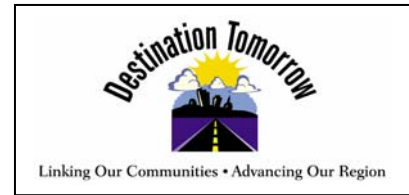


PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee



Planning Committee Meeting Notice

August 4th, 2011 9:00 a.m.

PACTS, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Public Comment
3. Approve Planning Committee Minutes of May 5, 2011
4. Transit Focused Region Draft report
5. Corridor planning and Placemaking: Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Design
 - a. Fall 2011 Committee Field Trips to Corridors
6. PACTS Destination Tomorrow video viewing
7. Information and Other Business
8. Next meetings and other DATES:

Next <u>Planning Committee Meeting</u>	September 1 at 9:00am
Next Joint Transit-Planning Meeting	September 1 at 10:00am
9. Adjourn

Agenda Item 3. Approve Planning Committee Minutes of May 5th, 2011

**PACTS Planning Committee Meeting
May 5th, 2011
9:00 A.M.**

**PACTS Planning Committee Meeting
May 5, 2011
9:00 A.M.**

Present: Dan Bacon (Scarborough), Steve Linnell (GPCOG), Sara Devlin (MTA), Kara Wilbur-Benson (Damariscotta), Vanessa Farr (Yarmouth), Theo Holtwijk (Falmouth), Tom Poirier (Gorham), Bob Kahn (Trainriders Northeast), Alex Jaegerman (Portland), Peter Morelli (Saco), Donna Larson (Freeport), Brooks More (Windham)

Staff/guests: Art Handman (consultant), Beth Della Valle (consultant), Ian McKinnon (PACTS), Steph Carver (GPCOG), Carl Eppich (PACTS), Lynne Powers (GPCOG), John Duncan (PACTS), Paul Niehoff (PACTS), Jim Tassej (Bicycle Coalition of Maine)

1. Call to order

Dan Bacon called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M.

2. Public comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approve Planning Committee minutes of February 3, 2011

Alex Jaegerman made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2011 meeting of the Planning Committee. Tom Poirier seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. 2012-2013 Budgeted Studies and Revised PACTS Studies Time Clock Policy

The top five studies have been approved for a total of \$230,000. Those projects are Gorham East-West planning, the Portland study of the Brighton/Deering intersection, a South Portland bicycle/pedestrian study, a Biddeford/Saco wayfinding study, and the Libbytown study. Carl Eppich said that the budget is still being developed, but those are the projects that look like they will be funded for the next biennium. The \$15,000 for the South Portland bike/ped study will probably be folded into today's last agenda item, the PACTS line item for bike/ped. As the biennium continues, sometimes some money opens up and the current practice is to look at the projects on this list.

Carl pointed out that the fiscal year ends on July 1. The old policy was that if a study wasn't moving along within a year, it was kicked to the curb. The new policy (via the Policy Committee) cuts that timing own to six months. This is to avoid future recurrences of the current situation where slow-starting projects lost state funding if they did not finish by the end of the biennium. PACTS wants to get studies moving right after they are approved. For projects that are approved in July, RFP's need to be out by October. The definition of "start" is the signing of a contract, and that will need to happen by December 30. The match will now be required in the first of the two years. If the project hasn't started by December, PACTS will move down to the next project on the list. This is practice, not policy, and consideration will be given to any projects that are submitted in the fall as well.

5. Form-Based Codes work in Maine: Damariscotta and Yarmouth

Vanessa Farr and Kara Wilbur-Benson gave a talk on form-based codes. Vanessa pointed out that comprehensive plans usually look for compact, vibrant, mixed-use villages with an active street life and lively pedestrian-oriented streets with residences above stores and places to gather. Typically, however, towns have been getting suburban sprawl, asphalt, and branding. Vanessa felt that form-based codes might be the regulatory tool to get to something different, by shifting the emphasis from use to form. Form-based means a mix of uses and having an interconnected network of streets and blocks. Form-based codes are much more clear about what is wanted, rather than focusing on what not to do.

The hold way of doing it involved setbacks, but form-based codes build to lines and create meaningful open space rather than remnants. They have street standards that require on-street and shared parking rather than giant asphalt lots, and sets up the community to be transit-ready.

