

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Planning Committee Meeting Notice

Thursday September 2nd, 2010 - 8:00 a.m – 9:00 a.m.
PACTS/GPCOG,
68 Marginal Way, Portland

*****Joint Transit + Planning Committee meeting follows at 9:00-10:00*****

(Joint packet follows within THIS document)

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Minutes of the April 1, 2010 Planning committee meeting
3. Long Range Plan Update – Destination Tomorrow
4. Planning Committee coming 2-year – topics/need discussion
5. Regional HUD Sustainable Communities planning grant request submitted 8/20 - by GPCOG with 26 entities signed on
6. Public Comments
7. Next Meeting Date(s) – September 30th 9am.
This is a change because the October 7th date conflicts with the NNECAPA conference
8. Adjourn

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

Agenda Item 2. Minutes of April 1st, 2009 Committee Meeting:

PACTS Planning Committee

April 1, 2010

9:00 A.M.

Members: Sara Devlin (MTA), Peter Morelli (Saco), Greg Tansley (Biddeford), Ethan Croce (Falmouth), Donna Larson (Freeport), Robert Kahn (TrainRiders Northeast), Elizabeth Trice (Cumberland County), Hilary Frankel (League of Young Voters), Alex Jaegerman (Portland), Judy Harris (Portland), Tex Haeuser (South Portland)

Staff/Guests: Carl Eppich (PACTS), Steve Linnell (GPCOG), Rebecca Shaffner-Tousignant (GPCOG), Caroline Paras (GPCOG), John Duncan (PACTS), Bruce Hyman (Bruce Hyman Consulting), Lynne Powers (GPCOG), Christian Milneil (MAST), Barbara Donovan (MaineDOT), Sue Moreau (MaineDOT)

1. Call to Order

Greg Tansley called the meeting to order at 9:05 A.M.

2. Minutes of the October 1, 2009 planning committee meeting

Alex Jaegerman made a **motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2009 meeting**, and Tex Haeuser **seconded**. The motion **passed by unanimous vote**.

3. Presentation by the Maine Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) - proposal to expand ZOOM commuter bus service to Biddeford/Saco and extend to Lewiston, Auburn, and Augusta

Christian MilNeil gave a presentation on the work that MAST has been doing in conjunction with the League of Young Voters, Conservation Law, the Bike Coalition of Maine, and other groups. MAST grew out of a desire to be proactive in promoting economic development while finding solutions that are acceptable to local communities. The group came together in response to the Turnpike's 10-year plan to widen miles of highway in Portland, looking for alternatives that would be more acceptable to communities and potentially more beneficial at lower cost.

A similar project was proposed 14 years ago in the Alternative Modes Feasibility Study, which was sponsored by the Maine Turnpike Authority, GPCOG, and Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission. MAST updated the data and would like to see that study utilized. They are proposing the addition of three new buses on the existing ZOOM route between Portland and Biddeford, boosting from 10 to 25 round trips per day and lowering the waiting time from an hour to a half an hour. MAST proposes to do the same with a route north to Lewiston-Auburn, but with fewer daily trips, and also with a route between Portland and Augusta. The Lewiston-Auburn plan would require another six new buses. MAST's idea is to route the bus along the Turnpike, then service employment and residential centers. MAST has estimated that the capital investment necessary (primarily for improvements to Park and Rides, bus stops, street scapes, and for the buses themselves) would be \$3.8 million. MAST would like to see this come to fruition rather than widening nine miles of the Turnpike.

Christian took questions from the committee. Peter Morelli pointed out that the 460,000-person annual ridership for ZOOM means 150-160 riders a day, which is very small in comparison to the Turnpike's daily numbers. Public transit builds slowly, and several committee members did not expect demand to grow until gas prices rise again. Donna asked how the routes were chosen. Christian answered that the Portland to Lewiston and Portland to Biddeford corridor was chosen because it is the MTA's responsibility and the MTA has an ability to levy funds that other organizations do not. There were questions raised about the sources of MAST's data in the Powerpoint presentation. Judy expressed concerns about continuing to fully support intra-city bus systems.

