

## Appendix A: BACTS Public Participation Schedule and Public Comments

### A.1 Schedule of Public Involvement for Metropolitan Transportation Plan

November 27, 2017.....	Posting for Public Comments
December 1, 2017 .....	Public Meeting, 10:30 a.m. Bangor City Hall Council Chambers
December 6, 2017 .....	Public Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Bangor City Hall Council Chambers
January 3, 2018 .....	Public Comment Period End

### Public Comments and Responses

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Public comments received did not raise any new material issues which would alter the content of the Plan. As there are no substantive changes, BACTS does not consider the proposed responses and any corresponding immaterial revisions to require an additional public comment period. The BACTS Policy Committee's responses to all relevant comments received on the draft, as well as listing of the approved changes to the final plan are listed below.

Written public comments were submitted by four individuals during the comment period. The comments are summarized below in order of date received.

1. *Howard M. Tritt*

**Comment:** Thank you for foresight and understanding the needs and desires of residents, as well as the demands of a sustainable transportation network.

2. *Paul Bolin, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems*

**Comment:** A sub-group of the EMHS executive team reviewed the plan and are pleased to see enhancement of services to seniors are in the plan. These services are very important to patients and employees.

3. *Karen Marysdaughter, Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine (Transportation For All and Livable Communities Initiative committees)*

**Comment:** The plan talks about the primary role of single occupancy vehicles in local transportation, but does not clearly acknowledge that residents often have few other viable alternatives. Most people drive cars because the infrastructure is available to them. Bangor is still primarily geared to SOVs and the serious walker, biker and user of public transit face challenges in terms of convenience and safety.

**Response:** *Several different elements of the Plan address and show support for a multi-modal network aimed at increasing access, reliability and convenience for all roadway users. Chapter*

*11 - Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment, addresses transportation alternatives and the limited availability in the region.*

*Roadway safety, particularly of bicyclists and pedestrians, is being closely examined and deliberated at the highest levels of our State government. MaineDOT has identified pedestrian safety as a top transportation priority and have devoted resources to, and developed initiatives for, educating the public, identifying general and specific safety concerns, and to assist municipalities with implementation of projects to address pedestrian safety at a local level.*

**Comment:** The plan does not acknowledge the high cost to taxpayers for SOV infrastructure, much higher than that for public and active transportation. It appears to tend too much toward reaction rather than pro-action in approach to, and commitment of resources for, other modes of transit besides SOV. More thought about how to redress the unequal preference given to SOVs in our transportation planning and implementation.

**Response:** *The Plan balances the needs of all transportation modes and users in the most earnest manner possible at this time. The Plan's primarily focus is on maintaining existing infrastructure and services. However, there is also a significant amount of attention on increasing intermodal connectivity and ensuring a safe, reliable network for all users, which is balanced with encouraging economic growth, maintaining access and preserving the high quality of life residents and visitors of the region enjoy.*

**Comment:** How extreme weather events due to climate changing are affecting and will continue to affect transportation should be addressed. Even if Maine is spared the worst of severe weather for a time, as part of a national and international transportation infrastructure, disruptions elsewhere are likely to affect us as well.

**Response:** *Chapter 11 - Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment, addresses climate change, weather events, vulnerability and the potential impacts on the transportation network.*

4. *Martin Chartrand, Organizer, Transportation For All*

**Comment:** We affirm support of the thorough recommendations regarding public transit. In particular the need for expanded evening and Sunday bus service, which is critical to make it possible for transit riders to access a greater variety of job and educational opportunities, civic participation and community events; the transition to a designated bus stop system; upgrades to the bus fleet; decreased headways; improved planning for transit access in new developments; increasing ease of use; cleanliness; and awareness of public transit.

**Comment:** We appreciate the focus on reaching new potential riders and accessing new sources of funding. One strategy for increasing ridership and ease of use of the Community Connector not included in the plan is to expand the discounted fare for seniors and people with disabilities to include a discount on tickets and monthly passes, as well as cash fare.

