



Linking our Communities . Advancing our Region

PACTS

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

Public Involvement Policies and Practices

of the

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System

(PACTS)

August 22, 2011 Draft

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I. Introduction

This document outlines the public involvement processes of the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). This update of the PACTS 2007 Public Participation Plan reflects changes brought on by the wider use of the internet for public policy development and communication in our region and throughout the country. In 2011 we also updated our Title VI Environmental Justice Plan.

PACTS was designated in 1975 as the federally mandated "metropolitan planning organization" for the Portland region. The federal government established these locally controlled planning agencies in all urbanized areas of the country to ensure that our transportation taxes are spent cost-effectively. These fifteen communities comprise the PACTS region: Biddeford, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, North Yarmouth, Old Orchard Beach, Portland, Saco, Scarborough, South Portland, Westbrook, Windham and Yarmouth. See the PACTS Region map on the next page, and visit www.pactsplan.org to learn more. (Insert in final draft.)

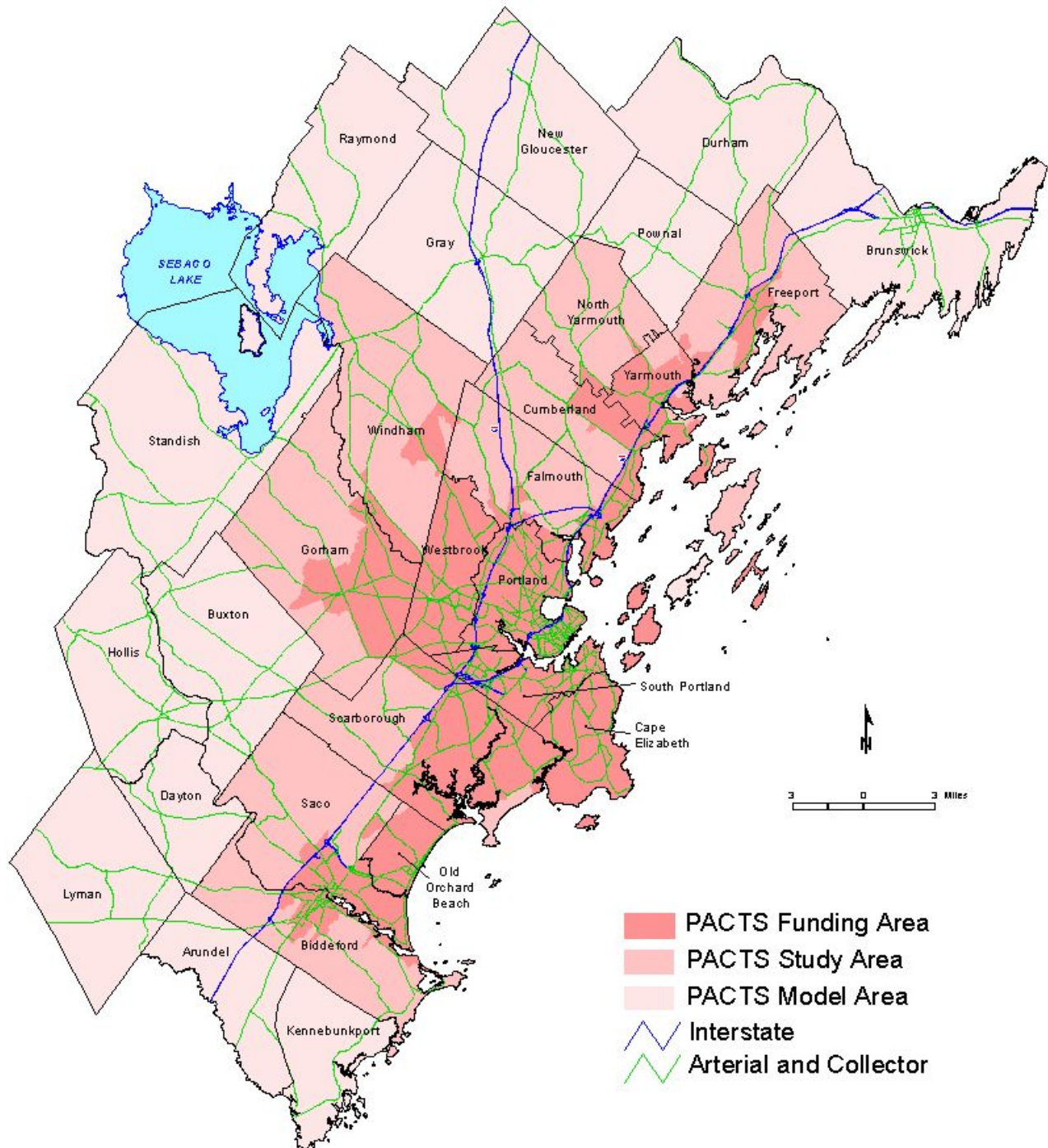
PACTS provides a forum for cooperation and public input into planning and funding decisions by our municipalities, seven transit operators, the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), the Maine Turnpike Authority, the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC), federal agencies, and other public and private transportation organizations. Using a multi-step strategic planning process, our focus is on outcomes within the context of broad community and regional concerns. Our responsibilities include evaluation and programming of proposed transportation improvement projects, sponsorship of transportation studies, monitoring of compliance with national air quality goals, and assistance to other planning agencies.

