



## Chapter 1. Executive Summary

### Introduction

*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 calls for a new level of coordination between our transportation planning and funding partners.

*Destination Tomorrow* is the long- range transportation plan for the Greater Portland metropolitan planning organization, FACTS – the Portland Area Comprehensive

Transportation Committee. The Plan addresses current problems of congestion, accessibility and mobility while laying the framework for the transportation system of tomorrow. The Plan acknowledges today's fiscal, political and social realities while incrementally extending beyond the status quo to better integrate the disciplines of transportation and land use planning through regional collaboration.

The *Destination Tomorrow* Plan:

- Emphasizes the planning and funding required to maintain the current transportation systems.
- Recognizes that land use planning is a major factor in determining where people live, and where businesses locate.
- Understands that certain individuals rely on public transportation to satisfy their mobility needs and their economic vitality.
- Continues to promote alternative transportation choices to the automobile to meet travel demand.
- Recommends a strengthening of the connection between transportation and land use planning and investments.
- Provides a framework for the future that values neighborhood and community character and quality of life.

#### Key Reasons for Investing in an Effective Regional Transportation Plan

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

#### Major *Destination Tomorrow* Elements

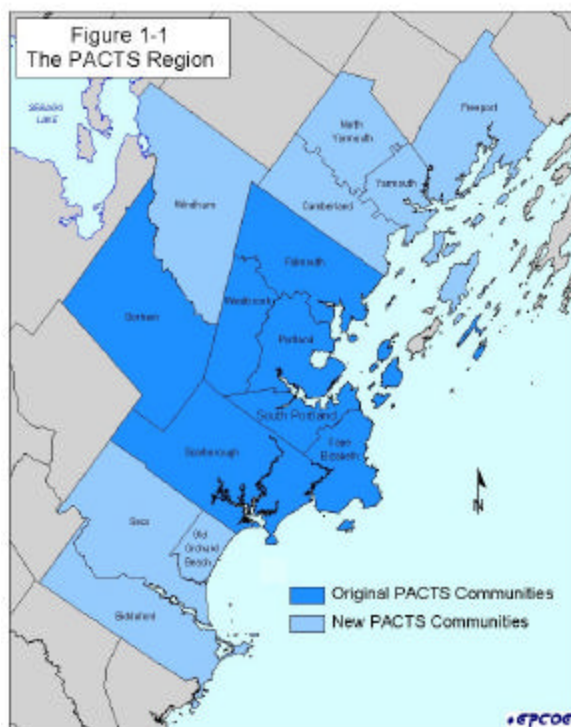
- Establishes a transportation vision, goals and objectives for the region;
- Assesses present day transportation and land use conditions and future trends;
- Evaluates and recommends opportunities to improve the safety, efficiency, and accessibility of the transportation system; and,
- Identifies priorities and a funding framework for the region.

## PACTS – Organizational Overview

PACTS has served since 1975 as the regional transportation planning and federal funding organization (the federally mandated "metropolitan planning organization" or MPO) for the Portland area. MPO's are formed for all urbanized areas with a core population of at least 50,000 people. PACTS is composed of municipal, state and federal officials, and representatives of regional planning and transit agencies. PACTS oversees transportation studies, identifies needs and sets priorities for certain federal transportation funds available to the area.

### PACTS Functions

1. Provides a continuous, coordinated and comprehensive transportation planning process for the greater Portland area.
2. Recommends to the MaineDOT the use of federal funding for certain road improvements, for public transportation operating subsidies and capital improvements, for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and for certain other transportation purposes in the PACTS area.
3. Performs and oversees transportation studies and policy analysis, and prepares a regional transportation plan.
4. Evaluates and approves proposed transportation improvement projects.
5. Provides a forum for interagency cooperation and collaborative decision-making, public input, the exchange of ideas and the exploration of innovative transportation concepts.
6. Monitors compliance with national air quality goals.



*Destination Tomorrow* was developed for the seven communities that comprised PACTS when the planning process began in 1999: Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Gorham, Portland, Scarborough, South Portland, and Westbrook. In response to federal regulations, PACTS expanded in November 2002 to include eight new member communities: Biddeford, Cumberland, Freeport, North Yarmouth, Old Orchard Beach, Saco, Windham and Yarmouth. Over the next 18 months the Plan will be updated to reflect the perspectives and transportation issues of these new communities and will encompass traffic management of the enlarged travel-shed.



