cascade Road & Scarborough town line
\$10,000,000	Purchase replacement transit busses and paratransit vehicles
\$50,000,000	Rebuild two large bridges #
\$80,000,000	Capital improvements for extension of passenger rail to Brunswick #
\$50,000,000	Rebuild two large bridges #
\$16,000,000	Build Eastern Trail connections #

Projects Under \$10 million (\$55 million total)

Biddeford:	South St to Rte 111, Connector Roadway - \$2-3 M
	Exit 32, South and South St Interchanges - \$8-9 M
CBITD:	Replace Casco Bay Island Ferryboat - \$5,500,000
Freeport:	Exit 20, Bridge Replacement - \$9 M
	North Main St, Reconstruction - \$1,263,000
Go Maine:	Purchase five vanpool vans - \$175,000 * #
OOB:	Ocean Park & Smithwheel Rd - \$400,000? *
Portland:	Franklin Street Arterial Improvements - \$3.24 M
	Feasibility Study, Regional Traffic Control - \$70,000
	Electronic Message Board, I-295 - \$250,000 *
Region:	Traffic signal coordination - \$500,000? * #
Saco:	Route 1 widening, I-95 overpass to Cascade Rd - ?
	Industrial Park Rd @ North St - \$1.5 M
Scarborough:	Dunstan Corner and Payne Rd/Rte 1 - \$3 M
South Portland:	Philbrook Rd/Rte 703 improvements - \$7.5 M
	I-295 Exit 4 SB On-ramp - \$3.5 M
	I-295 Sound Barrier - \$1.7 M
	Broadway Traffic Signal Coordination - \$700,000? *
Westbrook:	Bill Clark Dr, Reconstruction - \$6 M?

* On staff list of '08 earmark ideas.