

Attachments for May 18th Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes of April 27, 2006 Meeting

Members Present: Nat Tupper, Chair, Yarmouth; Neal Allen, GPCOG; Mike Bobinsky, Portland; John Bubier, Biddeford; Pat Christian, Public Transit; Carl Croce, MaineDOT; Jeff Jordan, South Portland; Donna Larson (for Dale Olmstead), Freeport; Mike McGovern, Cape Elizabeth; Larry Mead (for Joe Gray), Portland; Tom Meyers, Public Transit; Rick Michaud, Saco; Dan Bacon (for Ron Owens), Scarborough; Ed Reidman, South Portland; Jim Thomas, Old Orchard Beach; Jonathan LaBonte (for Conrad Welzel), MTA

Members Absent: Jerre Bryant, Westbrook; David Cole, Gorham; Kathi Earley, Portland; Dave Libby, Falmouth; Jeff Monroe, Portland; John Perry, FHWA; Tony Plante, Windham; Paul Schumacher, SMRPC; Scott Seaver, North Yarmouth; Bill Shane, Cumberland

Staff and Guests: Maddy Adams, GPCOG; Julia Dawson, PACTS; John Duncan, PACTS; Dennis Emidy, MaineDOT; Ed Hanscom, MaineDOT; Steve Linnell, GPCOG; Eric Ortman, PACTS; Dave Sherlock, MaineDOT

1. **Call to Order.** Nat Tupper called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.
2. **Minutes of March 16th meeting.** *Pat Christian moved approval of the March 16th minutes. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.*
4. **MaineDOT's I-295 Corridor Study** (taken out of order). Ed Hanscom presented an overview of the study. The purpose was to study the corridor needs between Scarborough and Brunswick. There have been 1100 accidents in a three-year period. Eight advisory committee meetings were held. Six informational meetings were held – three in Portland and three in Yarmouth. A web site was also developed.

The biggest environmental issue was traffic noise. A handout was distributed of a timeline for short term and long-term recommendations.

Some of the short-term recommendations include:

- Construct southbound and northbound auxiliary lane between Exits 4 and 3
- Install two inbound variable message signs
- Investigate development of service patrols on I-295
- Improve off-ramps at Exit 7
- Construct northbound off-ramp and improve southbound on-ramp at Exit 15
- Improve acceleration lane at Exit 11 northbound on-ramp
- Construct interchange access improvements at Exit 4.

Some of the long-term recommendations of the study include:

- Continue to improve a freeway management system
- Complete upgrades to acceleration and deceleration lanes at ramps
- Add through lanes to I-295 between Exits 5, 6 and 7
- Continue upgrades to Exit 11
- Investigate tolling strategies and implement appropriate actions that will help manage mobility in the I-295 corridor
- Plan for potential commuter rail to Portland

- Support I-95 capacity improvements to divert through traffic
- Continue to monitor conditions in the corridor and adjust plans accordingly.

It was asked if the local elected officials have seen or heard these recommendations. Ed responded that there have been six public sessions. Mike Bobinsky said that the Portland Transportation Committee was aware of the meetings. He and a Transportation Committee representative attended one of the meetings and they have been kept pretty much up to date on what is going on. Jeff Jordan said that the South Portland Council is fully on board with what is going on with I-295. He noted, though, that there was nothing on the spreadsheet addressing the noise issue. Carl stated that they are revisiting the MaineDOT noise policy. The noise issue will have to be dealt with if an expansion is approved. It would be an additional cost factor. Jeff reiterated that there needs to be some acknowledgement about noise as we begin to share this report with our Councils.

Nat recommended that the Study Advisory Committee look further at:

- Noise mitigation
- Supporting transit services in general
- Investigating bike/ped alternatives in the northern part of corridor.

Larry Mead said that the City of Portland would like more time before accepting the Study’s recommendations because they have some concerns about Exit 6. They don’t want to wait for another lane because it will take many years for that to occur but there are probably other mitigation measures that could be taken in the interim. ***John Bubier made a motion to table this item until the May meeting. The motion was seconded by Mike Bobinsky and passed.***

3. Transportation Improvement Program Topics.

3A. Action items

a. Transit Committee 2008/2009 Set-Aside Recommendations. Pat Christian reviewed the recommendations of the Transit Committee. The Transit Committee requested that should there be any funds available as the result of one of the other PTC projects coming in under budget, that those funds be put toward the Downtown Transportation Center (since that project was cut by \$9,717 in order to meet the total amount of funding available).