This public participation plan also serves as a guide for the work within the PACTS region by the GPCOG and SMRPC transportation planners. Working with and for the PACTS committees and staff, they contribute on a daily basis to the development of the region's transportation studies, plans and projects.

Public participation is essential to the success of any public planning process or project. As a small organization serving a large and diverse region, PACTS strives to identify and address the concerns of everyone – community leaders and citizens – with an interest in transportation decisions. Given limited PACTS resources, the participants broadly share the responsibilities for soliciting and applying public input to the region's transportation systems. The PACTS committee members and staff use the basic tenet of the region's Institute for Civic Leadership as a guide in our public involvement work:

“If you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and sustainable responses to issues and opportunities within their communities and organizations.”

PACTS Funding, Study and Model Areas



Produced by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, 2004.

pacts_web site_j.apr

II. Federal and State Perspectives

As the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Portland region, PACTS must follow certain federal and state rules and regulations. Similarly, Maine's Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA) requires the state's four metropolitan planning organizations to establish and follow public participation processes that are effective, timely, and efficient. The following pages outline these federal and state policies, rules and regulations.

The United States Department of Transportation's Metropolitan Planning Regulations are found in Title 23 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 450. The regulations require that all Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop a Public Involvement Process for the development and update of Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). CFR Section 450.316 (b) mandates that the public involvement programs of metropolitan planning processes shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and meets the requirements and criteria specified below.

- (i) Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;
- (ii) Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdictions);
- (iii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;
- (iv) Require adequate notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs;
- (v) Demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;
- (vi) Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households in an effort to ensure that the requirements of Title VI and Environmental Justice have been met during the planning and project process;

- (vii) When significant written and oral comments are received on a draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;
- (viii) If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;
- (ix) Public involvement processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;
- (x) These procedures will be reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to the MPO decision-making processes;
- (xi) Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

PACTS considers the requirements and criteria above when periodically reviewing our public involvement process to determine the effectiveness in providing transportation stakeholders and other interested parties with full and open access to the work of PACTS staff and committees.

The federal Metropolitan Planning Regulations also list the following transportation stakeholders (which is generally referred to in this document as the general public) which must have an opportunity to participate in the MPO public involvement process:

- Citizens
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Freight shippers
- Providers of freight transportation
- Privately owned passenger transportation providers
- Representatives of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Representatives of people with disabilities

The STPA requires MaineDOT and MPO's to establish and follow a public participation process that is effective, timely, and efficient. MaineDOT partners with Regional Planning Organizations (RPO's) and the state's MPO's to develop public outreach strategies that:

- are tailored specifically to their region,
- are consistent with the requirements of the STPA,
- encourage stronger regional partnerships,
- increase grassroots and local government involvement, and
- develop a more consistent statewide approach.

