



## **Maine Public Transit Advisory Council**

**January 24, 2023  
2:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
Meeting Agenda**

- 2:00 Welcome and Introductions**
- 2:10 Approve August 2022 Meeting Minutes**
- 2:15 Overview and Discussion of Draft Maine State Transit Plan**
- 2:40 MaineDOT Updates**
  - Transit Bus Electrification
  - Transit Technology Initiatives
  - Workforce Transportation Pilot
  - Biennial Report
- 2:45 Roundtable – Announcements, Recent and Upcoming Efforts**
- 2:55 Public Comment**
- 3:00 Adjourn**

# Public Transit Advisory Council

## Meeting Minutes of August 16, 2022 (DRAFT)

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

**Members in attendance:** Ryan Neale (PTAC Chair, MaineDOT), Sandy Buchanan, Stephanie Carver, Andrew Clark, Katherine Freund, Will Gayle, Rebecca Grover, Chris Hall, Maddie Jensen, Greg Jordan, Dana Knapp, Jonathan LaBonte, David Landry, Jessica Maurer, Wayne Morey, Levi Rogers, Barbara Schneider, Duane Scott, Paul Towle, Deirdre Wadsworth, Keenan Weischedel (for Kim Moody), Jennifer Williams, Rep. Lynne Williams.

Others in attendance: Lori Brann (PTAC Clerk-MaineDOT), Emily Becker (AECOM), David Baumgartner (Cambridge Systematics), Daniel Lang (Hatch), Mark Perelmutter (Hatch), Carol Schweiger (Schweiger Consulting), Jennifer Grant (MaineDOT), Ken Murchison (City of Caribou), Myra Orifice (LogistiCare), Joy Barresi Saucier (Aroostook Agency on Aging), Judy Shanley (Easter Seals), Tim Sturtevant (DHHS), Jim Wood (KVCAP).

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 and was recorded. Meeting minutes, presentations, and recordings will be available here: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/transit/ptac/>

**Welcome and Introductions.** Ryan Neale welcomed all participants and noted the span since the last meeting was due to a variety of factors, including staff turnover at MaineDOT and the pandemic. This meeting will serve to update the Council on ongoing projects. Ryan began the recording of the meeting, and introductions of MaineDOT staff, PTAC members, consultants, and interested parties commenced.

**Approve May 2021 Minutes.** *There were no comments on the minutes as presented. Jess M. motioned to approve, seconded by Deidre W. The minutes received unanimous approval.*

**Review and Adopt PTAC Remove Meeting Policy.** Ryan noted that many departments and agencies, including MaineDOT, have moved to a remote meeting format and found it successful, especially for statewide bodies like the PTAC. *Jess M. moved to approve, and Stephanie C. seconded. There were no comments and the policy received unanimous approval.*

**MaineDOT updates (please see presentation materials for further details on each plan):**

**GO MAINE.** Emily Becker, project manager for GO MAINE consultant AECOM, presented slides on the status of ongoing GO MAINE improvements. MaineDOT became the lead agency for GO MAINE in October 2021, administering GO MAINE with the Maine Turnpike Authority. Highlights include: optimizing environmental goals, engaging with existing/new members, improved outreach to northern and rural Maine, testing mobile ticketing and General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) functionality through pilot projects, and increasing membership in the program.

**Statewide Strategic Transit Plan (SSTP).** David Baumgartner, project manager for consultant Cambridge Systematics, presented slides on the Statewide Strategic Transit Plan, one part of MaineDOT's ongoing

Family of Plans. The planning effort has developed a vision for transit in Maine. The draft Existing Conditions assessment and draft Needs Assessment are nearing completion and Cambridge is now working on a system efficiencies and innovations draft which should be complete this fall, with the final plan expected to be complete in early 2023. Outreach efforts have included meetings with stakeholders, virtual public meetings, surveys, review of other studies, etc. The SSTP will address post-pandemic needs including supply chain shortages which affect continued and reliable service.

Jonathan LaBonte asked if the pandemic's impact on ridership is reflected in the data being used for the plan. David responded that StreetLight data, based on cell phones, was used to analyze changes in ridership, tied to demographics and Census data to determine who is mostly likely to need transit. New technology, marketing, and improved communication are needed to promote better transit use. Jonathan asked that a summary of the data and methodology be distributed to the PTAC members.