Pat Christian made a motion to endorse the Transit Committee’s recommendation for the programming of the 2008/2009 Transit Set Aside funds as follows:

<i>METRO</i>	<i>Downtown Transportation Center</i>	<i>\$90,283</i>
<i>TIDS</i>	<i>Monitors, CPU’s, Installation</i>	<i>\$36,000</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Two paratransit vehicles</i>	<i>140,000</i>
<i>METRO</i>	<i>Communication System w/AVL</i>	<i>300,000</i>
<i>SPBS</i>	<i>Building Replacement – South Ptld</i>	<i><u>238,153</u></i>
	<i>Total Request:</i>	<i>804,436</i>

Rick Michaud seconded the motion and all were in favor.

b. Westbrook proposal to transfer project funds. John Duncan explained. Westbrook wishes to use funds from a Bill Clark Drive paving project to help with the paving component of a non-PACTS project at the intersection of Bill Clark Drive and Saco Street. It was a stand-alone paving project and now it would be a paving component of an intersection project.

After John responded to a number of questions, Rick Michaud made a motion to endorse Westbrook's proposal, seconded by Mike McGovern. *John Bubier moved to table the item, seconded by Jim Thomas. The motion to table passed.*

- i. Transportation Committee's bond proposal. Sixty million dollars is being debated by the Transportation Committee as we speak. *Rick Michaud made a motion that PACTS add their name to the list of supporters of the Legislature's Transportation Committee Highway Fund Supplemental budget (LD 1974) which includes a \$60 million borrowing measure to help fund some of the 143 projects deferred last year by MaineDOT. Jeff Jordan seconded the motion and all were in favor.*

3B. Reports

- a. FHWA prohibition on changing the federal percent share of a project cost after obligation.

We have learned that FHWA does not allow the federal share for a project to be changed after the funds have been "obligated." Each individual project goes under obligation. All PACTS projects have not been obligated; about half have. Eric explained that most of the projects on the 06/07 list are collector paving projects. The cost for the projects that we have approved are most likely 25% higher than the estimated costs due to increased fuel costs, etc. There is also the issue of how MaineDOT schedules the projects, in addition to dealing with the 25% inflation rate. We have agreed to not fund overruns but we should also consider having an inflationary index. Eric is working on some alternatives.

- Look at it for the 08/09 work plan and separately for the previous biennium
- Cut projects until we make up the estimated \$4 million shortfall
- Rewrite city/state agreements

Some collector paving projects are ready to go out to bid. There is some sense of urgency on the collector paving projects. John Bubier suggested writing two contracts for the local share; Eric said that was one of the options but the project would be made federal "non-participating".

Staff will summarize the options and get some charts together and determine which projects are obligated already and which are not. It was suggested that a group be formed to work through this issue. Staff will work with MaineDOT and FHWA representatives on this also. The Technical Committee's expertise might also be warranted. Dave Sherlock said that he hopes that the Committee doesn't go through the route mentioned above as it would be an administrative nightmare. He also noted that every one of these projects is drastically under funded due to recent construction cost inflation.

A working group consisting of Eric Ortman, John Duncan, Dave Sherlock, Ed Reidman, Dale Doughty, Mike McGovern, John Bubier, Mike Bobinsky, Rick Michaud and whoever else the Chair appoints will be convened to address the options prior to the May 18th meeting.

- b. Portland and Falmouth interest in the remaining \$66,000 for bike/ped projects. John Duncan briefed the group. He noted that Freeport is also interested.
- c. 2007 Annual Appropriation Earmark Proposals. John Duncan gave an update. Senator Collin's office asked that we put the three projects in order of priority. Staff submitted the proposals in this order: the Westbrook project, the Old Orchard Beach project and then Freeport. Freeport is questioning the priority order of the projects and thought they should rank higher. John Duncan has looked but hasn't found anything that puts Freeport's project higher than OOB's. After some discussion, *Mike McGovern made a motion to support the*

list that the staff has provided to Congress. The motion was seconded by John Bubier and the motion carried.

