



Public Participation Plan

March 2021

Adopted by the BACTS Policy Committee on _____



The preparation of this document has been funded in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The contents of this document do not necessarily state or reflect the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

Non-Discrimination Policy Statement

The Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS), as a recipient of Federal financial assistance and under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations, is committed to ensuring that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, income, or limited English proficiency, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by BACTS, regardless of whether programs and activities are federally funded or not.

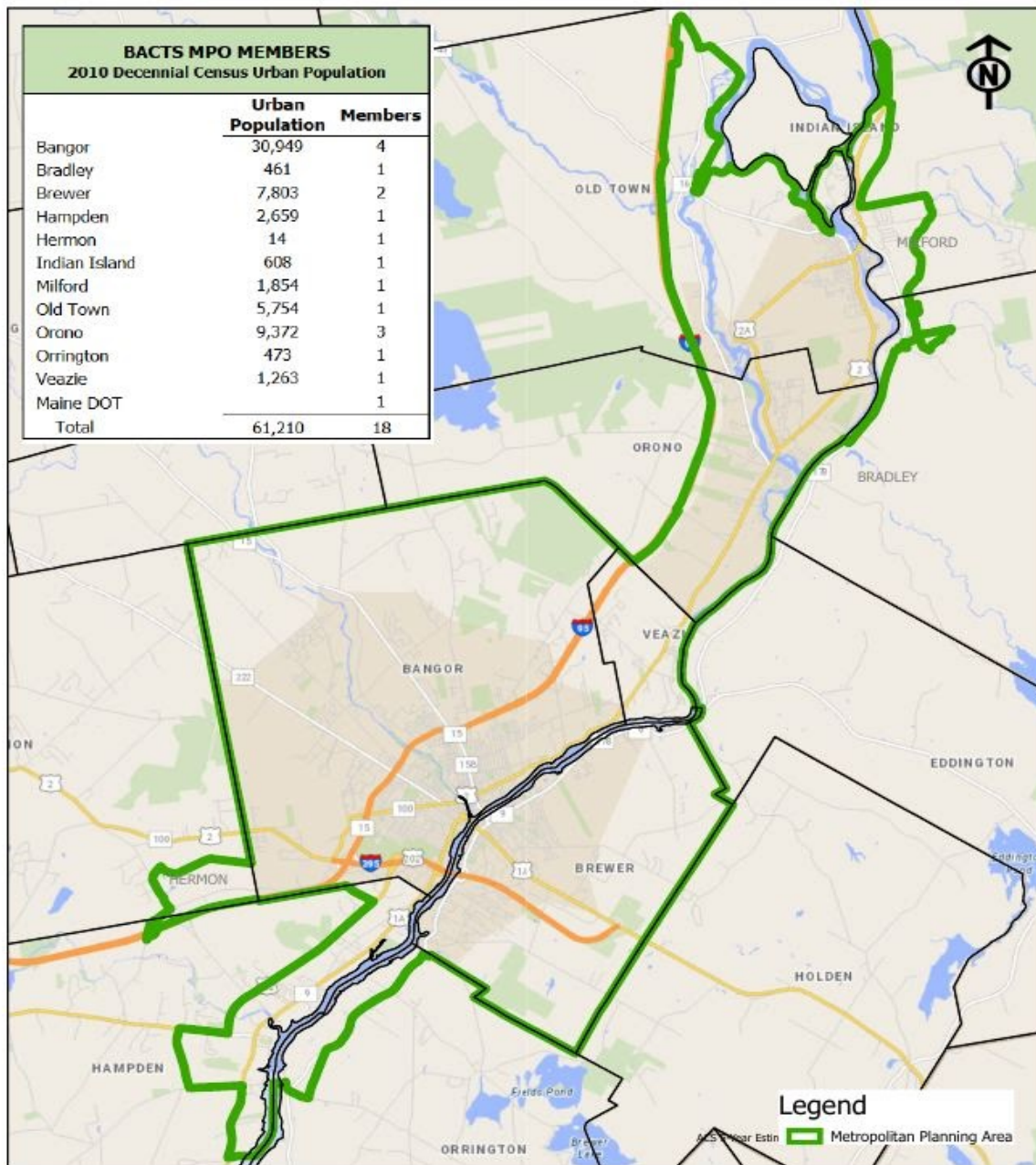
Table of Contents

Metropolitan Planning Area	4
What is BACTS	5
Membership and Governance	6
Committees	6
Open Committee Meetings	6
Meeting Accessibility	6
Key Products of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process	7
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	7
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	8
Public Notification of MTP Development	8
Preparation of Final MTP	9
MTP Modifications or Amendments	9
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	9
TIP Revisions	11
TIP Amendment Public Notification Process	11
TIP Administrative Modification Public Notification Process	11
TIP Project Rating Criteria	12
BACTS-Sponsored Transportation Studies	12
Metropolitan Transportation Planning Key Product Update Schedule	12
Five Basic Steps Of Transportation Decision-Making Process	13
