

Public Transit Advisory Council

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

1:00pm – 3:15pm

Location: Zoom

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/j/83890546497>

Agenda Item	Responsibility	Action or Information
1.) Call to Order (1:00)	Chad Heid, Chair	Action
2.) Ascertain Quorum (1:00-1:05)	Chad Heid, Chair	Action
3.) Approval of Previous Minutes (1:05-1:10) <ul style="list-style-type: none">February 12, 2025	Chad Heid, Chair	Action
4.) Chair Report (1:10-1:30) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft report feedback/responsesTimelineAcknowledgementsConsiderations for “final push”	Chad Heid, Chair	Information
5.) Report Revisions (1:30-2:30) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Walk through reportConfirm remaining actionsFeedback closes EOD 2/19	Chad Heid, Chair	Information
6.) PTAC Consider Adoption of Report (2:30-2:45) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Seek motion to accept/adopt report	Chad Heid, Chair	Action
7.) Remaining Schedule (2:45-3:00) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Remaining actions timelineReport Published: 3/1/25	Chad Heid, Chair	Information
8.) Public Comment (3:00-3:10)	Chad Heid, Chair	Information
9.) New Business (3:10-3:15)	Chad Heid, Chair	Information
10.) Adjournment (3:15)	Chad Heid, Chair	Action

Public Transit Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2025 – Held via Zoom

PTAC Members in Attendance: Omolola Achuba, Larry Allen, Kirk Bellavance, Sandy Buchanan, Josh Caldwell (vice chair), Stephanie Carver, Andrew Clark, Cole Cochrane, Tim Cowan, Representative Lydia Crafts, Amanda Dioszeghy, Eamonn Dundon, Katherine Freund, Cheryl Harkins, Chad Heid (chair), Maddie Jensen, Jay Kamm, Catherine Kruglak, Jessica Maurer, Ryan Neale, Megan Salvin (for Kim Moody), Duane Scott.

Others in Attendance: Lori Brann, Kate Reilly deLutio, Marissa Fink, William Gayle, Jennifer Grant, Zoe Miller, Tom Reinauer, Steve Richard, Tim Sturtevant, Rick Szilagyi.

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chad Heid at 9:04 am.
2. **Ascertain Quorum.** It was determined that the quorum was met.
3. **Approval of January Minutes.** Steph Carver motioned to approve the meeting minutes, with Larry Allen seconding. The minutes were approved unanimously with no discussion.
4. **Draft Report Review.** The focus of today's meeting is reviewing and discussing the draft Biennial Report to the Governor and Legislature by the Public Transit Advisory Council, which was distributed to members in advance of today's meeting.

Chad stated that today's discussion will be reflected in a draft to be reviewed and finalized at the February 19 meeting. Members should offer comment either today or by Friday for inclusion in the next iteration of the report. The Council reviewed the sections of the draft report. These minutes follow the draft report.

Section 1 – Statutory Requirements.

Chad noted that this wording is from the 2019 PTAC report. There was no discussion on this section.

Section 2 – Summary of Deliberations. Ryan noted that this structure follows that of the 2019 report. Chad noted that the survey was not mentioned. Ryan will add this to the next version. Ryan will ensure that all meeting materials including the regional presentations are added to the PTAC page on MaineDOT's website.

Katherine Freund commented that the focus of the Mobility Alternatives committee description on first and last mile connections does not reflect how volunteer networks fill gaps in the many areas of the state without access to public transportation. Chad said the Council agreed to this language in a prior meeting. Chad invited Katherine to provide revised language on the committee's broader scope.

Section 3 – Needs Assessment/Unmet Transportation Needs.

Chad noted that some items need to be finalized, including the operating and capital expenses. The framework is based on the 2019 report. The content reflects provider input and other plans and reports, particularly the John T. Gorman Foundation report.

Amanda Dioszeghy suggested adding data on the impact to Maine's economy if people are not able to get to jobs due to lack of transportation and moving the item on driver's licenses towards the bottom of the list. Kate Reilly deLutio commented that she has not seen any data on this. Larry Allen shared a link to an American Public Transit Association report on the economic impact of public transportation. Cole Cochrane commented that the list covers most reasons that people experience transportation challenges. Josh Caldwell suggested that the John T. Gorman report be included in the appendix, and the trip gap table could be included in this section of the report. Zoe Miller added that the Moving Maine Network's transportation security index survey, which will be shared later this week, may have some relevant data, including that 3 in 5 adults experience transportation insecurity and are more likely to not be working. Zoe will also share data on the impact of people with disabilities not being able to work due to transportation. Chad noted that additional detail may be added after the Council's approval before the report is finalized.

Section 4 - Summary of Current Services, Challenges, and Funding.

Chad asked all providers and presenters to review their sections by the February 19 meeting. All regional presentations are on the PTAC SharePoint site. Chad will provide summaries on Maine State Ferry Service and Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority. Ryan noted that GO MAINE is missing from the report and will provide that write up. The Council decided to include the summary of themes and regional summaries in the body of the report rather than as an appendix.

Section 5 – Maine Public Transportation Funding Summary.

Chad noted that sections A and B are taken from the 2019 report. Table 1 from the 2019 report has been updated with 2023 National Transit Database data on local, state, and federal operating funds. Fare revenue is also included to ensure an accurate picture of funding. The local category includes direct, local, or fare revenue. This captures all funding available for transit operations, while the 2019 report only included federal and state sources. Most operating funds are from sources other than state and federal. The 2023 data is the most recent available and does not capture the increased state funding for 2024. Will Gayle noted that 2024 data is used elsewhere in the report the use of data from different years may need some context or explanation. Josh commented that the 2023 data is vetted and the most holistic available. Chad will provide a summary of increased state formula and discretionary funds for 2024, which may tie to the PTAC's recommendation for 2025 funding.