- d. 2007 Reauthorization Earmarks Subcommittee. The Subcommittee had met at noon and John reviewed his notes from his meeting with MaineDOT staff of earlier today. MaineDOT is focusing on corridors rather than on projects. The group will come to the committee with a proposal at the next meeting. No action was taken on this item.

5. **Destination Tomorrow.** Due to time constraints, this item was postponed.

6. **Consent Agenda.** Nat Tupper thanked Jeff Jordan for his years of service on the PACTS Policy Committee. *Mike Bobinsky made a motion to accept the consent agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.*

7. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Agenda Item 3 – MaineDOT’s I-295 Corridor Study

Last month the Policy Committee heard a presentation of the MaineDOT’s I-295 Corridor Study. The presentation included an 11x17 handout that highlighted six recommendations that would be financed with the \$15 million I-295 Congressional Earmark of 2005. At the request of Portland, the Committee tabled endorsement of the study for a month. Last week Portland and MaineDOT met in order to discuss Portland proposals to use more of the Earmark on the Portland Peninsula.

In order to begin/continue development of the six projects, MaineDOT requests that PACTS endorse the study and amend the 2006-2008 PACTS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Following a PACTS TIP amendment, the MaineDOT will amend the Statewide TIP.

Draft Motion 1

To endorse the recommendations in MaineDOT’s I-295 Corridor Study

Draft Motion 2

To amend the 2006-2008 PACTS Transportation Improvement Program to specify that the I-295 Congressional Earmark of 2005 be used as follows:

- Build a southbound auxiliary lane between Exits 4 and 3 in South Portland
- Build a northbound auxiliary lane between Exits 3 and 4 in South Portland
- Lengthen the northbound on-ramp from the Falmouth Spur onto I-295 in Falmouth
- Extend the southbound auxiliary lane from Tukey’s Bridge to the Franklin Street off-ramp
- Widen the northbound off-ramp at Exit 7 (Franklin Arterial)
- Replace the existing southbound on-ramp at Exit 15 in Yarmouth with a new one on a different alignment
- Improve two Exit 7 (Forest Avenue) off-ramps and their intersections with Forest Avenue in order to improve safety conditions

Agenda Item 4 – Destination Tomorrow

Draft Motion

To place the adoption of the 2006 version of the Destination Tomorrow Plan on the agenda for the June 2nd Annual Meeting

Background

This item was on last month's agenda, but we did not get to it due to the time spent on the TIP issues.

The Planning Committee recommends adoption by the Policy Committee. It is the product of many hours of our collective time since we began the 2003 Plan work in 1999 and then began our update/expansion work in 2003. Our recent successful uses of the Plan in our TIP and studies selection processes bode well for its continued use in the future. We will complete the report editing, formatting and printing by July 1st.

Here are some highlights on a chapter by chapter basis. We also make note below of the air quality conformity process and the need of our federal partners that the Plan address Year 2030 conditions.

A month ago we emailed Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 to all PACTS committee members.

Chapters 1 and 2: Executive Summary and Plan Background

The 2006 chapters have the same format and purposes as the 2003 chapters. Both chapters reflect the expansion of the PACTS area and updated material (as do all the chapters). In addition we have added some language in Chapter 1 to highlight the Plan's numerous strategies aimed at a sustainable transportation system.

Chapters 3 and 4: Present and Future Conditions, and Alternatives Analysis

The 2006 chapters have the same format and purposes as the 2003 chapters. The 2006 chapter describes less 2025 congestion than our 2003 Plan did because of reduced regional and statewide forecasts of population and employment growth. The Plan Subcommittee and the staff/consultant team completed the analysis for Chapter 4 in 2004. We are currently finishing the incorporation of the new material into these chapters.

Chapter 5: Goals and Strategies

The Plan Subcommittee and the Planning Committee did a lot work on this chapter during several periods in 2004, 2005 and 2006. In January 2005 the Policy Committee endorsed the strategy recommendations developed in 2004. Here are the key items to be aware of at this time.

1. Chapter 5 presents the Policy Committee's strategy "tiers" adopted in 2005.
2. New Strategy 110 (Intercity Bus and Rail Service) expands the language of Strategies 8A and 100.

Continue support for extending bus, passenger and commuter rail service from Portland north to Brunswick and south to Biddeford and Saco. PACTS further recommends increasing the desirability of the passenger rail service between Portland and Boston through such actions as improving the frequency, travel time, convenience and amenities of the service.