**Response:** *We are aware of the desire, as well as the appeals Transportation For All have made to Community Connector staff and City of Bangor municipal leaders, to expand the methods and types of discounted fares offered to seniors and individuals with disabilities. BACTS staff will continue to pass these concerns along to the Community Connector and City of Bangor leaders and advocate for reasonable accommodations and improvements which will assist the increasing segments of senior and disabled populations to easily access transportation.*

**Comment:** We appreciate the strong recommendations for increasing active transportation and for considering both the effects of transportation on climate, and the effects of climate change on transportation. Transitioning to a transit system and development patterns that encourage lower-impact modes of transit, including walking, biking, car-pooling and public transit is of great importance to the region's sustainability and resilience economically.

Eighteen different individuals attended the public meetings. Oral comments provided at the public meetings relevant to the draft MTP were documented by BACTS staff and have been summarized and noted below as well. The comments are primarily related to the Public Transportation and Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation chapters of the Plan. It is important to note, that while those in attendance expressed comments individually, with much discussion among all participants, the majority of the comments made are related or similar in nature and have been consolidated and generalized.

- 1. Comment:** Improvements are needed to the current transportation system to allow bicyclists to travel safely and conveniently from origin to destination without interruption. Infrastructure and facilities are not always convenient and/or available for safe active transportation. In-town areas and rush hour traffic present safety issues for bicyclists which require traffic calming measures.

Sidewalks and/or shoulders in widths adequate to create a buffer between cars and pedestrians are not available in all locations where there are high numbers of individuals using active transportation as their primary means of travel.

*Response:* Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, addresses the criticality of making the roadways safe for all users, MaineDOT's commitment to addressing pedestrian safety issues and BACTS support of efforts, projects and initiatives to increase roadway safety. A Regional Active Transportation Plan will be developed in calendar year 2018 which will identify and document gaps in facilities and infrastructure. In addition, a comprehensive inventory and condition assessment of sidewalks in the BACTS area will be performed in the summer and fall months of 2018 and 2019.

- 2. Comment:** The Greater Bangor area needs a centralized intermodal facility which will connect fixed-route service with other modes and providers of transit (public, private, regional, inter-urban, inter-city) to allow users to easily travel inside and outside of the region.

*Response:* Chapters 4 through 10 all individually reference the lack of a formal intermodal facility in the region and opportunities to improve intermodal connectivity for both passengers and freight. Several recommendations throughout the plan encourage initiatives for studying and developing options for such a facility.

- 3. Comment:** Sidewalks and edges of roadway need to be maintained and clear of debris so they are passable by pedestrians.

*Response:* Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, acknowledges sidewalk and shoulder maintenance is not generally the first priority for municipalities trying to stretch financial and human resources to maintain and clear all public ways, especially during the winter months. The Plan encourages all municipalities to review local maintenance policies and include provisions in budgets to ensure adequate preservation and maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian systems.

**Plan Edit:**

*Section 6.2: Add the following after the second paragraph in that section.*

*“ADA regulations require public agencies to maintain walkways in an accessible condition, with only isolated or temporary interruptions in accessibility. Part of this maintenance obligation includes reasonable snow removal efforts. As part of maintenance operations, public agencies' standards and practices must ensure that the day-to-day operations keep the path of travel on pedestrian facilities open and usable for persons with disabilities, throughout the year. This includes snow removal, as well as debris removal, maintenance of accessible pedestrian walkways in work zones, and correction of other disruptions.”*

4. **Comment:** Encourage multi-use of the current infrastructure by including bike lanes in the transportation network through “sharrows.”

**Response:** *The Regional Active Transportation Plan, which will be developed in calendar year 2018, will identify and recommend strategies to incorporate multi-use facilities into the existing network and infrastructure, as well as suggesting new and additional facilities.*

5. **Comment:** MaineDOT requires projects to be updated to meet ADA standards. Recommend local projects will be constructed to meet ADA standards.

**Response:** *Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, discusses MaineDOT ADA Compliance Policy for Construction and Maintenance. ADA compliance standards are incorporated into the scoring, scoping, design and development processes for all BACTS sponsored roadway projects.*

**Plan Edit:**

*Section 6.9: add the following after the first paragraph of that section*

*There are two regulations addressing accessibility of individuals with disabilities which apply to transportation projects. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Title II).*

*If a public entity receives any Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) whether directly or through another DOT recipient, then the entity must also comply with DOT's Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) requirements even if the road alteration project at issue does not use Federal funds.*

*Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that state and local governments ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the pedestrian routes in the public right of way. An important part of this requirement is the obligation whenever streets, roadways, or highways are altered to provide curb ramps where street level pedestrian walkways cross curbs. This requirement is intended to ensure the accessibility and usability of the pedestrian walkway for persons with disabilities.*

