

Charter

Urban Issues Subcommittee

The Maine State Legislature, through Public Law 2009, Chapter 413, instructed the Maine Department of Transportation to work with stakeholders to evaluate the Maine's highway classification and routing systems to determine if these complicated state and federal systems could be simplified. The Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Municipal Association have formed a Policy Working Group (PWG) to guide this study. The PWG is chartering this subcommittee to evaluate the current systems of urban highway classifications and make recommendations to the PWG.

The Urban Issues Subcommittee group includes the following persons:

- Dale Doughty, MaineDOT, Co-chair
- Michelle Beal, Ellsworth
- Mike Bobinsky, Portland
- Jerry Dostie, Augusta
- John Duncan, PACTS
- Rob Kenerson, BACTS & PWG
- John Melrose, Maine Tomorrow
- Mike Roy, Waterville
- Chip Swan, Hampden

There are several separate and distinct definitions of boundaries that are applicable to urban areas: federal urbanized areas, state urban compacts, federal Metropolitan Planning Organization areas, and state winter compacts. A given municipality may have two or more different urban boundaries or a municipality may qualify as "urban" under one set of criteria but not the other. Associated responsibilities for highway capital and maintenance are frequently unclear and confusing. The Urban Subgroup will:

1. Identify conflicts between the various urban classifications including the potential for confusion regarding maintenance and capital responsibilities and potential for roads to fall through the maintenance and capital cracks.
2. Evaluate the initial purpose of each classification and assess whether the criteria will support their respective purpose.
3. Make recommendations to the PWG regarding simplified criteria, grouping the urban classifications into as few boundaries as possible. These recommendations would need to comply with federal law. State law changes could be recommended.
4. Evaluate the way in which maintenance and capital improvements are funded within urban areas. Begin this evaluation with the recent study completed by Maine Tomorrow on the behalf of Maine's four MPOs.

5. Investigate revenue sharing strategies and possible financing tools to assist urban areas finance much needed capital projects.

6. What other urban issues should the PWG consider?

This subcommittee will make reports to the PWG at each of their meetings. Any findings and recommendations will be approved by the PWG before they are published.

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