



**MUNICIPAL PARTNERS TRANSIT COMMITTEE
BREWER AUDITORIUM CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Present

Lori Brann, MaineDOT

Jeremy Caron, City of Brewer

Martin Chartrand, Transportation for All

Sherri Clark, Community Connector

Jeremy Clay, Community Connector

Michael Crooker, City of Bangor

Sean Currier, Town of Hampden

Karen Fussell, City of Brewer

Ron Harriman, City of Old Town

Rob Kenerson, BACTS

Mark Leonard, Town of Veazie

Connie Reed, BACTS

Janna Newman Richards, Town of Orono

Belle Ryder, Town of Orono

Tom Spitz, University of Maine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. with introductions and a request for nominations of a Committee Chair.

Selection of Committee Chair and Co-Chair: Karen Fussell made a motion to nominate Mike Crooker as Chair. Sean Currier seconded. Motion approved.

Karen Fussell made a motion to nominate herself as Co-Chair. Belle Ryder seconded. Motion approved.

Committee Purpose, Code of Conduct and Meeting Etiquette: The primary purpose of the Committee is to foster partnerships and enhance communication and coordination between the MPO, public transit provider, and the communities that contribute to the public transit system in the Greater Bangor Urbanized Area. No voting rights are extended to the decision-making boards of BACTS or any transit provider; however, the Committee may offer recommendations and suggestions to the decision-making bodies.

Meeting conduct and etiquette is intended to maximize meeting time and discussion quality, ensuring respect is given to individual's opinions and time. Discussions will be limited to the topic at hand. Matters outside of the agenda topic may be raised when the Chair requests other business. Everyone is encouraged to participate and communicate honestly and candidly in a respectful manner, being mindful to frame criticism in a positive manner.

MPO 101 Presentation: An MPO is an organization that makes regional level transportation plans and policies and has responsibility for determining how to distribute federal transportation funds within the region. MPOs are required to undertake a (3C) continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation

planning process to produce the region's long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The five core functions of an MPO are:

1. Establish a setting for overall coordination and consensus building. In addition to the Municipal Partners Transit Committee meeting every other month, BACTS Policy Committee meets on a monthly basis.
2. Develop a two-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which outlines planning studies, research and tasks to be accomplished. This Program is the basis for the contract between BACTS and MaineDOT.
3. Maintain a 20-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan, updated every five years, detailing regional goals and policies, performance goals and targets, investment priorities and anticipated available funding. Since BACTS neither owns nor operates the transportation systems served, it is not involved in implementing the transportation priorities established. Because of that, it is very important that all member communities participate in and understand the goals, policies and priorities outlined in this plan.
4. Develop a 4-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is updated every year, to allocate and program limited federal funding to the region's priority projects. MaineDOT would like conversations about transit projects included in the TIP to happen earlier with more coordination. MaineDOT is currently drafting the 2018-2021 STIP which is based on Section 5307 actual expenditures for the last fiscal year. MaineDOT is requesting a six-year operating plan for transit to identify projects and budgets before TIP/STIP documents are prepared.
5. Involve the public in development of plans and programs. Public notice of activities and projects, with public review and comment periods are provided for each program and plan. In some cases, public forums and workshops are also held.

With the regulatory emphasis on performance-based planning, there is an increase in the amount of data collection and reporting required on performance and progress of projects which receive federal funding.

Long-Range Plan – Transit: The BACTS 20-year plan is currently being updated. Visioning generates a common goal and offers a possibility for fundamental change; giving the group something to move toward. The following items were discussed as issues to be addressed and/or resolved within the next 10-20 years.

- Extending evening/nighttime bus service system-wide.
- Developing commuter Park and Ride lots with a designated transit stop to reduce traffic congestion.
- Using technology to provide additional service and service coordination (real-time apps, shared ride services, links between other public and private transit providers to make services more accessible).
- Coordinating with transit providers outside of the Greater Bangor area for more efficient and convenient connections.
- Addressing sprawl issues where development is geographically challenging to provision of transit service. The trend is that Millennials are moving into urban areas, but Seniors are aging in place.
- Protecting the environment by ensuring newly acquired transit vehicles are environmentally friendly and low-floor.

