

**Simplification Study
Policy Working Group**

**Friday, January 29, 2010
MaineDOT Room 216**

Attendees:

Policy Working Group Members

Elwood Beal, Lisbon Public Works Director
Michelle Beal, Ellsworth City Manager
Dave Bernhardt, MaineDOT
Bob Belz, Auburn Public Works Director
David Cole, Gorham Town Manager
Clint Deschene, Hermon Town Manager, (Co-Chair)
Greg Dore, Skowhegan Road Commissioner
Richard Freethey, Brooklin Selectman
Jim Hanley, Pike Industries
John Johnson, Jay Public Works Director
Rob Kenerson, BACTS
Galen Larrabee, Knox Selectman
Ryan Pelletier, St. Agatha Town Manager
John Sylvester, Alfred Selectman
Bruce Van Note, MaineDOT, (Co-Chair)

Policy Working Group Staff

Peter Coughlan, MaineDOT
Dale Doughty, MaineDOT
Kate Dufour, MMA
Fred Michaud, MaineDOT

Other Guests

Denny Keschl, Belgrade
John Duncan, PACTS
Glen Ridley, Litchfield

Co-chair Bruce Van Note convened the meeting at 10:10. During its three hour meeting, the Policy Work Group (PWG) discussed and took actions of the following issues:

Item 1. Revisions to Agenda

None.

Item 2. Administrative Matters

- a. *Comment Form.* The PWG discussed the comment response protocol. It was decided that staff will determine if the nature of the submitted comment is related to the Highway Simplification Study, thereby requiring PWG review and comment. Submitted comments that do not pertain to the study process will be answered by staff without further PWG input. Members of the PWG will receive copies of all study-related comments provided. At a minimum, staff will immediately acknowledge receipt of a comment with a “thanks for your comment, we will get back to you soon” response.

Item 3. Transportation Committee and Extended Deadline

Bruce Van Note reported on the Department’s efforts to obtain a Highway Simplification Study deadline extension from the Legislature’s Transportation Committee. As a result of the request, the deadline for completion of the PWG work has been extended from January 15, 2010 to July 15, 2010. Bruce reported that there was much interest among the members of the

Transportation Committee in the work of the PWG. The high level of legislative interest sparked a lengthy discussion about how the PWG would educate, not only the members of the Transportation Committee, but all legislators and the general public on efforts to reduce costs and increase efficiencies (such as this study) and the need for a more stable and sustainable source of road and bridge funding. The PWG concluded that education, messaging and proposal “packaging” are vitally important in the success of the Group’s efforts.

Item 4. Subcommittee Reports

- a. *Standards/Cost Subcommittee.* Subcommittee co-chair, David Bernhardt provided an update on the Subcommittee’s efforts. Since being created by the PWG, the 11-member Subcommittee has met twice and identified several issues to discuss, study and research. To date, the Subcommittee has focused its attention on examining how local-level and state-level road maintenance standards, policies and summer and winter road maintenance costs compare. The Subcommittee has scheduled meetings for Friday, February 5th and Tuesday, February 23rd. Both meetings will run from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. More information about the subcommittee process is posted on the Department’s website.
- b. *Urban Issues Subcommittee.* Subcommittee co-chair, Dale Doughty provided an update on the Subcommittee’s efforts. Since being created by the PWG, the 7-member Subcommittee has met twice and identified several issues to discuss, study and research. To date, the Subcommittee has focused its attention on developing a winter and summer road maintenance survey to collect municipal cost data to facilitate an “apples-to-apples” comparison with state-level cost data. The Subcommittee has scheduled meetings for Friday, February 5th and Tuesday, February 23rd. Both meetings will run from 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. More information about the subcommittee process is posted on the Department’s website.

Item 5. Need for New Subcommittees

The PWG determined that depending upon the study results, a third “public education” subcommittee will likely be needed to educate policymakers and the public about the findings and recommendations of the PWG.

Item 6. Road Classifications.

MaineDOT’s Peter Coughlan provided the PWG with a short tutorial on the existing federally-mandated highway classification system by providing an overview of the basic differences in criteria of the road classifications, which include arterials, major collectors, minor collectors and local roads.

Item 7. Clarification of Road Classification Problem – Is there a need for simplification?

The PWG members were asked to provide thoughts on three debate-generating questions: 1) do you favor adopting a “24-7-365” (i.e., one level of government having fulltime responsibility on a section of road) system on rural collector roads; 2) does the existing “shared” responsibility system lead to poor investment decisions and customer service; and 3) are there other methods for determining responsibility over the rural collector road system. In response to these questions, the PWG agreed to explore the “24-7-365” concept, but withhold taking a

position on the proposal until the details were developed and reviewed. The Department was charged with developing the details and all necessary accompanying documents (i.e., the spreadsheets, etc.) for review and discussion at the PWG's next meeting.

Item 8. Future Meetings

Friday, February 12, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at MMA.

Friday, February 26, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at MMA.

Item 9. Other Matters

None

Item 10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.