



## **Chapter 2: Plan Background**

### **PACTS – Organizational Overview**

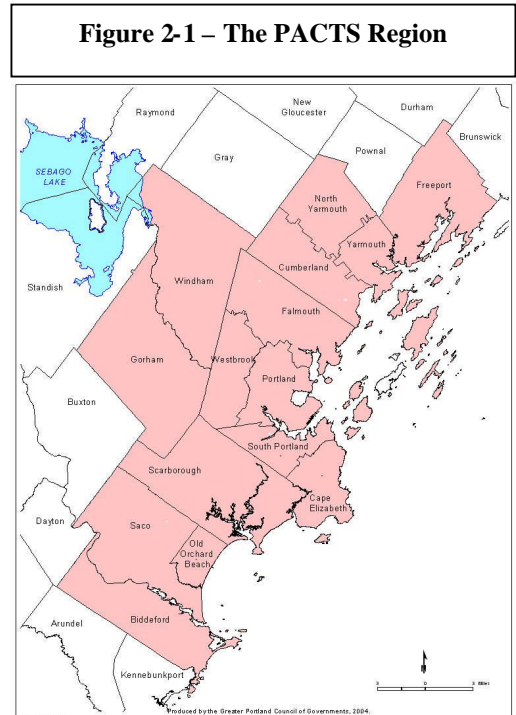
Since 1975, PACTS has served as the regional transportation planning and federal funding organization for the Greater Portland area MPO. MPOs are federally mandated "metropolitan planning organizations" formed for all urbanized areas with a core population of at least 50,000 people. PACTS is comprised of municipal and state officials, representatives of regional planning and transit agencies, and interested citizens and businesses. PACTS oversees transportation studies, identifies needs and sets priorities for certain federal transportation funds available to the area. (See box.)

<b>PACTS Functions</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provides a continuous, coordinated and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Greater Portland area.</li> <li>2. Evaluates and approves proposed transportation improvement projects.</li> <li>3. Recommends to the MaineDOT the use of federal funding for priority road improvements, for public transportation operating subsidies and capital improvements, for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and for other important transportation purposes in the PACTS area.</li> <li>4. Performs and oversees transportation studies and policy analysis, and prepares a regional transportation plan.</li> <li>5. Provides a forum for interagency cooperation and collaborative decision-making, public input, the exchange of ideas and the exploration of innovative transportation concepts.</li> <li>6. Monitors compliance with national air quality goals.</li> </ol>

### **PACTS Members and Their Roles**

MaineDOT is, and always has been, the key participant in the PACTS planning and funding processes. The two agencies have always shared a close working relationship. MaineDOT provides technical and policy analysis and technical assistance for consideration by PACTS committee members and staff. MaineDOT also provides matching funds for the annual PACTS operating budget. MaineDOT support is required to implement any PACTS funding proposal.

Municipalities play a central role in transportation planning in the PACTS area. In response to public concerns, municipal staffs request most PACTS studies. Local officials also propose the majority of projects for funding via PACTS. Public transportation organizations typically propose studies and capital/operating funding options related to public transportation. The fifteen municipal members of PACTS are depicted in Figure 2-1. They are: Biddeford, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, North Yarmouth, Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Saco, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook, Windham and Yarmouth.



The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) and the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) provide staff support to PACTS staff and committees. The GPCOG and SMRPC are the federally designated transit-planning agencies for PACTS covering Cumberland and York Counties respectively.

The Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA), seven transit providers and the Southern Maine Corridor Coalition also are members of PACTS. The seven transit providers appoint a representative to each of the PACTS committees. Interested citizens and business representatives are appointed to the Planning, Technical and Transit Committees. The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration are non-voting members of each PACTS committee. Though not a member, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection has worked with PACTS on air quality conformity for a number of years.

PACTS has four standing committees: the Policy, Planning, Technical and Transit Committees. The latter three advise the Policy Committee, which is the decision-making board of PACTS. Municipalities designate committee representatives; the municipality’s population is used to determine the number of representatives. Member agencies also designate representatives to each committee.