The group had a brief conversation concerning the Turnpike's charter or mission, with several committee members wanting to know what is within the MTA's purview. Tex suggested having it on the agenda at another meeting, or holding a discussion with Sara Devlin and Conrad Welzel about MTA's mission and the possibility – however slim – of expanding its charter. Sara and Barbara Donovan pointed out that Zoom is a partnership between the MTA and the DOT, with grants and federal funds also playing into the funding. Bob Kahn made the suggestion that if this was tied to sustainable communities, TIFFs could help relieve the operational costs.

Christian stated that MTA staff have made a formal response that they are not currently interested in pursuing the proposal, and that MAST has yet to present to the MTA board. Sara responded that the MTA supports regional discussion on transit and feels that the PACTS Planning Committee is the appropriate place to start these discussions. She stated that the MTA is not opposed to this proposal because it will take away from toll revenue, as was suggested; the DOT is currently doing a study looking at commuter patterns and numbers, and Sara said that that study should be completed before moving ahead with new programs. She offered assistance in fine-tuning the data used in MAST's proposal, and said that the MTA feels that it should have had a bigger role in creating the proposal.

4. **Federal DOT, HUD, and EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities and HUD grant program**
Rebecca Schaffner-Tousignant spoke about this grant opportunity. A group led by GPCOG is currently developing an application for the HUD sustainable community grant and has been meeting for the last several weeks. This is potentially a \$2 million grant. People at the table include COG, PACTS, Cumberland County, representatives from USM's Muskie School of Public Service, Alex Jaegerman from Portland, and Tex Haeuser from South Portland. There will be more participants; the group is now identifying the geographic scope of the application. This will be a widely regional application rather than just Portland or Cumberland County, as similar federal programs have rewarded highly inclusive applications. The application is on a tight deadline with proposals due June 5.
5. **Long range plan update – Destination Tomorrow**
Carl gave a quick report on the update of the Destination Tomorrow long range plan. With the census data having been collected this year, PACTS plans to wait until 2014 to do a comprehensive rewrite of the plan. In the meantime, staff will use available data to support the changes that have been identified. Some of those changes include: experience with high fuel prices, climate change, aging population, land use and transportation (growing use of transit and the new federal direction), and sustainable communities. The Destination Tomorrow committee has simplified the current plan down to policies and strategies. The committee is going from 89 strategies to 35-40, with some carrying over and some new. The final report will be written in December 2010, with a draft in the fall. The products-to-date are available to look at; Carl offered to send them to anyone who was interested.
6. **Public comments**
There was no public comment.
7. **Next meeting date**
The next meeting date will be May 6.
8. **Adjourn**
The meeting adjourned at 11:05 A.M.

Agenda Item 3. Long Range Plan Update - Destination Tomorrow

Since the spring of 2009 a subcommittee has been meeting comprised of representatives from all of PACTS standing committees to review and update our 2006 long-range plan. Early in the process the committee agreed that considering that new 2010 Census data would not be available until 2012, this effort would be an update to the existing plan and not a complete replacement. Rather this effort would be to review what is required by the federal agencies, and to then identify major changes that have implications for the plan's existing policies, goals, objectives and strategies. Examples of major changes identified include:

- Increasing inadequate funding
- Shifting demographics and an increasing % elderly population
- The new Federal initiatives/directions + Reauthorization
 - USDOT, HUD, EPA partnership (Livable and Sustainable Communities)
 - High Speed Rail
 - US DOT Policy change on Bike/Ped
- New Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act Rules
- Increasing transit ridership while funding decreasing
- Expansion of the Amtrak/NNEPRA Downeaster train to Freeport and Brunswick
- PACTS August 2008 survey indicated broad support for transit expansion
- Energy costs increasing at a faster rate, need for (alternative) Fueling Infrastructure
- Health implications/obesity epidemic, support for "Active Transportation"
- Global climate change from carbon emissions
- Better understanding of land use implications on transportation system

The committee then set out to review the tiered structure of the plan which includes a Vision Statement, Guiding Policies, Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. Many felt and the committee agreed that these 5 layers were too many and if possible, that some should be eliminated to simplify. All were reviewed and currently the structure now includes a revised draft resulting in Vision Statement, Policies, and Strategies.