Public Involvement Procedures	13
Scheduling And Notice Procedures	13
Public Outreach Strategies	13
Interested And Affected Parties Distribution List	13
Advisory Boards	14
Charette / Public Workshop	14
News Media	15
Presentations	15
Public Hearings	15
Public Meetings	15
Public Notices	15
Social Media	15
Facebook	16
LinkedIn	16
Surveys	16
Webinars	16
Website	16
Virtual Meetings	16

Visualization Techniques	17
Access to Information	17
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	17
Goals and Performance Measures	18
Periodic Review of Public Participation Procedures and Strategies	20
Public Participation	20
Appendix A - STIP Revision Procedures	21
Appendix B - Comment Periods and Minimum Public Notice	25

Metropolitan Planning Area

The Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System (BACTS) Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) includes all of Bangor, Brewer, Penobscot Indian Island, Veazie; and portions of Bradley, Hampden, Hermon, Milford, Old Town, Orono, and Orrington; covering 43 square miles and a population of 61,210. There is one fixed route transit operator in the greater Bangor Urbanized Area (UZA), the Community Connector. The Community Connector serves the municipalities of Bangor, Brewer, Hampden, Veazie, Orono, Old Town, and the University of Maine.



BACTS MPO MEMBERSHIP
2010 U.S. Decennial Census

What is BACTS

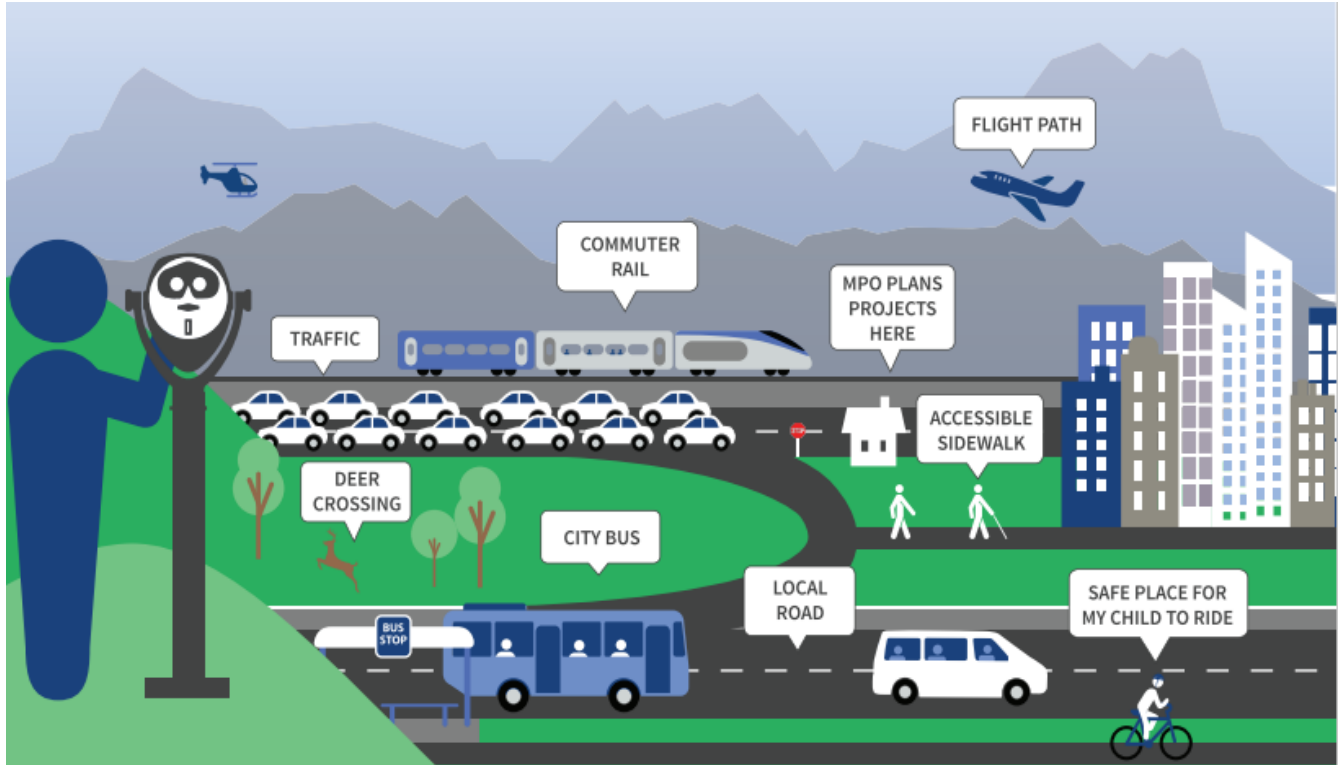
Federal legislation passed in the early 1970s requires that any UZA with a population greater than 50,000 have a designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). BACTS was designated in 1982 as the federally mandated MPO in the Greater Bangor UZA.

