



## Issue Paper #1

Draft for Public Comment  
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Linking Our Communities • Advancing Our Region

# Pressing Need for an Effective Transportation Plan

### Key Reasons for an Effective Regional Transportation Plan.

- Substantial traffic growth in the next 25 years will bring more congestion and safety concerns.
- Transportation investments need a regional focus that addresses long-term needs.
- Land use and transportation decisions affect one another and need to be better connected.
- Historic transportation funding levels have been inadequate, and will fall increasingly short as demand grows.

*Destination Tomorrow* is the most important regional transportation plan for the Greater Portland region since the 1960's. The Plan provides a vision for the transportation system through 2025, and signifies a new level of coordination between transportation planning and funding partners. *Destination Tomorrow* has received widespread support from state and local elected officials, and the general public.

### Substantial Growth in Traffic

The table below shows the expected increase in the average evening-commute time if current patterns are maintained.

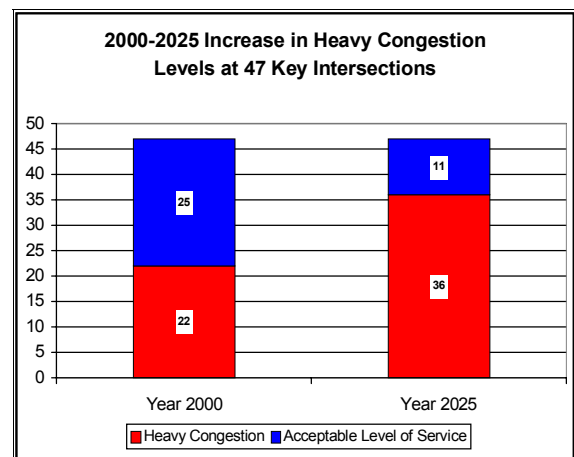
From	To	2000 (in minutes)	2025 (in minutes)
Maine Mall	Gorham Village	31	39
Maine Mall	Yarmouth	22	26
Downtown Portland	Gorham Village	36	46
Downtown Portland	Windham	25	32
Downtown Portland	Yarmouth	15	18

As the time needed to reach our destinations increases, so too will the distance we must travel to reach our destinations. Between 2000 and 2025, the daily miles driven in the PACTS area is expected to increase by more than a third.

Increased congestion will also be a result of traffic growth under our current development pattern. The figure below shows that almost half of 47 key intersections in the PACTS area regularly experience traffic tie-ups today and that 36 will likely do so in the year 2025 if current trends continue.



*Busy Route 25 traffic on a typical afternoon in Gorham*

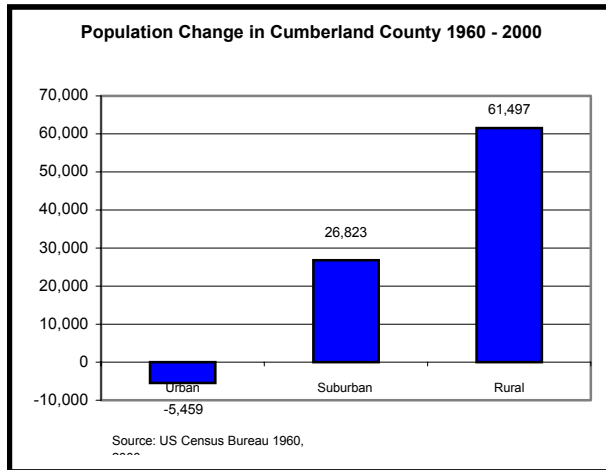


This issue paper is one of nine prepared by the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee (PACTS) for the *Destination Tomorrow* regional transportation plan. *Destination Tomorrow* provides a transportation vision and plan for the PACTS region for 2004 to 2025. The Plan will be implemented by the Maine Department of Transportation, the PACTS Policy Committee, the region's municipalities and public transit providers, the Greater Portland Council of Governments and the Maine Turnpike Authority.

PACTS members oversee transportation studies and allocate federal transportation funds for the PACTS region. In 2003, PACTS members will prepare an addendum to this Plan in response to the addition of eight municipalities in 2002 that increased the size of the PACTS area from seven to fifteen municipalities. In order to learn more about PACTS and this Plan, go to [www.pactsplan.org](http://www.pactsplan.org), or call John Duncan at 207-774-9891.

# Regional Approach

The increasingly regional nature of travel requires that future transportation investments address long-term regional needs. The population change figure below is one measure of how we have moved out from our urban centers in Cumberland County during the past forty years – thereby creating more traffic for ourselves. Our analysis shows that this spreading out will continue even with the projected population gain in our urban centers.



In light of the patterns of development and travel, the PACTS members concluded that they should broaden their approach to setting regional priorities. While we have performed many multi-jurisdictional corridor studies over the years and have used a respectable process for setting regional funding priorities, there is a need to look at both the PACTS region and the towns beyond as a single area in order to assess the needs of the true “commutershed” of greater Portland. While this is a major challenge for an advisory agency like PACTS, we concluded that PACTS, MaineDOT, municipalities, businesses and the region’s residents would all benefit from such an enhanced regional priority setting process.

## Regional Transportation Plans in 1963 and 2003

In 1963, MaineDOT and PACTS adopted their first regional transportation plan that served as the framework for many highway improvements made in the Portland region during the 1960's and 1970's. Ever since 1963, PACTS and MaineDOT have worked closely together to make regionally coordinated transportation decisions.