In an effort to further simplify, the Policies have been reviewed and consolidated from the 8 currently to 5:

1. Regional Focus
2. Maintaining and Improving the Current transportation System
3. Economic Development
4. Environmental Quality and Energy
5. Transportation-Land Use Connection

Concurrently the current 89 Strategies in the 2006 Destination Tomorrow plan have been reviewed in light of the changes identified as well as to identify any that have been completed or implemented. This effort has led to a list of highest priority strategies for the coming four years, most from the existing plan, although with modifications, but also the development of some strategies that were not part of DT 2006, but have evolved through PACTS processes such as the current ongoing evaluation of Collector Roads and a policy of pavement preservation.

As of this writing the highest priority strategies for the update stand at 34 and the Committee is currently considering other new strategies. It appears we will end up with around 40 high priority strategies for the Update.

The committee will now be considering finished and ongoing developments for the plan, including 2009 PACTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update, the results of the Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study, the DOT's Highway Simplification Study, PACTS concluding Tri-Community Study for Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach, PACTS Strategic Initiative to Facilitate Greater Portland's Economic Growth as a Transit Focused Region, and others.

Funds in our UPWP are available for consulting support and this will be used primarily for marketing and outreach of the plan. A draft of the revised plan will be available at the Planning Committees Sept 30th meeting and Public Process will begin in the fall for a projected Final Draft in late November. Here is the complete schedule to adoption in December by the Policy Committee:

1. September 15th, Tuesday: next **Update Committee** meeting
 - Finalize drafts Chapters 2, 4 – Preview discussion/comments on 3, 5, 6
 - THIS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT MEETING if the date/time doesn't work for all, then lets find another.
2. September 30th, Thursday: at **Planning Committee** meeting Review Chapters 2, 3, 4 (*the regular meeting date would be Oct 7th, but NNECAPA Annual Meeting is the 7th and 8th*)
3. October 13th, Wednesday **Update Committee meeting**
 - Finalize drafts Chapters 5, 6 -- Preview discussion/comments on 1 Executive Summary
4. October 28th, Thursday **Public Hearing** on the Draft Update Plan (Sunday Oct 17th Public Notice in Press Herald, and other papers)
 - Comments on Draft would close 30-days later on Monday November 15th.
5. November 4th, Thursday at **Planning Committee** meeting review Final Draft Update Plan (Comments due by November 15th)
 - Review Chapters 1 and 5, 6 for first time but provide full draft Update Plan for initial comments.
6. November 15th, Monday. All Public and PACTS Committee **comments due**
7. November 18th, Thursday: **Policy Committee** presentation of Draft Update Plan with Public Comments.
 - Milestone: Discuss, collect and incorporate Policy Committee comments
8. November 29th, Monday: send Final Draft Update to Policy Committee
9. December 16th, Thursday: Present Final Update Plan to Policy Committee for adoption.

Agenda Item 4 Planning Committee coming 2-year – topics/need discussion

In July new Planning Committee Chair Dan Bacon, Vice Chair Brooks More, and Carl met and discussed some ideas for the Planning Committee to tackle over the coming years. A number of ideas were put on paper and additional have surfaced since then. These are ideas for coming Planning Committee meetings:

- Presentations on your PACTS or locally funded studies/projects, lessons learned/best practices, etc.
- Bringing in experts/or professionals with local/regional experience with cutting-edge planning topics, techniques,
- Planning skills workshops
- YOUR other ideas?!?!?!?

Agenda Item 5. Update on HUD Sustainable Communities Grant Application submitted August 20th.

On August 20th GPCOG submitted a **Sustainable Communities grant** request to HUD. The proposal process resulted in the development of a consortium with 26 different entities signing on and with more to come, should the request be funded.

Although very intricate in the full proposal, the following is an excerpt from the Abstract for a *Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD)* that will resonate with Planners:

The RPSD process focuses on developing fact-filled awareness of the sustainability and equity implications of the current Trend in the region's development vs. Choice scenarios to be developed through a cooperative process among multiple municipalities in subareas of the region and for the different settings involved: urban core neighborhoods, new transit-capable urban neighborhood, suburban nodes and revitalized village centers. This process will provide leaders and the public the increased awareness to recognize the risks inherent in the status quo and the possible benefits to envisioned communities of opportunity

The full Abstract for the *Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD)* is attached and more information is forthcoming or available on request.