Form-based codes are specific about coming up with a range of street types and street standards that can become complete streets and can be calibrated to the local community. They tend to be more concise, more organized, written for non-planners to read, and involve more predictability for the public, land owners, and developers.

Vanessa said that Yarmouth recently completed its comprehensive plan, and building in the village can currently only happen by contract zone agreement. Residents want Route 1 to look and feel more like their village, which is a huge task. Kara said that this has been an ongoing process in Damariscotta for five years. A size cap was voted in, in order to keep out big box stores, and the idea emerged for the town to do proactive planning and to figure out what is important to residents. They want to live and work locally, and have access to local businesses and good transportation. There was a community design charrette that was attended by 400 people. It featured workshops over maps, meetings with stakeholder groups to identify additional issues, and the design team drawing plans to show what the vision would look like, with a final plan presented on the fifth day.

The Damariscotta code is a calibrated Smart Code to replace the C2 zoning district. Transect zones were used to create nodes along what was formerly a sprawl corridor. The existing code remains in place with an effort underway to knit the old and the new together. Tom asked about the expedited review time, and Beth Della Valle replied that it hasn't been adopted yet. If it is adopted, and if a development proposal meets the standards and doesn't require a waiver or a conditional permit, then it can be reviewed and approved by the town planner. If it is a large or controversial proposal, the planner has the option of bumping it up to a consolidated review committee made up of department representatives. If all goes well, it could conceivably be a two-week process.

Carl said that two active PACTS projects contain a stipulation of looking into form-based code, so it seemed timely to have a presentation. Dan felt that this should be a continued discussion.

6. Implementation of PACTS Bike and Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Education

The PACTS bicycle and pedestrian plan was finalized on December 2009. The unified planning work program contains \$25,000 for implementation and \$15,000 is being added so that PACTS can be more involved and can hire consultants for specific plans within communities. That should relieve some of the burden on communities for the local match. Paul said that PACTS is under contract with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine for \$5000,

until the end of June, to help implement the regional bicycle/pedestrian plan. In the next few months, meetings will be scheduled with the same group of towns that Bruce Hyman met with when he updated the 1995 plan to the 2009 one. The intent is to send out emails to those towns and each individual town could invite one or two interested citizens to sit down and talk about the plan, with topics like what communities are currently doing and how PACTS – with the assistance of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine – can help towns with infrastructure, development, guidelines, and standards. The idea is to develop regional guidelines and standards, with education and encouragement as a huge component.

Jim Tasse said that the Bicycle Coalition of Maine can really provide assistance with outreach. They have a state-wide database of individuals who are interested in the sorts of things that the bicycle/pedestrian plan covers, and can help with community education and greater coverage in meeting situations. If anyone is interested in their program that is intended to give people a mini course in advocacy, planning, and education about design standards, they can contact PACTS or contact Jim directly. The Coalition does a considerable amount of outreach in the region, and is available to work with municipalities.

7. Information and Other Business

There are several updates on items in the agenda, including several town-led planning studies and the transit-focused region effort. Carl said that the latter went very well. Over 100 participants developed conceptual plans for the region and for the core. The consultant is currently working to boil those down into a unified vision.

8. Next meetings and other dates

The next Planning Committee will be held jointly with the Transit Committee on June 2 at 9:00 A.M. The PACTS annual meeting will be held at the University of Southern Maine on June 23 from 11:30 to 1:30 P.M.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Agenda Item 4. Transit Focused Region Draft Report

Attached is the Draft of the “Moving Greater Portland Towards a Transit Focused Region” report.

Provided below for convenience, are the recommendations for the CORE, which consists of Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook, and the REGION, which includes the entire PACTS area, plus considerations to Buxton, Brunswick, Hollis, Gray, and Standish.

The questions for the Committee, is what do you think of this Vision, and how do we begin to make it, or a version of it, reality?

