



Technical Committee Meeting Notice

May 6, 2008
8:30 a.m.

PACTS, 68 Marginal Way, Portland

Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Minutes of April 8th Meeting
3. MaineDOT Project Development and Procedures Review
4. Road Classifications, RRI and URIP Program Overview
5. Intersection Proposal Rankings
6. Future Items
7. Information and Other Business
8. Adjourn.

Next Meeting: June 10 at 8:30 a.m.

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

PACTS Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
April 8th, 2009 – 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Jennie Franceschi, Vice-chair, Biddeford; Mike Bolduc, Saco; Mary Ann Conroy, Old Orchard Beach; Eric Dudley, Westbrook; Doug Fortier, Windham; Dan Jellis, Yarmouth; Mike Laberge, MaineDOT; Adam Ogden, Cumberland; Dave Redlefsen, Public Transit; Skip Varney, Falmouth; Jim Wendel, Scarborough; David Willauer, GPCOG.

Absent: Dana Anderson, So. Portland; Bob Burns, Gorham, Chair; Jim Carmody, Portland; Don Chaisson, No. Yarmouth; Julia Dawson, SMRPC; Bob Hough, MaineDOT; Bob Malley, Cape Elizabeth; Dale Mitchell, Policy Committee Appointee; Al Presgraves, Freeport.

Staff and Guests: Darryl Belz, MDOT; Bill Bent, HNTB; John Cannell, P.E., MDOT, Region Mngr., Region 1; Mimi Cerveny, MDOT; Julie Chizmas, MDOT; Steve Colson, MDOT; Pete Coughlin, MDOT; John Duncan, PACTS; Carl Eppich, PACTS; LaRay Hamilton, Asst. Project Mngr, MDOT, Region 1; Jeff McEwen, FHWA; Sue McIntyre, GPCOG; Paul Niehoff, PACTS; Mike Praul, P.E., FHWA; Shawn Smith, MDOT; Gerald Varney, FHWA.

1. **Call to Order.** Jennie Franceschi, Vice-chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.
2. **Adoption of minutes of March 11th, 2008 meeting**
Dan Jellis made a motion for approval of the March 11th, 2008 minutes, seconded by Jennie Franceschi. Vote taken. All were in favor. Minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **FWD Overview and Traffic Coordination with Steve Colson of MaineDOT**
Steve Colson of MDOT provided a slide presentation giving an overview on the Falling Weight Deflector.
Among items noted were: how the sensors gather the data on the roadway and information about Uniform Traffic Operations. These mobile operations involve frequent stops and work activities without stopping at slow speeds. Traffic signs are put at two-mile intervals and for roadway testing. The FWD vehicle leads the caravan, which includes another traffic control vehicle and a secondary traffic vehicle. A “testing” sign is attached to the FWD vehicle and a “caution” sign is attached to the towing vehicle. The sign states “40-Second Stop” and states “Do Not Pass”. All the vehicles are equipped with lighting to warn motorists.
The process the caravan follows for “stepping into” the travel line from the road shoulder and then back to the shoulder area was explained. The operator of the second vehicle signals operation of vehicles to other vehicles. It is critical to their success during the testing operations. Once the “all clear” is sent, the FWD and primary vehicle moves into the travel lane to begin the information gathering process. During the testing, vehicles behind the caravan stop while the vehicles going in the opposite direction are allowed to drive by. They then pull over to let the vehicles behind the caravan travel by. The entire process is then repeated.
In limited viewing areas, appropriate warnings are used for curved roadways, hills, etc. An update that has taken place since 2004 is that the FWD has been replaced with a new one. Additionally, the vehicles now have attached signage that helps to speed up the process. They can usually conduct about seven tests per mile.

