

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Policy Committee Meeting Notice

September 16, 2010
1:30 p.m.

GPCOG, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. **Call to order**
2. **Public Comment**
3. **Minutes of the July 15th Meeting**
4. **The PACTS Holding PIN Account**

Action on \$2 million recommendation from the Executive Committee
5. **The PACTS 2012/2013 Biennial MPO Allocation and the Credit Program**

Report in preparation for October 21st programming of funds for Credit Program proposals and of the \$15 million MPO Allocation for the 2012/2013 biennium
6. **Highway Simplification Study**

Action on staff request for members' input on proposal to reduce PACTS funding
7. **Consent Agenda**
8. **Executive Director's Report**
9. **Order to go into Executive Session pursuant to the Laws of Maine to discuss the Executive Director's performance evaluation, pursuant to 1 MRSA Section 405 (6) (A).**
10. **Adjourn**

The Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland Urbanized Area

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Minutes of the July 15th Meeting

Members Present: Kathi Earley, Chair, Portland; Kat Beaudoin, MaineDOT; Hank Berg, Public Transportation; David Cole, Gorham; Jim Gailey, South Portland; Tom Hall, Scarborough; Judy Harris, Portland; Mike McGovern, Cape Elizabeth; Tom Milligan (for John Bubier), Biddeford; Rick Michaud, Saco; Brooks More, Planning Com. Appt; Nathan Poore, Falmouth; Nat Tupper, Yarmouth; Conrad Welzel, MTA

Members Absent: Neal Allen, GPCOG; Mike Bobinsky, Portland; Jerre Bryant, Westbrook; Marnie Diffin, North Yarmouth; Joe Gray, Portland; Tex Haeuser, South Portland; Dan Jellis, Tech Com. Appt.; Tom Meyers, Public Transportation; Eric Pandora, Freeport; Tony Plante, Windham; Tom Reinauer, SMRPC; Bill Shane, Cumberland; Jack Turcotte, OOB

Staff and Guests: Maddy Adams, GPCOG; John Duncan, PACTS; Ian Hayes, Saco Intern; Paul Niehoff, PACTS

- 1. Call to order.** Kathi Earley called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. She welcomed everyone and introductions were made.
- 2. Public Comment.** None.
- 3. Minutes of the May 20th meeting.** *Judy Harris moved approval of the minutes, with David Cole seconding the motion. All were in favor of the motion.*
- 4. Annual Check-in on the Executive Committee process.** This is the second annual review of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee members, along with the new incoming members, conducted a review of themselves in June. The consensus of the group and staff is that the process is going well. There hasn't been as much activity at the Planning and Technical Committee levels as members would like to see. Nat said he thinks the Executive Committee is great and he appreciates not having to go through all the details at the Policy Committee meetings. However, as a Policy Committee, we don't feel as connected to the big picture and we still haggle over the money. Perhaps we should have a yearly retreat to address the big picture issues. Kathi thanked the outgoing members of the Executive Committee for their work.
- 5. Presentation of MaineDOT Draft Local Match Policy.** A handout regarding the local cost sharing policy was distributed. Kat explained that there was a sense of unfairness because the rural areas had one standard and the urban areas had another. The Legislature asked a group to work on this issue. They will be starting a "road show" on the policy and are trying to develop something that works for all communities. This policy could apply in the MPO areas if the MPO decides they want it to. It will take effect when there is a major treatment on a roadway but not on preservation or maintenance projects. It will not apply to High Priority Projects and projects already under construction. If a project is available for federal/state funding, they will negotiate with communities. For sidewalks – new or existing – they would be asking municipalities to pay only the nonfederal share; municipalities would pay only 20%. Drainage for right-of-way costs would be excluded. As it stands today, municipalities would be responsible for maintenance at 100%.

Kat reviewed the bullets on the handout. It has to be a major treatment in order for the policy to come into effect. The non-compact areas will be paying something when they never had to pay before. Urban communities would probably be paying less. Bike facilities are part of the highway portion so they are included. Kat responded to some questions from the Committee. Tom M. asked if you could

opt out of sidewalks. Kat said that you have to go with sidewalks unless there is some proven infeasibility. As for sidewalks on bridges, if it is a sidewalk leading up to the bridge then the state would pay for that. This policy was developed for the highway side of things. Kathi asked if a subcommittee should be formed or if we wanted to rely on John to keep us updated. John D. noted that if we wanted to implement this policy in the 2012-2013 year, we would want to make a decision about implementing this policy. Otherwise we will stay status quo.

Nat thought we should go down this road. Nathan noted that we don't fund a lot of money for this type of project so there wouldn't be a lot funded from our set-asides. We can opt in at any time. Jim G. asked if there would be a way to compare a couple of projects with the new policy and the current policy. Tom H. agreed that the analysis might give us a better sense of how this might affect us. Kat said she would help with this. PACTS and MaineDOT can work together to compare two projects under both scenarios. Mike M. and David didn't agree that that should be done. David didn't think it would tell the whole story; you could cherry pick the results to show how well it worked or didn't work. Mike M. thanked Kat for her report.

- 6. Report on Transportation Improvement Program priority setting work.** John D. explained the Holding PIN account status (as shown on page 7 of the meeting packet). The Executive Committee is working on this. Mike M. noted that we could fund several projects with the money from the Holding PIN; we should look at all the different projects and see the whole list to determine what can be accomplished. Nathan thought it should go into collector paving; that would be the quickest and easiest way to get some things done quickly. Kathi suggested that we evaluate the funding percentage targets and also look at the collector roads. There will be further discussion on this.

Credit program – there are four proposals. The Falmouth proposal was acted on when MaineDOT suggested that the money needed to be used soon. Portland and Cumberland spent municipal funds on rebuilding two projects. The Cape project was discussed at the Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday. The work in Cape is not meeting the state standards required by the current PACTS policy. Cape has spent a lot of their money and it would be great to recognize that through the credit program process, but at this time it doesn't meet the \$500,000 threshold. Mike M. explained that there are issues regarding the guardrail ends. They would have to spend another \$50,000 to get \$50,000 and they aren't even sure they could use the credit money. Nat suggested that we perhaps consider lowering the \$500,000 threshold. Mike M. responded that the Executive Committee has agreed to look at the issues.