PACTS works with MaineDOT, the Maine Turnpike Authority and the RPO's in the development and execution of the PACTS public involvement process. Where a project has yet to be classified and where the project affects PACTS and the RPO, findings of Significant Highway Projects defined in Subchapter 1, Section 3(k) and Substantial Public Interest Projects described in Subchapter 1, Section 7 of the STPA rule will be determined cooperatively with the RPO and MaineDOT. The PACTS public involvement process envelops all STPA public participation requirements.

The 2011 MaineDOT Administrative Guide to Metropolitan Planning Organizations offers a useful list of public involvement tools for MPO's like PACTS to use to develop long-range plans and transportation improvement programs.

1. Meetings: Although meetings tend to be the first approach, keep in mind that many people often are too busy with other demands or have conflicts with scheduled times. MPOs, therefore, should develop contact lists of interested people.
2. Website comment boxes: MPOs should consider using their websites to obtain feedback from the public about plans and programs.
3. News releases and commentaries: MPOs are encouraged to send news releases to media outlets to promote important meetings, transportation plans and other activities. MPOs should consider submitting letters to the editor and opinion pieces to local newspapers to raise awareness of transportation-related issues.
4. Brochures and other mass-distribution materials: Brochures and handouts are relatively inexpensive tools for providing information about policies, programs and other, more specific topics.
5. Newsletters: Some MPOs regularly publish newsletters to inform citizens, communities, the news media and other interested groups about their activities.
6. Presentations: Some MPO staffs make presentations to civic and professional groups to raise awareness about their activities.
7. Workshops, forums and open houses: MPOs occasionally hold workshops, forums and open houses to provide information to the public and/or to obtain a sense of public priorities.

8. Public opinion surveys: Surveys can be used occasionally to obtain specific information. PACTS, for example, once funded a statistically valid telephone survey to gauge the level of support for proposed regionally significant projects.
9. Databases of interested parties: Databases identifying potentially interested parties can enhance public involvement activities. The databases should include information such as mailing addresses, affiliations, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and websites.
10. Visual displays: MPOs should consider using maps, charts and other displays to present information about their plans and programs.
11. Public notices: Notices about meetings, MPO draft plans and programs, or high-profile studies should be sent to newspapers and posted to MPO websites.

III. Overview of PACTS Policies and Practices

The region's general public has many opportunities to participate in the transportation planning and programming work of PACTS and of the other organizations that have transportation decision-making responsibility. Those many organizations share the responsibilities for soliciting and responding to public input to the planning of the region's transportation systems. The participants in the PACTS process bring the results of their organizations' public outreach to bear in the decisions of PACTS.

Here are examples of opportunities for the public to participate in the transportation work of other organizations in our region:

- Participate in the work of a non-profit advocacy group.
- Serve on a transit system board or committee.
- Serve on a municipal transportation study committee, including a committee working on a study funded via PACTS, or otherwise provide input to the local study committee.
- Serve on a standing municipal board involved in transportation planning, or otherwise provide input to such a board.
- Participate in special public forums such as the one led by the University of Southern Maine in 2011 in the East Bayside neighborhood of Portland.

In October 2011 the PACTS Policy Committee updated the PACTS Title VI Plan which outlines efforts taken by PACTS staff and members to reach out proactively to the region's transportation disadvantaged community. For more information on this work, please contact PACTS staff or visit the PACTS website at www.pactsplan.org.

The balance of this chapter is an overview of the PACTS public involvement policies and practices. Subsequent chapters provide additional details. This chapter is organized around

the public involvement tools listed on the prior page from the 2011 MaineDOT Administrative Guide to Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The final version of this document will include an additional paragraph here regarding the public outreach work of GPCOG and/or SMRPC.

1. PACTS Committee Meetings

The general public has several ways to participate in the meetings of PACTS Committees. Here are some details about the committees, and ways that the public may participate in the committees' work.