To strengthen the framework for regional coordination and decision-making, PACTS members chose to put a major effort into the development of the *Destination Tomorrow* Plan that will be completed in 2003. An extensive survey of the region’s residents in 1999 supported this effort. A key finding of the survey showed that by a two-to-one margin, the region’s citizens supported spending transportation dollars for regional projects in preference to local projects.

## Transportation and land use planning decisions need to be better connected

In southern Maine, and throughout the country, there is consensus that a significant disconnect exists between transportation and land use development policies, responsibilities and funding. This disconnect occurs despite our understanding that how we travel is affected by where we choose to live, work and shop, and that these choices are, in turn, shaped to some degree by our transportation system. This lack of coordination also exacerbates congestion problems and contributes to the development patterns of sprawl.



*A Westbrook citizen speaking at a Destination Tomorrow Forum*

Although PACTS has no direct authority regarding land use policy, its members decided to include a number of strategies and recommendations in *Destination Tomorrow* that may be used to increase the connection between land use planning and transportation planning. These strategies and recommendations provide incentives for coordinated land use and transportation plans and projects, and are included for the consideration of municipal officials and other decision makers.



*Another subdivision under construction in Scarborough*



*Exit 7 Turnpike Spur near the Maine Mall*

There are many potential opportunities to combine good land use and transportation planning in the region. Land use and transportation decisions yet to be made will shape the future of areas with relatively undeveloped parcels of land. One such opportunity in Scarborough and South Portland is the proposal to connect the Exit 7 Turnpike Spur to Running Hill Road as seen at the top of the photo on the left.

## **PACTS studies and plans need to have more impact on the PACTS decision-making process.**

The PACTS members want to use their studies and plans more effectively in the decisions they make. This will be a challenge due to the political nature of some decisions, the complexity and number of federal funding programs, the many parties involved in the PACTS process, and the scarcity of funds relative to transportation needs. (See page 4.)

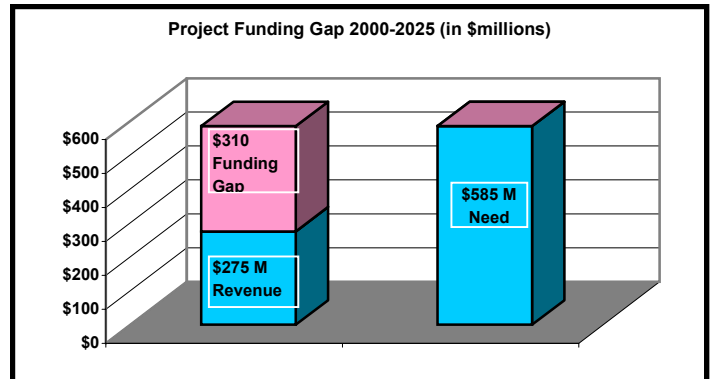
While a review of the linkage between past funding decisions made by the PACTS members and the PACTS plans and studies showed an effective connection, *Destination Tomorrow* recommends actions to further improve the connection and implement the Plan's goals and strategies.



*State, regional, federal and local leaders at a Destination Tomorrow meeting*

# Transportation funding has fallen short in the past, and will continue to do so

*Destination Tomorrow* updates a 2001 PACTS assessment of a significant capital investment funding shortfall for the PACTS region for the 2004-2025 period. The update details capital investment needs of approximately \$585 million, and forecasts funding of approximately \$275 million.\* The result of this update is a *\$310 million unmet capital investment need over the next 22 years in the PACTS region.* (See *Issue Paper 8* for more details.) This unmet need must be addressed by concerted efforts by local, regional, state and federal levels of governments.



\*Includes the highway, passenger transportation, bridge and freight components of the transportation system.

## Implementation of *Destination Tomorrow*

The key role of PACTS in the implementation of *Destination Tomorrow* will be to allocate the federal highway and federal public transportation capital and operating funds available to our region. The MaineDOT, the Maine Turnpike Authority, public transportation providers, and those who establish and implement land use policies and plans will, collectively, implement the remainder of the Plan. Overall, MaineDOT will continue to play the primary leadership role in the implementation of major transportation projects in our region. As MaineDOT continues to implement Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act, it will support strategies and actions that coordinate land use and transportation decisions.

## Major Components of *Destination Tomorrow*

*Destination Tomorrow* includes a vision statement, six goals and 84 strategies, funding principles, several specific project recommendations, and regional transportation "budgets" for system maintenance, additional system capacity and community/economic development. Many currently unidentified small-to-medium sized projects (less than \$5 million per project) will be funded under the maintenance and community/economic "budgets". PACTS and MaineDOT will decide on the funding of major projects (greater than \$5 million each) as follows:

- *Major projects specified for funding during the 2004 to 2009 period will receive a high priority – but not a guarantee – for federal funding by PACTS and MaineDOT.*
- *Major projects not specified for funding during the 2004 to 2009 period will not be eligible for federal funding unless the Policy Committee amends the Plan.*

## PACTS Expansion and *Destination Tomorrow*

In 2002, the PACTS region expanded to a 15-municipality region from its former size of seven municipalities, and from four to six transit providers. This expansion was a result of the 2000 Census and as required by federal law. The advanced stage of work on *Destination Tomorrow* resulted in a decision to complete the Plan based on the former size of a seven-municipality region.

In 2003, PACTS members will develop an addendum to *Destination Tomorrow*. The addendum will incorporate the visions and perspectives of the eight new municipalities. The process of expanding and integrating the additional municipalities began in June 2002 and is proceeding in a manner that will ensure a strong foundation for the newly expanded region. With this strong foundation PACTS members can advance the agreed-upon basic tenets in *Destination Tomorrow*.