Mike M. asked about the first bullet on page 9 regarding Falmouth's project. It says that Paul and MaineDOT have applied \$39,000 toward the PACTS-funded Falmouth Route 88 sidewalk project, and he asked where that authority came from. John D. responded that there was a project in Falmouth that we were very confident met the credit program standards and MaineDOT recommended using the money for this particular project to meet a MaineDOT project deadline. This was the first money used from the credit program. Mike M. said that he wants to make sure that we are following the policy established. The Executive Committee should tweak the policy to make sure that any money spent is authorized. ***Nat made a motion that we affirm the decision to approve the \$39,000 for the PACTS-funded Falmouth Route 88 sidewalk project and have the Executive Committee affirm the decision that was made. The motion was seconded by Mike McGovern.*** The Executive Committee will study the current program further and report back to the Policy Committee. We need to answer the following questions: should we be applying state standards? What is the control point for using the funds? Should the threshold be \$500,000? ***An amendment was made to the motion to include the Allen Avenue project as well for a total of \$135,000 from the credit program (\$39,000 for Route 88).*** The Allen Avenue project is still pending the three party agreement. ***The amendment was accepted. All were in favor of the main motion; Nathan abstained.*** The idea of an e-mail vote of Committee members was suggested if that would help to move decisions along more expeditiously.

7. **Action on proposals to amend planning budget and to fund new studies.** The Transit Committee has discussed this and voted on this item. *Conrad made a motion to amend the FTA 5303 funded section of the UPWP as described in the meeting packet (pg 10) and to amend the FHWA-funded section of the UPWP per the Executive Committee's recommendation (pg 10). David Cole seconded the motion. Motion passed with Mike McGovern and Judy Harris abstaining.*

John D. explained the FHWA funded tasks. The PACTS staff had recommended funding the Scarborough and Portland studies and a Bicycle Coalition of Maine study. The Executive Committee recommended fully funding the Portland and Scarborough projects and dropping the BCM project. *Mike M. moved approval of the two projects: \$20,000 for the implementation of the Portland TDM ordinance, and \$40,000 for the Oakhill pedestrian plan in Scarborough. The motion was seconded and passed, with Judy Harris abstaining.*

8. **Action on proposal to submit TIGER II application.** John explained. Judy asked how PACTS staff time would be paid for. She thought this proposal looked identical to the PACTS Bike/Ped Plan that was just done in November 2009. She said she would prefer to see implementation of the Bike/Ped Plan instead. Kathi explained that this would take the Bike/Ped Plan to the next level. It is a \$500,000 study with no PACTS money involved. Jim Gailey explained that South Portland has been working with Jon Dore of the South Portland Land Trust, Portland Trails, and others. Jon and Nan are doing all the work on the grant. They want PACTS to submit the grant because it might get better clout. Mike M. said he is uncomfortable supporting this grant because we don't have enough details. *Rick M. made a motion to support a staff recommendation that the PACTS Executive Director submit a TIGER II grant application on behalf of the South Portland Land Trust and its partners. The motion was seconded by Jim Gailey. Nathan offered an amendment to the motion that staff time spent on this project be reimbursed by the parties involved. The amendment was seconded by Judy H. David C. was troubled by the ambiguity of what we are being asked to do. We are putting the "meat on the bones" but he's not sure what that means. The motion passed with five in favor and four opposed. An amendment to the motion was made that the Executive Director be authorized to submit the pre-application contingent upon the Executive Committee reviewing the final grant application at its August meeting, and that the Executive Committee be authorized to vote on approval of the study. Judy seconded the motion. The amendment passed with two opposed (David C. and Mike M.).* Jim G. apologized that the specific details of this application were not available today. John assured members that in future meeting packets we will be sure to provide more information. Mike M. said that a cost estimate is needed.

9. **Consent Agenda.** *A motion was made and seconded to amend the PACTS TIP for 17 bridge-deck replacements on I-295. Motion passed.* A request was made to not include action items on the consent agenda. *David Cole moved approval of the consent agenda, seconded by Conrad. All were in favor.*

10. **Executive Director's Report.** The report was accepted.

11. **Executive Session to complete the PACTS Director performance evaluation** – postponed to September.

12. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Agenda Item 4: The PACTS Holding PIN Account

Member Resources: Executive Committee

Staff Resources: John Duncan and Paul Niehoff

Recommendation: Endorse the following Executive Committee recommendations for use of the estimated \$2,000,000 in Holding PIN funds that will remain after allocations next month to the Credit Program projects:

1. Allocate \$750,000 (\$735,912 in federal and state funds) to the Riverside/Warren project. This action constitutes an exception to our project cap policy justified based on the following reasons:
 - The overall project cost increased from \$406,000 in 2002 to \$2,747,000 today.
 - The original scope did not envision the need for a \$500,000 retaining wall at the intersection.
2. Allocate \$250,000 for the Transit Committee’s automatic vehicle location (AVL) project.
3. The estimated \$1,000,000 balance to be apportioned to each of our Set Aside categories for projects that are ready to go. Staff and the Executive Committee will present specific ready-to-go projects to the Policy Committee for action on October 21st based on the following estimates:

Collector Paving	57%	\$570,000
Bike/Ped	4%	\$40,000
Rebuild Roads	10%	\$100,000
Intersections	20%	\$200,000
STP Transit	<u>9%</u>	<u>\$90,000</u>
Total	100%	\$1,000,000

Background

Our “Holding PIN” account was created four years ago. It is a PACTS account at MaineDOT into which federal and state funds from projects completed under budget or withdrawn projects have been put. The Holding PIN funds been used to cover all additional costs of 2006/2007 collector paving projects (per a Policy Committee decision) and to cover the costs of other projects for which the Policy Committee has given specific permission – and will be used for our Credit Program projects. The current balance in federal and state funds (after applying funds to Credit Program project candidates) is \$1.5 million. That amount, when matched at our 25% local match rate, has a buying power of \$2 million.

The following six pages are the staff memorandum to the Executive Committee for their meeting last week. The Executive Committee's recommendations above do not include the staff's recommendations.

Policy Committee action on September 16th on the use of the Holding PIN funds would make action on the allocation of the \$15,000,000 2012/2013 MPO Allocation on October 21st much more manageable. (MaineDOT requires action in October.)

This is new territory for us all. ***The \$2,000,000 in the Holding PIN is available to use now*** – while the \$15,000,000 in the 2012/2013 biennium will not be available until next fall.