- Coordinating between the transit operator and municipal planning staff/decision-makers to include public transit factors as part of the application and approvals process for new and proposed developments.
- Connecting services [for students] to regional transit hubs (e.g., Boston, New York) for travel from school to home easily. Non-Maine residents are entering post-secondary schools in this area at a large rate.
- Exploring train service in the area.
- Separating right of way or otherwise creating bus way alternatives.
- Providing convenient and reliable transit service for telecommuting workers employed by organizations in larger cities (outside of the area) who occasionally travel to and from the employer's office.
- Linking transit in the area to other systems further north of Bangor and into Canada through a coordinated system.
- Coordinating transit services from Brewer to Bar Harbor/Acadia National Park to eliminate congestion through Route 1A from Brewer into Bar Harbor and into ANP.
- Organizing services and marketing between other regional and inter-city transit providers coming into and out of the Bangor area so travelers make seamless transitions from one service to the next without too much layover time.
- Partnering with the local business community to fund additional transit service geared toward enhancing customer/client base experiences (i.e., EMMC – parking issues, several employees, patients and visitors each day).
- Partnering with businesses to institute promotional programs (e.g., a paid transfer program with retail establishments where the retailers would provide customers with free transfer vouchers to ride the bus from their store).
- Creating more frequent and closer to door access for high traffic medical facilities and complexes in the area.
- Creating a system that meets the need of, and supports, the level of importance placed on transit, by making it more accessible, available, convenient, frequent and connected to non-motorized/active transportation infrastructure.
- Determining impacts and role of autonomous/self-driving vehicles to public transportation services.
- Making bus services easier to use by clarifying where or when the bus is coming, providing route maps that are explicit and clear, as well as available where riders are (i.e., bus stop locations) and providing real time information on where the bus is and where it will be.
- Utilizing GPS/GIS technology integration for bus route maps.
- Ensuring transit can accommodate the different types of active transportation that are also used by bus riders to ensure easy transition from one mode to another (e.g., BBOE route occasionally cannot accommodate all the bike space required for riders).
- Changing the perception of transit use by providing assistance to those needing extra guidance on how to use the bus as well as increasing marketing and outreach efforts to explain bus services.

Other Business: The Tri-State Transit Conference is being hosted in Freeport and will be held next week (September 12-15). Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire are all included in this conference, as well as various planning agencies, vendors, and speakers. Several of the break-out sessions will cover compliance topics. The keynote speaker is Travis Mills, who among other things, will bring the perspective of the

disabled community in regards to transit. The conference is open to everyone and if anyone would like more information they can contact Lori Brann or Connie Reed.

Community Connector has established a public advisory group for transit to obtain regular rider feedback and understand barriers that prevent some individuals from being able to use the bus. This group meets regularly with representation from Transportation for All, an advocacy group in the Bangor area that was spun off from the Food and Medicine group.

Community Connector provides group sessions to those requesting assistance in learning how to use the bus. Sherri Clark gives presentations to groups with populations of individuals who would benefit from learning how to use the bus service, such as the Ellen Leach House and the Bangor House. If anyone would like to have a session scheduled for their group, they should contact Sherri. Transportation for All also spearheads the Bus Ambassador program to educate and help individuals needing assistance one-on-one to learn how to use the Community Connector system.

Funding is uncertain because it is vulnerable to current administration priorities and those priorities change when administration changes. Federal funding comes with requirements and mandates. The need for non-traditional grant and/or funding options for public transit was discussed.

To help clarify roles and responsibilities of the operator and the MPO in relation to transit planning, the rule of thumb is regional issues, questions and ideas, such as demographics and interconnectivity should be directed to BACTS and operational issues, questions, and ideas (e.g., routes, stops, vehicles) should be directed to Community Connector.

Future Agenda Items: Other items relating to transit (either public or private transit operators) in the area and the types of topics the committee would like to cover in the meetings should be sent to Connie.

Interest was expressed in member communities having more involvement in the budgeting and allocation of costs for the Community Connector bus service. It was suggested that the Community Connector provide a brief overview at next meeting. The City of Bangor is examining the current process of budgeting and allocating costs with expected changes and opportunities for improvements and clarification. The need for financial information to be shared with member municipalities with more clarity and earlier in the process to be able to adequately prepare for the budget process is recognized.

A future agenda item will be Community Connector "Finances 101."

Adjourn: Karen Fussell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Belle Ryder seconded the motion.