*The public entity performing the alteration is ultimately responsible for following and implementing the ADA requirements specified in the regulations implementing Title II. At the time*

*an alteration project is scoped, the public entity should identify what ADA requirements apply and whether the public entity owns sufficient right-of-way to make the necessary ADA modifications. If the public entity does not control sufficient right-of-way, it should seek to acquire the necessary right-of-way. If a complaint is filed, the public entity will likely need to show that it made reasonable efforts to obtain access to the necessary right-of-way.*

- 6. Comment:** Recommend that municipalities begin developing ADA Transition Plans as mandated by federal law.

**Response:** *Although included, this requirement is not specific to a municipality's transportation facilities. The intent of the regulation is to ensure opportunity and equal access to all public services and facilities for people with disabilities. A transition plan consists of: 1. Listing of the physical barriers that limit the accessibility of programs, activities, or services; 2. Methods to remove the barriers and make the facilities accessible; 3. Schedule to get the work completed; and 4. The name of the official(s) responsible for the plan's implementation. A transition plan must also include a schedule for providing curb ramps giving priority to walkways serving entities covered by the ADA, including state and local government offices and facilities, transportation, places of public accommodation, and employers, followed by walkways serving other areas.*

*The Title II requirements of 1991 ADA required public agencies with 50 or more employees develop a transition plan based on a self-evaluation and facilities survey which was required to be completed on or before January 26, 1993. The current (2010) ADA Standards for Accessible Design includes additional accessibility requirements for recreation areas and also specifies accessible routes to and between sports fields. Public agencies are encouraged to complete a new self-evaluation and facilities survey based on the 2010 standards and develop transition plans based on the results.*

*BACTS sponsored projects meet the criteria and standards set by MaineDOT in their ADA compliance policies as listed below:*

- *MaineDOT ADA Compliance Policy for Construction and Maintenance – Revised 8.11.16*
- *ADA Technical Infeasibility Checklist – Approved 2016*
- *MaineDOT Guidelines on Crosswalks – Revised 10.13.16*
- *MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy- Adopted 6.18.14*
- *MaineDOT ADA Design Guidance for Pedestrian Facilities – Issued 11.1.17*

*Federal law requires that facilities that are constructed with federal funds either be maintained by the MaineDOT or through maintenance agreements with the appropriate local officials. MaineDOT enters into agreements with municipalities when pedestrian facilities are upgraded or constructed which require the municipalities to maintain those facilities.*

- 7. Comment:** Consider using the Veazie Rail Line to create a trail way.

**Response:** *Bangor Land Trust purchased the 80.5 acre property known as The Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve in 2006-2007 with support from the Land for Maine's Future Program and North American Wetlands Conservation Act Funds. Bangor Land Trust did extensive trail remediation to protect the wetlands and make the trails more pleasant. These trails connect to the old Veazie railroad bed, which lead to Walden-Parke Preserve or the Bangor City Forest. The*

*Veazie Railroad Trail begins in the Bangor Land Trust and continues into the Orono Land Trust. Current efforts are underway by the Orono Land Trust to connect the trail all the way to Kirkland Road in Old Town. It is anticipated that this will be completed next year.*

8. **Comment:** From Winterbury Heights on Ohio Street there is no way for residents to walk to the Airport Mall. Pedestrians have worn a path area between the back of the properties, consider making this a formal pedestrian path.

**Response:** *This comment will be forwarded to the City of Bangor Engineering and Planning Departments.*

9. **Comment:** Actively discourage dependence of single-occupancy vehicles through strategies such as instituting fees for parking, tolling the downtown, and reducing the size of travel lanes and other traffic calming measures.

**Response:** *This comment will be forwarded to BACTS municipal leaders. Each municipality is encouraged to address these strategies at the local level as deemed appropriate.*

10. **Comment:** Concentrate populations and eliminate Sprawl.