Staff offers comments on the various proposals before us:

- Our project cap policy would prohibit support for the Portland request for additional funds for the Riverside/Warren project. The Policy Committee and our TIP Process Committees have reviewed that policy several times and have confirmed it several times. Also, several of our member towns have spent significant extra local money in order to finance projects under this policy.
- While we treat Transit Set Aside projects differently, it seems fair to say that our project cap policy would also prohibit support for the Transit Committee's AVL proposal.
- The Cumberland Mills proposal – which came on September 1st – is one of many good proposals in our region. MaineDOT makes a compelling case for it. That said, PACTS staff finds the \$400,000 PACTS liability proposal problematic.

This memorandum (*for the Executive Committee's recent meeting*) presents the following:

1. Funds in the Holding PIN
2. Staff's recommendation
3. Ideas from joint meeting of Technical and Planning Committees
4. Portland email of July 28th and letter of August 20th
5. Memorandum on the transit automatic vehicle location (AVL) proposal
6. Cumberland Mills proposal from MaineDOT on September 1st
7. Collector paving projects

1. Funds in the Holding PIN

There is approximately \$2,036,000 in the Holding PIN. This is the sum of \$1,229,159 in federal funds, and \$298,022 in state funds, and the balance in local match based on our 25% local match policy.

Note that the \$2,036,000 is FEDERAL+STATE+LOCAL – using our standard 25% local match policy. Note that Portland is asking for \$735,912 in FEDERAL+STATE. We need to keep these distinctions in mind.

2. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends funding the following \$1,006,250 in construction projects from the PACTS Holding PIN:

- Exit 7 Pedestrian Connection Project at an estimated \$195,000
- Park Avenue Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvement Project at \$260,000
- St John Street Road Rebuild Project at \$551,250

The Exit 7 Project has been a priority for Portland, MaineDOT and PACTS for some time. The expectation from some bike pedestrian groups was the project was scheduled to be completed as part of the Exit Seven Safety Improvement Project but because traffic modeling and pedestrian counts are required after the Bayside Trail opens (which it has) the project was not designed and constructed as part of the current ramp project. It is our understanding that the safety improvement project will make accommodations for the connection. If this project is not funded at the current time and funded in the 12/13 TIP, the earliest the project could be completed is the summer of 2012.

Because of development time for road rebuilds if the St John Street project is funded immediately work can then begin with possible construction the summer/fall of 2011. Also, the intent would be to combine the rebuild project with the intersecting Park Avenue Bicycle/Pedestrian project for economies of scale and real project cost savings.

Funding these projects now will put the funds to use immediately. The 12/13 set asides can reflect the use of the funds now.

Related to staff recommendations for the use of the Holding PIN is the added recommendation of postponing at least Portland's collector paving projects within in the 12/13 TIP to 2013 based on extreme fiscal constraints facing the City. This is of course with the concurrence of the City.

3. Ideas from joint meeting of Technical and Planning Committees

On August 10th John Duncan briefed the members at a joint Planning/Technical Committees meeting on the status of the Holding PIN and the project selection process for the 2012/2013 biennium MPO Allocation funds. The members offered these ideas for the use of the Holding PIN and related PACTS policies:

1. Fund the Cumberland Mills intersection project (Eric Dudley). See below for proposal from MaineDOT.
2. Fund a future "vision project" (Peggy Killmer).

3. Use some of the available money to help fund candidates that just missed getting funded two years ago.
 4. Review our project funding cap policy (Dan Jellis).
 5. Fund ready-to-go projects (Paul Niehoff).
4. Portland email of July 28th and letter of August 20th

Staff Introduction: Portland is asking for \$735,912 in federal and state funds from our Holding PIN. They propose to provide \$142,437 as match – and thereby fill the existing \$878,349 gap in the project’s financing. As stated in our August meeting packet, PACTS originally programmed \$406,000 for this project in 2002 for the 2004/2005 biennial program. We added about \$500,000 several years later. MaineDOT says that we have programmed \$1,298,918 (federal+state+local). Kathi Earley and Shawn Smith can give the members a history of this project. PACTS staff have also been to many meetings on this project during the past five years.

July 28th email from Kathi Earley to MaineDOT, Portland and PACTS Staff

In order to attempt to fill the current funding gap for the Riverside/Warren intersection project, the City of Portland will be making two requests of PACTS through the August 3rd Executive Committee meeting and September 16th Policy Committee meeting.

Current figures provided by MDOT indicate that the total project cost now stands at \$2,747,000. This results in a funding gap of \$1,448,082.

On August 3rd the City will request that the Executive Committee act on a substitution of the Read St. collector paving project into Riverside/Warren; current figures indicate the value of the Federal/State obligation for Read St. stands at \$428,035.

Also on August 3rd the City will request that the Executive Committee recommend utilizing up to \$735,177 of the current Holding PIN to meet the remaining funding gap. (The City currently has \$415,000 obligated to this project, including the \$130,130 local match)

On Sept. 16 the Policy Committee will act on the Executive Committee's recommendations on how to utilize the \$1,527,181 in Holding PIN funds.

We appreciate the work everyone has been putting into this frustrating project and note that it will be very important for MDOT staff to be ready to present the reasons behind the costs increases in order for Tuesday's Executive Committee to be fully informed as they consider the City's requests. Mike L. - who do you suggest will present that material? I'd like to be able to check-in with them ahead of Tuesday's 8 AM meeting.

Excerpt from Shawn Smith email 7/28/2010 8:35 AM

Good Morning Kathi,

As requested, here is a breakdown of the estimated costs of the Riverside /Warren Intersection.

PE Expended to date: \$ 324,434.25 (including GeoTech & retaining wall Eng)

Const Estimate \$ 2,062,00.00

Construction Engineering \$ 250,000.00

Total estimated project cost is \$ 2,747,000.00

PACTS has funded \$ 1,298,918.17

Leaving a - \$ 1,448,081.83 difference.

The Construction value has increased significantly by the type of wall required as well as the lightweight fill. As explained at the May 3rd meeting, the soils at the wall location are unstable and are very sensitive to weight. In order to construct a wall that will hold up the widening and roadway as designed, we must go to a very specific wall design, lightweight fill, as well as excavate the existing material further into Riverside Street to eliminate the old heavier material and replace it with lightweight fill. We estimate that the retaining wall and the lightweight fill added about \$ 500k. Also, in looking at the estimate, the signal system is estimated at \$ 220,000.00 installed. I would assume this would account for the larger mast arm and base required due to the fact we will not have smaller mast arms at each quadrant.

