Advocacy Committee

November 12, 2026 | 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Onsite:

Greater Portland Transit District
114 Valley Street, Conference Room A | Portland, ME 04102

Remote:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
https://meet.google.com/wzx-amyp-mcv
Or dial: (US) +1 646-535-6995 PIN: 339 571 847#

MEETING AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER	ACTION or INFORMATION
1. Call Meeting to Order (12:30)	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	N/A
2. Public Comment (12:30 – 12:35) The Advocacy Committee welcomes public comment. For items NOT listed on this agenda, the chair will recognize speakers at this point on the agenda. For items on the agenda, the chair will recognize public comment following the staff presentation. There is a 3-minute time limit per speaker.	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	Information
3. Meeting Minutes (12:35-12:40) Review and approve minutes from the May 21, 2026 Advocacy Committee Meeting.	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	Action
4. Legislative Update (12:40 – 12:45) Staff will review status of pending state and federal issues and rules affecting public transit, as well as what the recent election results mean for transportation and transit priorities. • State • Federal • Local	Megan Hannan, Director of Government Affairs & Community Engagement	Information
5. Advocacy Planning (12:45 – 1:15) Staff will update the committee on potential new and continuing efforts in statewide and Federal advocacy, including: • Federal and State Funding for Transit	Megan Hannan, Director of Government Affairs &	Information and Discussion

• Local Option Tax • Bus Operator Barriers • BRT	Community Engagement	
6. Future of the Advocacy Committee Staff will update the committee on the ongoing discussions about the advocacy committee role and responsibilities, including moving from a standing committee structure to an *ad hoc* advocacy program which includes all Metro Board members.		
7. Future Agenda Items (1:15 – 1:20) Committee members may request future agenda items. • Federal Initiatives Affecting Transit • Bus Rapid Transit • Workplan Development (Strategic Plan) • Coalition Building, State Advocacy, Local as appropriate • PACTS Funding Formula	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	Information
8. Upcoming Meetings (1:20 – 1:30) • Planning & Ops Committee - Nov. 18, 2026 at 10:30 am • Executive Committee – November 25, 2026 at 3:30 pm • Finance Committee – December 2, 2026 at 3:00 pm • Facility Planning Committee – T.B.D.	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	Information
9. Adjournment (1:30)	Lou Simms, Committee Chair	**ACTION**

As of November 9, 2022 Greater Portland METRO is holding meetings of the Board of Directors (and its committees) in hybrid format, both in person at METRO's offices and via webinar. The remote portions of all meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of METRO's Remote Participation Policy (adopted August 25, 2022) as well as LD 1772, PL 2022 Ch. 666, and 1 MRSA Chapter 13, Subchapter 1.

Greater Portland Metro Advocacy Committee
Wednesday May 21, 2026:
DRAFT Meeting Minutes:

Member	Municipality	Role	Status
Lou Simms	Gorham	Chair	Present
David Morse	Westbrook	Vice Chair	Present
Anna Bullett	Portland	Committee Member	Present
Chrissy Adamowicz	Brunswick	Committee Member	Absent
Ed Suslovic	Portland	Board President	Present
Julie Dubovsky	Yarmouth	Board Member	Present

Staff Present	Identified Members of the Public
Megan Hannan – Director of Government Affairs & Community Engagement Glenn Felton – Executive Director Chad Heid – Chief Transportation Officer	

I. **With a Quorum in place, this meeting was called to Order by Lou Simms at 3:10 pm**

II. **Public Comment:**
- No comments from members of the public present.

III. **Meeting Minutes:**
Anna Bullett moved to approve the March 19, 2026 minutes Advocacy Committee Meeting; Lou Simms seconded. After a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously of voting members present. The slide deck presented to the committee is at the end of these notes.

IV. **Legislative Update:**
- Megan Hannan provided an update on the State Legislature, Federal budget and the Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization processes engaged with since the last meeting.

V. **Advocacy Update**
- Megan Hannan provided an update on advocacy initiatives engaged in since the last meeting, including:
  - Public Transit Advisory Council

- Maine Transit Association
- Regional Transportation Advisory Committee
- Housing & Transit Coordination
- Advocacy Communications
    - The need to generate excitement around the BRT is moving up in priority. Committee members recommended talking to several members of the community and to draft an op-ed about using Metro versus driving to highlight the cost of gas and potential savings.