An MPO has authority and responsibility for transportation policy-making in metropolitan planning areas. As the MPO, BACTS focuses on advancing the transportation interests of the greater Bangor UZA. BACTS' primary responsibility is to develop regional plans that coordinate various elements of transportation networks into one cohesive regional transportation system and identify transportation investment priorities within the region. BACTS evaluates and approves proposed transportation improvement projects; facilitates communication between member communities and local, state and federal transportation agencies; and sponsors and conducts studies to assist in the transportation planning process with the goal of executing a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) planning process in the region.

As is the case with most MPOs, BACTS does not own or operate the transportation system it serves and, therefore, is not involved in implementing the transportation project priorities established. Rather, BACTS serves an overall coordination and consensus-building role in planning and programming funds for projects and operations. BACTS involves local transportation providers in the planning process by including transit agencies, State and local highway departments, airport authorities, maritime operators, rail-freight operators, Amtrak, port operators, private providers of public transportation, and others with an interest in the transportation system within the greater Bangor UZA.

Transportation System Infrastructure

Image: US Department of Transportation Every Place Counts Leadership Academy Transportation Toolkit¹



¹ Image of transportation system infrastructure US DOT Every Place Counts Leadership Academy Transportation Toolkit <https://www.transportation.gov/leadershipacademy#:~:text=The%20Every%20Place%20Counts%3A%20Leadership,the%20transportation%20decision%20making%20process>

Membership and Governance

BACTS membership is limited to those municipalities, tribes, and the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), wholly or partially within the greater Bangor Federal UZA as defined by the most recent United States Decennial Census and MaineDOT.

BACTS is governed by a Policy Committee. Each member municipality and tribe have the right to appoint one voting member for every three thousand (3,000) people in their urbanized area to the Policy Committee, with a minimum of one member and a maximum of four (4) members per municipality or tribe. MaineDOT also has the right to appoint one (1) voting member. In addition to voting members, FHWA and FTA each have one (1) non-voting seat on the Policy Committee.

Committees

Executive Committee - The Executive Committee sets the overall strategic direction for BACTS. Duties include proposing amendments to bylaws; approving policies and procedures; and reviewing/renewing the Executive Director's contract and performing their annual performance evaluation.