I have attached the wall design for your information.

Letter On Portland Public Services Department Letterhead

August 20, 2010
John Duncan
PACTS Executive Director
68 Marginal Way
Portland ME, 04101

Re: Request from City of Portland for use of Holding PIN funds

Dear John:

The City of Portland has learned that the costs for the Riverside/Warren Intersection Improvement Project (PIN #5136.30) have again risen substantially. As of last March we were positioned to supply the necessary 10% local match of \$129,892 and the significant funding gap at that time of \$276,082. We are now advised that the 10% local match has risen slightly (to \$130,130) and the funding gap has risen substantially (to \$1,448,082). This extraordinary rise in costs simply cannot be borne by the City at this time.

We therefore respectfully request that PACTS consider supporting the use of Holding PIN funds to augment a recently approved project substitution in order to be able to proceed with this important project on the National Highway System. We understand that the recently approved substitution of the Read St. paving project has supplied \$427,300 in Federal and State funds to help cover the gap. The City has secured \$415,000 in local funds to date. Therefore, based on the table below, it appears that the City can supply \$142,437 of the remaining gap of \$878,349, making the funding gap we seek to fill via the Holding PIN a total of \$735,912.

	FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL	TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	PROJECT COST	FUNDING GAP
July 28, 2010 allocations	\$818,610	\$350,179	\$130,130	\$1,298,918	\$2,747,000	\$1,448,082
Read St. Substitution add'tl funds	\$398,813	\$28,487	\$142,433	\$1,868,651	\$2,747,000	\$878,349

We note that a recent Holding PIN action supplied \$638,000 in Federal and State funds from the scope change of our Baxter Boulevard paving project. We trust that will be considered as the PACTS Executive and Policy Committee take action on our request. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Very Truly Yours,

Michael Bobinsky,
Director of Public Services

Cc Joe Gray, City Manager
Kathi Earley, Engineering Services Manager

5. Memorandum on the transit automatic vehicle location (AVL) proposal

AVL/ITS project executive summary for Executive Committee Packet

BSOOB, CBITD, METRO, RTP, SPBS and YCCAC are working together on a shared Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Real Time Passenger Information project. This project would replace the providers' current AVL system with one with greater functionality and expandability. It would also provide real-time vehicle location information to passengers and the public (on the web, PDAs and/or in the form of text messages, for example). Real time passenger information is important because...

- ...It addresses the critical problem of the time-consuming call load. Transit staff spend a great deal of time answering calls to answer the simple question, "where's my bus."
- ...It helps to regionally integrate and enhance customer information, in line with the PACTS Regional Transit Coordination Study (2007), moving the region towards seamless public transportation.

- ...It is a component of PACTS' Destination Tomorrow strategies, specifically Strategy 36 Tier 1 Transit Coordination, and Strategy 34 Tier 2 Traveler information.
- ...It increases customer satisfaction through reduced stress and the perception of shorter wait times.

The Operations Committee has made great progress on this project. The Committee has drafted a Concept of Operations and agreed on the Essential, Desirable and Optional components of a new AVL system. GPCOG staff are in the process of drafting an RFP for the first phase of this project and expect to complete a draft RFP by mid-September.

While this project has been in the works since 2006, and transit providers have set aside funds to support the shared project since that time, due to a variety of factors (including increased costs and funds reallocated to pressing projects), the providers now find themselves short on funds to complete the first phase of this project - the acquisition of a new AVL and passenger information system for SPBS and METRO. While \$170,000 is available, the first phase is likely to cost in the range of \$200,000 to \$600,000 (different vendors have quoted divergent prices).

While PACTS Holding PIN funds could help implement this project, the transit providers recognize that, in these trying economic times, this particular project is not critical; lack of funding will not threaten transit operations. The transit providers wish to make the PACTS Policy and Executive Committees aware of this near shovel-ready project, but would not wish to jeopardize PACTS funding of more critical transit projects in the future.

Cumberland Mills proposal from MaineDOT on September 1st

September 13th: The Executive Committee did not include the project proposal in their recommendation to the Policy Committee. Staff can give an oral summary to the Policy Committee on September 16th if requested. Two days after last week's Executive Committee meeting, MaineDOT asked for a meeting with Westbrook and PACTS staff. We are going to meet.

Collector paving projects

September 13th: See below.

Agenda Item 5 – PACTS 2012/2013 Biennial MPO Allocation and the Credit Program

Staff Resource: John Duncan and Paul Niehoff

Recommendation: Accept the reports on the status of selecting projects under our Set Asides and our one-year pilot Credit Program

Background

In October the Policy Committee will program funds for Credit Program projects and for the balance in the Holding PIN (pending action proposed in Agenda Item 4 above), and also for the 2012/2013 biennium MPO Allocation. The MaineDOT's deadline for us is October.

Credit Program

Staff is working with five communities on proposals for the use of the Credit Program. Staff and the Executive Committee will present a recommendation on this to the Policy Committee next month.

Set Asides priority setting for 2012/2013 biennium

In 2008 we programmed \$14.6 million (federal + state + local) for our 2010/2011 MPO Allocation. Last January we adopted a \$15,000,000 budget as a guide as we prepare for programming the 2012/2013 funds this September. The "budgets" in the Set Aside narratives below reflect the \$15,000,000. We are glad to report that we appear to have **\$15,300,000** available to program, plus the Holding PIN funds described above.

The Executive Committee will review all recommendations before they go to the Policy Committee for action.

1. Bike/Ped Projects (\$630,000 budget)

In March, the Policy Committee endorsed a short list of proposals to undergo enhanced project scoping (EPS). **See chart below** which was reviewed at a joint meeting of the Technical and Planning Committees in August.) Based on the draft EPS reports and assumptions made to date the cost estimates have been revised and include our 25% inflation factor. Very briefly, the scopes and associated revisions were as follows:

- Portland Exit 7 connection improvements revisions have been made to the original cost estimate lowering the estimate from \$230,000 to \$155,353. The major revisions included changing a portion of the sidewalk from brick to hot mixed asphalt, deleting the Jersey barriers, and removing an assumed 370 cubic

yards of gravel based on MaineDOT's proposal to install the barriers and the gravel base.