- All meetings of PACTS committees (Policy, Executive, Technical, Transit and Planning Committees) are open to the public, and the agendas include an agenda item for public comment. Other procedures and protocol for PACTS committee meetings can be reviewed by obtaining a copy of the PACTS Bylaws which are available on our website. See Appendix X for a list of the current members of the PACTS permanent committees.
- The PACTS Technical, Planning and Transit Committees each have two general public voting members who are appointed by the Executive Committee. Appointees serve for three-year terms, and may serve for successive terms at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The individuals are selected from a pool developed by various means, including a memorandum sent to individuals known to be interested in transportation affairs and a memorandum sent to the current PACTS committee members.
- Appendix B lists the people and organizations who currently receive Policy Committee meeting packets and agendas via email. The meeting packet distribution lists for the other four standing committees are different based on our knowledge of people interested in receiving the meeting materials. Agencies and individuals wishing to be added to these email distribution lists are added upon request.

2. PACTS Website and Blog: The PACTS website, www.pactsplan.org, provides public access to many committee documents, containing both policy and technical information used in the transportation decision-making process. The site also contains information relating to the Transportation Improvement Program, current studies, and other relevant transportation issues. It also includes links to the GPCOG and SMRPC websites. It allows public review and promotes public comment on *Destination Tomorrow*, the PACTS long range transportation plan.

The final version of this document will include an additional paragraph here regarding the PACTS blog.

3. News Releases, Conferences and Commentaries: PACTS staff distributes news releases to media outlets to promote important meetings, transportation plans and other activities. Recent news releases were:

- In October 2010 regarding the PACTS Credit Program
- In November 2010 regarding the PACTS \$15,000,000 projects programmed
- In December 2010 regarding the legislative forum
- In March and April 2011 regarding the Transit Focused Region public forums
- In May 2011 regarding the election of new Policy Committee officers
- In June 2011 regarding the PACTS annual meeting
- In June 2011 regarding the PACTS-funded www.TDM2go.info website (a news release by the City of Portland in this case)
- In August 2011 regarding public forum on the draft PACTS Transportation Improvement Program and the PACTS outreach process.

PACTS staff also submits letters to the Maine Voices section of the Portland Press Herald in order to raise awareness of transportation-related issues. The last one was in 2010 regarding the extensive public process which had been undertaken to solicit regional public support for the PACTS Policy Committee's submission of three proposals for Congressional High Priority Projects funding.

PACTS staff and committee members have also attended newspaper editorial board meetings during the past several years regarding *Destination Tomorrow* (the PACTS long range transportation plan) and proposed state bonds for transportation improvements. In July 2011 several members of the PACTS Transit Committee met with the editorial board of the Portland Press Herald – the result was a positive editorial about public transportation in the region.

PACTS has also held news conferences regarding *Destination Tomorrow* (the PACTS long range transportation plan), and participated in the June 2011 news conference regarding the www.TDM2go.info website.

4. Videos and Brochures: PACTS produces videos and brochures for mass distribution.

In response to the advent of YouTube and the existence of many local public access television stations, PACTS has begun to produce videos and will continue in the future. In 2010 and 2011 PACTS produced four videos which were posted on the PACTS website and to the PACTS YouTube account on the Internet, and shown on twelve local access television stations in the region:

- Spring 2010 six-minute video entitled: “Greater Portland’s Transportation System: A Vital Resource Needs Our Help”
- October 2010 one-hour video recording of a public forum regarding the development of the 2010 *Destination Tomorrow* Plan
- December 2010 one-hour video entitled “Transportation Issues and Opportunities in the PACTS Region – A Briefing for State and Local Officials”.

- A July 2011 seven-minute video about the 2010 *Destination Tomorrow* Plan.
- Final version of this document will make note of GoMaine's videos.