3. New Strategy 107B (East-West Toll Road) is the result of dialogue between agencies and within the Planning Committee.

PACTS supports the study of a potential east-west limited-access toll highway. Potential endpoints for such a toll road include South Portland and Gorham. The study must carefully consider the regional

transportation and land use impacts that would result from a transportation investment of this magnitude, as well as identify opportunities, from a transportation-oriented development or other means, for net improvements to the regional economy.

4. Strategy 48A (Implementation of the PACTS Transportation Project Land Use Policy) is also the result of dialogue between agencies and within the Planning Committee.

Refine and implement the PACTS Transportation Project Land Use Policy, to encourage the preparation of land use and transportation plans before programming federal funds for significant transportation projects that significantly reduce commuter travel times, through application in case studies, public outreach, cooperation with regional planning initiatives, and partnership with State and federal agencies.

5. Strategy 104 (I-295 and the Maine Turnpike) recommends strategies and projects for our region's interstate highway system.

Recommend that the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority study the feasibility of, and implement where appropriate, the following 13 recommendations that collectively will provide safe and efficient transportation service to the region's two primary interstate highways. Further, MaineDOT should limit the widening of I-295 to Items 1, 2, 3 and 4 below, if at all possible, in order to balance the need to provide regional mobility and access with the need to minimize potential negative impacts on the fabric of nearby neighborhoods, on pedestrian connectivity, and on local streets.

Figures 5-1 and 5-2 display these recommendations. Please see also Strategy #110 that continues support for extending bus and rail service from Portland to points to the north and to the south.

1. MaineDOT should eliminate I-295 safety and operations problems between Scarborough and Brunswick by adding auxiliary and/or acceleration/deceleration lanes and by making interchange ramp improvements. These improvements should include but not be limited to:
 - auxiliary lanes, northbound and southbound, between Exit 3 (Westbrook Street) and Exit 4 (Lincoln Street)
 - auxiliary lane extension, southbound, between Exit 8 (Washington Avenue) and Exit 7 (Franklin Arterial)
 - improvements at Exit 7 (Franklin Arterial) off-ramps (northbound and southbound)
 - improvements at Exit 11 (Falmouth Spur) northbound on-ramp
 - improvements at two intersections of Exit 6 (Forest Avenue) northbound and southbound off-ramps with Forest Avenue
 - improvements at Exit 15 (Route 1) on-ramps northbound and southbound.
 - ramp extensions at Exits 17 (Route 1), Exit 20 (Desert Road), Exit 22 (Mallett Drive) and Exit 24 (Route 1)
2. MaineDOT should enhance regional mobility by making interchange improvements at Exit 4 (Lincoln St.); Exit 10 (Bucknam Rd.); Exit 11 (Falmouth Spur); and Exit 15 (Main St.);
3. MaineDOT should study ways to address the safety and operational concerns at the interchange of the Falmouth Spur and I-295 including access improvements and interchange reconfiguration.
4. MaineDOT should widen I-295 – using the existing median – between Exit 5 (Congress St.) and Exit 7 (Franklin Arterial) to improve mobility and safety conditions at the Exit 6 (Forest Ave.) interchange. MaineDOT should also continue to monitor and consider long-range improvements at the Forest Avenue interchange, including reconfiguration of the interchange.
5. MaineDOT should continue to monitor safety, congestion and capacity issues in the Tukey's Bridge area.

6. MaineDOT should monitor conditions on the I-295 mainline between Exit 11 (Falmouth Spur) and Exit 15 (Main St.) for additional capacity needs.
7. MaineDOT should implement the use of variable message signs to inform drivers of traffic incidents and weather conditions.
8. MaineDOT should plan for and develop a service patrol program on I-295.
9. MaineDOT should continue to implement ITS (intelligent transportation systems) strategies to manage traffic flow.
10. The Turnpike Authority should do the necessary study to enable the Authority to widen the highway to six lanes between Exits 44 and 53. It is understood that this study will involve a consideration of widening I-295 along the Portland peninsula – and that the trade-off between impacts of a Turnpike widening on the natural and social/human environments in the Turnpike corridor and the impacts of an I-295 widening on the natural and social/human environments in the I-295 corridor will be an important component of that study.
11. The Turnpike Authority and the MaineDOT should consider increasing the Turnpike speed limit to 60 or 65 mph between Exits 44 and 53, and on the Falmouth Spur as part of the widening of the Turnpike. This consideration should include due attention to the importance of safe travel on the highway.
12. The Turnpike Authority and the MaineDOT should continue to investigate tolling strategies in the Turnpike and I-295 corridors, including a regional toll system and an “open-road” tolling structure, to manage and improve interstate mobility. Strategies must address Turnpike Authority concerns, and the potential negative aspects of diversion of traffic onto local streets.
13. MaineDOT, the Maine Turnpike Authority and PACTS should conduct feasibility studies for potential new interchanges and/or expansion of existing interchanges to increase access to/from communities, such as Cumberland, Freeport, Biddeford and Saco.

