

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

PACTS TIP Process Committee Meeting Notice

April 10, 2009
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Lunch will be provided.

GPCOG, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Minutes of March 13th meeting
4. Collector Funding Policy
5. Regional emphasis in project selection
6. Format of draft TIP Policies Summary Document
7. Next steps – see committee work plan
8. Adjourn.

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Minutes of March 13th Meeting

In Attendance: John Bubier, Chair, Biddeford; Mike Bobinsky, Portland; Jim Gailey, South Portland; Bob Hough, MaineDOT; Dan Jellis, Yarmouth; Molly Just, Mike Laberge, MaineDOT; Tom Meyers, Public Transportation; Tom Milligan, Biddeford; Brooks More, Windham; Greg Tansley, Biddeford.

Staff: John Duncan, Carl Eppich, Sue McIntyre, Paul Niehoff

1. **Call to Order:** John Bubier, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.
2. **Public Comment:** There were no public comments expressed.
3. **Minutes of February 13, 2009 meeting:**
Tom Milligan made a motion for approval of the February 13, 2009 minutes, seconded by Jim Gailey. Vote taken. All were in favor. Minutes were unanimously accepted.
4. **Review of maps and initial cost analysis prepared for analysis of “local” an developing regional” collector Roads**

John and Paul directed the group to two maps on the wall which summarized staff’s findings. As described in the meeting packet, there are 23 miles of collector roads that carry 3,000 or less cars per day. At roughly \$1 million per mile, municipalities would pick up \$23 million in costs over the next 10 years. Those roads carrying 4,000 or less cars per day would result in 42 miles of collector roads and at roughly \$1 million per mile, municipalities would pick up \$42 million in costs over the next 10 years. They did not look at specifics such as how many are simple overlays and/or how many roads include reconstruction. Another item would be that some of those roads that are on the list and “drop off”, so to speak, are in the program or have been in the program for the past four years or so. Some have been done while others would be done. Any roads below the 3,000 or 4,000 count would not be funded. A copy of the two lists posted on the wall alongside the maps will be emailed to the group. These lists generated a long discussion. *Among the questions and comments:*

- From a funding aspect, these roads are part of the PACTS program and the assumption was that monies would be there at some point. Should we be considering bringing these roads up to standard before in effect “turning them over” to the towns? However, if they are up to standard, there is the issue of long term maintenance. Would URIP funds be applicable for those roads “dropped-off” the list?
- The 3,000 count number and 4,000 count number were arbitrary numbers. We don’t have to stick to those numbers. It was thought that these numbers would be a good place to start discussions.
- A suggestion was made to give the towns their respective lists of roads and for them to review it in conjunction with the Gorrill-Palmer Report to assess the current condition of each of these roads.
- Maybe the AADT category or process has to be expanded with other criteria to balance it out with things such as, is it a bike route; is it an evacuation route; is it located between two major roads; etc.
- These roads are generally unbuilt and may not meet safety standards. It may cost more to bring them up to standard. If we leave it the way it is, the towns could do what they wanted with those roads and probably at a lesser cost.

- Do we really need to pick a “threshold” traffic count number at all to categorize these roads? “Just for the record”, Greg Tansley said he was opposed to the use of a particular traffic count number for categorization.
- It comes down to monies. If we have to cut 10% or 20% we should do it in a rational process and with additional criteria other than dropping roads that are less than a particular traffic count number.
- What criteria would any of the roads that would be “dropped” off the list have to meet to be “re-listed” for funding in the future? Could we have an additional area of funding where we could create a funding mechanism between MaineDOT and local communities to bring a road up to standard until it moves up the list?
- Caution was expressed for those towns who might decide to improve a road with town funds. They should not lose sight of the State standards in improving that road. Because if that road becomes eligible for funding for a simple overlay, the towns run the risk of being saddled with State and Federal standards.
- Is there a quantitative standard vs. a numerical standard that we could use?
- AADT is one aspect but we should look at other factors and have PACTS staff set standards.
- We need to determine the character of a road and how people use it. Are they using it to get to work, etc.?
- We could take the maps to our respective town officials and ask them to take an honest look to see if there is anything that could be “dropped” off the map, reminding them at the same time, that they have the option to do what they want with the road. We could ask under what circumstances would you drop a road project?
- Another opinion supported sending a list to towns and ask what are the factors that make these roads important to your community? That would provide the factors that towns are looking at and then we could weave those into the prioritization process that goes to the Technical Committee.

Subsequently it was decided to send out the maps and corresponding list of roads to the Technical Committee member of each town with a request that the town officials, along with both the Planning Committee representative as well as the Technical Committee representative all provide input. Results of the feedback can be discussed at our next meeting and a recommendation can be forwarded to the Policy Committee.