**PACTS Membership**

**Municipalities**

Biddeford	Portland
Cape Elizabeth	Saco
Cumberland	Scarborough
Falmouth	South Portland
Freeport	Westbrook
Gorham	Windham
North Yarmouth	Yarmouth
Old Orchard Beach	

**Agencies and Others**

Maine Department of Transportation  
Maine Turnpike Authority  
Casco Bay Island Transit District  
Citizen and business representatives  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration  
Greater Portland Council of Governments  
Greater Portland Transit District (METRO)  
Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority  
Regional Transportation Program  
Southern Maine Corridor Coalition  
Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission  
South Portland Bus Service  
York County Community Action Corporation  
ZOOM-ShuttleBus



## *Destination Tomorrow* – The 2006 Regional Transportation Plan

PACTS has prepared and updated its regional transportation plans for more than 20 years. In 1999, the PACTS Policy Committee decided to significantly and substantively revise the PACTS regional transportation plan. The following four major topics were recommended to receive greater analysis and focus:

- addressing the projected growth in travel demand;
- a need for an increased regional approach;
- better coordination between transportation and land use policies and decisions; and
- a need for a tighter link between PACTS studies and plans and its funding decisions.

The PACTS Regional Trends Analysis (1999) was completed as one of the initial steps in the development of *Destination Tomorrow*. The report looked at trends out to the Year 2040 and highlighted the pressing transportation problems looming for the region based on past and forecast future trends. A second step was a survey of 2,000 area residents in 1999 that documented the regional nature of travel, and the desire of the region’s residents for “regional solutions” to transportation problems. The survey supported the decision of the Policy Committee’s approach to *Destination Tomorrow*. (Transportation issues affecting the Greater Portland region: Survey of Portland area residents, 1999.)

*Destination Tomorrow 2006* follows and includes the work of *Destination Tomorrow 2003* and represents the PACTS long-range Regional Transportation Plan. (This plan will be updated every four years to reflect changes in the transportation needs of the PACTS region.)

### **Growth in Travel Demand**

Today, daily congestion occurs on numerous roads in the PACTS area. An intersection capacity analysis indicated that three-quarters of the 66 intersections studied currently operate at congested levels during the p.m. peak-traffic-hour.<sup>1</sup> Most of this congestion is on the region’s primary roads where significant delays are regularly experienced during both the morning and evening peak-travel hours. Forecasted increases in travel demand by the Year 2025 are anticipated to result in daily congestion on 90 percent of the 66 intersections studied.<sup>2</sup> Two indicators of increasing travel demand are Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT). These two indicators are forecast to increase 25 percent and 31 percent, respectively, between 2000 and 2025. Interstate roadways are forecast to have the largest percent increase.

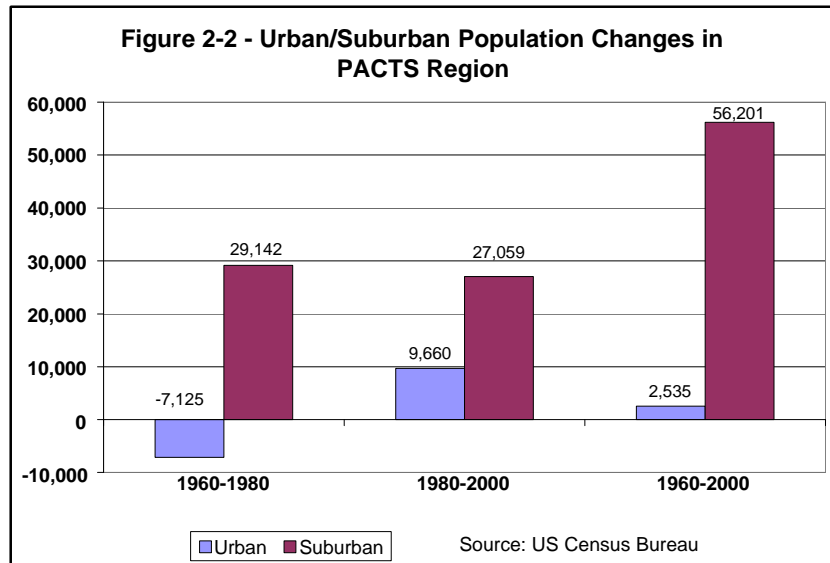
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<sup>1</sup> The 2003 Plan also identified 10 miles of roadway segments as currently being congested during the p.m. peak-traffic-hour. This analysis was not repeated for the 2006 Plan that covers the larger, 15-community PACTS region.