With reference to traffic control coordination, towns will have several options. One would be for MDOT to bring traffic control with them and supply the folks in the region. Another option would be if towns were able to secure a policeperson from each community then MDOT could forgo their own traffic control personnel. Yet, another option would be for towns to provide all of the traffic control support. Steve noted that they have driven the roads to look at the most efficient ways to conduct the test with FWD. Some roads will have situations with utility trenches. Most likely much of the testing will be conducted during the night. There may be day testing done for some of the urban areas. The FWD vehicle will be in the road about 25 to

30 seconds at a time. The testing is fairly low impact. MDOT will be coordinating traffic control with the communities. Paul will provide a contact list to Steve Colson.

Paul provided an eight-slide PowerPoint presentation that described among other things, road conditions, how the sensors work on the FWD vehicle, rating and deflection charts, etc. Other slides described “built” and “unbuilt” road sections.

Julie Chizmas, who is involved with the Highway Adequacy Index, noted that the data gathered from the FWD is used as part of that index process. The FWD was brought in to obtain information on condition ratings and also to give a numerical value. Initially, MDOT was going to do only rural areas but are now considering doing urban areas as well. However, the cost of doing urban areas is higher. That is why the DOT is looking for support from towns with respect to traffic control. Steve added that they will also be reporting the raw deflections. They adjust the deflections so that everything is equal and then they will do an average. MDOT is hoping to begin with the 15 communities in the PACTS region by June 1st and end by July 1st. He re-iterated to the group that towns providing a policeperson to assist with traffic control would make the process much more efficient.

A question and answer period followed. Among items noted and explained were:

- With reference to the technical data and a spike in the chart, Steve explained that a number over 20 or 25 means that the road is starting to get weak. He added, that the FWD will not only tell you what is happening at the surface but also up to five feet down. Julie added that the roads are rated as “poor”, “good” and “excellent”.
- Intersections will be done when the testing is completed at night when there is no traffic.
- Rain does not affect the results of the FWD system. But, if it is raining hard, it then becomes more of a traffic issue. They do prefer that the road surface temperature be no less than 50 degrees.
- When using the Highway Adequacy Index, they are not looking at the remaining surface life of the road on this data. But one can look at the score and note if a particular road’s condition can become a traffic and/or safety issue. It does not mean that a road shows as being in “critical” condition that it has to get done within the next year.
- With respect to road classification and designation, Julie explained that some roads are classified as urban because it is based on the State classification. She then explained the difference between state compact lines and federal compact lines. The State Urban Compact Line refers to who is responsible for maintenance. The Federal Urban Line refers to federal funding.
- If the FWD is a one-time stop evaluation, will the information devalue over time? MDOT may decide to re-look at the roads in 10 or 15 years. It is not a process that will be repeated every two years. Steve noted that there are usually no big changes in deflection within the first five years. The items that are deflecting really badly are hopefully things that will be done within five years.

Steve noted that he will give notice to towns when MDOT expects to be in the community.

4. Federal Standards and Procedures Review

A PowerPoint presentation entitled “Project Development Process using Federal-Aid” A Broad Overview” was provided by Jeff McEwen from FHWA.

Federal regulations are designed to make sure that public monies are spent responsibly and to prevent fraud. Regulations address such items as environmental impacts, impacts on certain population segments, impacts on historical structures/areas, equitable property sales, etc. The regulations do not say how to do things but the process must be reviewed to make sure that it fits the criteria of public responsibility, etc. The MaineDOT has its own standards. If towns have their own standards, they should review those to make sure they comply with the MDOT process. Three and one-half day classes pertaining to the many Federal regulations are held on a regular basis. Jeff will notify the group when the next one is scheduled.

Objectives of the regulations are to help in providing information on the different phases of a project's development and outcome which include the environmental aspect as well as the design and construction phases.

Phase I of the process is an environmental analysis, making sure that it meets certain standards. This includes an environmental impact statement (class I), and categorical exclusions (class II), such as projects you clearly know what the impacts will be and those projects where the impact will not be significant. The third segment of Phase I involves an environmental assessment (class III).

