



## Public Transit Advisory Council

### Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2018

Note: Decisions and commitments in ***bold italic*** type.

Meeting was **called to order** at 12:31 by Mary Ann Hayes, at MaineDOT Headquarters, in Augusta.

Members attending: Mary Ann Hayes (chair), Barbara Schneider, Kalie Hess, Jessica Maurer, Tom Meyers, Sandy Buchanan, Al Schutz, Duane Scott, Theresa Savoy, Giselle White, Jennifer Williams, Zoe Miller, Chris Hall, via phone: Tom Reinauer, Connie Reed, Marcia Larkin, Lisa Feldman, Alley Smith, Carla Dickstein.

Members absent: Coretta Cooper, Dana Knapp, Deborah Deatrick, Jonathan LaBonte, Rebecca Grover, William Shane, Rep. Bettyann Sheats, Sen. Kimberly Rosen, Patricia Quinn

Liaison attending: Roger Bondeson (DHHS) for Stefanie Nadeau

Liaison absent: Bill Hurley (DOL)

Other attendees: Lori Brann (clerk), Jo Morrissey (MaineHealth) Rich Rothe, Amy Rau, Jennifer Grant, Scott Rollins, Victor Cociu, Brianna Littlefield, Sarah Mount, Kelly Arata, Ben Condon, Barbie-Jo Lord, via phone: Leah Sirmin, Leslie Raft, Wayne Emington, Bucksport Seniors

**Introduction:** Welcome by Mary Ann. Participants introduced themselves. Mary Ann noticed that the agenda was full and advised participants to review the MaineDOT update for progress on other items. Asked non-members to hold comments until public comment period at end.

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting minutes:** *Jess moved to adopt the minutes with correction of Barbara Schneider's name. The motion was seconded by Tom M and approved unanimously.*

**Long Range Plan:** Jennifer Grant and Scott Rollins made a presentation regarding the Department's Long Range Plan currently under development. (See presentation and polling questions/results at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>). Feedback from the group: Can PTAC members promote opportunities for public feedback? Scott – once developed, the website will be shared with all members for further exposure. Comments: Need a focus on the disabled population that can work, need to align economic development, housing, healthcare with workforce, millennials and younger population. Jen/Scott - most trends are interconnected, more needs expected to come up. Will be meeting with other state agencies, Labor, DECD, etc. PTAC members encouraged asking meaningful questions about likely changes in transportation needs compared with today. The micro-prioritization among clear trends did not materially add value to the planning process. Scott replied that transportation is our focus, but want to coordinate with other needs, noting access to opportunities would be distinct subject in plan. This initial presentation was high level; follow up survey in the fall will include more focus areas. Lively discussion around presentation. Cooperation/coordination, and information sharing should be applied to transportation. Needs for older/younger populations come together. Hard to convince town governments that having a public transportation system is a marketing asset for the municipality.

**DHHS Transportation Programs:** Stephanie Nadeau has been named official liaison for DHHS. Roger Bondeson, Director of Operations, present to report on DHHS transportation programs. Roger presented a Powerpoint presentation on covered transportation services for 4 programs <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>. Roger manages non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). In total there are 4 transportation programs that cost \$69M per year. Questions: Can attendants/escorts ride for free-yes, also a second child can ride if there is room. The group wanted to know the cost savings by using the brokerage method, the answer was no real savings, but the system is compliant with federal procurement rules requiring fair and open competition. Roger said there is more capacity today than pre-2013; Sandy said there is more capacity that is not being utilized. Group would like data on average cost per person for NEMT rides. Other functions of the office: oversight of service agreements, audit for background checks, random sample, defensive driving, first aid. Staff of 2 – handles 100 contacts per day oversight of broker system. Complaints are trending downwards every year. 120-150 missed trips/week. Comment made by group that before 2013 there was a better coordinated system comment. Not servicing citizens well if there are empty vehicles due to federal constraints.

**Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA):** Jo Morrissey (see presentation at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>). How can this subject link with transportation needs? Bigger picture, connections with healthcare, transportation, economic development, bike paths, needs more coordination. Urbanization, environmental factors, smaller cities growing, smart growth, plan environmental impact, tie in workforce, health professional shortage area. Schedule of statewide CHNA meetings will be shared with group.