## Planning Process and Key Findings

The development of *Destination Tomorrow* followed a process called performance-based transportation planning. The cornerstones of this process are:

- Identifying a desired end state – a Vision – and goals for the transportation system.
- Identifying needs and potential system alternatives.
- Evaluating alternatives to meet those needs based on a set of performance measures.
- Selecting courses of actions that best meet the needs in conformance with the established Vision.

### *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.

The Vision Statement was used as the foundation for the development of the Plan’s goals listed below. Each goal was associated with a number of Objectives that identify measurable implementation steps in achieving the Plan’s vision.

### **Six Goals**

1. Economic Development – Enhance regional prosperity through support for the economic vitality of existing business and for economic development opportunities encouraged by local and regional plans.
2. Mobility, Safety & Accessibility – Improve the mobility, safety and accessibility of people throughout the region, and the movement of goods.
3. Energy Conservation – Conserve and efficiently use non-renewable energy resources.
4. Land Use – Support land use plans and development patterns that promote efficient transportation services and systems.
5. Environmental Quality – Protect and improve quality of life and the human and natural environments including natural and cultural resources, air and water quality.
6. Regional Focus – Reflect a regional approach to transportation and land use planning and decision making founded on effective communication and management of regional resources.

## Key Findings: Present Conditions and Past/Future Trends Analysis

Several key findings emerged from the analysis of present conditions related to transportation and land use as well as their past and future trends. These findings, in conjunction with the Vision Statement and Goals, were used to guide the development of the Plan’s recommendations and strategies.

**Key Findings**

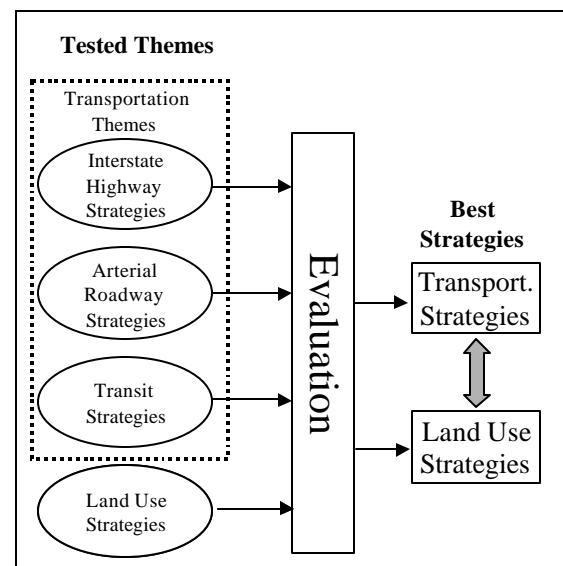
- Significant traffic congestion and safety problems currently exist and will worsen if current development patterns and practices, and investment trends continue.
- There are mixed trends in passenger transportation use and service. Ridership is increasing on inter-city bus, demand-response bus and air transportation services, and after years of decline is also increasing on local bus service. Passenger transportation still accounts for a small percentage of all trips made. Many areas in PACTS are not accessible by passenger transportation.
- While important to the regional economy, the land use patterns, heavy traffic volumes and design on many of the region’s arterials have negative impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Land use development patterns and practices are reinforcing dependency on the automobile for travel in the region.
- The gap between transportation needs and available funding resources is large and is widening.
- Transportation issues are regional in nature and will require a concerted and coordinated multi-jurisdictional response to resolve.

## Alternatives Explored

Four transportation and land use “themes” were analyzed relative to the Plan’s Goals. These themes were called: Interstate Highway, Arterial Roadway, Transit, and Compact Land Use. Each theme included a combination of potential transportation projects and/or land use initiatives. The purposes of the theme analyses were to:

- identify potential benefits and impacts to the transportation system; and
- identify individual projects that could yield the greatest benefits when combined with the “best” projects from the other themes.

Within each of the transportation system themes, potential projects and improvements were rated against a



series of performance measures. From these ratings, a series of guiding policies and the Plan’s Capital Investment Framework were developed.