<sup>2</sup> The 2003 Plan also identified 25 miles of roadway segments that will be congested during the p.m. peak-traffic-hour in 2025. This analysis was not repeated for the 2006 Plan that covers the larger, 15-community PACTS region.

**Regional Approach**

The increasingly regional nature of travel requires that future transportation investments address long-term regional needs. The shifts in population shown in Figure 2-2 are one measure of how we have moved out from the urban centers in Cumberland County during the past 20 and 40 years – thereby creating longer driving distances and more traffic. Analysis shows that this spreading



out will continue even with the projected population gain in the region’s urban centers between 2000 and 2025. The forecasted continuing population spread is also reflected in Figure 2-2.

In light of these regional development trends and travel patterns, the PACTS members concluded that a broadened approach to setting regional priorities should be part of *Destination Tomorrow*. While PACTS has performed many multi-community corridor studies in the past and has used a respectable process for setting regional funding priorities, its members believed there was a need to look at both the PACTS region and the surrounding towns as a single area for which to assess the needs of the true “travel-shed” of greater Portland. While this is a major challenge for an advisory agency like PACTS, its members concluded that MaineDOT, municipalities, businesses and the region’s residents would all benefit from such an enhanced regional priority-setting process.

**Coordination Between Transportation and Land Use**

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 decisions. This disconnect occurs despite our understanding that: (1) how we travel is affected by where we choose to live, work and shop; (2) that these choices are, in turn, shaped to some degree by our transportation system; and (3) that these choices also shape, to some degree, the transportation system. The disconnect also exacerbates congestion problems and contributes to the development pattern of sprawl.

## Link Between Studies and Plans and PACTS Decision-making

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 many decisions, the complexity and number of federal funding programs, the many parties, and turnover in parties, involved in the PACTS process, and the scarcity of funds relative to transportation needs. While a review of the linkage between past funding decisions made by PACTS

members and the PACTS plans and studies showed an effective connection, members wanted to further strengthen these linkages.

### *Destination Tomorrow Vision Statement*

The PACTS Regional Transportation System will:

- Provide efficient and cost-effective travel for the region’s citizens and goods;
- Provide access to the entire PACTS region through a fully developed and well maintained multi-modal transportation system;
- Promote public safety;
- Protect environmental quality and quality of life;
- Actively complement land use decisions that promote compact development, preserve community character and retain open space; and
- Reflect the policies and values of the PACTS communities.

### Growing gap between identified needs and anticipated funding

As part of the development of *Destination Tomorrow*, the PACTS members and staff developed the Plan’s short and long-term investment framework. In accordance with federal regulations, the framework was limited to identified system needs and did not include projects that might be better defined as a “wish-list.” PACTS members soon realized that the identified transportation needs would significantly exceed the anticipated levels of available funding. This financial reality will present an ongoing challenge to PACTS members and staff. Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the funding aspects of *Destination Tomorrow*.

## *Destination Tomorrow Goals and Objectives*

The *Destination Tomorrow* Vision Statement, seen in the box above, was crafted early in the *Destination Tomorrow* process and acted as a guide in the Plan’s development. The six goals and objectives described on the following pages translate the Vision Statement into actions items – both broad and concrete measures that the region can collectively take to implement the Plan. The 88 strategies developed from these goals and objectives are listed beginning on page 5-8.



## Goals & Objectives

Each of *Destination Tomorrow's* six goals have a number of objectives. Many of these objectives are inter-related reflecting the close relationship between the transportation system, the economy, land use and the environment. To stress the importance of this relationship, PACTS members included similar objectives under multiple goals.

**Goal #1. Economic Development** – PACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Enhances regional prosperity through support for the economic vitality of existing businesses and for economic development opportunities encouraged by local and regional plans.