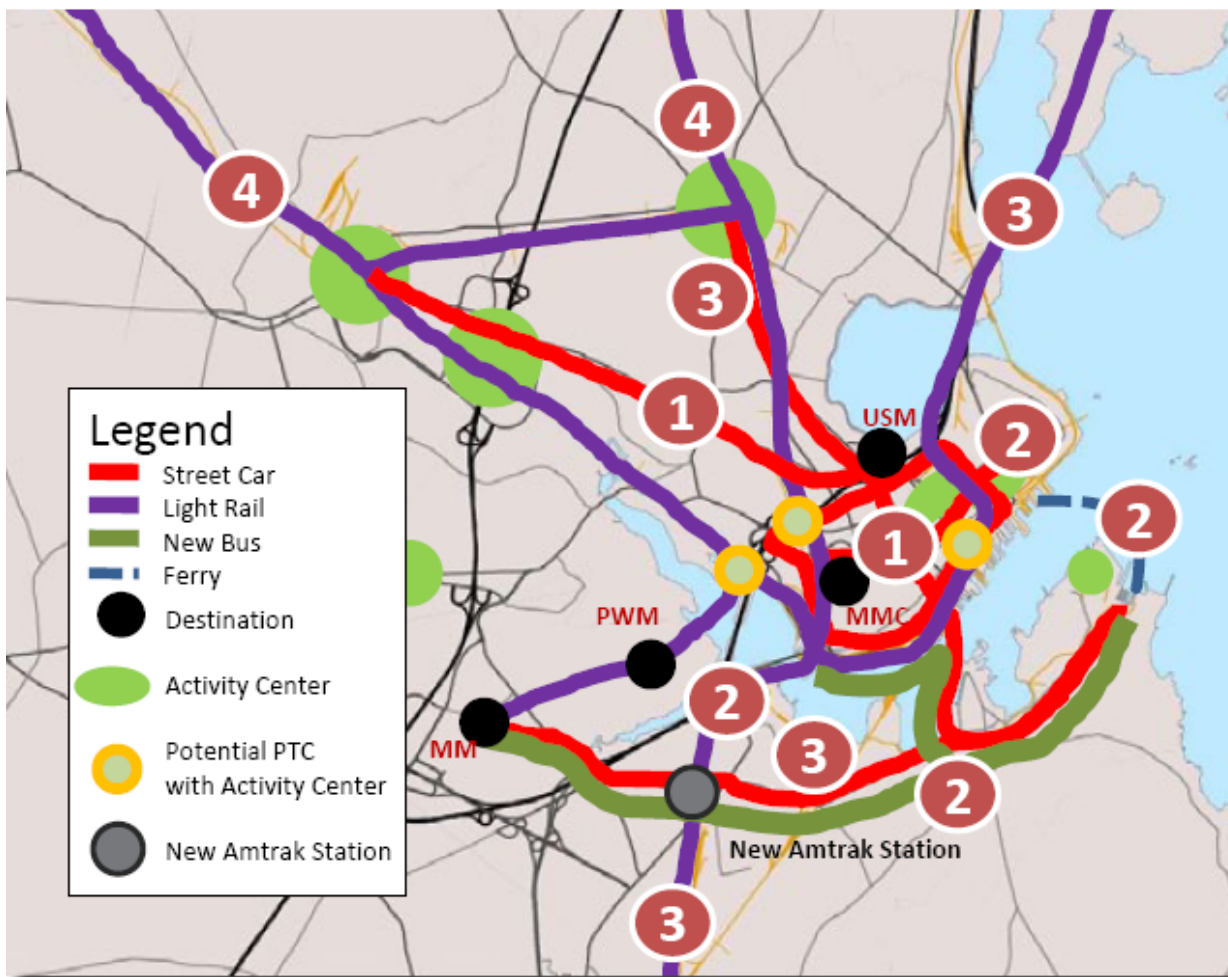
*** See attached **Report AND economic development analysis.**

PACTS

MOVING GREATER PORTLAND TOWARDS A TRANSIT-FOCUSED REGION

THE FUTURE OF TRANSIT IN THE URBAN CORE?

This inset map represents a unified map combining three different “transit futures” for the urban core of Greater Portland as developed during the workshops. Again, this is only one possible future transit scenario for the core of the region. The details associated with using any of the suggested alignments must be developed over time as projects are evaluated and prioritized.