PACTS also produces informational brochures periodically and distributes them widely. In 2003 we wrote and distributed nine 4-page "issue papers" and an 8-page summary of the 2003 *Destination Tomorrow* Plan. Recent brochure examples include:

- May 2009 four-page brochure entitled: Greater Portland's Transportation System is Crumbling!
 - A 2009 one-page brochure entitled: PACTS Collector Road Study – Developing Cost-Effective Maintenance Programs
 - January 2010 four-page brochure entitled: Transportation Opportunities for Greater Portland
5. Annual Reports: PACTS produces a 12-page annual report in order to inform citizens, communities, the news media and other interested parties. It outlines the planning and programming work done during the past year and anticipated to be done in the coming year. Copies are made available to the public through distribution at our public forums, at our website, and through the mail to people upon request. The GPCOG and SMRPC organizations also produce similar annual reports which highlight similar transportation topics.
 6. Presentations: PACTS staff make presentations to civic and professional groups to raise awareness about the work of PACTS and in order to learn of the groups' transportation interests. Recent examples include presentations made at:
 - The 2010 Northeast Annual Conference of the Institute of Transportation Engineers
 - Meetings of the Maine Association of Planners and the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association
 - The 2011 Northeast Transportation Safety Conference hosted by the Maine Transportation Safety Coalition
 7. Workshops, Forums and Open Houses: PACTS holds workshops, forums and open houses to provide information to the public and to obtain a sense of public priorities.
 - Regional Information Sharing Forums... We hold quarterly forums open to the general public regarding any and all transportation topics. The public's interest at these "open forums" is usually alternative modes, health, bicycling, walking, transit, energy and sustainability topics. We invite the public using an email invitation list. Staff produces notes from these forums and shares them with our committee members so that they are aware of the topics discussed at the forums.
 - April 2010 lunch and learn regarding Gorham East West Corridor Study
 - 2011 August public forum regarding the draft PACTS Transportation

Improvement Program and the PACTS outreach process.

- PACTS study advisory committees
 - 2010 participation in a transportation class at the Casco Bay High school
 - Four “sandwich symposia” in 2008 and 2009
 - 2009 and 2010 two public forums regarding Destination Tomorrow Update – during plan development and after the draft plan was available
 - 2011 transit focused region forums – 120 people attended a 4-part forum series in Westbrook and Portland
8. Public Opinion Surveys: In August 2008, PACTS funded a \$20,000 statistically valid regional telephone survey to gauge the level of support for proposed regionally significant projects. The survey also asked people about their travel behavior changes, if any, made in response to the significant increase in fuel prices between 2006 and 2008.

PACTS also did a public opinion survey in 2000 as input to the development of the 2003 *Destination Tomorrow* regional transportation plan.

9. Interested Parties Email Distribution List: PACTS maintains an “Interested Parties” email distribution list. The list currently includes 200 individuals. Informational emails are sent to the people on the list for these purposes:
- To solicit input into substantial changes in the PACTS Public Involvement Plan
 - To solicit input into the development every other year of our 2-year planning and administration work program, called the Unified Planning Work Program (see details in Chapter IV)
 - Invitations to PACTS forums, including those related to the update of *Destination Tomorrow* (see details in Chapter V)
 - Notice of the start every other year of our review of our TIP project selection process (see details in Chapter VI)
 - To solicit input into the endorsement every other year of our capital work plan, called the Transportation Improvement Program (see details in Chapter VI)
 - To advise the people on the list of other significant PACTS efforts, such as the March 2010 email regarding the PACTS video entitled: “Greater Portland’s Transportation System: A Vital Resource Needs Our Help”
10. Visual Displays: PACTS uses maps, charts and other displays to present information about plans and programs. These displays are prepared by GPCOG staff and PACTS consultants.

11. Public Notices: PACTS staff sends notices about committee meetings, draft plans and programs, and studies to committee members, the media and/or interested parties by email. PACTS staff also posts these notices on the PACTS website. Periodically, PACTS staff also notifies the general public of major plans and forums via display ads in local newspapers.

The table below presents the public comment periods and notification processes for each of the PACTS policy, plan and program areas for which public input is sought via public notice.