Agenda Item 6. Public Comments

This Agenda Item is reserved for any comments the public or anyone attending may wish to share with the committees.

Agenda Item 7. Next Meeting Date

- September 30th 9am
(The NNECAPA Conference is on the regular date, Oct 7th & 8th – in Portsmouth NH this year)

Agenda Item 8. Adjourn

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Joint Transit-Planning Committees Meeting Notice

Thursday September 2nd, 2010 – 10:00 a.m – 11:00 a.m.
PACTS/GPCOG,
68 Marginal Way, Portland

9. Call to order

10. Minutes of the June 3rd Joint Transit & Planning meeting

**11. PACTS regional initiative kicking off soon:
a.k.a Transit Focused Region**

12. Updates

13. Public Comments

14. Next Joint Meeting Date(s)

- December 9th

15. Adjourn

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

Agenda Item 2. Minutes of June 3rd 2010 Joint Committees Meeting:
Joint Meeting of the PACTS Transit and Planning Committees
PACTS Joint Planning-Transit Committee Meeting

June 3, 2010

9:00 A.M.

In attendance: Patricia Quinn (NNEPRA), Marina Douglas (NNEPRA), Marc Nahorney (University of New England), Brooks More (Windham), Connie Garber (YCCAC), Sandra Mowery (Gorham), Judy Harris (Portland), Tom Meyers (South Portland), Peter Morelli (Saco), Robert Kahn (Train Riders Northeast), Dave Redlefsen (Metro), Mike Laberge (MaineDOT), Sara Trafton (RTP), Ed Clifford (ShuttleBus/ZOOM), Greg Tansley (Biddeford), Sara Devlin (MTA), Peggy Killmer (Yarmouth), Elizabeth Trice (Cumberland County), Molly Just (Westbrook)

Staff/guests: Sue Moreau (MaineDOT), John Duncan (PACTS), Carl Eppich (PACTS), Steve Linnell (GPCOG), Rebeccah Schaffner-Tousignant (GPCOG), Rebecca Lambert (GPCOG), Lynne Powers (GPCOG), Art Handman (private consultant), Steve Horowitz (member of public)

9. ***Call to order***

Greg Tansley called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

10. ***Minutes of the December 10, 2009 Joint Planning-Transit Meeting***

Peter Morelli made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 10 meeting, and **Tom Meyers seconded**. The **motion passed unanimously**.

11. ***New Planning Committee officers***

Dan Bacon was nominated as chair of the Planning Committee, and Brooks Moore as vice-chair. Their terms would be for two years. **Peter made a motion to accept the nominations and Sandra Mowery seconded it**. The **motion passed unanimously**.

12. ***Portland North Project - MaineDOT***

Sue Moreau from MaineDOT gave a presentation on Portland North, which is a study analyzing the potential implementation of rail or bus rapid transit service between Portland and destinations north of it. Phase one of the study has been completed, with public meetings held in all locations and MaineDOT screening the possibilities of locations and modes of travel from 30 down to six. Some of those possibilities included Lewiston/Auburn to Portland or Brunswick to Portland rail or bus rapid transit. The project is currently in phase two, with MaineDOT looking at station locations and layouts, road and rail infrastructure, economic development around stations, environmental effects, and costs. The options of building a new bus lane or using the St. Lawrence rail line have already been eliminated. The department is coordinating with stakeholders and the FTA. In July, the options will be pared down to one route coming from a particular destination, and the decision will be made on bus or rail.

Sue said that she had heard strong interest in commuter rail, concern about highway widening (which would not be done for this project, though there could be some accommodations made for buses in the breakdown lane), and cost/funding concerns. There are currently three service alternatives being considered: Yarmouth, Brunswick/Bath, and

South Auburn. The options being looked at for bus service are exclusive right of way, bus on shoulder, and mixed traffic scenarios. There are five potential locations for train stations in Portland: Union Station, Center Street, India Street, Bayside, and the Portland Transportation Center. A train would have two cars with the seating capacity for 100-150 people; it cannot be longer than that, as it could not impede intersections. The scenario as currently modeled would feature 22 trips per day, with the first trip arriving in Portland at 6:45 A.M. and the last departing at 10:55 P.M.

