

Charter Policy Working Group

Pursuant to P.L. 2009, Chapter 413, Part T, the Maine State Legislature charged the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) with working with stakeholders to evaluate the Maine's highway classification and with preparing a report whether these complicated state and federal systems, and related responsibilities, can and should be simplified.

The MaineDOT, Maine Municipal Association, and other stakeholders have formed a 15 member Policy Working Group (PWG), and an open enrollment Sounding Board to assist MaineDOT in discharging this responsibility. The PWG, in turn, has or will form subcommittees to review certain issues and report back to the PWG. Subcommittees will be formed as needed, but at the outset it is anticipated that there will be subcommittees on standards and costs, urban issues, classification processes, and routing and signage.

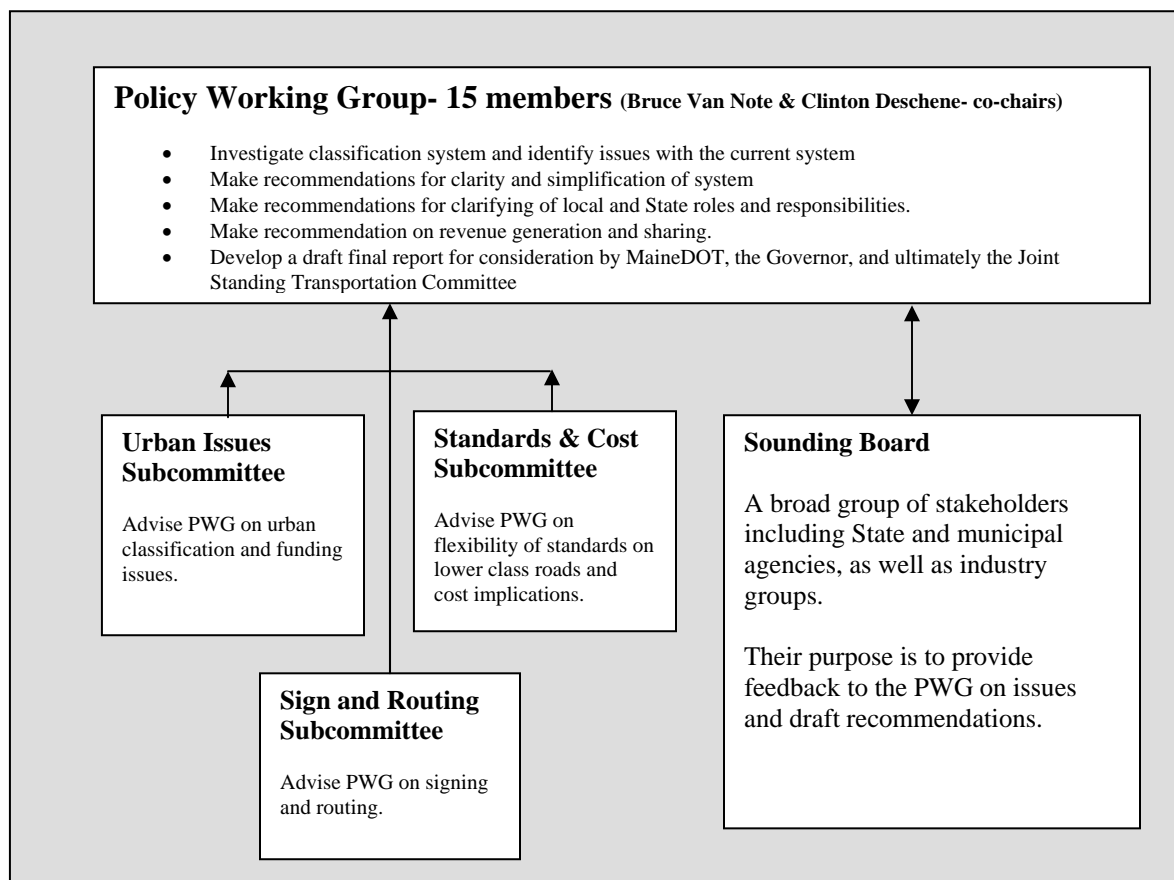
As provided by law, the following topics are to be evaluated. Though subject to change, it is anticipated that primary initial investigation and recommendations will be performed by the PWG and/or subcommittee in parentheses after each topic.

1. Whether the State and federal highway classification systems can and should be reduced to one, or otherwise simplified; **(PWG)**
2. Whether the State should transition over time to a system as used in other states in which the State would have full year-round responsibilities, including capital responsibilities and winter and summer maintenance of certain highways and minor spans, and local governments would have full year-round responsibilities, including capital responsibilities and winter and summer maintenance of other highways and related minor spans; **(PWG)**
3. Whether urban and rural classification systems and related responsibilities can or should be simplified to ensure that sections of highway with similar urban development patterns are treated equally with respect to capital and maintenance responsibilities. This analysis may include whether to create 2 systems of urban classification with a common definition that reflects both federal criteria and sustained density of development, regardless of population or town boundaries; **(Urban Issues Subcommittee)**
4. The design and construction standards and processes that should apply to each road classification; **(Standards / Cost Subcommittee)**
5. An assessment of transition impacts, including the cost and time required to bring highways to a consistent and appropriate standard prior to the shift to full year-round responsibilities, operational estimates for both the department and local government including equipment needs and the potential assignment of existing snow removal contracts; **(Standards / Cost Subcommittee)**
6. Other fiscal matters including possible adjustments to the Urban-Rural Initiative Program or other revenue sharing opportunities, possible adjustments to the Rural Road Initiative, innovative financing tools for local governments such as expanded use of the TransCap Trust

Fund at the Maine Municipal Bond Bank or the state infrastructure bank and incentives for coordinated corridor based highway improvements involving multiple municipalities and other possible regionalization incentives; **(Urban Issues, PWG)**

7. Whether route numbering or signs, or both, should be revised so as to improve customer service; **(TBD)**
8. Related administrative matters, including a fair and open mechanism to request, change and appeal decisions to reclassify highways; and **(TBD)**
9. Related issues. **(See Subcommittee Charters, Other Issues - TBD)**

In general, the relationship of the PWG, the subcommittees, and the Sounding Board, is as follows.



The PWG shall use the following Working Bylaws, subject to amendment by vote of the PWG

1. Clinton Deschene and Bruce Van Note will co chair the PWG. MaineDOT and MMA will provide staff support.
2. PWG discussions will be constructive, open, frank and succinct.

3. In general, the PWG agrees to focus on the needs of travelers, the state, municipalities, and other stakeholder groups as a whole, as opposed to individual entities.
4. Meeting minutes will be developed within 2-3 days after a meeting and then immediately sent to Committee members and Co-Chairs for review and approval. Within 24 hours of their review, the final minutes will be published on MaineDOT's webpage and linked to MMA's website. Other documents will be published on the website as soon as possible after development and approval.
5. The meetings will be open to the public, as space allows. Noncommittee members may participate at the pleasure of the co-chairs. A comment form is available on the website for all comments.
6. Subcommittees will make monthly reports to the PWG and will not publish findings or recommendations without PWG approval.
7. The PWG will use the Sounding Board, made up of stakeholders cited in the law, the Transportation Committee, and any interested party, to get feedback on their findings and recommendations at key junctures during the study.

Accepted by unanimous vote of the Policy Working Group on 12/11/09