**Local Coordinated Plan (LCP):** Mary Ann noted there are a lot of overlapping plans with public outreach processes on the same cycle. Long Range Plan, CHNA, LCP. Lori explained the prior process for public meetings. Need suggestions from the group on recommendations for more effective public participation. Important to be inclusive while following federal requirements. ***It was agreed that it was best to piggyback on other meetings/events rather than invite the public to a generic event.*** July 20 is Disability Pride Day at the Capitol -- 2<sup>nd</sup> annual group meeting primarily attended by people with disabilities sponsored by Disability Rights Maine. ***All agreed this event was a priority.*** For reaching elderly and low income, it was suggested that the area agencies on aging (AAAs) and Community Action Programs (CAPs), would be best choices for hosting events. Lori reminded the group that the plan needs to identify needs, priorities, and strategies.

**Mobility Options:** Amy Rau (see presentation <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>). As recommended in the Strategic Plan and by Peter Schauer, Amy is hoping to start an aggressive marketing campaign through social media via MaineDOT's Communication's Office. Marketing plan will be created with assistance from Meg Lane and involving MTA. ***Consensus of the group was supportive.*** Biggest challenge is pushing it out to the people who need to see it. Sandy highlighted success of new Sugarloaf Express service.

#### **VW Settlement Funds:**

**Low-No Electric Bus Grant:** Mary Ann presented an overview of current status and due diligence work done since March meeting with Ben Lake from Maine Clean Communities/GPCOG. Low-No grant opportunity posted and MaineDOT will apply for funds on behalf of Metro and Shuttlebus to use \$3M of VW settlement funds for match of \$5.5M federal grant if awarded. (see presentation <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>). Ben gave an overview of his visit to MA to review the electric buses, good/bad. Will also apply for overhead chargers to decrease worry about the charging system.

**Review of rural transit fleet pre2009 vehicles eligible for funding:** Budgeting \$2M of VW funds to cover 100% of the local match (FTA paying 80%) upgrading up to 84 remaining eligible transit buses. Will

stretch bond funds further for 100% replacement for gas powered vehicles that do not qualify for VW program so everyone is assisted regardless of their fleet being diesel or gas.

Other VW multimodal investments budgeted are 4 electric drayage trucks at International Marine Terminal and \$.5M for ferry engine repowers for each of Maine State Ferry Service and Casco Bay Island Transit District. In sum, most of the funds are programmed for transit fleet upgrades.

Does the PTAC support the Department's plan? The focus on transit, leveraging and broad disbursement of the funds was applauded. Several members congratulated MaineDOT, GPTD, BSOOB and Maine Clean Communities for doing such thorough due diligence on the electric bus opportunity, allowing a change in opinion compared with March meeting. ***Sandy moved for the PTAC to endorse the Low No Electric Bus application and overall proposed use of VW settlement funds. Kalie seconded. Passed unanimously.***

**Veterans Study bill:** The bill is sitting on the Special Appropriations Table along with many other worthy bills awaiting funding. The Legislature is not yet scheduled to return to complete its business. Giselle noted that her program has run out of funding to hire transit providers to provide rides to Togus. Members were advised to contact their legislators if they believe the bill is important.

**Bus Driver Certification Program:** Carla reported on research conducted. She believes the best host of the program would be the Maine Community College System. Class A bus driver program will extend to Class B for endorsement to include badges. Salary range is an issue. Range averages \$21/hr. ***Al agreed to contact Carla to make a connection with the Maine Transit Association for follow-up.***

**Additional PTAC Members:**

Housing/developer member: Barbara Schneider proposed Deirdre Wadsworth, President of Hardy Pond Construction, as new member to represent housing. She is interested in the appointment. Several members were familiar with her work and expressed enthusiasm for recommending her appointment. ***This recommendation for the Commissioner to make the appointment was made by consensus.***

Business member dependent upon public transportation: This is the remaining vacant required seat. Chris Hall proposed that WEX be asked to participate as they need to create a transportation demand management plan for the 800 employees who will be working in the downtown. Chris also noted he would be meeting with tourism businesses, several of whom have identified public transportation as a critical need. ***The group authorized Chris to invite WEX or an enthusiastic tourism business to consider representing businesses on the Council and get back to Mary Ann with results.***

**Next Meeting Date Set: October 18 in the morning.**

**Public Comment:** None was offered.

**Member Roundtable:** Members expressed satisfaction with the meeting.

**Working Groups:** Mary Ann said staff would solicit advice and participation from members on individual projects, including LCP progress and performance measure development, prior to the October meeting.

**Adjournment: 4:15.**