- South Portland Eastern Trail connection revised cost from \$109,494 to \$151,420 consisted of minor unit price adjustments with the largest being an \$11,000 adjustment for a culvert crossing.
- Portland Park Avenue enhancements cost estimate was revised from \$187,000 to \$208,000 consisting mostly of additional ADA ramps with truncated domes and some catch basin adjustments. There exists a good potential of combining this project with the St John Street rebuild project to lessen the cost of both projects substantially.
- Cape Elizabeth Shore Road Path -- No EPS report was necessary although it was reviewed and determined to have accurate cost estimates. Cape Elizabeth is currently developing a construction design. Their request for the current full-length (~2 mile) scope for construction is \$980,000 and our set aside is \$600,000.
- Westbrook Downtown Streetscape estimate was revised from \$154,440 to \$125,950 based on ADA ramps which exist but only require truncated domes. These may need to be verified.

Staff recommended funding the top three candidates with either additional funding from the holding PIN or from the road rebuilds set-aside as explained below. Or the potential savings from combining St John Street rebuild with the Park Street project may result in cost savings enough to fund the approximate \$44,000 difference. (9-2-10 note: the estimates above do NOT include our 25% "inflation" factor so when adding 25% the total is approximately \$644,000))

At the August Joint Planning and Technical Meeting, Dan Jellis made a motion to fund the top three projects, with the goal of finding a way to fund the excess \$44,000. Maureen O'Meara seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

2. Rebuild Roads (\$1,575,000 budget)

On May 20th the Policy Committee chose three proposals for which EPS was done. **See chart below.**

With \$1,300,000 - \$1,500,000 to be programmed (considering NHS match ratios), we can only fully fund the top-ranked Portland - St. John Street project for the 2012-2013 TIP. This project has a cost of \$441,000 (per EPS) and \$551,250 at 125% including contingency.

Given the Cummings Road (South Portland) cost estimate of \$2,390,000 EPS and \$2,987,500 at 125% contingency, staff's recommendation was to fund it in two biennia as a "complex project":

- In the '12/'13 TIP PACTS funds Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Right-of-Way (ROW) along with an allowance for wetland permitting and mitigation
- In the '14/'15 TIP, PACTS fully funds construction and Construction Engineering (CE).

At the August Joint Planning and Technical meeting Eric Dudley made a motion to send the Portland St. John Street project forward to the Policy Committee for the 2012-2013 TIP as recommended, funding \$551,250 (which includes a 25% contingency). Maureen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Dan Jellis made a motion to work on the Cummings Road project as recommended in the staff report. This would mean funding preliminary engineering and right of way with allowance for wetland permitting/mitigation, aggressively pursuing the option of design exceptions, and assigning the remaining funds in the 2012/2013 set-aside to this project to use toward construction in 2014/2015. Mike Laberge seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Eric Dudley voting in opposition.

3. Intersections (\$3,000,000 budget)

We are going to use the entire amount on the Dunstan Corner project per the Policy Committee vote in January, 2010.

4. Collector Roads (\$8.98 million budget)

Staff is optimistic that the Technical Committee will have made a final recommendation to the Policy Committee at their September 14th meeting. The fall back date is at their October 12th meeting.

At the August Joint Planning and Technical meeting Paul Niehoff said that there were some discrepancies and inaccuracies in some of the data from Gorrill Palmer, but he felt comfortable with the short list of 12 miles which are viable candidates for the 2012/2013 program. The group had many questions about the formulas and technical information used. Several committee members wanted to see the pending/recent column brought up to date. Paul said that he will suggest to Gorrill Palmer that they add a column with dates of when projects were finished or when they are pending to.

Several people voiced the opinion that it is too late to go back and look at the formula now. Dale suggested that, prior to the next meeting, Gorrill Palmer communicates with each listed community and makes sure that their information is up to date by going through the list from project to project. Then the list would be sent out to the Planning and Technical Committees prior to the next meeting, and Gorrill Palmer would come in and make a brief presentation. He also made the suggestion of setting up a special work session to go over the report.

Dan J. made a motion to have Gorrill Palmer go over their data and come in to speak at a meeting. Maureen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Subsequent to the meeting staff has met with G-P, reviewed the definitions and ranking formulas and have discussed the findings with Al Presgraves (Executive Committee) and Dan Jellis, Chair of the Technical Committee. As of 9/2/2010 no definitive conclusions have been reached but most likely the ranking formulas will not be revised for the 12/13 TIP to be consistent with the 10/11 TIP.

5. STP Transit Capital Projects (\$1,152,000 budget)

The Transit Committee adopted the following list of projects on July 8th for action by the Policy Committee in October. Not all requests were funded, of course.

STP Transit Set Aside Recommendation for 2012/2013

<u>Provider(s)</u>	<u>Scope and Location</u>		<u>Cost Est.</u>
SPBS	Mill Creek Transit Hub	1	\$ 206,870
BSOOB	Bus Shelters	2	\$ 100,000
SPBS	Ops and Maintenance Buildings	3	\$ 238,153
RTP	Mobile Data Terminals	4	\$ 244,613
BSOOB	UNE - Downtown Bus	5	\$ 200,000
CBITD	Electronic Ticketing	7	\$ 115,000
Total			\$ 1,104,636
New Estimated Set-Aside (Mod 2)			\$ 1,152,362
Remainder			\$ 47,726

Rank	Municipality	Project Name	Scope and Location	* Proposed Cost Est.	EPS Revised Cost Est.	125% PACTS (rounded)
1	Portland	I-295/Exit 7 Pedestrian Connection	Marginal Way/Franklin to Back Cove	\$230,000	\$155,353	\$195,000
2	South Portland	S. Portland Eastern Trail Completion Project	Old Bog Road	\$109,494	\$151,420	\$189,275
3	Portland	Park Ave Bicycle/Pedestrian Enhancements	Between St John Street and Deering Ave.	\$187,000	\$208,000	\$260,000
4	Cape Elizabeth	Shore Road Path	Town Center to Ft Williams	\$980,000	\$980,000	
5	Westbrook	Downtown Streetscape Implementation	Downtown Wbrook	\$154,440	\$125,950	\$157,440
	Yarmouth	Bike/Pedestrian Path Along Rt 1	Hannaford Plaza to East Maine Street	\$400,000	\$400,000	
	Portland	Tukeys Bridge Connections	Both bridge ends	\$91,000	\$91,000	
	Gorham	Sidewalk Improvements at Gorham Village Center	Intersection of Routes 25 and 114	\$336,328	\$336,328	
	Falmouth	Gray Road Sidewalk	Rt 26/100 bet Leighton Rd & Presumscot River Bridge	\$244,560	\$244,560	
	Cumberland	Tuttle Road Sidewalks	Meadow Way to Twin Brooks	\$1,130,000	\$1,130,000	
			Total of Proposal Cost Estimates	\$3,862,822	<u>\$3,822,611</u>	<u>\$801,715</u>
			ESTIMATED PACTS Bike/Ped/Other Set Aside Amount:		\$600,000	\$644,275 for top three ranked projects