### Objectives: Economic Development

- To provide transport linkages and modal alternatives to centers of employment, business and retail activity, and other traffic generators.
- To provide gateway connections into and out of the Portland region through highways, airports, seaports, rail, public transportation, and multi-use trails.
- To provide access to air, sea, and rail stations accounting for the needs of passengers, expedited freight and goods movement, and other demand.
- To maintain the balance between accessibility and mobility in heavily traveled corridors feeding regionally significant employment and activity centers.

**Goal #2. Mobility, Safety & Accessibility** – PACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Improves the mobility, safety and accessibility of people throughout the region, and the movement of goods.

### Objectives: Mobility, Safety & Accessibility

- To reduce congestion and delay on main travel arteries throughout the region.
- To improve highway safety by reducing the number and severity of crashes involving vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and others.
- To manage incidents along or within transportation facilities minimizing loss of life, injuries, property damage, and disruption to the operation of transportation services.
- To direct through-traffic to use higher functionally classified roadways.
- To provide physical connections among modes that are convenient, safe, and affordable.
- To create a seamless passenger transportation system coordinating service, fares, and operations.
- To improve truck circulation and movement within the region.
- To provide transportation alternatives and choices for those with special needs - elderly, young, disabled, low-income, and others.

**Goal #3. Energy Conservation** – PACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Conserves and efficiently uses non-renewable energy resources.

**Objectives: Energy Conservation**

- To reduce the number of trips by single-occupant vehicles.
- To encourage trips by pedestrian and bicycle modes of travel.
- To increase the use of ridesharing through high occupancy vehicles – carpools, vanpools, and transit.
- To minimize energy consumption in the movement of people and goods, and total energy consumption by transportation.
- To facilitate the availability and use of alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles (AFV) in public and private fleets.

**Goal #4. Land Use** – PACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Supports land use plans and development patterns that promote efficient transportation services and systems.

**Objectives: Land Use**

- To encourage the creation of and conformance to regional and local land use plans that provide regional connectivity and mobility in support of development patterns.
- To foster compact development patterns such as mixed use and transit-oriented development that promote efficient transportation services and systems that reduce sprawl.
- To promote site development and infrastructure that provides the opportunity for access and on-site circulation by pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes.
- To protect neighborhoods and community integrity, preserving local ties and relationships.
- To manage access along major arteries to reduce delay and crashes while protecting accessibility of adjoining property.
- To balance the needs for increased network connectivity and reduced cut-through traffic on lower classified roads such as residential streets.
- To create transportation facilities that are community sensitive – responding to the needs of the community, neighborhoods, and adjoining properties.
- To formulate a planning and design process that effectively coordinates land use and transportation decisions and that spans jurisdictional boundaries.

**Goal #5. Environmental Quality** – FACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Protects and improves quality of life and the human and natural environments including natural and cultural resources, air and water quality.

**Objectives: Environmental Quality**

- To minimize impact on environmental resources – wetlands, wildlife, habitat and water quality.
- To reduce vehicle-related emissions both regionwide and at specific locations.
- To minimize and avoid noise impacts of transportation facilities on neighborhoods, schools and people.
- To construct visually attractive transportation infrastructure that complements surrounding land uses and is contextually appropriate.
- To increase accessibility to recreation and natural areas through alternative modes of transportation.

**Goal #6. Regional Focus** – FACTS will plan for, fund, maintain and operate a transportation system that: Reflects a regional approach to transportation and land use planning and decision-making founded on effective communication and management of regional resources.

**Objectives: Regional Focus**

- To establish priorities for implementation of transportation improvements that are tied to regional transportation needs and funding availability.
- To clearly assign roles, responsibilities, and schedules for implementation of plan elements.
- To monitor transportation system performance and Plan implementation on a region-wide basis.
- To provide information on a real-time basis to elected officials, interested parties and the general public.
- To establish a means for the continuous involvement of citizens in the implementation of transportation improvements.

**Plan Process and Public Outreach**

A continuous public outreach process was conducted throughout the development of the 2003 Plan and the 2006 *Destination Tomorrow* Plan. The public outreach was one part of the performance-based transportation planning process used in *Destination Tomorrow*. The cornerstones of this process were:

- Identifying a desired end state – a vision – and goals.
- Identifying needs and potential alternatives to meet the needs.
- Evaluating the alternatives through a set of performance measures.
- Selecting courses of action that best meet the needs in conformance with the established vision and goals.