Chapter 6: Financial Assessment

1. Eric and John have reorganized this chapter since 2003, updated it, and added a discussion of the PACTS “MPO Allocation”, as well as our nascent earmark work.
2. We have kept the 20-year financial needs forecast in order to emphasize the 20-year horizon of the Plan, and to reduce the projects aspects. It presents a 20-year \$1.024 billion regional need, and an estimate of \$501 million available.

Chapter 7: Implementation

Eric and John reorganized this chapter in two primary ways: (1) it emphasizes the increased policy aspect of the Plan, and (2) it highlights our recent use of the Plan’s Guiding Policies in the selection of our TIP projects. Figure 7-1 depicts on a map the desired outcomes for Years 2006 to 2012.

Air Quality Conformity and the Year 2030

Our Plan must pass muster with federal air quality conformity requirements. We will finish that effort after June 2nd. There is a very small risk that we would have to change the Plan in order to meet the requirements.

As we have discussed in the recent past, our federal partners also require that the Plan address Year 2030 conditions. We are writing a memorandum regarding an extrapolation

Agenda Item 5 – Selection of committee officers for FY 2007

The Nominating Committee will report.

Agenda Item 6 – Consent Agenda

Appoint John Bubier as a “Policy Committee Appointee” on the Transit Committee in place of Rick Michaud.

Tom Meyers is the new Chair of the Transit Committee.

EPA has given the Stormwater Working Group an award for the “rubber duckies” public outreach program that PACTS helped to finance.

Upcoming committee topics:

- Allocate 06/07 PCE \$ based on results of EPS reports and related scores
- Review MaineDOT collector paving project recommendations
- Land use policy case study scope decision
- Submit proposals to MaineDOT to compete for federal Safety funds based on staff analysis
- Update the PACTS public participation policy

Agenda Item 7 – Transportation Improvement Program Topics

A. Action on working group’s recommendations to address \$6,000,000 shortfall

During the past three weeks PACTS and MaineDOT staff have worked hard to meet MaineDOT’s desire for addressing this shortfall (discussed at the April meeting) at today’s meeting. It is a tall order. A working group met on May 8th and again today (May 18th). It is possible that the working group will not be able to make a final recommendation today given the complexity of the issues involved in dealing with \$6,000,000 in “bad news”.

As reported to you in an earlier email, the May 8th meeting preliminary recommendations were a combination of deferring several projects to our 08/09 Allocation, cutting several small projects, capping PACTS funding for the eight old projects that we have given 06/07 funds to, and a few other actions.

B. Action on Westbrook proposal tabled at the April meeting

Draft Motion

To endorse Westbrook’s proposal to use \$250,000 of the funds from a PACTS paving project (PIN 8821) on Bill Clark Drive for the paving component of a non-PACTS

intersection project (PIN 12293) at the intersection of Bill Clark Drive and the Westbrook Arterial.

Background

PIN 8821 is a PACTS paving project from the 2000/2001 biennium. Originally programmed for \$305,000, there is \$279,000 left in the PIN. Given that we no longer use “PACTS” funds for paving collectors, we will not participate in a future paving project there. MaineDOT will, however. PIN 12293 is a Congressional earmark.

The Policy Committee tabled this request in April for these reasons:

- They had just heard of a new hit that the PACTS Allocation was about to take, so they knew they might have to make some project cuts in the near future.
- There was some perception that using the “PACTS” PIN 8821 to help finance a “Non-PACTS” project (PIN 12293) might be undesirable.
- Westbrook did not attend the meeting, so was unable to speak on behalf of the proposal.