Phase I should include, among other things, an answer to the question "why"; include the development and examination of a reasonable range of alternatives; coordination and public involvement with local agencies, MaineDOT, U.S. E.P.A., etc. to determine significant impacts; and, coordinate with resource agencies for permitting, etc.

Phase II includes, among other things, design standards as described in the MDOT Design Guide – Volume I. The Maine design guide meets AASHTO standards. However, there can be exceptions and there is a simple process to follow when applying for an exception. A project would need to be documented that it was an exception. It was noted that certain types of maintenance projects do not have to meet ADA requirements. Phase II also includes plans, specifications and estimate. This involves contract requirements, plans reviewed and approved accordingly, and a completed engineer's estimate. Monies must be available for the project. Once all of the criteria have been met, the project needs authorization. This normally takes about three weeks. In summary, outcomes of phase II is the contract package (the PS & E), and the authorization to advertise and construct.

Phase III includes the construction phase. Advertisement is done and the bids come in. There should be a three-week advertising period. Bids are reviewed and must either be accepted or rejected. There should be no negotiating. A short discussion followed with regards to specification. DOT specs and testing schedules must be used unless otherwise approved. A proprietary items policy is about ready to be released. Once finalized, the guidelines will be available. A town's specs may be used but it must meet the overall purpose of the program.

With regards to contractors who have a history of doing poor work, the MaineDOT has a process where they qualify contractors. Forms are available to provide feedback and there is a committee to restrict them from bidding on certain jobs.

A discussion began on equipment items such as traffic control signals, etc. and buying American manufactured items. This is a mandate by the Federal Highway Administration. A waiver is needed in order not to have to buy an American manufactured product. If this mandate is not followed and a municipality buys an item that is not American made then Federal monies will not pay anything on that project. There is little flexibility. There is a minor provision where you can use up to \$2500.00 but cannot exceed that amount. Jeff advised the group to identify those things early on so a solution may be found.

Documentation must be a basis for payment and includes keeping items such as inspection reports, testing reports, receipts, etc. With respect to contract modifications, an independent estimate is needed and must include time with the CM. This should not be done at the end of the project. This is a very critical aspect. This includes testing with the Freeport Lab for IA (Independent Assurance). Mike noted that good coordination is needed and it is necessary to let the Freeport Lab know what is going on in the project.

Jeff spoke of quality control with regards to paving. The FHWA has been working with MDOT regarding discrepancies with paving. They are trying to be cost effective and have a good quality product at the same time. They will also be talking with the paving companies. With reference to specs, everybody that does testing must be certified.

In summary, Jeff noted that this is a broad overview and that more information could be provided and that they could return if more detail is needed. The MaineDOT local project administration manual may also be a good resource for additional information. Good contacts include Norm Baker, Mike Laberge, Shawn Smith, and Jeff. He reminded the group about significant items that pertain to historic properties (Section 106), and items that pertain to public properties, like parks (Section 4F). With regards to the historical aspect, an area just has to be eligible it doesn't have to be on the register. It's up to the State Historical Preservation Organization the SHPO. Enough scoping upfront should be done and you should know what you are looking at. If you do your planning and homework, Phase I is not that challenging.

John thanked the members of the MaineDOT and the FHWA for coming in. Shawn Smith noted that he would be willing to come back and describe each of the "boxes" on the process chart. A PDF version will be provided. Some of the processes have changed. It is set up as a PowerPoint. The chart takes everything into consideration.

5. Future Agenda Items

- Paul Niehoff provided a quick overview on May's agenda items.
- David reported that GPCOG had received 36 projects from rural towns and those projects were due March 17th. Projects for suburban towns are due April 15th. For those PACTS towns outside the funding area, PACTS is involved in providing input on those projects. These projects should be submitted to David. Projects from Old Orchard Beach, Biddeford and Saco go through SMRPC.
- The Collector Road Study is currently underway. Paul will be meeting with MaineDOT again next week. And, Gorrill-Palmer will also start acquiring data.
- Pete Coughlan will be coming at the May meeting to discuss road classifications, the RRI program and the URIP program.
- New ideas for local roads will be worked on at the next meeting. Mike Laberge noted that MDOT would like to utilize resources to improve the PACTS process and to educate the communities on how things are done.
- Carl Eppich will be providing an overview on traffic integration.