The costs would include capital (track, bridges, train sets or buses, signals, stations) and operating (management, fuel, maintenance). The bus is far cheaper. There is a Powerpoint presentation with more cost information available on the MaineDOT website, at:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/portlandnorth/presentations.htm>

MaineDOT has been calculating potential ridership. Sue said that there was no modeled preference for rail over bus, and that having to walk more than 10 minutes after arriving at a station was a barrier to ridership. She said that there was not a great deal of interest in Lewiston/Auburn in commuting to Portland; many people who live in the area also work in the area. The higher ridership projections were for Bath/Brunswick, and those routes had lower projected costs as well. The highest ridership projection for a Portland station was at Center Street.

The project could be eligible for 50% funding from the FTA's Small Starts Program, for dedicated fixed guideway. MaineDOT will be applying in July.

13. ***HUD Sustainable Communities planning grant application development update***

Rebecca Schaffner-Tousignant spoke about the HUD sustainable communities grant that GPCOG and a number of organizations and municipalities have been working on. The advanced NOFA regarding the opportunity came out in February and the stakeholder group has been working since March. They will be applying for regional planning funds. They are brainstorming major issues facing the region and have not settled on specific geography, for which communities and areas will be included in the grant, just yet. It depends on who wants to partner in the project. HUD is looking for regional projects with a wide geographic range.

Rebecca said that the application is being drafted now, and that the stakeholders want to hold a series of round tables to extend the audience. The final NOFA was due in April but has not been released yet, which does not leave the group with a lot of time to prepare the application. The regional HUD director will be at GPCOG meeting with the stakeholder group tomorrow. There is no minimum dollar value, and HUD is looking for large scale projects. GPCOG is the convener for this area's application. Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, Cumberland County, the Midcoast Economic Development County, the Mid-coast Council of Governments, and a number of other entities are involved, and others are currently deciding whether they will join the effort. Judy expressed concerns that in the process of spearheading the grant application, GPCOG staffs are doing work for non-member communities that have not paid COG dues.

14. ***Updates***

There were no updates.

8. *Next joint meeting dates (taken out of order)*
September 2 and December 9

7. *Public comment (taken out of order)*
There was no public comment.

9. *Adjourn*
The meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.

**Agenda Item 3. PACTS regional transit initiative kicking off soon:
a.k.a Transit Focused Region**

Hopefully you all recall that we have a funded, regional project that will involve both planners and transit agencies with the task of developing a foundation and vision for collaborative land-use planning and transit service growth throughout the region. We have hired a team with transit-economics expertise, as well as transit AS a tool for economic growth expertise. Coupled with region-wide implementation (at the municipal level) of the new **Transit TIFs**, this initiative is intended to bring all the tools we currently have together to develop a vision and path to region-wide, sustainable transit operations, and transit-oriented development growth. It is also intended to bring to the surface the barriers and opportunities in realizing a comprehensive, and reliable transit system throughout the region.

The timing is just right to begin as a number of studies are concluding, or projects about to begin that have transit components THROUGHOUT the PACTS region;

- ◆ Expansion of the Amtrak Downeaster to **Freeport** and **Brunswick**, and the completion of the **Portland North Study** (through **Falmouth, Cumberland, Yarmouth**)
- ◆ The Gorham East-West Corridor Study with its “Urban to Rural” land use scenario and tested comprehensive regional transit system, (**Gorham, Westbrook, Scarborough, South Portland**)
- ◆ The Tri-Community Transportation Plan – **Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach**

With much of this work completed and available to our consultants and the general public, the “Transit Focused Region Initiative” will build on these works and involve the municipalities

Attachments:

- Chosen proposal from Nelson\Nygaard and HDR
- Gorham E-W Transit 2035 scenario **map**
- Gorham E-W Transit 2035 Recommendations (descriptions of routes)

At this meeting we would like to (1) get your input on how to make this effort most productive, (2) how to ensure your involvement, and (3) who from the public we might reach out to involve on a project committee.

Agenda Item 4. Public Comments

This Agenda Item is reserved for any comments the public or anyone attending may wish to share with the committees.

Agenda Item 5. Next Meeting Date

December 9th?

Agenda Item 6. Adjourn