1. Short-Term

While regional BRT solutions expand the reach of transit, key core area connections are needed where existing service is challenged in today's traffic:

- Improved bus or streetcar service along the Congress Street transit spine in Portland
- Improved bus or streetcar service across the Portland peninsula from waterfront to the USM area
- Improved bus or streetcar service to Westbrook along Brighton Avenue

2. Short to Medium Term

Several higher-capacity transit enhancements in the core area will greatly expand transit-oriented development potential where greater density is achievable in the shorter term:

- Initiating circumferential peninsula streetcar, connecting all radial services
- Adding regular water transit service to the South Portland waterfront
- Improving existing bus service in South Portland and into Portland
- Initiating light rail service between the northern tip of the Portland peninsula and a new Amtrak station in South Portland, interlined with the circumferential streetcar on the waterfront

3. Medium to Long Term

As core services mature, expansion of high capacity fixed-guideway transit paves the way for broader fixed-guideway expansions into the surrounding region in the long-term:

- Extension of light rail towards Falmouth (to replace/supplement BRT)
- Extension of light rail south towards Saco (to replace/supplement BRT)
- Extension of streetcar service to Morrill's Corner
- Extension of streetcar service into and through South Portland

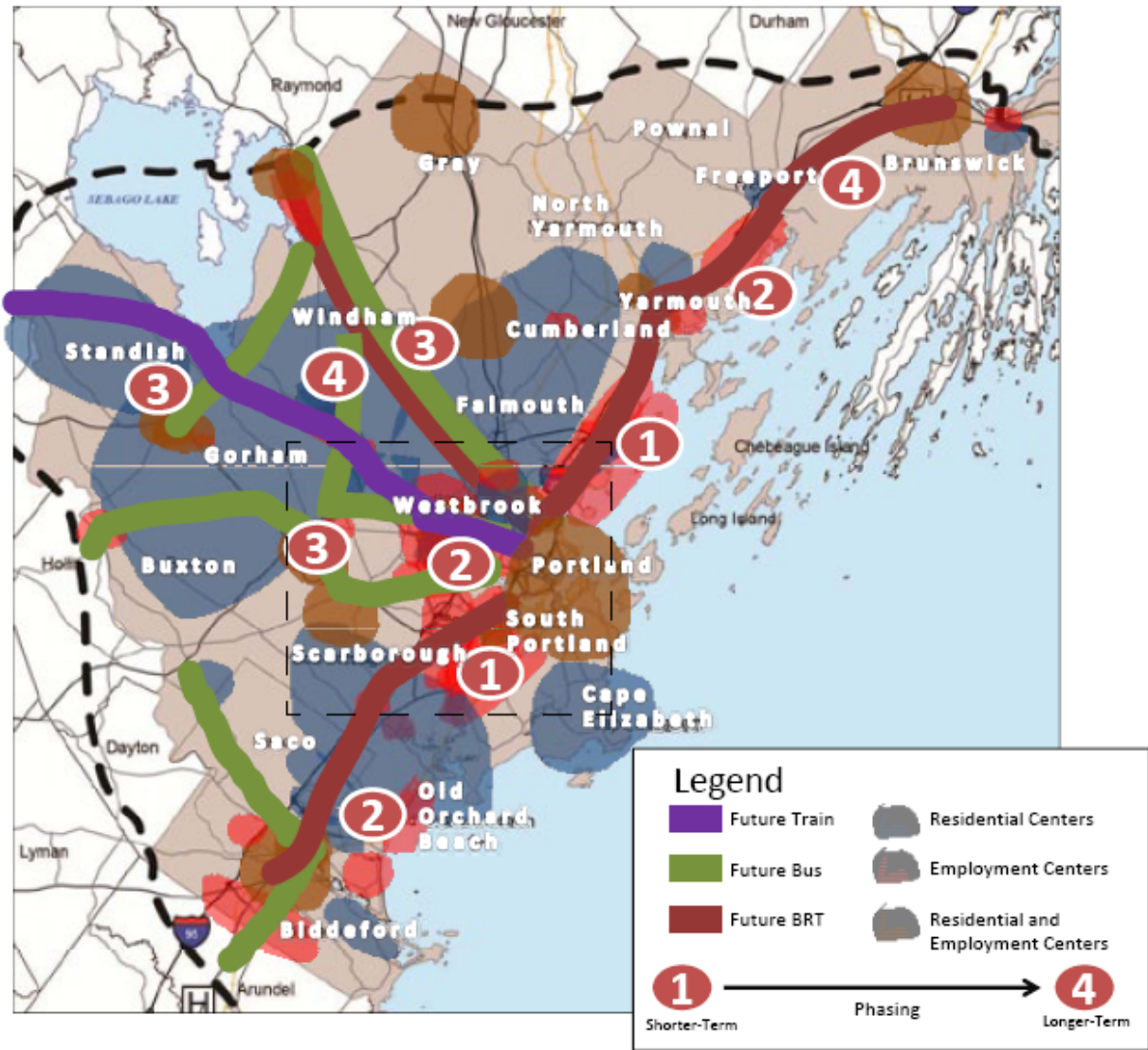
4. Long-Term

Utilizing existing railroad right-of-way, expanding light-rail service to supplement and maybe replace previous bus and streetcar expansions:

- Light rail west through Westbrook, Gorham, and Standish
- Light rail north through Morrill's Corner to Windham (Rt. 302 corridor)
- Light rail to Portland Jetport and Maine Mall

ONE POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR REGIONAL TRANSIT?

