

**MaineDOT Strategic Plan Steering Committee Meeting #1**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Date: August 21, 2013**  
**Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**  
**Place: MaineDOT Conference Room, Augusta, Maine**

**Attendees:**

**Steering Committee Members:**

Marsha Bennett	Ronald McKinnon
Don Cooper	Jessica Maurer
Carla Dickstein	Paul Murphy
Dennis Fitzgibbons	Cathy Singleton
Connie Garber	Brian Sullivan
Steve Linnell	Representative Sharon Treat
Miranda McGowan (for Tom Reinauer)	Jim Wood

**MaineDOT Staff:**

Sue Moreau *Manager, Multimodal Planning & Operations*  
Herb Scott *Director Statewide Multimodal Planning*  
Duane Thomson, *Director of Statewide Transportation Planning*

**Consultants:**

Peter Schauer-Principal in Charge, Sharon Eaton, Tom Meyers, Bill Millar, and Rich Rothe

**Welcome and Notice of September 24 Meeting:**

Sue Moreau welcomed the committee members (introductions were made) and members were notified of an additional planned committee meeting scheduled for September 24, 2013. Sue Moreau then explained that the strategic plan is mandated legislatively and also the need for meeting MAP 21 performance measures. She offered a brief history of how transit planning was done in the past—indicating that “we are in different times”. She noted that Maine’s aging population is becoming a larger factor and it is important now to look at how Maine can improve connections for the elderly, retain what we are doing well and develop new ways to assist public transportation in Maine—noting the need for the Steering Committee to help shape the direction.

Preliminary discussion included the following guidelines for staff and consultants:

*Avoid use of acronyms*

Committee members asked that we not use acronyms in our presentations without proper identification as many members are not familiar with them. Sue Moreau suggested that a list of commonly used acronyms and their proper names could be prepared for the membership.

*Definition of public transit*

Discussion included a request for a definition of “public transit”. Public Transit was defined by Sue Moreau as “open to anyone who needs a ride” giving examples of dial-a-ride/demand response; flex routes and fixed routes. Peter Schauer provided a visual aid showing the general continuum from pedestrian to heavy rail indicating the wide options

available and that public transit consists of many modes but that all trips start with a person walking or wheeling. That is why for a community to be transit friendly it must also be pedestrian friendly. There was a brief discussion about the use of school buses—an explanation was offered which explained the legal prohibition against using school buses for public transit and also structural limits such as narrow seats and high steps.

*Need for inclusive membership on Steering Committee and Importance of Youth*  
There was a suggestion that it might be helpful to have a younger person join the committee. Sue Moreau concurred.

### **Introduction to Project:**

(PowerPoints and Minutes will be posted on MaineDOT website at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planningstudies/mstp/index.shtml>)

Peter Schauer offered a Power Point presentation which will be posted on MaineDOT's website. This presentation offered a road map of the project, the conceptual tasks and timelines, and why the plan is needed. He summarized the presentation by stating the plan will be the result of a high quality, deliberative process with the final plan delivered in 2015 to the Maine Legislature. Main points of the presentation were:

*Plan directed at general public-all users*

A committee member asked if the scope of work will include looking at services for all people—not just the elderly. She was assured the process is primarily for the general public (all people).

*Plan will investigate all funding current and possible*

A committee member stated she assumed we will not be looking strictly at Federal Transit Administration funds and was assured we will not.

*Plan will examine needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities*

A committee member asked if the scope of work will include people with disabilities and was assured it will.

*Plan is not constrained in any way and vision must not be limited*

A concern was raised about any constraints the committee might have. Duane Thomson responded by indicating MaineDOT wants a holistic approach brought to the discussions—looking at all travelers and how we might meet the needs bringing together transit, pedestrian, bicycles, roads, bridges, ferry, aviation and rail. MaineDOT's transit plan will have a broadness that pulls it all together and he hoped the committee will explore all options. A committee member noted that it is important to think about inter-connectivity of private and public—is there room for a bigger vision?

*Prioritization of MaineDOT activities needed and documentation needed*

Sue Moreau spoke about the need for having to prioritize what MaineDOT does. A committee member raised the possibility of legislation that would assign responsibility for all transportation in Maine to MaineDOT. Sue Moreau indicated that proof would be required that a plan such as that would work.

*Need to keep Legislature informed*

A committee member commented on the potential for new priorities, that it will be beneficial to build in testimony before legislative committees, and indicated that outreach needs to happen. Sue Moreau noted that the Legislature will be updated throughout the process.

**Public Participation Introduction:**

Sharon Eaton outlined the plan for the public process beginning with the organization of the Steering Committee and the need for their ideas and suggestions. Committee members were informed of the planned rider and provider surveys, statewide telephone survey, and focus groups scheduled for this fall, and the three public hearings to be held in 2014 and 2015. MaineDOT's website will be used as a means for the public to voice their opinions and all materials will be posted there for public viewing. Discussion on public participation focused on:

*Need to have comprehensive and thorough public involvement*

There was much discussion about expanding surveys and focus groups to include a broader cross-section of people across all socio-economic levels. Committee members were assured that we valued their input on how this could best be accomplished.

