**Public Transit Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2020 (FINAL)**

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

Members in attendance: Sandy Buchanan, Chris Chop, Mary Ann Hayes, Jonathan LaBonte, Rick Langley, Susan Lessard, Jess Maurer, Zoe Miller, Al Schutz, Duane Scott, Richard Taylor, Giselle White, Jen Williams. Attending by phone: Lisa Feldman, Katherine Freund, Casey Gilbert, Greg Jordan, Marcia Larkin, Patricia Quinn, Connie Reed, Tom Reinauer, Rep. Bettyann Sheats, Paul Towle.

Liaisons in attendance: Carolann Oullette-DECD, Roger Bondeson-DHHS, Kimberly Smith-DOL

Others in attendance: Lori Brann-clerk, Barbie-Jo Lord, Jen Brickett, Michael Hallundbaek, Nate Moulton, Steve Cole, Teresa Savoy, Elswyth Strassberger, Bruce Van Note. Attending by phone: Joy Saucier, Jay Kamm, Dawn Roberts, Liz Ray.

The meeting was called to order at 9:04. Welcome by Mary Ann and introductions by all. During introductions, Marcia shared this comment received from a rider of the Lynx who appreciates their service: “I’m now able to see my husband of 65 years in a nursing home.”

No changes were made to the agenda.

**April 2019 minutes. *Motion to approve as presented by Jess, seconded by Duane. Unanimous.***

Working Cars for Working Families Program: Description of this program provided by Liz Ray. It is a program under development by the Office of Family Independence at DHHS and is a statutory requirement. A competitive procurement process will follow in the spring to seek vendor or vendors to provide transportation options for eligible families in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program with the launch anticipated by September 1, 2020. Hoping to have rulemaking completed in early May with an RFP posted by the end of May. The goal is to solve transportation barriers for families and to find solutions for members to engage in the workforce. It is understood that there may be multiple options and creative solutions are needed. The name of the program is deceptive as access to public transportation is one of the options that will be considered.

PTAC: Mary Ann provided an overview of the statute changes regarding terms. Members’ terms have been adjusted. She then reviewed the by-laws and noted that the PTAC aims to meet twice per year with a statutory requirement of at least once. No changes were proposed to the by-laws.

Blue Ribbon Commission: Jess updated the group of the five meetings held to-date. A draft document was developed outlining information collected and considered. A subcommittee is trying to reach consensus on next steps. One recommendation is to allow the commission additional meetings over the five that were initially authorized. They are seeking four additional meetings and to issue a final report. Topics at the meetings have included: DOT’s reliance on $100M in annual bonding and existing federal funding; the current unmet need of $232M; decreased reliance in bonding; increase in the gas tax, tire/auto parts, car rentals; adding tolls to non-toll roads. The group understands that finding solutions that are politically acceptable to all committee members is challenging.

Economic Development Strategy: Monthly meetings were held to discuss economic issues in Maine and in the early fall held listening sessions across state. The final report included three goals: Increase workforce by 75K over next 10 years, increase average income of Maine earners by 10%, increase product value. The report sets goals and objectives but does not include tactical solutions. This is a state economic plan (not just the Governor’s) and needs long term support. A more educated workforce is more productive and increases GDP. It will come together as partnerships are developed and more collaboration in growing local talent, attracting new talent, broadband connectivity, providing supporting infrastructure (transportation, child care and affordable housing), business environment and hubs of excellence. There is a focus on innovation and R&D. Maine’s average wage is now 75% of national average. Maine’s production per person less than national average.

Maine Climate Council, Transportation Working Group: This group is led by MaineDOT Chief Engineer Joyce Taylor and Transportation Demand Management consultant Sara Cushman. It has held three meetings and now is breaking up into subgroups to address rural, urban/suburban, freight/trucking and resilience/adaptation strategies. There is a lot to learn with no easy solutions. There will be trade-offs. There is widespread consensus of the need to improve carpooling, provide buses in rural areas, reduce cars, reduce VMT, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Age-Friendly State: Maine is the 7th state to join the AARP Age Friendly Network. There are 70 communities in the network and 60 more are working on age-friendly initiatives. The age friendly concept comes from the World Health Organization. Bowdoinham was the first town in the state to become and age-friendly community. Maine is committed to collaborate on meeting all 8 domains with the initial focus on transportation. There is real interest in understanding how the brokerage system impacted the public transportation system and how to redesign the system while meeting public law. The eight (8) WHO domains are: Outdoor spaces and public places; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; work and civic engagement; communications and information; community and health services.

DHHS coordination efforts: Commissioner Lambrew wants collaboration between programs and agencies and is seeking to improve and align different transportation programs. Services are siloed from other state agencies, and within DHHS also. DHHS is reviewing all systems and has agreed on performance metrics and safety programs. The DHHS offices will jointly issue an RFP this spring to evaluate the existing programs and survey the beneficiaries of each program for quality, access, and comparison. This was last done in 2014 for NEMT only. Hopeful to identify key areas for improvement. Attracting and retaining drivers is a challenge.