Tom Reinauer suggested that the current methodology for distributing state transit funds be included with a note that the Maine Transit Association and MaineDOT are reviewing this approach. The Research and Policy committee created a spreadsheet which may be helpful to include as an appendix. Tom suggested that it may be helpful to include the \$9.1M in municipal funding specifically as a component of the local category. Chad noted that NTD funding categories are direct, local, state, and fare revenue, each with a specific definition. Direct funding is a significant amount. A key takeaway from the table is that the state contribution is small relative to other sources. Tom noted a misperception that municipalities are not sufficiently funding transit operations, and this may be an opportunity to correct that. Chad agreed on the importance of highlighting local investment to transit services, especially in comparison to the state. Tim Cowan agreed on the importance of calling out municipal funding specifically.

There was no comment on Table 2, NTD performance statistics.

Section 6 - Comparison With Other States.

Chad said it is important to include the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation report for 2024. The 2024 report uses 2022 data, and while there is inconsistency in how and what states report, the AASHTO survey is regarded as the standard for comparing across states. Cole Cochrane offered to provide data from other similar states by Friday. Some of this is currently included in an appendix but could be moved or summarized here. Eamonn suggested including a table using AASHTO data to list the various funding sources used by states instead of funding amounts and will provide this to Chad. Tim commented that it may be useful to note that Maine is among the most rural states. Chad noted that comparisons to similar states are most helpful when looking at strategies and approaches. Sandy Buchanan noted that not all states have all modes, such as rail and ferry, which affects funding.

Section 7 – Recommendations for Levels of Service.

Chad said identifying the attributes of an effective transit system helps to define what funding is used for, including core competencies to sustain basic service. The themes broadly apply to all regions, except for service frequency. Maddie Jensen suggested that a comparison of recommended versus actual levels of service could be helpful. Chad noted that many of the themes and findings are from the Maine State Transit Plan, and this will be referenced in the report. This section focuses on identifying the attributes of a quality transit system and informs the next section. This section generally aligns with the Maine State Transit Plan. Sandy commented that the distinction between service characteristics for low density and rural areas should be clarified and will work with Chad on revising this language.

Section 8 - Transit Vision.

Josh provided an overview, noting that this section highlights the gap between recommended levels of service and current conditions. Some of the data referenced will need to be amended based on the discussion earlier in the meeting. The narrative connects goals for transit to other long-range goals for workforce, housing production, and economic development. This section serves as a transition from data to recommendations for Maine's transit system.

Tim said this approach makes sense and suggested this section be called out in an executive summary. Josh noted that a conclusion paragraph will be added as well. Chad commented that the report is not at a length to require an executive summary.

Section 9 – Recommended Priority Strategies and Assigned Action Steps.

Chad noted that the Council has seen these before and the rankings reflect the survey results but do not include the survey scores. Josh said the Council is determining an appropriate amount of operating funding to request from the state. Whatever amount ultimately is recommended will be less than the total need but should balance local and state contributions and is therefore set at \$9.1M. Larry asked for clarification on how the \$9.1M would be distributed. Josh noted this should align with the Maine Transit Association's recommendations and this would be distributed among the 16 MTA members. Chad will work on how this is described here and elsewhere in the report. The discretionary funding for innovative projects is helpful but results in additional operating costs. The report does not

advocate for a particular approach but includes three potential options for the Legislature to provide a dedicated funding source.

Cole expressed support for these strategies and welcomed questions or feedback from members. Josh summarized the section in the appendix on the potential revenue sources. One focuses on increasing the overall transportation funding pie and including a dedicated source for transit, one earmarks specific revenues to the multimodal fund, and one earmarks specific sources to transit operating expenses. Cole noted that revenue projections for different sources are available. The strategies acknowledge fiscal constraints but look at potential avenues to raise revenues for transit. Chad noted that these are not recommendations per se but are meant to provide options for policymakers.

- 5. Remaining Schedule.** The Council will next meet on February 19 to finalize the draft report. Any feedback should be shared by this Friday, February 14. The next iteration will be shared with members ahead of the February 19 meeting. The week of February 24 is available to finalize the report as needed. The report will be issued to the Legislature and Governor on March 1. MaineDOT and the PTAC will develop an approach for presenting the report and following up with the Committee. Josh noted that Representative Crafts and Senator Farrin have indicated the Transportation Committee's interest in hearing directly from transit providers and Council members. Josh is working to coordinate these efforts.

Ryan reviewed the following tasks assigned to members before the next meeting/final report:

- Ryan to add a piece on GO MAINE.
- Zoe Miller to provide the Moving Maine Survey Data.
- Transit providers and presenters to review those sections for accuracy.
- All presentations and materials are available on the SharePoint site.
- Cole to work on comparison with other rural states.
- Tim to work on impacts of Maine being the most rural state.
- Eamonn to look at AASHTO table on funding sources.
- Chad and/or Sandy to provide language on needs and expectations for rural and low density regions.
- Katherine has provided revised language on the Mobility Alternatives committee.
- Josh to revise numbers in the Transit Vision.
- Everyone, to review report by Friday, February 14 and submit comments to Chad/Josh.

Chad reiterated that the next version of the report is not likely to differ significantly from the current draft.

- 6. Public Comment.** There was no public comment.

- 7. New Business.** There was no new business.

- 8. Adjournment.** Tim motioned to adjourn, with Maddie seconding. The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.