During the working sessions, participants developed several potential “transit futures.” These were then integrated into one unified potential transit system, with suggestions for potential phasing. This map represents one possible future transit scenario for the core of the Greater Portland Region. The numbers represent potential priority phasing of these projects based on discussions by the workshop participants. These might change based on various implementation priorities that the region works out through a prioritization tool.



1. Short-Term

Reinforcing existing transit opportunities that are under study today, initial transit expansion in the form of express buses or bus-rapid-transit (BRT) might be considered:

- Express bus or BRT north to Falmouth
- Express bus or BRT south through South Portland, possibly to Scarborough.

2. Short to Medium Term

Building upon an expanding high capacity network in a financially-constrained fashion, extensions to BRT service might be considered:

- BRT north to Yarmouth/Freeport
- BRT south to Saco/Biddeford, possibly replacing/supplementing ShuttleBus/Zoom

Expanded service to other nearby growing transit markets will become necessary:

- Expanded service to Westbrook, possibly BRT

3. Medium to Long Term

With ongoing improvements to the above services, growing inland markets will desire improved connections:

- Local and express bus to Windham
- Local and express bus to Buxton

Inter-community connections will need to be put in place as non-Portland focused trips increase:

- Local bus between Windham, Westbrook, and South Portland
- Local bus between Windham and Gorham

4. Long-Term

Expanding the rapid service capacity to greater distance can take advantage of existing infrastructure:

- BRT north to Brunswick
- Light rail west through Westbrook, Gorham, and Standish

Meanwhile, additional intercommunity services will be needed:

- Local bus to Saco/Biddeford from Dayton
 - Local bus to Saco/Biddeford from Arundel
-

POSSIBLE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

During the course of the working sessions, several notable transportation and land use strategies emerged. These are described on this page, and some have been included in the sample prioritization matrix to the left:

Focus on improving urban core transit system and services

- Implement 1-2 high-frequency, high visibility loops/circulators on the Portland Peninsula to connect the waterfront, Bayside, West End, East End, Portland Transportation Center (PTC), etc
- Provide other key urban core connections, including to the University of Southern Maine (USM), the Jetport, South Portland, Westbrook, the Maine Mall, etc. that can easily integrate with the Peninsula circulators
- Improve the integration of all regional transit operations and marketing to make a more seamless system, including the provision of a single schedule, real time bus info, improved shelters, etc

Prioritize the bus corridor projects that provide compelling transit commute options to outer communities

- Gorham-Westbrook-Portland corridor (bus, BRT, and/or light rail), to include targeted TOD opportunities
- Route 302 to Windham (express bus or BRT, providing a high-quality, reliable, single-seat ride to Portland)

Portland Transit Center

- Improve transit connections between the PTC, downtown Portland, and centers within the Greater Portland region
- Create opportunities for TOD in the area surrounding the PTC
- Preserve/enhance inter-city rail and bus operational features, including long-term parking and regional highway access

Innovative parking strategies implemented region-wide

- Implement reduced parking requirements, shared parking incentives, shared-car ownership, "unbundling" of parking cost from housing and commercial space, and demand management measures (Look to the Portland Peninsula Transit Study for implemented local examples of Fee In-Lieu of Parking, TDM ordinances, and reduced parking requirements for urban housing.)
- Explore the strategic use of existing garages and lots as park and ride locations (e.g., shopping center and grocery store lots)

Longer-term vision initiatives

- Consider phasing in streetcar and/or light-rail for key urban core routes
- Complete system of high-quality regional bus corridors coordinated with increased land use densities that support transit
- Protect and explore major inter-city and commuter rail opportunities, such as the Mountain Division rail corridor and rail service north to Brunswick (Falmouth, Yarmouth, Freeport)
- Ferry (or other modes) connecting South Portland and Portland

Agenda Item 5. Corridor planning and Placemaking: Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Design

Almost every community within the PACTS region has been involved to some degree with the “placemaking” aspects of transportation and land use. Context Sensitive Design may be a more familiar term and idea, while “Complete Streets” is newer with a policy are being developed in Portland.