## **Recommendations and Strategies**

*Destination Tomorrow* includes a comprehensive set of 86 recommendations and strategies that respond to the many transportation challenges facing the PACTS region. Development of these recommendations and strategies was guided by the realization that future decisions about transportation investments and policies need to be considered in a larger context, and that the current PACTS approach to planning could be broadened and improved upon. The Vision Statement, Goals and Nine Guiding Policies aided the development of the recommendations and strategies, each of which identifies the organizations responsible for its implementation. PACTS members used these policies in the development process realizing that their lack of mutually exclusivity would require trade-offs amongst the policies during the implementation of *Destination Tomorrow*.

### **Nine Guiding Policies**

1. Maintain and preserve the existing transportation systems as the highest priority.
2. Make roadway improvements at critical intersections a higher priority than roadway capacity improvements.
3. Strategically expand the transportation system while continuing to meet current demands.
4. Avoid building major new highways, to the extent possible, with a preference for adding capacity to existing streets first, where feasible and appropriate.
5. Enhance/reinforce the Maine Turnpike as the preferred interstate to serve regional through-traffic and I-295 as the preferred interstate to serve intra-regional traffic.
6. Strengthen the link between transportation investments and land use policies and decisions to preserve public investments and promote efficient land use patterns.
7. Implement access management measures to preserve access to land uses, to preserve arterial roadway capacity and to promote safety.
8. Enhance, maintain and, where appropriate, expand passenger transportation services to increase their accessibility and attractiveness to a larger number of people.
9. Promote community and neighborhood livability and economic redevelopment as a goal of transportation investments.

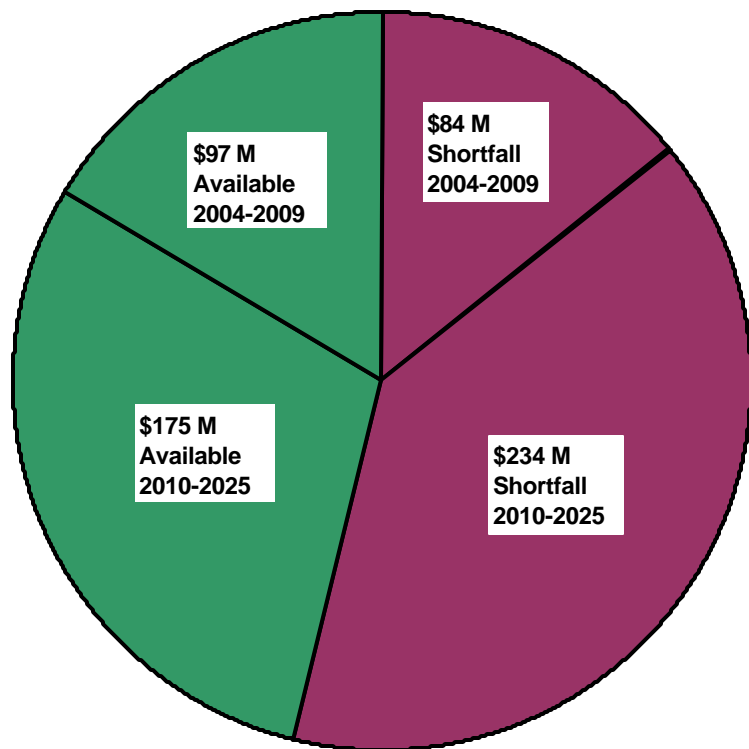
## Implementation

Implementation of the myriad *Destination Tomorrow* recommendations and strategies will require a new level of regional coordination and collaboration by PACTS member communities, the FHWA and FTA, and funding partners such as the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority. In each community, the city and town councils, planning boards, planning and engineering staff, businesses and residents will need to be active participants in the process. The adoption and implementation of *Destination Tomorrow* is one of many steps toward answering these five persistent questions that face our region:

- How best can communities collaboratively address regional transportation problems?
- What is the proper level of investment in and role of transit in the region for meeting the mobility needs of today and tomorrow, and for managing congestion?
- What is the optimum investment balance to mitigate existing problems while proactively meeting tomorrow’s needs?
- What is PACTS role in addressing transportation and land use issues, including sprawl?
- What are the best short and long-term approaches to managing congestion without exacerbating sprawl?