PACTS Rebuild Roads Rankings for 2012-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

						Points available: 80 Roadway Formula 24 Destination Tomorrow						
<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Scope and Location</u>	*	Original Cost Estimate	EPS Cost Estimate	PACTS 125%	Roadway formula score	Destination Tomorrow score	Adjustment to make roadway score 50% [Roadway score /80 points available X 50%]	Adjustment to make Destination Tomorrow Score 50% [Destination Tomorrow score /24 points available X 50%]	FINAL COMBINED SCORE [out of 100 points available]	Rank
Portland	St. John Street	from Park Ave to Congress St.		\$495,000	\$441,000	\$551,250	30.72	11.0	19.20	22.92	42.12	1
South Portland	Cummings Road	from the southerly Gannet Sr to Westbrook Town line		\$999,000	\$2,390,000	\$2,987,500	20.26	5.5	12.66	11.46	24.12	2
Freeport	South Street	(Lower Mast Landing by DOT)		\$700,000	\$1,193,000	\$1,491,250	19.46	4.5	12.16	9.38	21.54	3
South Portland	Highland Avenue	from Anthoine St to Scarborough Town line		\$1,120,000			15.41	3.5	9.63	7.29	16.92	4
Cumberland	Tuttle Road	Main Street to I-295 overpass		\$4,430,000			13.78	3.5	8.61	7.29	15.90	5

Total of Proposal Cost												
Estimates				\$3,314,000	\$4,024,000	\$5,030,000						
ESTIMATED PACTS Rebuild Set Aside Amount:				\$1,500,000								

Town	Street Segment Name	Segment Length (Miles)	Begin/End Points	Shim & Overlay	Mill & Overlay	Pending or Recent Project	Av FWD	Average PCR	Average AADT	Transit Route	2009 Preliminary Opinion of Probable Construction Cost*
Portland	BAXTER BLVD_3	0.7000	annah to 2011 section, revise from .3 to .7 miles		Y		70.74	2.75	8,410		\$ 661,584
Portland	BEDFORD ST	0.2800	Forest to Deering	Y			53.77	3.28	8,911	Yes	\$ 579,229
Portland	VANNAH AV_1	0.0600	Combine with _2		Y		77.70	3.64	8,733		\$ 38,100
Freeport	S FREEPORT	2.0400	Yarmouth TL to Lower Mast	Y		Y	46.10	3.94	2,281		\$ 918,600
Portland	VANNAH AV_2	0.2900	Combine with _1	Y			87.87	3.30	2,739		\$ 115,500
Portland	CAPISIC ST	1.2700	Brighton to Stevens	Y			51.91	3.52	6,926		\$ 636,108
Portland	INTERNATL PKY	0.3200	Combine with Jetport Rd.	Y			51.02	3.93	3,660	Yes	\$ 135,200
Biddeford	MAY ST	0.8630	Entire			Y	51.64	4.50	5,111		\$ 477,888
Cumberland	TUTTLE RD_1	0.2800	From RT 9 .28 miles	Y			51.97	3.75	4,992		\$ 125,504
Westbrook	CUMBERLAND ST_1	0.3900	Maine Street to .39 miles		Y	Y	39.61	4.50	17,047	Yes	\$ 295,888
Westbrook	BRIDGE ST_1	1.0000	Main St to Cumberland ST	Y			45.55	3.84	9,101	Yes	\$ 507,544
Biddeford	MAIN ST_2BID	0.4900			Y		52.24	4.50	3,246		\$ 271,832
Falmouth	US 1_3	0.8100	Bucknam to _2 section (Rt 88)	Y			40.52	3.87	13,462	Yes	\$ 491,344
Saco	OLD ORCHARD RD_1	0.4000	Ferry Rd to .4 miles	Y			50.78	3.22	3,381		\$ 180,200
Falmouth	US 1_2	0.2600	Rt 88 to section _3	Y			45.51	3.89	6,444	Yes	\$ 82,800
Portland	US 1 NBP	0.3600		Y			48.19	3.52	3,408	Yes	\$ 253,100
Portland	VERANDA ST	0.5000		Y			45.13	3.46	5,281	Yes	\$ 283,272
Westbrook	E BRIDGE ST	1.9100		Y			41.01	2.89	5,403		\$ 1,012,532
		12.2230									
Portland	PRESUMPCOT ST_1	0.2700		Y			45.24	3.85	6,110		\$ 157,300
Portland	CONGRESS ST	0.5200			Y		47.38	3.43	3,839		\$ 363,000
Old Orchard Beach	E GRAND AV_1	0.4350		Y		Y	40.30	5.00	6,545	Yes	\$ 201,300
South Portland	RUMERY ST	0.5500		Y			44.00	3.73	4,596		\$ 232,800
Yarmouth	YORK ST_YAR	0.0300		Y			44.00	5.00	5,580		\$ 20,000

Agenda Item 6 – Highway Simplification Study

Member Resources: Dave Cole and Mike Bobinsky

Staff Resource: John Duncan

Recommendation: Advise Dave, Mike and John regarding a PACTS position on MaineDOT's proposal to reduce the biennial MPO Allocations of federal and state to PACTS, BACTS, KACTS and ATRC

Background

Dave Cole, Mike Bobinsky and John Duncan are serving on Simplification Study committees. John is asking for input from the Policy Committee on MaineDOT's proposal to reduce the MPO Allocation after the proposed "fix and swap" of minor collector roads within the PACTS Funding Area. Dave, who is serving on the study's Policy Working Group, is at a Policy Working Group meeting today, so he will not be here today to share his insights. However, Dave would like to receive input from the Policy Committee on this subject.

The Policy Working Group and MaineDOT are proposing several fundamental changes to the state/municipal relationship and responsibilities regarding the maintenance and capital investments in state roads. The study process is a great example of collaboration between the state and municipalities. Go to the following website for the July 14th "Progress Report" to the Legislature: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/hss/index.htm>. See page 10 regarding the proposal to reduce capital funding to MPO's.