The corridors within the PACTS region –the *roadway and rail* corridors— are all candidates for multi-modal infrastructure modernization. PACTS and Maine DOT see that the region needs to develop some consistency about the placemaking and livability initiatives along roadways that previously were designed almost exclusively with motorist movement in mind.

For an example, Route 1 currently has many traffic calming and/or placemaking studies or projects underway or planned. In Scarborough PACTS is completing a Pedestrian Plan with traffic calming in the Oak Hill neighborhood through which a 4-lane Route 1 travels. And Yarmouth has been studying changes to Route 1 that foster more development while making its character more like its downtown. And both Falmouth and Freeport are looking at their low density commercial areas of Route 1 and rethinking them as new villages.

How can we work together and develop some consistency about transforming these areas for all modes of transportation, while making the corridors more economically viable and transit-supportive?

The following are the relevant *Destination Tomorrow* Strategies related to this initiative.

- Strategy 26. Transportation Project Land Use Policy,
- Strategy 27. Transit Oriented Development
- Strategy 28. Transportation Investment Areas
- Strategy 29. Context Sensitive Design Principles.

Additionally, this fall the communities of Gorham,, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook will hire a consultant for a component of Phase 2 of the Gorham East-West Corridor Planning study, which includes the compact land use planning for transit-supportive development.

a. Fall 2011 Committee Field Trips to Corridors

This fall we plan to schedule Planning Committee “field trips” to begin a process of understanding and planning project sharing along the Route 1 and Route 25 corridors. PACTS has completed and programmed upcoming studies in these corridors, and Maine DOT has asked PACTS to work on coordinating some “Consistency about inconsistency and standards about deviations from standards”. This is all about the ongoing transformation in our communities and coordinating land use and transportation. Although we are looking to develop more Complete Street infrastructure, there needs to be coordination and consistency about how we do it in the context of our individual communities, but in a way that users (bicyclists, pedestrians, drivers, transit riders, etc.) can have some familiarity with how to use the newer or less familiar infrastructure.

Known projects in PACTS Communities:

Along Route 1:

Biddeford/Saco/OOB	(1) Tri-Community Transportation Plan
Scarborough	(1) Dunstan Corner; (2) Oak Hill Pedestrian Plan
South Portland	(1) Veterans Bridge bike/ped connection; (2) Bike/ped infrastructure plan
Portland	(1) St. John St./Valley St; (2) Park Ave; (3) Veranda St.
Falmouth	(1) Route One South Infrastructure Enhancement Plan
Yarmouth	(1) Route 1 Corridor Studies (Phases 1, 2, 3)
Freeport	(1) A Vision for Route 1 South

Along Route 25 or 302

Portland	(1) Route 25- Brighton @ USM Campus (2) Rt. 302 Transforming Forest Ave. Plan
Westbrook	(1) Westbrook Arterial and William Clark Drive
Gorham	Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility recommendations (Rt 22/144 also)
Windham	(1) North Windham Transportation Plan

Links:

<http://www.completestreets.org/>

<http://www.ite.org/css/>

<http://www.pps.org/blog/putting-the-livability-agenda-back-in-place/>

Agenda Item 6. PACTS Destination Tomorrow video viewing

The new video on PACTS and its 2010-2035 Long Range Regional Transportation Plan is now complete. This will be an opportunity to discuss and think about the future videos to produce. The video will be sent to all municipal/public access television stations for regular and ongoing broadcast.

The video highlights the existence of our regional transportation plan, its emphasis on maintaining and transforming transportation and land use, and the funding deficiency and inadequate and obsolete revenue mechanisms.

Agenda Item 7. Next Planning Committee meeting(s) and NNECAPA conference

Next meetings and other DATES:

Next Planning Committee Meeting

September 1 at 9:00am

Next Joint Transit-Planning Meeting

September 1 at 10:00am

***** NNECAPA Annual Conference**

September 8th and 9th

Burlington, Vermont

<http://nneccapa.org/resources/2011-annual-conference/>