VI. Future Agenda Items:

- Federal Initiatives Affecting Transit
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Workplan Development (ongoing)
- Coalition Building, State Advocacy; Local as appropriate
- Activism for World Public Transit Day, April 17, 2026
- PACTS Funding Formula

VII. Upcoming Meetings:

- Executive Committee – May 27, 2026 at 3:30
- Planning and Operations – June 17, 2026 at 10:30
- Executive Committee – June 24, 2026 at 3:30
- Board of Directors – June 25, 2026 at 4:00
- Executive Committee – July 22, 2026 at 3:30
- Advocacy Committee – August 20, 2026 at 3:00

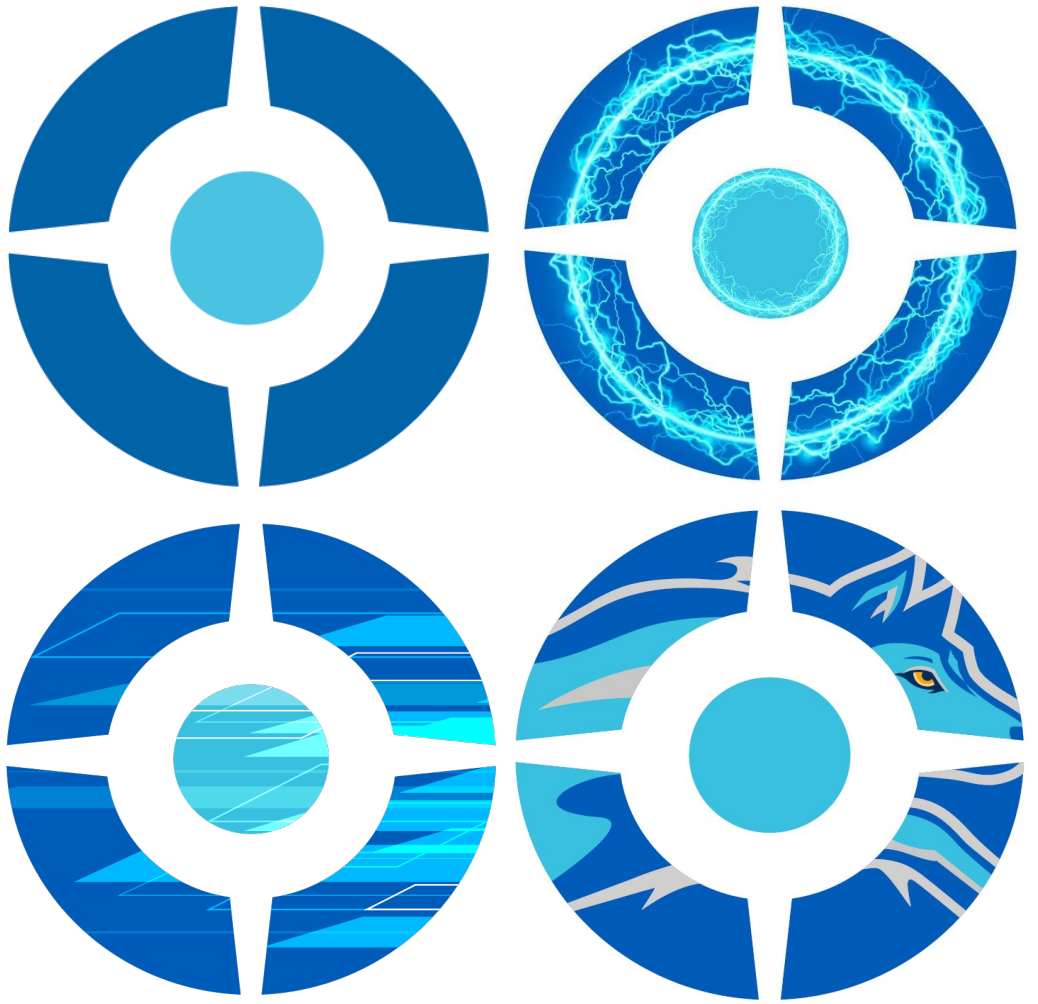
VIII. Adjournment: Adjournment was moved by Anna Bullett, seconded by Lou Simms and the meeting ended by mutual consent at 3:40 pm.

DRAFT

GREATER PORTLAND METRO

Advocacy Committee

May 21, 2026



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GREATER PORTLAND ON-DEMAND TRANSIT

State Update

MaineDOT

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
16 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0016

Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

Dale F. Doughty
COMMISSIONER

16 April 2026

Transportation Partners:

Maine's transportation system is a long-term commitment, but it is under immediate financial stress from several fronts.

The current 2026-2027-2028 Work Plan is $300 million less than the previous edition yet still includes **$130 million of state funding without an identified source. The true state structural funding gap** is larger, but without action to provide this $130M, MaineDOT will be forced to remove critical projects and delay needed investments across the state that have already been programmed in the Work Plan.

