

Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System

MPO Planning Review (11-8-18)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Volpe Center conducted on November 8, 2018, a joint planning review of the transportation planning process for the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS) Metropolitan Planning Organization. (MPO) The review was conducted using the INVEST tool with follow up questions upon completing the tool questions and scoring of BACTS Long Range Transportation Plan.

Prior to the site visit the FHWA Maine Division and FTA Region 1 reviewed BACTS planning products (LRTP, TIP, UPWP Public Involvement Plan, Title VI Plan, and processes. The review of the documents and processes provided background information for the review, and highlighted areas to be explored during the site visit. The INVEST tool provided a window for the review and discussion of the system planning in BACTS metropolitan area. Following the completion and scoring of the INVEST tool the remaining of the review was used for a more in-depth review and discussion of the required metropolitan transportation planning products and the process to develop the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Project Selection and Prioritization Process, and Organizational Bylaws of BACTS, to comply with the planning requirements under 23 CFR Section 450.300 and FAST Act compliance.

A questionnaire was also sent to the BACTS to obtain additional information needed to prepare for the team to prepare for the site visit. The Federal Review Team would like to commend BACTS staff for their positive attitude and exemplary professionalism in working with the Review Team to conduct this planning review. The Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System is a high-performing organization, given the limited resources available.

On December 11, 2018, the FHWA Division presented a summary of the findings, recommendations at the BACTS policy committee meeting and shared a copy of the INVEST results. The summary findings listed below and the discussions with all the stakeholders during the site visit concludes the planning review for BACTS. Based on the findings of the metropolitan planning review, FHWA and FTA jointly find that the Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System is complying with the metropolitan planning laws and regulations.

Summary of Review Findings

Transportation Plan

- The plan should document changes to the organizational structure including the municipal partners, transit committee, technical committee and changes to the policy committee as well as changes to the MPO operating procedures and bylaws.
- BACTS should consider using available Census data, socio/economic demographics and available GIS maps to update transit development plans, construction of bicycle/pedestrian facilities to improve transportation linkages within all the modes and provide a better link to low income households and employment opportunities in BACTS Region.
- A more robust financial plan the documents proposed transportation improvements with already available and projected sources of revenue 23CFR 450.322(b)(11).

TIP

- The TIP should have more detail information about the funding assumptions.

UPWP

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.308 the MPO is required to indicate in sufficient detail, responsibility for work, completion schedules, and products as well as tasks to which funds have been provided under Title 23 and 49 of the U.S.C. Following are some of the observations:

- Strongly encourage to develop GIS capacity and include those demographic maps in the UPWP.
- Should include or reference all activities or planning agreements funded under Title 23 and the Federal Transit Act 2 CFR 450.314 (a) (2).
- BACTS Budget Summary should include FTA's Section 5307 funds.

List of Obligated Projects

In accordance with 23 CFR 450.332 the MPO, transportation operators and the State must cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the previous year. The listing must include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and, at a minimum, the following for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP;
- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year;
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years;
- Sufficient description to identify the project or phase; and
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase.

It was apparent from the discussion during the site visit that MaineDOT has not prepared or is not providing BACTS with a list of obligated projects. The BACTS needs to get the list as indicated in the regulations and make the information available to the public by posting it on the website.

Transit

The BACTS IS commended for its support to the City of Bangor to study the city's Community Connector bus questions with respect to system to explore alternatives and answer numerous rider preferences for the operation of buses later in the night and the overall efficiency of the current system.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

The BACTS MPO is encouraged to continue working with all the communities toward the completion of Plan for Bicycles and Pedestrians in the BACTS Region, and make bicycling and walking viable and accessibility and safety. The attractive choices of travel to support multimodal TP should address or make references to any work in the region to improve pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities.

Public Outreach and Public Involvement

The MPO staff is encouraged to document the public involvement process such as meeting attendance and comments, and develop a timeframe for evaluation of the public involvement process. As necessary, conduct a review of the Public Participation Plan to measure the effectiveness of the plan, concert with the next update to the LRTP. and update accordingly. This can be in concert with the next update to the LRTP.

Travel Forecasting Methods

The BACTS is encouraged to continue working with MaineDOT's modeling experts and Eric Pihl with FHWA's Resource Center on the update of the travel demand model for the region.

Title VI. Environmental Justice, & Limited English Proficiency

The Review Team recommends that the MPO review and update their Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Title V/I Implementation Plan and submit it to the MaineDOT no later than September 1, 2019. The Review Team recommends that the MPO work with the MaineDOT's Title VI Coordinator and, as appropriate, the FTA/FHWA Maine Division to update the Plan to include all requirements and ensure compliance. Below is a bulleted list of items that will need to be addressed during the Plan update. The list is not intended to be all-inclusive as the MaineDOT Title VI Coordinator and, as appropriate, the FTA/FHWA Maine Division will collaborate with and assist MPO staff to ensure a compliant document is submitted. Additionally, the team recommends that MPO staff participate in Title VI training as provided by MaineDOT and the FTA/FHWA as it becomes available.

- The MPO must update and submit, directly to the MaineDOT, no later than September 1 annually, their Title VI Implementation Plan. The FHWA does not require a copy of the Plan.
- When the Title VI Plan is updated it needs to redefine BACTS definition of Title VI (race, color, national origin).
- The Annual Goals & Accomplishments Report should not be a component of the Plan, rather a standalone document that is also submitted directly to the MaineDOT no later than September 1 on an annual basis. It is appropriate for the Title VI Implementation Plan to discuss the Goals and Accomplishments Report in general terms and be included in the performance measurements section.
- The Title VI Complaint form and associated instructions should be reviewed, updated and published as a standalone document on the BACTS website and attached as one of the appendices to the Title VI Implementation Plan. The information contained on the form should align with the Plan's narrative section entitled Complaint Procedures.
- When the MPO updates the documents, all outdated documents need to be removed and updated document uploaded on the BACTSC website.