**Response:** *Chapter 4 – Public Transportation, and Chapter 11 – Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment address the importance of land use and development designed to encourage individuals to walk between home, work, shopping, and recreation; create safe and direct bicycle and pedestrian routes; connect neighborhoods with workplaces, shops, schools, and other destinations; and provide for and connect with transit service that is reliable, convenient, and reasonably time and price competitive with driving a car.*

11. **Comment:** Enhance Public Outreach efforts in various ways. Work with local employers and businesses to facilitate alternative transportation programs and encourage employers to offer flex scheduling to accommodate bus schedules and provide areas for employees to clean up and change prior to work start for pedestrian and bike commuters. Advertise public meetings and changes on the buses and at the bus hub at least week in advance. Publicize, advertise, or promote transportation related programs and improvements so the public is aware of the availability of new or improved services and facilities which make travel more accessible. Encourage municipalities to create local boards or committees that advocate for alternative transportation.

**Response:** *Outside of the MTP, BACTS has an adopted Public Participation Policy, which is updated every three years; and Biennial Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) which includes a Public Outreach and Education element. As the MTP does not have one specific element which relates directly to the public education and outreach efforts of BACTS, interested parties are encouraged to submit appropriate comments for the Public Participation Policy and UPWP during those public comment periods.*

*BACTS recognizes outreach is an integral part of planning a well-balanced, continuing, coordinated, and comprehensive transportation planning process in the urbanized area and is committed to expanding opportunities to educate and inform the public of available and potential transportation resources and initiatives.*

**Plan Edit:**

*Section 4: add the following as a recommendation*

*Develop, and distribute to large employers in the area, informational communications regarding programs designed to reduce demand for transportation through various means, such as the use of transit and of alternative work hours.*

- 12. Comment:** Promote Coordination between services, agencies and jurisdictions. Work with public, private and commercial transportation providers to create programs and coordinate efforts to link the Bangor area to other regions. Consider individuals coming into the region for employment and services that need a way to connect with transportation inside and outside of the BACTS region.

**Response:** *Coordination and linking of services, as well as coordination of various agency efforts and initiatives is addressed throughout the Plan and in several recommendations. BACTS will continue to encourage cooperative and coordinated efforts in transportation planning.*

- 13. Comment:** Bus service limited hours are inconvenient. Consider pilot programs that extended hours for the busiest and most common stops and routes. Provide bus service for special events (especially municipal sponsored) events such as parades. Bus routes need to be extended to more areas and connect with bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

**Response:** *Chapter 4 - Public Transportation, addresses service gaps and demand for additional and extended service hours, and includes recommendations for improvements. Specific suggestions for pilot programs and or special service will be forwarded to Community Connector staff and the Municipal Partners Transit Committee.*

*Chapter 4 – Public Transportation, Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, and Chapter 11 – Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment all address the need for connecting bicycle and pedestrian facilities to transit.*

- 14. Comment:** Security for bus needs to be addressed, specifically with a presence at Pickering Square.

**Response:** *Chapter 4 – Public Transportation, addresses the importance of the safety and security of all staff and riders on the fixed-route bus system and recognizes the criticality of providing a safe and reliable public transportation service. Although noted within the text of the chapter, it was inadvertently omitted from the recommendations section, that BACTS strongly recommends Community Connector develop, document and implement a Transit Safety and Security Plan to address emergency response procedures and protocol related to criminal activity, address weather related/natural disaster plans and protocol, special events plans and evacuation plans.*

*This comment regarding the specific location will be forwarded to Community Connector staff and the Municipal Partners Transit Committee.*

**Plan Edit:**

*Section 4: add the following as a recommendation*

*BACTS strongly recommends Community Connector develop, document and implement a Transit Safety and Security Plan to address emergency response procedures and protocol related to criminal activity; address weather related/natural disaster plans and protocol; special events plans; and evacuation plans.*

- 15. Comment:** Consider alternatives to using large diesel buses.

**Response:** *BACTS understands the importance of balancing economic and environmental priorities that most equitably ensure and preserve quality of life for all residents, when investing limited transportation-related funds. We will monitor, and engage in discussions with State and local partners, regarding available technologies and options which may be viable alternatives to large diesel buses for the fixed-route bus service.*

**Plan Edit:**

*Section 4: add the following as a recommendation*

*Monitor, and engage in discussions with State and local partners, regarding available technologies and options which may be viable alternatives to large diesel buses for the fixed-route bus service.*

- 16. Comment:** Given that the MTP covers a 20-year timeframe, it should be clear that developing the Regional Active Transportation Plan is a short-term goal and include a timeframe for completion of Regional Active Transportation Plan.