5. Discuss the idea of a PACTS committee charged with developing TIP project proposals rather than our municipalities doing so.

Mike L. offered an idea that was discussed in 2003 to establish a Committee that would be charged with identifying potential projects/proposals that promote the development of more regionally significant projects.

A discussion began about the potential benefits and the challenges and/or downsides of this concept. There might be fewer proposals to evaluate and fewer locally-oriented proposals. The downside is that we might be perceived as giving too much authority to that group or this would be seen as less participation from our members. Good questions to ask would be: What would the model look like if we did that? Would the Technical and Planning Committees “float” the projects up to that particular Committee? Would that Committee sort the projects out to see which ones should be moved up? One opinion envisioned that it could be similar to an RFP process. The towns would submit their projects to a group and then a ranking process would take place. Those selected would get presented to the group. The group would then select 10 top candidates from that group and then filter them out to a fewer number. It was noted that this is pretty much the same process we currently follow, but that perhaps if we had a

subgroup there would be opportunity for more vetting. Other ideas included the following: (1) Towns could submit a bulleted list and then the group could decide which ones are more important. (2) This group could take a list and look at it more regionally. Discussion continued.

Reference was made to conversation during the recent PACTS re-organization process where the topic of sub-regions had been discussed. It was also noted that the “item description” promotes the more regionally significant projects but there is no standard established yet on what a “regionally significant” project is. Which model would work the best to promote?

One option would be to use *Destination Tomorrow* and pick out what is regionally important. However, some felt that in regards to regional scoring, we are already doing that today.

There was a consensus to keep our existing process but staff could encourage the collaboration between towns on certain projects. Staff could also encourage towns to evaluate their priorities and the projects that build on smaller ones. It was agreed that we have a mechanism in place already to address some points for regionally significant projects which starts with the application stage. The more people that are in play, the higher the scoring value. We could require that projects show how the connection is made to the adjacent town and/or within a 5-mile stretch of road, how other towns are connected. This could be included in the scoring process.

6. Review of the factors and weights in our scoring formulas

Factors and weights are very important in our scoring formulas and in our selection process. As a TIP Process Committee this process should be reviewed to some extent.

In regards to the first two items listed in the “Ranking of Proposals” box on page 6 of the meeting packet, Molly said that given the current focus on regionalism as well as the attempt to focus on the land use/transportation relationship, it seems that our current prioritization in the ranking of proposals goes toward the PACTS Roadway Formula. This would mean that a road where traffic volume has increased and that might be due to sprawl might not be in an established corridor. It may not be necessarily the way we want to move forward in regards to regionalization. Greg said he shared Molly’s concern. Molly felt that land use and transportation could be part of the roadway formula in that projects that did acknowledge land use and transportation could be “rewarded”. She explained that she was thinking in terms of funding regional projects and funding a project that thinks of the land use and transportation relationship.

Mike L. said it was his understanding that *Destination Tomorrow* provides the guiding principles in what we do. It has eight guiding principles and they somehow could tie into the scoring of projects. Maybe “x” amount of points could be given for instance, with as many as eight points if you meet those criteria. PACTS could adopt something similar to the STPA where so many extra points are given for following certain criteria that take into consideration the land use and transportation relationship and/or a regional outlook.

Carl felt that in regards to intersections and rebuilt arterials it would be nice to move to set thresholds. You could look at the *Destination Tomorrow’s* guiding principles; you would have to meet certain things to get into the game, so to speak, and then you could go to the roadway formula and see if it would make sense and was deemed to be regionally significant, etc. Greg wondered if the Planning Committee could do a pre-screening. John B. pointed out that you would still want to see some type of a threshold

even occur before projects entered this “box”. The projects could get “triaged” according to discussions earlier under agenda item 5 and then drop down into the factoring and weights of the scoring formula. But, at some point we would still have to add some regional criteria. Jim Gailey wondered if we should then be discussing the 20% and maybe changing that percentage. Carl noted that another option might be that the Planning Committee makes some recommendation to the Technical Committee and then the Technical Committee goes through the process. More discussion followed. Another option would be to have the TIP Process Committee become the “filtering” group. It would provide a more collaborative effort and is comprised of a diverse group. There was support among the group for this idea. If it’s truly a regional organization and guided by regional transportation policy issues, then that is what we should be looking at from a regional planning standpoint. That way you can infuse the buses, trains, the bikes and make the project truly regional. It doesn’t mean that you outcast a project that is pure road because we need to provide for that as well. Of course, there are not enough monies, so how do we balance this out? It was noted that if one of the goals is to foster other transportation means, then it would reduce the impact on highways, so in the long run, it would reduce the work needed on roads. The discussion continued about a matrix of priorities and the maintenance of our existing system. The question was asked as to “what does maintaining our current system” mean? In one instance it could mean paving, etc., and be purely technical, such as “fixing the road”, per se. On the other hand, it could also mean the use of transit, for instance. It may make sense to support commuter buses to Freeport from Biddeford, for example, in order to maintain the current system by reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