**Transit Bus Electrification Plan.** Dan Lang, Project Manager for Consultant Hatch LTK, presented slides on the plan. Project goals are to reduce emissions by transitioning transit fleets to more sustainable hybrid and battery electric vehicles. FTA requires transition plans for transit agencies to move towards electrification. Hatch is working with eight Maine agencies to create those plans. Multiple reports as part of this project are listed in the attached presentation material. Limited operating range is a challenge with battery electric vehicles. The project will determine available vehicles that meet the range needed for existing routes and recommended charging infrastructure. Hatch is also working with utility companies to understand pricing structures for recharging to optimize charging at the best rate. Emissions impact assessments will quantify emissions reduced. Life cycle cost analyses will quantify financial impact. Final electrification plans will be delivered for each of the transit agencies, in addition to a best practice report for all transit agencies.

David Landry asked if the range of electric buses is being considered. Dan responded that range considerations are an important aspect of this study. Hatch is evaluating the feasibility of using electric buses on various routes. On-route chargers are being evaluated for longer routes.

Ryan ended this section by noting that while Maine's vehicle electrification goals are ambitious, we are taking a thoughtful approach we move towards electrification of the transit bus fleet.

**Transit Technology Initiatives.** Consultant Carol Schweiger presented slides on this project. She is tasked with developing a plan to incorporate GTFS-Flex and automated fare payment into Maine's transit systems and incorporate these into the GO MAINE trip planner. She will be researching a fare payment platform to work with GO MAINE. The GO MAINE trip planner needs to be updated with needed data along with vendors to keep the data updated and relevant. GOFs is a new technology for on demand transit systems and is being used in pilot projects elsewhere. Carol will monitor progress on this as she develops her report. She will also look to other peer states to use existing projects as a resource, as well as the DiriGo system currently being used by 3 transit agencies in the Portland area. Facilitating coordinated service between transit systems and looking at complete trips is a priority. GTFS Flex vendors are expected to be under contract in 3-6 months.

Ryan noted that public transportation is moving towards GTFS and automated payment and this project will help identify a path forward for the State of Maine and for transit agencies. A goal is to make these systems as easy and seamless as possible for both transit agencies and the end user.

**Workforce Transportation Pilot.** Ryan gave an overview of this project. MaineDOT has \$5M for local and/or regional workforce transportation projects. This is a rolling application process which requires 20% local match. This is funded with ARPA funds to address workforce transportation challenges for industries negatively impacted by COVID. Applicants can be varied, but need local partners and support. MaineDOT will work with applicants to identify potential transportation solutions. MaineDOT has received 6 applications to date and had discussions with several interested parties.

#### **Roundtable Announcements, Recent and Upcoming Efforts.**

Ryan noted that the PTAC Statute requires a report to Legislature, in March of odd-numbered years. MaineDOT will begin work on that shortly for the Council's input.

Jess noted that the Maine Council on Aging has secured a grant for transportation equity for older Mainers. The first phase will catalog volunteer driver programs. The second phase will work with the University of Maine Center on Aging on volunteer training and a manual to be completed by the end of the year. A goal is to bring volunteer driver programs together with transit providers to share info/resources and fill gaps. The third phase will seek to strengthen the overall transit/volunteer systems to improve services.

#### **Public Comment.**

Will noted NNEPRA's project for a new station in Wells to provide round trip service from Brunswick to Wells. The hope is that this will improve the schedule to bring workers into Portland in the morning.

Ken noted the rideshare program with Cary Medical Center in Caribou is just getting started after the pandemic. This is using Community Development Block Grant funds. Ken would like to connect with GO MAINE on these projects.

Paul noted that rural areas like Presque Isle face different public transportation challenges than Portland and Maine's other urban areas. Northern (rural) Maine has struggled to support a single transit route. Addressing climate change is important and well-intended but can be costly. It is encouraging that the Transit Bus Electrification assessment will include electricity and life cycle costs.

Ryan noted that a focus of the Transit Plan is on the best ways to address transit needs in rural Maine. David noted that the plan will recommend pilot projects for rural areas in the state.

**Adjourn.** Ryan noted that the intent is for the Council to meet again later this year or early next year, or as circumstances warrant, with substantive updates on all of the ongoing plans.

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 pm.

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