

**Highway Simplification Study
Policy Working Group**

**Thursday, July 1, 2010
Maine Municipal Association**

Attendees:

Policy Working Group Members

Michelle Beal, Ellsworth
David Bernhardt, MaineDOT
Bob Belz, Auburn
David Cole, Gorham
Clint Deschene, Hermon (Co-chair)
Jim Hanley, Pike Industries
John Johnson, Jay
Rob Kenerson, BACTS
Galen Larrabee, Knox
Glen Ridley, Litchfield
John Sylvester, Alfred
Bruce Van Note, MaineDOT (Co-chair)

Policy Working Group Staff

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

Absent

Elwood Beal, Lisbon
Greg Dore, Skowhegan
Gerry James, Presque Isle

Co-chairs Clint Deschene and Bruce Van Note convened the meeting at 10:08 a.m. During its five hour meeting, the Policy Working Group (PWG) discussed and took actions on the following issues:

Item 1: Urban Issues Subcommittee Update

Dale Doughty and Pete Coughlan provided a brief update on the Urban Issues Subcommittee's work to replace the existing population-based urban compact definition with one that is based on development density along the state's major collector and arterial roads. Dale and Pete indicated that without further input from the impacted communities, the Subcommittee had done all that it could to develop a new definition that could yield to improved simplicity, customer service and operational efficiencies of both state and local forces. As a result, the Subcommittee asked for PWG authorization to convene a "compact municipalities" sounding board meeting to solicit much needed feedback from municipal officials.

After a brief discussion, the PWG authorized the convening of the Compact Municipalities Sounding Board meeting on Wednesday, July 21st from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at MMA. The PWG also requested that its members receive notice of the meeting, that data regarding miles of road in the compact area as well as the state funding levels be provided to the participants, and that a straw poll be taken at the end of the meeting to determine if the meeting participants believe that the

Subcommittee is: 1) headed in the right direction; 2) headed in the wrong direction; or 3) don't know.

The PWG also asked that once all of its work was completed, that the Subcommittee submit a detailed explanation of its compact proposal for input and feedback.

Item 2: Status Report to Transportation Committee

Bruce Van Note led the PWG through a review of his proposed status report to the 124th Legislature's Transportation Committee. The purpose of the status report is to provide the members of the Transportation Committee with an update of the PWG's work, as well as to request a six-month report back deadline extension of January 15, 2011.

Based on the comments provided at the meeting, Bruce will revise the document and make the amended report available for further PWG comment on Friday, July 2nd. All comments are due to Bruce by Wednesday, July 7th.

Item 3: Fiscal Analysis Sub-group Update

Bruce Van Note and John Sylvester provided an update on the efforts of the Fiscal Analysis Sub-group to address the funding elements of the "fix and swap" proposal. The Department distributed a spreadsheet illustrating the level of state aid that would be provided to municipalities through the "MDOT" proposal and the "Sylvester" proposal. The two funding proposals are identical, with the expectation of the reimbursement rate for minor collector miles. Under the "MDOT" plan, municipalities would receive \$1,200 per lane mile, which (in part) would result in a \$5.7 million (25%) increase in state aid for roads payments. Under the "Sylvester" plan the minor collector rate would be \$3,440, resulting in a \$16.3 million (71%) increase in state aid.

After much discussion regarding the political and policy related realities and consequences associated with each of the proposals, the PWG directed the Fiscal Analysis Sub-group to continue its work to try to develop consensus on a reimbursement formula. David Cole, Gorham Town Manager, has agreed to attend the next meeting of the Sub-group.

Item 4: Municipal Road Cost Data Sub-group Update

Glen Ridley and John Johnson provided an update on the efforts of the Municipal Road Cost Data Sub-group to ensure the accuracy of the February 2010 study of municipal winter and summer road maintenance cost. That study showed that in 2009 municipalities statewide spent an average of \$3,450 per lane mile on winter maintenance and an average of \$3,440 per lane mile on summer maintenance (excluding paving).

According to the verification work done by the Sub-group, it was determined that the per mile figures generated in February of this year were accurate and that no further study was needed at this time.

Item 5: Other PWG "To-Do" List Progress Update

Pete Coughlan reported on his efforts to review and correct several misclassifications of roads in several communities. For instance, along the peninsulas along the Maine coast, there are 64 miles located on nine different roads in twelve communities that need to be reclassified as they do not function as rural major collectors. The PWG asked for a list of those roads, with mileages.

Bruce Van Note reported that he and Kate Dufour had not yet finished their work on developing the make-up, roles and responsibilities of an “appeals board” that would be available to resolve municipal road reclassification grievances. Bruce asked the PWG members to think of other issues the “appeals board” could address.

Bruce also reported that work is still being done to finalize a letter to MMA’s legal staff requesting an opinion as to whether the existing constitution provision (Article IX, Section 19), preempts the Legislature from requiring municipal excise tax revenue to be used for highway related purposes only.

Item 6: Reality Check

Taking into account the differences of opinion with respect to the level of state aid provided for the year-round maintenance of the minor collector road system, the PWG was asked whether or not it was possible to move forward with the study. Based on the willingness of the Fiscal Analysis Sub-group to reexamine the fiscal impacts, the PWG agree to continue to move forward with the study.

Item 7: Adoption of Proposed Meeting and Work Schedule

The PWG adopted its July – December 2010 meeting and work schedule (*Attachment A*).

Item 8: Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

July to December 2010 Meeting and Work Schedule
Adopted by the PWG 07/01/2010.

Wednesday, July 21	<i>Compact Municipalities Sounding Board Meeting</i> ➤ 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. @ MMA
July – October	<i>Fiscal Analysis Sub-group Meetings (as needed)</i> ➤ Friday, July 16 th (10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. @ MMA) ➤ Other dates, times and locations to be determined.
July – October	<i>Municipal Road Cost Data Sub-group Meetings (if needed)</i> ➤ Date, time and location to be determined.
Monday, August 16	<i>Policy Working Group Meeting</i> ➤ 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. @ MMA
Thursday, September 9	<i>Policy Working Group Meeting</i> ➤ 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. @ MMA
Thursday, September 16	<i>Full Sounding Board Meeting</i> ➤ 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. @ MMA
Thursday, September 30	<u>~All Subcommittee work completed.~</u>
Thursday, October 7	<i>Policy Working Group Meeting</i> ➤ 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. @ MMA
Tuesday, October 12	<i>MMA Annual Convention – Highway Simplification Study</i> ➤ 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Roundtable Discussion
Friday, October 29	<u>~All PWG Sub-group work completed.~</u>
Tuesday, November 9	<i>Policy Working Group Meeting</i> ➤ 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. @ MMA
Monday, November 15	<u>~First Draft of final report.~</u>
Tuesday, December 7	<i>Policy Working Group Meeting to finalize report (if needed)</i> ➤ 10:00 a.m. to Noon. @ MMA
Wednesday, December 15	<u>~Final Report Completed!!!~</u>