It was decided to begin our next meeting with this agenda item. In the meantime, the group will be working on a “homework assignment” using the four boxes on page 6 of the meeting packet to either insert other ideas and/or “mix and match” the boxes, per se, in terms of setting up the system. “Assignments” can be forwarded to John D. and staff within the next ten days.

7. **Briefing on review to be done of state’s urban compact policy with John Melrose.** – Tabled until next meeting.
8. **Review of format of draft TIP Policies Summary Document.** – Tabled until next meeting.
9. **Next steps**
The next TIP Process Committee meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2009.
10. **Adjourn**
The meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Agenda Item 4: Collector Funding Policy

At our February meeting there was a consensus to reduce the number of miles of collector roads eligible for PACTS funding based on the fact that we do not have even close to enough PACTS money to maintain and upgrade these 205 miles – and that we should use PACTS money on the most regionally significant collectors.

In March we decided to ask our members for feedback on this concept. Specifically, we asked our Technical Committee members to consult with their colleagues internally and:

- To indicate to us the roads in their towns which they feel are most appropriate to become ineligible and those that they feel should remain eligible for PACTS Collector funding if we were to institute such a policy.
- To offer other ways to address this unmet funding needs situation

We got the following responses:

- Old Orchard Beach – Suggested two collector roads become ineligible.
- Falmouth – Suggested three collector roads could become ineligible (all of which are or soon will be newly treated).
- Freeport – Does not like this concept.
- Cape Elizabeth – Does not like this concept.

On March 26th the Policy Committee had a thoughtful discussion of the inadequacy of funding for collector roads with several visiting Technical Committee members. Here are some highlights:

- Tom Gorrill showed that if PACTS continues to spend only \$2.5 million annually to preserve collector miles in good shape then our regional unmet need will grow in the next ten years by \$60 million more than if we double our budget to \$5 million annually. Note that this is for the 85 miles in “good” shape rather than for the entire 205 miles.
- Suggestion that PACTS give “points” to municipalities (to be applied toward funding of PACTS projects) which invest a lot of local funds in their collector and arterial roads. *Staff likes the concept but wonders how we could keep track of the expenditure of local funds.*
- Suggestion that we float bonds regionally for the financing of highway projects and thereby achieve regional cost efficiencies. *John Melrose will look at this in his upcoming work with MPO’s, MaineDOT and others.*
- Staff noted that four local newspapers have written about the TIP Process Committee’s “reduce collector road mileage under PACTS” per our news release. This is great for advising the public about our unmet needs.
- Policy Committee asked staff to write a more detailed executive summary of our *Regional Collector Roads Assessment* report.

Staff Recommendation

After the Policy Committee's discussion, and talking with many Technical Committee members, staff suggests the following:

1. Stick with our 205 miles of collectors eligible for PACTS funding rather than reducing the miles eligible for PACTS funding.

We now feel that the gain to be had from reducing our eligible collectors' mileage will not be worth the pain of working with reluctant members to implement this. We might also get more attention from our state legislators when we talk about 205 miles of collectors rather than a smaller number.

We feel that our members understand the stark realities of limited PACTS funding well enough that they all have realistic expectations of collector road funding via PACTS. We suggest that reducing the eligible mileage would not add value to our process.

2. Establish a policy whereby our municipalities use 100% local funds to preserve the collectors in good shape and PACTS finances the rehabilitation and reconstruction of collectors with federal/state/local funds.

Staff feels that this is a cost effective approach. Our municipalities can do the "simply" overlays with local funds more cost effectively than with federal and state funds.

Staff and our committees and MaineDOT have discussed the following other two *alternatives* for years:

- Use PACTS funds to preserve the good roads. We did this last fall with \$5 million for the 2010/2011 biennium. One result of this approach is that our towns end up taking care of the ones that are in poor shape.
 - Use PACTS funds to preserve the good roads and to rehabilitate/rebuild the bad roads. In late 2007 the Policy Committee adopted our "three tiers" policy to do this, but acted in late 2008 per item 1.
3. Add more weights to AADT, transit routes and truck routes in our Collector Road Formula. Note that the addition of more weight to AADT will have the effect of funding the more regionally important roads per our discussion last month.