Securing the funds needed to meet the region’s identified transportation needs may be the biggest challenge facing local, regional, state and federal decision-makers as *Destination Tomorrow* is implemented. The graphic below highlights the extent of this challenge – a 22-year, \$318 million gap between the Plan’s identified needs of \$590 million and anticipated funding of \$272 million. The gap is estimated to be \$84 million in the Plan’s first six years (2004-2009) and \$234 million in the subsequent 16 years (2010-2025). The total amount of available funding is anticipated to be less than half the total amount needed to fully realize the Vision of *Destination Tomorrow*. (See Figure 1-1.)

**Figure 1-2 Funding Shortfall**





PACTS Committee members – in particular the MaineDOT – will meet during the coming year with members of the Legislature and the Maine Congressional Delegation to seek additional necessary funding to implement *Destination Tomorrow*. With nearly 20 percent of Maine’s population now living in the recently expanded PACTS region, PACTS members should have a stronger voice in Augusta and in Washington when seeking the funds necessary to fully implement *Destination Tomorrow*.

Table 1-1 presents a summary of the *Destination Tomorrow* Capital Investment Framework, identifying anticipated revenues and investment priorities.

Principles	Action	First 6 Years	Next 16 Years	Total 22 Years
Maintain	Maintain highways and bridges	\$25	\$68	\$93
Maintain	Maintain public transportation	\$35	\$80	\$115
Maintain	Address critical intersections	\$9	\$24	\$33
Maintain	Improve access management	\$2	\$4	\$6
Maintain	Turnpike regional toll system	\$30	\$0	\$30
Maintain	I-295 Forest Avenue interchange	\$17	\$0	\$17
Maintain	Electronics (ITS) strategies	\$3	\$6	\$9
Community	Arterial investment/enhancement	\$7	\$19	\$26
Community	Bicycle and pedestrian systems	\$3	\$5	\$8
Capacity	Passenger rail to Brunswick	\$3	\$6	\$9
Capacity	Phases I and II of Gorham bypass	\$30	\$0	\$30
Capacity	Route 25 corridor	\$0	\$5	\$5
Capacity	More bus service to Gorham	\$1	\$3	\$4
Capacity	I-295 Tukey's Bridge area	\$0	\$30	\$30
Capacity	I-295 Exits 3 and 4	\$0	\$9	\$9
Capacity	New I-295 lanes between Exit 3 and 4	\$7	\$0	\$7
Capacity	New I-295 northbound lane from Exit 6 to 7	\$2	\$0	\$2
Capacity	Falmouth Spur/I-95/I-295 interchange	\$0	\$20	\$20
Capacity	Widen Turnpike Exits 6A to 9	\$0	\$44	\$44
Capacity	Route 22 corridor	\$0	\$50	\$50
Capacity	Connectivity between arterials	\$0	\$20	\$20
Capacity	Bus service to North Windham	\$1	\$3	\$4
Capacity	Bus rapid transit (BRT)	\$1	\$3	\$4
Capacity	Freight system investments	\$5	\$10	\$15
	Needs Subtotals:	\$181	\$409	\$590
	<i>Less Amounts Available:</i>	\$97	\$175	\$272
	<b>Shortfalls:</b>	<b>\$84</b>	<b>\$234</b>	<b>\$318</b>



The box below highlights actions to be taken during the first six years of *Destination Tomorrow*. This set of strategic actions will address or set the stage for addressing the most serious transportation issues that the region faces, and provide a framework for an increased level of regional collaboration in which to develop regional solutions.

#### **Six Year Action Plan**

1. Secure additional funding through the Legislature and the Congressional Delegation to close the funding gap.
2. Work with the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority to complete major projects including:
  - building Phase I and Phase II of the Gorham Village Bypass
  - completing studies regarding a regional toll system
  - undertaking corridor studies for widening sections of the Maine Turnpike and I-295
  - extending passenger rail service from Portland to Brunswick.
3. Implement the land use policy regarding arterial roadway projects (See page 7-3).
4. Implement key plan strategies, including:
  - maintaining our existing transportation system
  - addressing critical intersections
  - implementing access management practices and principles
  - preserving I-295 as the primary route for intra-regional traffic and the Maine Turnpike as the major route for traffic traveling through the region.
5. Revise the PACTS funding process to get the most out of the limited transportation funds available and ensure that transportation investments will help achieve the goals of *Destination Tomorrow*.