MTA Directory: A new directory of public transportation services is to be printed within the next month. Sought to be more user friendly. More generic, removed specific names. Tourism regions were used as basis.

CCAM Strategic Plan: There are 130 federal programs to support transportation. Each program has its own requirements which make coordination very challenging. At the federal level there is progress to make improvements. Strategies seek to improve access, strengthen partnerships, enhance cost effectiveness, and demonstrate innovated coordination. May seek congressional action to solve issues. SBIR discretionary grant is to develop technology to track and coordinate transportation costs by trips. There are 3 technical assistance centers to help with developing coordination. Mobility Management training is being held across the country with one in Springfield, MA March 25-26. Monthly webinars will feature each agency explaining its transportation programs beginning in February.

Status Update on other PTAC Recommendations: An update had been provided in the packet. There were no further questions raised.

Commissioner’s Remarks: MaineDOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note joined the meeting and spoke in support of everyone’s efforts. He said there is a window to do something now to improve financial support for public transportation programs. Both he and the DHHS commissioner are willing but a plan needs to be developed that outline the strategies and priorities to sell to legislature. DOT will need to work with DHHS to develop a plan that breaks down challenges into parts that can be implemented and built upon. Commissioner Van Note thanked the members of the group for their efforts. He looks forward to working with the other commissioners to make something happen.

Moving Maine: Zoe provided an overview and update of work to-date. Mobility management is a coordination effort to help communities and individuals create and manage their mobility options. Following a Moving Maine conference held in May 2018, collaborators and steering committee developed the statewide model and then applied for FTA funding late in 2018. Awards were announced in May 2019 and work is now beginning. Peer learning efforts are ongoing and working. Objectives seek to share best practices, spur innovation, and connect stakeholders. While the grant focuses on pilots in southern Maine, Moving Maine overall seeks to facilitate regional mobility management networks as were identified during the Locally Coordinated Plan outreach. The final outcome will be providing more access to affordable and convenient transportation, starting locally and growing statewide. Technical assistance is provided through the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. There are three program goals (see presentation on Moving Maine sent via email by Mary Ann for more detail):

Goal 1. Improve coordination among transportation stakeholders statewide

Goal 2. Improve access to Transportation Resources and Information (one call one click service).

Goal 3. Build Capacity for Mobility Management Programs across Maine.

PTAC Workplan 2020: Mary Ann noted that it is only in odd-numbered years that a report is due to the Governor and Legislature so there are no statutory requirements this year. Zoe-jump on commissioner’s comment to prioritize needs and how we would spend the money. Lisa-need a statewide trip planner or one-call network. Mary Ann-working with Maine turnpike authority/agile mile to develop the all-purpose trip planner at no charge to MaineDOT, also working with GoVermont to mirror their model. Need to get all routes mapped out. Volunteers for the working group: Giselle, Duane, Chris. Giselle-veterans now receive healthcare in the community. VA is authorizing payment for care in the community more than ever. Calls now for community care. Has a volunteer driver for downeast area with vehicle. Machias driver gets riders to Bangor. Friends in action can also gives rides to Bangor. Wreaths Across America also gives rides to appointments. The trip planner would allow more collaboration. Mary Ann-PTAC working group for finding funding for public transportation: Sandy, Carolann, Susan, Greg, PACTS designee.

Public Comment: Elswyth-Seniors need transportation to be able to age in place. Difficulty to walk or bike along Route 1. Can’t live car free like she would like. More trips on public transit decerease the need to spend money on roads and bridges.

Meeting Feedback/Announcements/Comments: Funding prioritization-Is that for operations? Yes, funding gap. Promote more public transit. Glad to join. Informative. ATRC and LATC will have an RFP this spring to a transit study for the Lewiston Auburn transit system. Augusta:writing comprehensive plan to include the 8 domains of age friendly communities. Augusta certified by WHO as age friendly. As volunteer at Maine General, sees how patient transportation works and doesn’t work. Bucksport age friendly through AARP. Transportation is number 1 need. People don’t coordinate – silo system. Maine Housing-Older adult projects to begin with bond funds. Mostly rural housing. Giselle-VA thanks Penquis Lynx. Piscataquis most highly rural county in Maine and Lynx provides the trips. Such a relief that Lynx provides these trips. Marcia-Lynx also has Penobscot county grant for VA appointments. Community Concepts provides rides for dialysis for veterans. MCPT helped with emergency rides to dialysis from Belfast to Rockland. Appreciates partnerships with Maine Transit Association. Maine Cancer Foundation-working with oncology in Scarborough Maine Health to partner with uber and lyft for non-mainecare patients.

Adjourn at 11:27. Next meeting TBD. Mary Ann invited members to request a meeting if desired.