Agenda Item 5: Regional Emphasis in Project Selection

At our March meeting we began an enthusiastic discussion of the merits of enhancing the regional planning and programming at PACTS. Highlights included:

- Give more weight to the “Destination Tomorrow Formula” and less weight to the “PACTS Roadway Formula” in the scoring of our Intersection, Rebuild Road and Widen Road Set Asides.
- Give points to TIP proposals from multiple towns.
- Have future TIP Process Committees filter project proposals for regional merit.
- See the meeting minutes above for more details. (Also for your reference, our existing scoring procedures for picking projects are included on page 11.)

John Bubier ended the discussion with the request that members offer further thoughts via email before today’s meeting. Here are the responses:

1. Brooks More

In thinking about this, I am not convinced that the current process is not regionally oriented. If anything, I would say that either Staff or any one of the Committees should be able to add regionally significant projects to the list of proposals submitted by the municipalities.

2. Tom Meyers

Tom sent in the Transit Committee’s project selection criteria with the comment that the criteria are regionally oriented.

3. Bob Hough

- Identify major routes that connect communities on the heaviest travel days (work week).
- Determine if there are means to reduce AADT on these routes
 - Park & ride
 - Car pooling
 - Express Buses
 - Encourage employers to offer incentives for using alternate transportation.
 - Encourage travel on different routes that are in better repair
 - Traffic signal timing on alternative route
 - Limit parking/crosswalks on alternative route
 - Reduce bus fares on alternative route
 - HOV lane for multiple occupants
 - Discourage travel on routes that are in poor repair

- Lower speed limit
- Traffic calming
- Program work on identified routes that connect across municipal lines (don't create islands, e.g. Brook Rd.)
- Concentrate on pavement preservation
- Projects have to be large enough to garner economies of scale
- Find alternative revenue sources to incrementally bring roads up to standard rather than completely meeting standards on a small section

4. Mike Laberge

First of all, consider the eight federal planning factors, which are designed to encourage MPOs and their partners to develop strategies for managing, preserving and financing the area's transportation system in order to advance the region's long-term goals:

- 1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
- 2) Increase the safety of the system for users of all modes of transportation.
- 3) Increase the security of the system for users of all modes of transportation.
- 4) Improve accessibility and mobility for people and freight.
- 5) (a) Protect and enhance the environment; (b) promote energy conservation; (c) improve the quality of life; and (d) promote consistency between transportation projects, and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- 6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, between modes, for people and freight.
- 7) Promote the efficient operation and management of the system.
- 8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Second, regarding the urban collector roads in the PACTS region, the following questions may help to determine if a road has a regional purpose:

- Does the road handle commercial truck traffic? *Roads with truck traffic have a commercial function that should be considered, since one would assume that such traffic would have an economic benefit.*
- Does the road serve primarily local traffic, or through traffic either coming from other towns or heading to other towns? *If the traffic is primarily local, then the road really has no regional purpose.*
- Is the road residential in character? *I would argue that residential roads serve primarily a local function.*
- Does the road connect communities? *Such roads have a regional purpose.*

- Does the road serve as an emergency evacuation route? *If a road is expected to handle lots of traffic in an emergency – or, like Cousins Road in Yarmouth, is the only way to get to and from a place – it also should be considered.*
- Has the road been built to modern design standards for safety and mobility? If no, does the community want it to be upgraded or left as it is? *Roads that communities do not want built to modern standards should be removed from the PACTS-eligible list and maintained by the communities.*

Staff Suggestions

Based on our March meeting discussion, on the suggestions received from members and on staff analysis we recommend the following:

1. Change to 50/50 from 80/20 the weights given to scores from our Roadway Formula and Destination Tomorrow formulas, respectively.
2. Incorporate more of the principles laid out by Bob and Mike into our selection criteria and processes. The principles can be summarized as travel demand management and transportation system management.
3. Create a PACTS Public Private Partnership program with the \$500,000 plus in our existing “holding PIN”. These funds are from projects recently withdrawn and from funds leftover from completed projects.

We would make these funds available to help pay for off-site transportation projects (bike/ped, road or transit) for regionally significant land development projects.

We offer this idea in the context of our current nationwide transportation funding crisis and the widespread agreement that we try to get more private development money into transportation projects. The regional benefit of success in this endeavor is that new (private) money gets added to the transportation funding picture.

For your reference, here are our scoring procedures for picking projects. They were in last month's meeting packet. We used the slides at last year's TIP orientation sessions.