PACTS Public Input Periods and Notification Processes

	<u>Public Comment Periods</u>	<u>Notification Processes</u>
Start of Long-Range Plan Update Process	30 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, post on website
Draft Long-Range Plan Update	30 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, post on website
Draft Update of Public Involvement Plan	45 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, and post on website
Solicit public input into development of Unified Planning Work Program early in every odd-numbered year	30 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, and post on website
Start of PACTS biennial review of PACTS process for development and administration of Transportation Improvement Program projects	30 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, and post on website
Draft PACTS Transportation Improvement Program every odd-numbered year	30 days from receipt of notice	Email to Interested Parties, and post on website
Proposed TIP amendments	10 days	Post on website

When adopted, this Public Involvement Plan Update will have been available for public comment for the federally required 45 days. The public's comments on the draft document, and the responses from PACTS staff and members will be shown here.

1. Comment...

Response...

2. Comment...

Response...

IV. Unified Planning Work Program

As mentioned above, the region's general public has opportunities to participate in the PACTS transportation planning work which is outlined in our Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The opportunities described below are organized around the development of the UPWP every two years, and during the performance of the planning work itself.

A. Public Input to the Development of the UPWP

PACTS staff and committees develop the 2-year UPWP during the winter and spring of each odd-numbered year. See the table on page 10 regarding public input periods and notification processes. Here are the public input opportunities and other details on the process:

1. Members of the public serve on standing municipal boards involved in transportation planning, or otherwise provide input to such a board. This participation is relevant here for municipal boards that submit study proposals for funding in the UPWP.
2. PACTS staff sends an email to the Interested and Affected Parties list soliciting input to the development of the UPWP every other year. Appendix C is the email distribution list used in January 2011. A request for public input is also posted on the PACTS website. Public comments and staff responses are shared with all Committees.
3. Copies of the draft final UPWP and approved UPWP are available to the general public upon request.
4. Members of the public are encouraged to speak at PACTS committee meetings during the public comment agenda item (as described above).
5. Members of the public serve on PACTS standing committees (as described above).

B. Public Input to PACTS Studies

The public input opportunities during the performance of studies funded in the UPWP, and other details on the process, are presented here. See later sections of this report for public input opportunities during the development of the long range transportation plan and the Transportation Improvement Program.

1. Members of the public serve on municipal transportation study committees (such as a committee working on a study funded via PACTS), or provide input to local study committees in other ways.
2. Members of the public serve on municipal boards involved in transportation planning, and otherwise provide input to such boards.
3. Members of the public are encouraged to speak at PACTS public forums or public hearings.
4. Members of the public are encouraged to speak at PACTS committee meetings during the public comment agenda item.
5. Members of the public serve on PACTS standing committees.

V. Long Range Transportation Plan Update (*Destination Tomorrow*)

This chapter provides more details about the general public's opportunities to participate in the development of updates to the PACTS long range plan which is known as *Destination Tomorrow*.

A. Public Notification of Transportation Plan Update Development

As described in the Overview chapter, PACTS staff provides notice every four years to the public of the intent to update the Plan. This notice shall be posted on the PACTS website and sent to those interested groups and agencies on the email list of *Interested Parties*. The updated Plan will also be posted on the PACTS website. PACTS shall also attempt to reach additional persons interested in the Plan's development by using various public outreach strategies which may include, but are not limited to: newsletters, news releases, newspaper inserts, bulletin boards, and public service advertisements.

The public notice shall include at least the following information:

- a description specifying what changes were made from the original plan,
- a brief description of the planning process tied to a schedule of when decisions will be made,
- how the Plan may affect the region,
- what opportunities exist for public participation, and
- PACTS contact for obtaining further information.

B. Public Forums/Workshops

PACTS will hold public forums to discuss the various components of the *Destination Tomorrow* at the beginning of the quadrennial Plan Update and then again after the completion of a Draft Plan Update.