The premise is that MaineDOT would improve the minor collectors (or pay the municipalities to do so) throughout the state – and therefore PACTS and the other MPO's would not need to do so. Therefore, MaineDOT proposes to reduce our MPO Allocations commensurate with the lane miles of minor collectors in our regions. (MaineDOT has the authority to do this. The MPO Allocation is a Maine policy, not a federal one.)

See table on the next page. It shows that the proposed reduction in our MPO Allocation would be more than offset financially by the proposed increase in URIP funds to our municipalities.

John and Mike serve on the Urban Subcommittee. On October 5th the Subcommittee will meet again to consider the MaineDOT proposal and to submit a recommendation to the Policy Working Group on which Dave (and the BACTS Director) sits.

The Policy Working Group might decide today to convene another statewide "Sounding Board" meeting on October 7th at 1:00 to discuss the study's draft recommendations. The study's final recommendations will be presented to the Legislature in January.

We will discuss the Study again at our October 21st meeting.

Highway Simplification Study Proposal for Changes in Capital Funding in the PACTS Area

Dave Cole, Mike Bobinsky and John Duncan are serving on Simplification Study committees. They would like Policy Committee input on the MaineDOT proposal below to reduce PACTS capital funding.

Step 1

MaineDOT brings 223 lane miles of minor urban collectors within the PACTS Funding Area part of our region up to the proposed "fix and swap" standard. (The 223 is a MaineDOT estimate.) Note that there is discussion underway to have MaineDOT pay the towns to do the work.

Step 2

The 223 lane miles of minor urban collectors become the capital responsibility of the municipalities.

Step 3

MaineDOT increases URIP payments to municipalities in region by \$1,174,984. See below.

Step 4

MaineDOT reduces the PACTS MPO Allocation by \$904,000 (or \$1,807,000 biennially) in federal and state funds based on fewer minor collector miles being used in the MaineDOT MPO Allocation formula. This would be a 16 percent reduction.

\$1,174,984 minus \$904,000 is \$270,984 -- a net municipal gain.

	Column A FY 2011 URIP \$\$	Column B MaineDOT Proposal on Sept 9	Columns B Minus A
Biddeford *	\$196,203	\$297,413	\$101,210
Cape Elizabeth	\$80,672	\$140,984	\$60,312
Cumberland	\$81,672	\$96,954	\$15,282
Falmouth *	\$188,230	\$252,420	\$64,190
Freeport	\$136,520	\$167,978	\$31,458
Gorham	\$246,216	\$371,352	\$125,136
North Yarmouth	\$38,736	\$34,548	-\$4,188 **
Old Orchard Beach *	\$70,987	\$120,606	\$49,619
Portland *	\$596,968	\$784,900	\$187,932
Saco *	\$245,567	\$319,429	\$73,862
Scarborough	\$322,976	\$512,654	\$189,678
South Portland *	\$337,537	\$354,288	\$16,751
Westbrook *	\$207,235	\$273,473	\$66,238
Windham	\$257,300	\$392,324	\$135,024
Yarmouth	<u>\$80,516</u>	<u>\$142,996</u>	<u>\$62,480</u>
Total	\$3,087,335	\$4,262,319	\$1,174,984

* Includes Transit Bonus Program funds

** North Yarmouth would receive less currently if not for the Hold Harmless provision.

Note that the H. S. S. is proposing to eliminate the Hold Harmless provision.

Agenda Item 7 – Consent Agenda

Staff proposes to increase the UPWP budget for our 2010 Regional Collectors Assessment Study from \$11,000 to \$15,000.

Background

1. Gorrill-Palmer completed our first Regional Collectors Assessment Study last year for \$73,000. They did an excellent job, and were just under budget.
2. Gorrill-Palmer has done many studies for us, and several of them have required substantially more effort than in the contract – but the firm requested additional funding from us for only one of those studies.
3. The study is almost done. The firm is not asking for additional funding despite having spent \$12,300 so far. Gorrill-Palmer staff attended Tuesday's Technical Committee meeting in order to answer questions about the project ranking.
4. We have asked them to do more work than is in the contract:
 - Revisit the collector project ranking methodology, as requested by the Technical Committee.
 - Make extra effort – due to non-responsiveness by some of our members – to determine when certain collector paving treatments were done in the past.
5. The \$4,000 is available. In July the Policy Committee reallocated \$60,000 of \$64,000 in available planning funds to two new studies. That leaves \$4,000 to put to work.

By the way, staff will brief the Executive Committee next month on a proposal to authorize the Executive Committee to take action on proposals like this in the future. If the members like the concept then they will forward it to the Policy Committee for consideration and action.

Agenda Item 7 – Executive Director’s Report

1. After five years as MaineDOT’s MPO Coordinator, **Mike Laberge** has been offered a new position in local projects administration at MaineDOT. Mike has been a tremendous asset to the MPO’s. He was a central player in the evolving roles of MaineDOT project staff and MPO staffs regarding the administration of funded projects. He led the development of Maine’s Guide to Metropolitan Planning Organizations. We have been fortunate to have him work with us for so many years, and we will miss him.
2. **November 18th at 1:30** remains a tentative Policy Committee meeting date. There is a possibility that we will want a special session on the Destination Tomorrow Update (or we might need to adopt the Destination Tomorrow Update that day), so please keep that time reserved for PACTS.
3. The Maine Turnpike Authority Board of Directors has invited the Policy Committee to join them on **November 18th at 4:00** for a workshop on PACTS region topics. We did this several years ago.
4. These committees met in August and September:
 - Executive Committee (twice)
 - The Technical Committee (twice)
 - The Transit and Planning Committees met together
 - The Planning and Technical Committees met together
 - The *Destination Tomorrow* Update Subcommittee
 - Transit Committee (twice)
 - Transit Operations Committee
 - Traffic Signal Coordination Committee
 - Tri-Community Transportation Plan Committee
5. Summary of Executive Committee’s August and September meetings:
 - Developed \$2 million Holding PIN projects recommendations
 - Endorsed Portland \$567,555 request for a “project substitution” whereby that amount was transferred to the Riverside/Warren project from the Read Street collector paving project.
 - Accepted staff report on preparations for 2012/2013 \$15 million programming
 - Delayed action on several items.
 - Finalized today’s agenda and recommendations.
 - Discussed the following: John Duncan recently advised Mike Laberge that it is possible that we will spend only \$1,550,000 of our \$1,800,000 2-year administrative/planning budget by next June – due in great part to delays in starting studies by our municipalities. John asked if this might be a problem for MaineDOT as they assess **how much federal planning money to**

obligate to PACTS in the next biennium. Mike was unable to give a definitive answer, but encouraged PACTS staff to continue to push members to initiate the studies approved by the Policy Committee in May 2009.