6. Information and Other Business

- Seven (7) Bike/Ped applications have been received, as well as seven (7) applications for intersections.
- The MaineDOT has met internally with regard to projects with significant budget issues and have discussed how to improve projects overall. Issues discussed included inadequate scopes and constructions costs. They concluded that better communication in the planning process would be beneficial. Among items that increase costs are traffic detours or traffic control. The goal is to get everyone together before a project starts and also to get a more accurate scope. Everyone should be on the same page, so to speak.
- On May 7, MaineDOT, Healthy Maine Partnerships and other health partners are holding a conference on "The Built Environment and Physical Activity" at the Eastland Hotel.
- Other items as described in the meeting packet.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Agenda Item 3. MaineDOT Project Development Process

Shawn Smith will give an overview of MaineDOT’s project development process. This not only will give PACTS members a better understanding on project development and what can at times seem like a lengthy process, but it will be an excellent follow up to the Federal process review in our last meeting.

Agenda Item 4. Road Classifications, RRI and URIP Program Overview

Pete Coughlan, Director of the Community Services Division and possibly Fred Hutchinson, Urban-Rural Initiative Program Administrator, will give an overview discuss road classifications, the RRI program (outside the PACTS funding region) and the URIP program. Given our collector road study and questions related to the road designations, funding and responsibilities we figured a “refresher” was in order.

Agenda Item 5. Intersection Proposal Rankings

The preliminary ranking of the intersection applications are as follows:

INTERSECTIONS					
Town	Location	Totals	Prelim Score	DT Score	Cost Estimate
Scarborough	Dunstan Corner	52.9	39.9	13.00	\$577,800
Westbrook	Cumberland Mills Triangle	39.2	25.7	13.50	\$1,300,000
Portland	Forest at Newton	37.8	27.3	10.50	\$93,500
Scarborough	Payne at Mussey	34.7	25.7	9.00	\$1,688,000
OOB	Saco at Emerson	31.5	22.5	9.00	\$210,000
Westbrook	Spring at Main	28.4	13.9	14.50	\$275,000
Portland	Forest at Kennebec	18.6	11.6	7.00	\$40,000
			Total*		\$4,184,300

A more detailed spreadsheet indicating the category rankings will follow.

Agenda Item 6. Future Items

- a. Our apologies to Carl Eppich who was scheduled to give an overview of the signal coordination findings and report recommendations from the study Julia Dawson originally initiated at the May meeting. Given the heavy agenda, this will happen in June.
- b. Yes it’s time again for new nominations for Chair and Vice Chair and the nomination committee has been working toward that goal. The roles of the Chairs and Vice Chairs have not changed, except that the Chair may choose to serve on the new Executive Committee.

Agenda Item 7. - Information and Other Business

1. Mark Eyerman and John Melrose gave a presentation at last week's Planning Committee Meeting in respect to the alternatives funding study.
2. MaineDOT individuals involved with project development will meet tomorrow May 7th with PACTS members currently affected by project cost overruns.
3. The MPO quarterly meeting was held April 11. Discussed were: projected 2010-2011 allocations, 6 year plan status, State/MPO/municipal 3 party agreements and the MPO guide.
4. Tomorrow, May 7, MaineDOT, Healthy Maine Partnerships and other health partners are holding a conference on "The Built Environment and Physical Activity" at the Eastland Hotel.
5. MaineDOT is currently scoping safety projects. If your community has an intersection of concern that may not be under consideration by MaineDOT, please let us know and we will at least coordinate that review. Projects must be submitted no later than mid-June or by our next meeting on June 10th.