Appendix A summarizes the public comments received. Key elements of the public process are listed below.

- A Regional Residents Survey in 1999.
- Publication and distribution of the Regional Trends Analysis in 1999.
- A series of public forums and listening sessions before town and city councils and at convenient locations for residents and businesses in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2005.
- Regularly scheduled meetings of the PACTS Planning Committee and PACTS *Destination Tomorrow* Subcommittee with regular updates to the PACTS Policy Committee. (All PACTS meetings are open to the public.)
- The establishment of a Plan website [www.pactsplan.org](http://www.pactsplan.org), with regular updates, to document the Plan's progress, post significant products and seek public input.
- Distribution of *Destination Tomorrow* planning documents.
- E-mail updates to interested parties.
- Publication and distribution of nine issue papers in 2002, a Plan Summary Report in 2003, and draft final reports of *Destination Tomorrow* 2003 and 2006 to seek additional public input.
- Publication and distribution of the final *Destination Tomorrow* Plans in both 2003 and 2006.

## State and Federal Regulatory Context

The Federal Highway and Transit Administrations require that eight planning factors be incorporated into the development and updating of regional transportation plans. These factors are reflected in the *Destination Tomorrow* Goals and Strategies.

**FHWA/FTA Planning Factors**

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Parts of southern Maine, including the PACTS region, are in a “maintenance area” with respect to air quality. Because of this, federal regulations require that *Destination Tomorrow* meet certain air conformity standards. PACTS, MaineDOT and MaineDEP have collaborated on the Plan’s air conformity analysis. The data inputs and results of the analysis will be available in a separate document as an addendum to this Plan. FHWA will not give final approval to the Plan until it passes the air conformity analysis. Appropriate measures will be taken in the unlikely event that *Destination Tomorrow* does not pass the air conformity analysis, and an amendment to the Plan will be issued.

The National Environmental Policy Act (1969) resulted in significant changes to transportation planning. In 1990 and 1991, four other pieces of legislation were enacted that brought additional, major changes to how federal and state transportation funds are used. *Destination Tomorrow* has responded to the requirements of each of these five laws including subsequent revisions and reauthorizations.

### **A. The National Environmental Policy Act**

The 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the basic national charter for the protection of the environment. The Act establishes policy, sets goals and provides a process for carrying out its requirements.

For the PACTS region, NEPA requires that all major projects that use federal funds:

- assess the project’s environmental impacts;
- consider the project’s environmental impacts in the decision-making process; and
- disclose the environmental impacts to the public.

There are three types of assessments required under the Act:

- Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for projects with significant impacts.
- Environmental Assessments (EA) for projects with no significant impacts.
- Categorical Exclusions (CE) for “small” routine projects with insignificant environmental impacts.

The MaineDOT and PACTS work together closely on all major projects adhering to the NEPA requirements.

### **B. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments**

In 1990, Congress passed additional amendments to the Clean Air Act (CAAA). The amendments set new target dates for attainment of air quality standards and required state and local governments, metropolitan planning agencies and businesses to develop an implementation plan to reduce the levels of emissions. The CAAA requires that this Plan, and the PACTS Transportation Improvement Program, help the region move toward reducing the production of mobile source ozone precursors.

Maine’s three southernmost counties – including the PACTS region – continue to fail to meet the federal ambient air quality standard for ozone. The airborne transport of ozone precursors from outside of Maine significantly contributes to the southern part of the state falling short of the federal standards. Mitigation of this contribution to Maine’s shortfall is beyond the scope of this Plan.

Three *Destination Tomorrow* objectives (see page 2-8) and nine strategies (see page 5-21) promote the conservation and efficient use of nonrenewable energy resources; the increased use of cleaner and zero-emission fuels; low or zero-emission vehicles; and support the development of improved technology, such as better catalytic converters to reduce or eliminate harmful vehicle emissions. However, continued growth in regional VMT, VHT and the resulting vehicle emissions could outstrip the gains from implementing these strategies.