- We need the Policy Committee to endorse a **Destination Tomorrow Update**. As such, we propose to give the **Policy Committee** a presentation on the draft recommendations at the October 21st meeting, and to ask the members if they would like to convene in November on this subject (in preparation for final action in December). September 13th update: we might need to endorse the Plan Update even sooner.

6. October 5th Executive Committee's draft agenda:

- Receive report from upcoming meeting of MaineDOT, Westbrook and PACTS staff regarding MaineDOT's push for us to fund a Cumberland Mills in coordination with two nearby MaineDOT bridge projects
- Finalize recommendations with staff on TIP 2012/2013 priority setting process, and the Credit Program proposals
- Recommend Policy Committee action regarding MaineDOT proposal regarding reimbursement of expenses for withdrawn Cape Elizabeth project
- Destination Tomorrow Update presentation
- Monthly status reports
- Proposal to authorize email votes and more Executive Committee authority
- Proposal to create public comment time limits at the Executive Committee

7. October 21st Policy Committee draft agenda:

- Presentation by MaineDOT of the results of the Portland North Rail/Bus Study, and the feasibility study (just started) for passenger rail from Portland to Auburn to Montreal
- Highway Simplification Study topics
- Action to program \$15 million for "MPO Allocation" projects, and the PACTS Credit Program
- Presentation on our Destination Tomorrow Update...in preparation for adoption of our 2010 update of our regional transportation plan in November or December.
- Other items from the Executive Committee meeting earlier in the month.

8. The Portland City Council recently passed an ordinance to allow developers to pay a **fee in lieu of building new parking spaces**. The fee revenues will go into a Sustainable Transportation Fund.

9. The **Gorham East West Corridor Study** will present draft land use, transit and highway recommendations at a public forum in October. Dan Bacon, Carl Eppich and John Duncan are members of the study's Steering Committee.

10. Thirty four (34) people attended four meetings recently organized by John Duncan and Pete Coughlan to discuss the draft urban recommendations in **Highway Simplification Study**.
11. GPCOG and a coalition of organizations (including PACTS) recently submitted a \$2 million regional sustainability **planning grant application** under a HUD/DOT/EPA program.
12. **FTA's Acting Regional Administrator** met here recently with GPCOG and PACTS staff.
13. DEP continues to meet with municipalities, MaineDOT and others regarding a proposal to **regulate road salting procedures**, and the **Culvert Law**.
14. Carl Eppich and the Regional Traffic Management System subcommittee continue to meet monthly. They are organizing a meeting with city managers regarding a proposal to **regionalize the management of traffic signals**.
15. John Duncan, Paul Niehoff and GPCOG's Eben Marsh are exploring with MaineDOT the concept of PACTS and GPCOG staff organizing and supporting an I-295/Turnpike (Scarborough to Brunswick) **incident management working group**. The SMRPC has been providing this service for a similar group for four years.
16. **GPCOG was awarded second place** for Marketing and Outreach - Public Sector for their "GO MAINE Nation" campaign from the National Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT).
17. Transit Committee August and September meeting topics
 - *Decided to organize a meeting with the Congressional Delegation* regarding recent cuts in federal support and regarding the importance of public transportation
 - Decided to write a letter to the Congressional Delegation in support of MaineDOT's application for funding under the "State of Good Repair" program
 - Portland sidewalk snow removal plan
 - Preparation for the upcoming FTA 5307 Formula Subcommittee's work
 - AVL Project
 - Destination Tomorrow Update presentation
 - Many of us rode the Downeaster to the meeting in Saco and back.
18. Planning Committee September 2nd meeting topics
 - Destination Tomorrow Update presentation
 - Topics for the committee for the coming year
 - \$2 million regional sustainability planning grant application to HUD/DOT/EPA

- Update on the Transit Focused Region initiative to a joint session of the *Transit* and Planning Committees.

19. Technical Committee August and September meeting topics

- Bike/ped and Rebuild Road projects.
- Collector Study II results and project selection process
- Highway Simplification Study

20. “Making Maine Work”, a current report by the Maine Development Foundation and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, says that upgrading the state’s transportation system is **one of the five most pressing issues the next governor should tackle**.

21. The following August 14th **Portland Press Herald editorial** says the state will need to make big decisions to pay for transportation infrastructure. It is a very good synopsis of the issues we face.

[Press Herald Editorial: Highway fund deficit poses hard questions](#)

The state is going to have to pay more for roads or make other, even tougher, choices.

As campaign season approaches, candidates can be expected to call for new thinking on old problems. We can expect to hear that consolidation and efficiencies will enable us to have the services we want without having to pay more. Thinking "outside the box" will save us. While we have nothing bad to say about creativity, the reality is that there is only so much we can expect to get from innovation when it comes to state road construction and maintenance.

Our aging infrastructure is crumbling. The existing revenue stream is woefully inadequate to keep up what we have, let alone expand the road system with bypasses and other projects that local communities want. If it weren't for bond issues and federal stimulus money, the situation would be even more dire, but those pots of money are not bottomless.

The choices that will confront the next Legislature and governor are increasing revenues, scaling back the road system or letting it continue to deteriorate -- not the kind of options that will get anyone elected in November, but something that should be at the top of the "to do" list after Election Day. The magnitude of the problem was made clear this week when the Legislature's Transportation Committee received a report on the structural gap in the current two-year budget.

According to the committee's analyst, lawmakers will have to come up with an additional \$350 million this year and \$370 million next year to complete planned road projects.

An attempt to raise the gas tax was knocked down by legislators last year, who were determined not to raise taxes to balance the budget. That is a laudable goal, and gas tax increases, which hurt rural residents more than city dwellers, are always a tough sell in a state like Maine. But supplementing the highway fund with other broad-based revenues such as money from the general fund or bonds can't be the entire solution, either.

Maine should determine how much of a highway system it can afford and adjust the gas tax to make sure that the people who use the system are paying their fair share for its true costs. Once we get there, we will be in a better position to look for creative alternatives for the future.