Public notices for these meetings shall be posted on the PACTS website, and shall be sent to those interested groups and agencies included on the list of *Interested Parties* at least ten days prior to the meeting. PACTS shall endeavor to identify neighborhoods affected by system deficiencies and attempt to involve them as an "interested party."

PACTS provides, upon request, access to technical and policy information/assumptions underlying the planning and emissions models used in transportation decision-making and air quality conformity determinations.

C. Public Forum on Draft *Destination Tomorrow* Update

Upon completion of the Draft Plan Update, PACTS shall schedule a public forum on the document. Individuals and organizations identified on the *Interested Parties* email list shall be notified and offered the opportunity to participate in and/or offer comment. The purpose of the forum will be primarily for PACTS to collect comments regarding the content of the Draft Plan Update.

A public notice shall be posted on the PACTS website and will encourage submission of written comments by those unable to attend the hearing. A comment period of 30 days beginning from the date of the hearing notice (and at least 10 days beginning from the date of the forum) shall be provided during which comments may be submitted for consideration by the PACTS Policy Committee. The Draft Plan Update shall be made available for inspection at the time of the forum notice. Copies of the update shall be made available at the PACTS office, website, and at the Town and City Offices of the PACTS communities. At the forum, PACTS staff shall present pertinent information contained in the Draft Plan and receive comments from the public.

A summary document of the Transportation Plan will be made available to the attendees at the forum. All substantive comments received during the proceedings will be documented by PACTS staff.

D. Preparation of Final Transportation Plan Update

PACTS will prepare the Final Transportation Plan Update after considering all of the comments and input received from the public process. All relevant written or oral comments received on the Draft Plan will be included in the Final Plan.

If the Final Plan contains substantive changes from the one which was made available for public comment, or raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, then PACTS shall provide an additional duly noticed public comment period on the revised Draft Plan of not less than ten days.

The Final Transportation Plan shall contain PACTS responses to all substantive comments received on the Draft and, if necessary, the Final Plan. PACTS shall provide at least one copy of the Final Transportation Plan to each Town or City Hall and municipal library in the PACTS area. As the Plan is updated, so shall these copies be updated.

E. Significant Amendments to the Transportation Plan Update

While the Transportation Plan is updated every four years, the USDOT's Metropolitan Planning Regulations also state that the Plan might be "amended" between updates. This has never happened during the 35 years of the PACTS process. Nevertheless, there is a process for public input in the event of need for a significant amendment to the Plan, as described here.

PACTS will publish the proposed amendment to the Plan with a brief description or summary of the amendment(s) included. All technical analysis in support of the amendment including any air quality/conformity analysis will be referenced in the public notice and made available to the public for review and comment. A comment period of 30 days beginning from the date of the public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to PACTS staff for consideration.

An exemption from the public involvement process may be granted only where proposed projects are determined to be exempt from air quality conformity determination under the provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 and 40 CFR 93.134. For purposes of the Transportation Plan or TIP, these exempt projects would be considered minor in nature. PACTS will consult FHWA and EPA in the determination as to whether an amendment requires public involvement.

VI. Transportation Improvement Program

In the fall of every odd-numbered year the PACTS Policy Committee endorses a list of federally funded transportation projects for the PACTS Funding Area (see map in Chapter I) for submission to FHWA, FTA and MaineDOT. This list, and the report in which it is located, is called the PACTS Transportation Improvement Program, referred to as the TIP.

The PACTS TIP includes federally funded projects that the PACTS participants have selected for funding (known as the MPO Allocation projects) and other federally funded projects selected by the MaineDOT. The adoption of the TIP constitutes a formal statement of support by the Policy Committee for the projects in the document that were initiated by MaineDOT. The process of selecting projects is complex due to the many federal programs, state requirements and PACTS rules and guidelines. Interested parties should refer to the

latest version of the *PACTS TIP Policies and Procedures* report in order to understand the process well.