At the same time, uncertainty at the federal level creates real risk. If Congress fails to pass a new federal transportation bill by September 30, 2026; and if a federal shutdown occurs, Maine could temporarily lose access to federal funds during the most productive part of the construction season. Even when passed, the transportation bill could change the amounts and dynamics of our funding. In past disruptions, the state has relied on its own funds to keep projects moving and ensure contractors are paid. Without available state funds, projects will stall.

Meanwhile, cost pressures are rising:

- Asphalt, fuel, and labor costs continue to increase,
- Projects initiated today will generate costs over the next 1–3 years, and
- Funding disruptions during this period would directly impact active construction.

First, to lessen the impact of a potential federal shutdown this fall, we must take action now. Once contracts are executed MaineDOT has limited ability to manage the rate and timing of expenditures. As outlined in the attached "Revision to Construction Advertising Schedule" six paving projects will be removed from the Capital Advertise Schedule and will be reprioritized as part of the development of the 2027-2028-2029 Work Plan.

Second, with no resolution to the $130 million state structural funding gap during the Legislative session, and with no viable alternatives appear on the horizon, MaineDOT is now forced to cut or delay major portions of significant programs in the 2026–2027-2028 Work Plan. This reduction will represent $65 million in state funding, and may include reductions to the following programs:

- Municipal Partnership Projects (~$30 million total investment)
- 350 miles of light capital paving ($20 million state)
- 250 miles of federal paving ($125 million total investment)
- Multimodal- transit, active transportation, etc. projects (~$7–8 million total)

In total, this equates to approximately $182 million in lost transportation investment.

Federal Update

- President’s Proposed FY 2027 Budget
- Surface Transportation Reauthorization



Surface Transportation Reauth

The House Draft

The House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee announced the *Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development* for America's *250th Act* (BUILD America 250 Act)

- It is a bi-partisan solution, with the GOP moving from a $500B cap to the $567B authorization in this bill
- Public Transportation: $102.60B - $87.6B for formula funds & $15B for CIG
- MPOs: direct funding, CIP changes
- Gas tax – EV fee

Surface Transportation Reauth

The Senate Drafts

… on the move

- Environment and Public Works
- Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Finance

Advocacy Update

- Public Transit Advisory Council
- Maine Transit Association
- Regional Transportation Advisory Committee
- Housing & Transit Coordination
- Advocacy Communications

Advocacy Update

Advocacy Communication

- BRT Campaign: Next Steps
- Op-Ed on Gas Prices



BRT Advocacy Plan

BUS RAPID TRANSIT DESIGN
GORHAM • WESTBROOK • PORTLAND

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, Opposition	Decision Maker(s)	Tactics
Long Term	**Resources**	**Constituents**	**Primary**	
			Secondary	
Medium Term	**Capacity Building**	**Allies**		
Short Term	**Internal Problems**	**Opposition**		

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, Opposition	Decision Maker(s)	Tactics

Long Term
• Successful BRT service
• Overwhelming Support
• 80% satisfaction rate
• 80% full rate
 	
Medium Term
• 50% full rate
• Pass Program Sales
 	
Short Term
• Great press & comms plan
• Majority Support
• Pass Program Sales
	Resources
	• Funds for:
	  • BRT Analysis
	  • BRT Field Trip
	  • Decision Maker Mtgs
	• Trained board members
	
	Capacity Building
	• Increased staff involvement
	• Increased board involvement in advocacy all around
	
	Internal Problems
	• Lack of passion for BRT
		Constituents
		• Board of Directors
		• Staff
		
		Allies
		• GPCOG
		• MaineDOT
		• Me Turnpike Auth.
		• PTAC
		• MTA
		• Governor
		• GOPIF Climate Council
		• USM Staff & Students
		• Rock Row
		• Local Employers
		• Bicycle Coalition
		
		Opposition
		• Gorham Councilor Jones
		• Rail enthusiasts
			Primary
			Gorham Councilor Jones
			
			Secondary
			Gorham Councilor Smith
				• BRT field trip
				• Press events
				• Letter writing & Op-Ed campaign
				• On-site bus parties
				• Council meeting presentations
				• Local info sessions

BRT Advocacy Plan

BUS RAPID TRANSIT DESIGN
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Westbrook

- Mayor
- City Administrator
- Councilors
- Staff
- Rock Row, Other Businesses?

Gorham

- Town Manager
- Councilors
- Staff
- USM, Other Businesses?

Portland

- Mayor
- City Manager
- Councilors
- Staff
- Chamber, Portland Downtown, Other Businesses?