**Response:** *Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, Section 6.4 fourth paragraph of the draft MTP indicates that the BACTS stand-alone Active Transportation plan is anticipated to be completed in 2019. While reviewing the chapter in order to address the comments, BACTS staff determined that the language of this paragraph is confusing as it refers to two distinctly separate, although ultimately related, projects of developing a specific comprehensive, detailed sidewalk inventory and condition assessment and the development of a more broad scope Regional Active Transportation Plan intended to guide policy and identify strategies for short-term and long-term facility improvements and potential investments. In addition, the Regional Active Transportation Plan is anticipated to be completed during calendar year 2018, although the sidewalk inventory is not expected to be completed until 2019.*

**Plan Edits:**

*Section 6.2, third paragraph, second sentence add*

*...which will be completed by the end of calendar year 2018.*

*Section 6.4, fourth paragraph, last sentence to read*

*It is expected the sidewalk inventory update will be completed in 2018-2019, along with identification of marked crosswalks in the BACTS area, and will be incorporated into the BACTS stand-alone Regional Active Transportation Plan.*

**17. Comment:** Outline who will make up the Advisory Committee in developing the Regional Active Transportation Plan.

*Response:* As with all BACTS Advisory Committees, the Policy Committee will determine membership of the Regional Active Transportation Plan Advisory Committee.

**18. Comment:** Include a recommendation within the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Chapter for municipalities to develop and adopt local Complete Streets policies.

*Response:* BACTS is committed to developing a multi-modal transportation system which includes well-used, safe, and accessible facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, encouraging municipalities to adopt a Complete Streets approach. Chapter 5 - Highway Transportation, Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, and Chapter 11 – Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment all discuss the importance of a Complete Streets approach to designing and developing transportation systems. In the spirit of the Complete Streets approach of considering the needs of all users when planning and developing projects, the recommendation encouraging municipalities to adopt and implement Complete Streets policies is found in Chapter 11 - Land Use, Livability, Sustainability and Environment.

**19. Comment:** There are no recommendations in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation chapter other than referencing a non-existing Regional Active Transportation Plan. Include recommendations specific to Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation in the chapter.

*Response:* The only recommendation for Chapter 6 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation is to develop the Regional Active Transportation Plan because, once developed and approved by the Policy Committee, that Plan along with the recommendations developed during that process will be incorporated into the MTP by reference and serve as the guidance for planning, prioritizing, and for constructing bicycle and pedestrian network improvements in the region.

*The following comments received during the public hearings are more specific in relation to service and operations of the Community Connector. These comments will be forwarded to Community Connector staff and the Municipal Partners Transit Committee.*

- *The route design is inconvenient. Not all buses connect at the Hub. The Odlin Road route connected only to Hammond Street and the three buses on Union Street do not connect.*
- *Bus routes need to be extended to more areas and connect with bike and pedestrian facilities.*
- *Implement shuttle service for the downtown Bangor area.*
- *Connect with other modes and providers to allow riders to easily travel outside of the region.*
- *Work with commercial inter-urban transit providers to create programs that coordinate efforts.*
- *Use smaller buses for shorter routes.*
- *Reduce headways on the VOOT Route. Sixty minutes is too long.*
- *More frequent, convenient and accessible bus service would increase ridership.*
- *Allow seniors to purchase ½ price tickets and discounted monthly passes rather than cash only.*
- *Market bus service to the senior population.*
- *Bus Drivers smoking outside the bus causes problems for those with allergies/asthma.*
- *Pickering Square needs security because individuals feel unsafe. Business owners believe the bus riders are the problem, but that is not necessarily the case.*
- *Update bus schedules and maps so they are clear and understandable.*

- *Safety protocol should be provided to bus riders.*
- *Rangeley Road in Orono will be closed for three months this summer. This will affect bus service.*
- *Hermon has many industrial areas with no available public transportation.*
- *Bus service is not available for adult education locations and times.*
- *Municipal Economic Development leaders need to focus on Colleges. They are a hotbed for economic growth. Make it convenient and easy for them to leave campus and get into town by eliminating transportation obstacles. Husson students need to take two different buses to get downtown.*
- *Limited hours are inconvenient. Evening and weekend service needs to be expanded.*
- *Consider pilot programs that extended hours for the busiest and most common stops and routes.*
- *Provide bus service for special events (especially municipal sponsored) events such as parades.*