The *PACTS Policies and Procedures for the 2012/2013 Transportation Improvement Program* adopted in March 2010 documents the procedures in developing the 2012/2013 biennial TIP. In the document PACTS encourages the general public to identify problems, to propose possible solutions, and to be involved in municipal decision-making processes during the development of projects to be funded via PACTS and MaineDOT. The 2011 update of this document (in progress during the writing and review of this public participation plan) will be adopted in late 2011.

The PACTS public involvement process for TIP project priority setting is a combination of contacts with member organizations and the general public, as outlined below.

- All feasibility studies funded by PACTS (which often produce funding proposals for capital improvement projects from MaineDOT and/or PACTS) include a public outreach component. Our Enhanced Project Scoping process also includes a public input component. Together, these feasibility studies and project scoping efforts are designed to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement in regional transportation planning and funding.
- We maintain at all times an up-to-date TIP section on our website, www.pactsplan.org. Comments may be made via the info@pactsplan.org at any time.
- At the beginning of the project selection process every two years we send an email to our municipal, state, transit, other regional organizations (and to our Interested Parties email list participants) advising of the deadlines for submitting MPO Allocation proposals. (See the [PACTS TIP Policies and Procedures](#) report for more on the MPO Allocation.)
- We ask that city/town councils, municipal officers and transit system boards submit written endorsements of all of their TIP proposals submitted to PACTS. We also ask for written endorsement to PACTS for the projects from their municipality that the Policy Committee votes to include in each biennial MPO Allocation list
- We hold a public meeting every two years in order to take public comment on the draft PACTS Transportation Improvement Program for the upcoming biennium.

Any substantive change in PACTS' TIP project selection criteria or formula is also subject to public review and comment. Amendments to the TIP selection criteria and formula shall be accomplished before the initiation of the biennial TIP development process. PACTS shall notify the public of its intent to update the TIP selection criteria and/or formula and make said material available to the public for comment.

Amendments to the TIP

The PACTS Policy Committee periodically needs to amend the TIP. An amendment is the addition or deletion of a project, a major change in a funded project's budget, or a major change in the design or scope of a project that alters the intent of a project.

Before the Policy Committee makes an amendment, PACTS staff posts to the website the proposed amendment to the TIP for public comment. All technical analysis in support of the amendment including any air quality/conformity analysis will be made available to the public for review and comment. A comment period of 10 days beginning from the date of the posting will be provided during which comments may be submitted to PACTS for consideration.

An exemption from the public involvement process may be granted only where proposed projects are determined to be exempt from air quality conformity determination under the provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 and 40 CFR 93.134. For purposes of the TIP, these exempt projects would be considered minor in nature. PACTS will consult FHWA and EPA in the determination as to whether an amendment requires public involvement.

PACTS and MaineDOT make administrative modification, also known as adjustments, for relatively minor changes that do not require a public comment period. Adjustments cover the following:

- A moderate change in the total cost of a project
- Combining or separating projects that are part of an approved TIP
- Combining or separating phases of a project that are part of an approved TIP
- Adding a new phase to an existing project that does not have a substantial cost associated with it
- Creating a lineage PIN that does not have a substantial cost associated with it
- Making a minor change in the scope of a project, including an insignificant change in the termini and/or
- Making a change to the project termini with no change in overall project cost.

The final version of this document will include an additional paragraph here regarding the FTA "program of projects" rules about project programming and amending.

VII. Summary

This document has outlined the PACTS public involvement processes as updated in 2011 to reflect changes brought on by the wider use of the internet for public policy development and for communication in our region and throughout the country.

Public participation is essential to the success of any public planning process or project. The region's general public has many opportunities to participate in the transportation planning and programming work of PACTS and of the other organizations that have transportation decision-making responsibility. Those many organizations share the responsibilities for soliciting and responding to public input to the planning of the region's transportation systems. The regular participants in the PACTS process bring the results of their organizations' public outreach to bear in the decisions of PACTS. Between the direct involvement of the general public in regional transportation planning and the involvement of their elected and appointed representatives, we all strive to make the PACTS transportation planning and programming process a meaningful contributor to the health, economy and quality of life in our great region.