BRT Advocacy Plan

BUS RAPID TRANSIT DESIGN
GORHAM • WESTBROOK • PORTLAND

Gorham City Leaders BRT Advocacy Plan

Person / Position	Notes / Stance	Tactics: Who, What, When
Staff		
Town Manager: Ephrem Paraschak		
Dir. of Cmty Development: Tom Poirier - BOD		
Town Planner: Carol Eyerman		
Dir. Economic Development: Kevin Jensen		
Councilors		
Chair: Suzanne Phillips		
Vice Chair: Seven Siegel – former BOD		
Kelly Dearborn		
Charles Hamblen		
Janet Keuch		
Lou Simms - BOD		
David Willis		
Businesses		
USM		
Industrial Park		
Ambassadors		
Lou Simms – BOD / Councilor		

Advocacy Update

Advocacy Communication

- BRT Campaign: Next Steps
- Op-Ed on Gas Prices



Future Agenda Items

- Federal Initiatives Affecting Transit
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Workplan Development (Strategic Plan)
- Coalition Building, State Advocacy; Local as appropriate

Upcoming Meetings

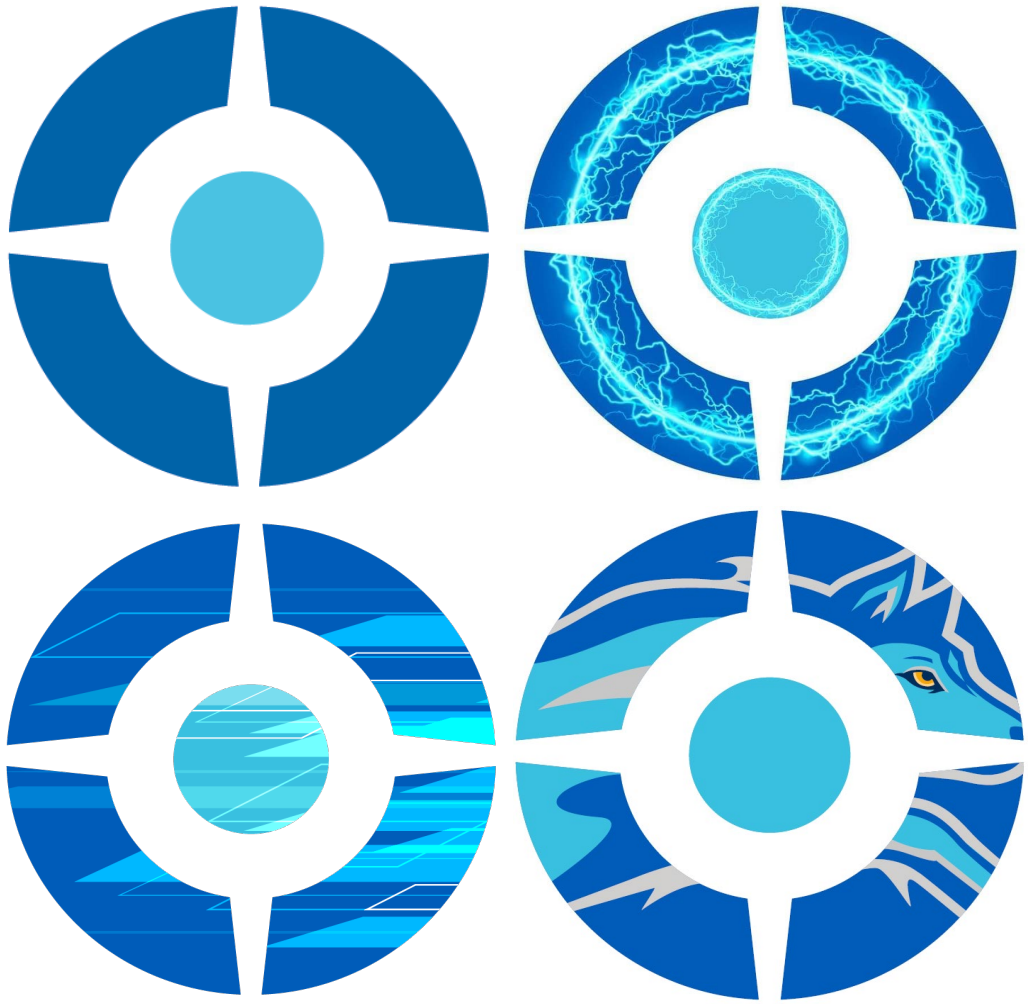
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- Planning and Operations – June 17, 2026 at 10:30
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- Advocacy Committee – August 20, 2026 at 3:00

GREATER PORTLAND METRO

Advocacy Committee

Next Meeting: August 20 @ 3:00

Adjourn



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GREATER PORTLAND ON-DEMAND TRANSIT