*Need to have focus groups well attended and by all types of providers*

It was also suggested that perhaps there would be a way to reimburse transit providers who bring transit dependent people to the focus groups. It was suggested the consulting team build in examples during focus groups of what transportation is like in other places—what is possible. It was also asked if rider surveys originally planned for riders using only agency controlled vehicles could include trips completed by volunteer driver. Sue Moreau reinforced this suggestion.

*Need to be inclusive of rural and urban areas*

It was requested that we look at both rural and urban systems—committee members were assured this will be the case. A reminder was offered about public hearings—noting that some regions have very rural areas, for example Transit Region VII being more rural than urban. A committee member noted that the traditional model does not work in rural Maine and what is needed is a model which will serve basic needs. It was noted that travel and interval time is a big factor and compact areas have the greatest success for usage.

## Overview of Existing Transit Services in Maine:

Rich Rothe gave a “Transit 101” overview presentation. This PowerPoint is posted at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planningstudies/mstp/index.shtml>). The presentation included statistical information on trips provided, funding and sources (both Federal Transit Administration and MaineDOT). Information was presented comparing states on state contributed public transit funds and where Maine ranks in relation to the other states. It was noted that Maine ranks below Mississippi in state per-capita funding for public transit.



### Sources:

AASHTO, “*Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation.*” Washington, D.C. 2013: n.p.

ASSHTO, “*Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation.*” Washington, D.C. 2010: n.p.

Additional information was provided showing transit regions; the number of agency operated vehicles by provider and the various modes used for transportation including Park and Ride lots (42 MaineDOT; 13 Maine Turnpike Authority), volunteers, taxis, etc. Discussion on the overview yielded the following points:

#### *Need to look at connectivity with informal park and ride lots*

Several committee members commented on the fact that there are many “informal” park and ride spaces used by people across the state and we should look at expanding connectivity.

#### *Need to be aware of funding and traditional expenditures*

A committee member noted that the Department of Interior has in the past provided substantial capital funding for the Acadia service. This will no longer be the case. This loss of funding places the need for future capital needs back on MaineDOT and the Federal Transit Administration. A question was put forth about why Casco Bay Island Transit District received federal funding and the Maine State Ferry Service does not. (The Maine State Ferry Service is funded with state dollars.) Sue Moreau responded that this has been the tradition.

#### *Fare box Recovery Ratio*

A brief discussion regarding Maine’s higher than normal fare box recovery rate occurred—higher especially for a rural state. The question was asked as to what is counted in the fare box recovery rate of 27% (higher in some regions). As part of this discussion it was noted that in Region III, Penquis CAP had a history of purchasing numerous bus passes each month on the Community Connector for eligible MaineCare

recipients which contributed to higher fare box recovery. A change to MaineCare rules, which now requires individual tickets be purchased in many of these cases, will have a negative impact on fares for the Community Connector. It was noted that this will occur in other transit regions as well.

#### *Cost to Ride a Bus*

Discussion moved onto fares and that fares are an obstacle to riding the bus—when a fare is charged, ridership is lower than when ridership is free. The Acadia service was cited as an example. It was noted that senior citizens want to pay a fare and do not want to ride for free.

### **Core Values and Beliefs Presentation:**

Tom Meyers gave a presentation on the importance of identifying core values and gave examples of how core values and beliefs may differ. He identified MaineDOT's core values as integrity, competence and service. It was emphasized that core values and beliefs will set the foundation for the plan. Committee members brought up the following points:

#### *Importance of Committee Members Completing Surveys*

A committee member mentioned the committee survey results, and Tom responded by stating only three (3) surveys had been returned. He emphasized the importance of committee members completing and returning the surveys that were provided to them prior to the meeting. These surveys will help start the process of the committee identifying their core values at the September 24, 2013. He asked that all surveys be returned as soon as possible. It was noted we will be collecting a lot of data over the coming months and that good verifiable data is critical decision making.

#### *Decisions should be driven by Data and Values*

A discussion on data driving decisions was held, and a committee member noted that values should help drive decisions—not just data.

### **Meeting Summary and Closing:**

Peter Schauer stated that he closes meetings with a quick “around the room” comment by each person on what they have learned or changed as a result of the meeting. The comments were positive. The following is a summary of the responses:

- Clarified the definition of public transit and the importance of pedestrian planning as being a part of transit planning
- Felt the meeting had been very productive
- The importance for enhancing the public process
- The process was going to include all modes of transportation and rural and urban
- The process has no preconceived notions and is open to all ideas

### **Next Meeting:**

**Date: September 24, 2013**

**Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Place: MainDOT Main Conference Room 216, Augusta, Maine**

**Purpose: Core Value Discussion and Survey Review**