**C. The Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act**

The 1991 Sensible Transportation Policy Act was enacted in response to the importance of the transportation system to Maine's economic vitality and to the well-being and quality of life of its citizens. Additional factors included the need for transportation improvements to meet the diverse need of the State's residents; the state of disrepair of the transportation system; the heavy dependence of the system on foreign oil; and the long-lasting and widespread impacts of transportation investments. The Act requires a process for transportation planning, capital investment and project decisions that will:

1. Minimize harmful environmental impacts of transportation.
2. Evaluate the full range of reasonable transportation alternatives for all significant highway construction or reconstruction projects.
3. Give preference to transportation system management, transportation demand management, and improvements to the existing system and other modes before increasing highway capacity through road building activities.
4. Repair and improve roads and bridges to provide a safe, efficient and adequate transportation network.
5. Reduce reliance on foreign oil.
6. Increase reliance on energy-efficient forms of transportation.
7. Meet the mobility needs of rural and urban residents and the unique needs of the elderly and disabled.
8. Be consistent with the purposes, goals and policies of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act.
9. Incorporate a participation process for local government and the public.

The Act further requires that PACTS take the following actions:

1. Develop a long-range plan that responds to MaineDOT's planning rules.
2. Respond to the Act's goals in its selection of projects for the Transportation Improvement Program.
3. Administer the MaineDOT "significant highway project" analysis process.
4. Coordinate plans and programs with regional corridor planning efforts.
5. Provide opportunities for participation by local government and the public.

The MaineDOT began a revision of the STPA Rule in 2006 and will present a revised Rule to the Maine Legislature.

**D. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act**

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) set new accessibility standards for persons with disabilities. ADA's impacts on transportation have been significant, most notably the accessibility requirements for transit services, streets and sidewalks.

### **E. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Title VI - Environmental Justice**

All MPOs who receive federal money to create and implement long range transportation plans are required to follow the Title VI regulations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Act provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal financial assistance. Related statutes have broadened the grounds to include age, low income, and disability. Title VI's three major principles are to:

- Provide a full and fair participation by traditionally underserved communities.
- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportional impact to traditionally underserved communities.
- Ensure that traditionally underserved communities share in the benefits of transportation improvements.

During the development of *Destination Tomorrow*, PACTS staff met extensively with partner transportation agencies, local governments, interest groups and individual citizens. PACTS reached out to the transit dependent and minority communities by holding public meetings at venues located on public transit routes. In addition, prior to beginning work on the Plan, a random telephone survey of 2,000 residents of Greater Portland was conducted.

### **F. The 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA); the 1997 Transportation Equity Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21); and the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**

ISTEA, passed by Congress in 1991, fostered at least as much change in transportation decision-making as the three laws described above. The added flexibility and increased resources promised in ISTEA (and subsequently TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU) supported efforts in the Portland area and throughout Maine to work toward the objectives enumerated in Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act.

ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU granted states more flexibility in matching transportation solutions to needs, made highway funds available to enhance the environment, promoted new technologies and removed some restrictions on the use of federal funds for toll roads. The Acts also shifted more Federal funds to the National Highway System. Key features of ISTEA/TEA-21/SAFETEA-LU included:

1. Funds traditionally dedicated for highways and bridges could now be used to support capital transit (and certain operating) projects under the Surface Transportation Program.
2. Increased levels of highway, bridge and transit funding to fix deteriorating infrastructure.

3. Set-asides with the Surface Transportation Program for safety construction activities, and for transportation enhancements encompassing a broad range of non-motorized transportation and environmental-related activities.
4. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program directs funds toward projects that improve air quality.
5. Providing start-up costs for traffic management and traffic control actions.

The increasingly regional nature of travel requires that future transportation investments address long-term regional needs. The shifts in population shown in Figure 2-2 are one measure of how we have moved out from the urban centers in Cumberland County during the past 20 and 40 years – thereby creating longer driving distances and more traffic. Analysis shows that this spreading will continue even with the projected population gain in the region’s urban centers between 2000 and 2025. The forecasted continuing population spread is also reflected in Figure 2-2.