Ranking of Proposals

- **Collector Paving** *(Technical Committee)*
- **PACTS Roadway Formula** *(Technical)*
- **Destination Tomorrow Factors** *(Planning Committee)*
- **Bike/Ped ranking criteria** *(Planning)*
- **STP Transit Capital ranking criteria** *(Transit Committee)*

Ranking for Bike/Ped Proposals

- **Users (type and number)**
- **Regional benefit**
- **Cost effectiveness**
- **Growth area**
- **Network connections**
- **Safety**
- **Maintain/improve**
- **Expansion of system**
- **Land use connection**
- **Livability/redevelopment**

Ranking for Intersection and Rebuild Arterial Proposals

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><u>Roadway Formula (80%)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic volume • Future traffic volume • Pavement condition • Road geometrics • Safety • Volume-to-capacity ratio • Multi-modal • Cost effectiveness | <p><u>Destination Tomorrow (20%)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of system • Intersection • Strategic expansion • Avoid build new road • Land-use-transportation • Access management • Passenger transportation • Neighborhood compatible • Economic redevelopment |
|---|--|

STP Transit Projects Ranking

- **Regional benefit**
- **Maintain/improve existing service**
- **Consistency with Destination Tomorrow**
- **Air pollution and energy conservation**
- **Land use and transportation link**
- **Multiple transit providers**
- **Multiple modes effect**

The Collector Road project ranking factors developed last summer were based on:

- **Pavement surface (per the PCR data) – 35% weight**
- **Road base structure (per the falling weight deflectometer data) – 35% weight**
- **Traffic volume – 20% weight**
- **Truck use – 5% weight**
- **Bus use – 5% weight**

Agenda Item 6: Format of Draft TIP Policies Document

Last fall you asked that the summary report of your work – our TIP Policies and Procedures Document for the 2012/2013 Biennium – be shorter and more user friendly than those of the past. *Last month's meeting packet included a 15-page draft 2010/2011 summary report based on the 40-page version that we sent you on 12/24/08. If you have your meeting packet in a notebook, then you still have it. We have also emailed it again to you for today's meeting.*

Does this format and size work for you as we develop the 2012/2013 version this year? Will this document be useful for you as we do our TIP Process Committee work?

Here are the changes.

1. We reordered, consolidated and shortened many subsections.
2. We made these subsection changes to the MaineDOT section:
 - Dropped Project Development Priority
 - Dropped Enhanced Project Scoping
 - Dropped Earmarks
 - Dropped Information Sharing
3. We made these subsection changes to the rest of the document:
 - Dropped Section III: Schedule
 - Dropped Section IX: PACTS Scoring Procedures
 - Dropped the Glossary
 - Added NHS Projects Section
 - Added CMAQ Projects Scoring
 - Added Three Party Agreement
 - Added PACTS Six Year Plan
 - Added Unspent Funds

Note that this and prior versions of this summary document do not describe our work to develop Annual Appropriation earmark proposals and High Priority Project proposals for consideration by Congress.

The purpose of this draft is to suggest how the report could be organized and how much shorter it could be. You will see that there are:

- *many placeholder notes,*
- *still many 2010/2011 references, and*
- *several places where we are anticipating changes to be made this year.*

Agenda Item 7: Next Steps

If we make good progress today on Collector Set Aside funding policy then a key item to address at our May 8th meeting can be the overall policy on all of our set asides (item 5 below).

The May 8th draft agenda below is ambitious to say the least.

TIP Process Committee Work Plan

<u>Topic</u>	<u>12/11</u>	<u>1/9</u>	<u>2/13</u>	<u>3/13</u>	<u>4/10</u>	<u>5/8</u>	<u>6/12</u>
1 Committee's purpose and goals	Done						
2 Brief the Policy Committee	Done		Done	Done		May	
3 PACTS contribution cap policy	Done						
4 PACTS match ratio policy	Done						
5 Set Asides Policy		X	X		X	X	
6 Collector funding policy			X	X	X		
7 Regional emphasis in project selection				X	X		
8 Format of Policies/Procedures Document					X		
9 Languishing projects policy						X	
10 Substitution and Withdrawal Policies						X	
11 MaineDOT's new 3-Party Agreement						X	X
12 MaineDOT's Six Year Plan (quick)						X	
13 FTA 5307 funds priority setting (quick)						X	
14 Enhanced project scoping improvements						X	
15 Staff revisions to project applications processes						X	
16 Produce Policies and Procedures Document							X

Other finished items

Flexible MaineDOT and FHWA design standards -- Staff feels that MaineDOT is making good progress in this. Therefore, the TIP Process Committee is done.

Staff recommended months ago that PACTS assume a new role in the "local project administration" process. Our members and MaineDOT have not embraced this, so staff has dropped it.