Policy Committee - The Policy Committee is the governing body of the MPO. Duties include establishing subcommittees and working groups; hiring/firing of the Executive Director; setting strategic direction for the regional long-range plan and UPWP; endorsing the programming of the annual federal funding allocation; adopting the annual TIP; establishing/amending bylaws; and approving/directing the Executive Director to sign and enter contracts on behalf of BACTS. The Policy Committee meets at least quarterly, or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Policy Committee Chair.

Transit Committee - The Transit Committee provides input on overall strategic direction for the fixed route transit service in the greater Bangor UZA. Duties include providing input on the Community Connector capital plan, assisting with the annual budget development, and providing input on all transit planning efforts and studies. The Transit Committee meets quarterly, or more frequently as deemed necessary by the Committee Chair.

Open Committee Meetings

All committee meetings are open to the public. Notifications, cancellations, and any special announcements for regular meetings conducted by BACTS are posted on the BACTS website and Facebook page.

Meeting notices, agendas, and materials are provided to all members of the Committee at least seven (7) calendar days prior to a scheduled meeting. Meeting notices and agendas for committee meetings are posted to the BACTS website at least seven (7) calendar days prior to a scheduled meeting. Meeting minutes are available on the BACTS website after committee approval.

There is opportunity for public input at each BACTS committee meeting during the standing public comment agenda item. Public input is limited to five minutes per person. The Committee Chair has the discretion to allow additional time for public input or limit public comments when they determine comments are redundant.

Meeting Accessibility

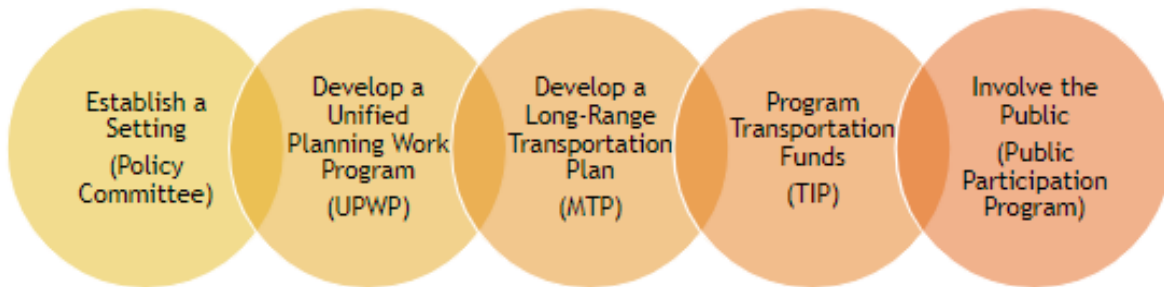
The transportation needs and opinions of all persons shall be included in the transportation planning process. The planning process will be made accessible by ensuring that all public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times. When possible, public meetings shall be held at facilities accessible by public transit. Meetings shall also be offered virtually and/or by telephone when possible. Individuals needing special accommodations to participate in meetings or individuals with

limited English proficiency should contact BACTS staff at (207) 974-3111 at least three (3) business days prior to the scheduled meeting in order to make arrangements to accommodate their needs.

Key Products of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

As an MPO, BACTS performs six core functions:

1. Establish a setting for effective decision-making.
2. Identify and evaluate transportation improvement options.
3. Prepare and maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
4. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
5. Identify performance measure targets and monitor whether implemented projects are achieving targets.
6. Involve the public.



BACTS creates plans and policies for transportation at the regional level. The federally required key products of an MPO include:

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP lists the transportation studies and tasks that BACTS staff and member agencies will perform to support the metropolitan transportation planning process. The UPWP identifies the funding source for each project, the schedule of activities, and the agency or agencies responsible for each task or study.

The UPWP covers a two-year period and typically includes the following elements:

- Planning data and analysis tasks, such as data collection and trends monitoring, and studies of a variety of demographic, development, transportation, and environmental factors.
- Public outreach activities conducted in accordance with the Public Participation Plan (PPP), including collaborative development and periodic evaluation of its effectiveness.
- Preparing the MTP and TIP, including supporting studies and products that will result from these activities.
- Completing all Federally funded studies, including all relevant State and local planning activities conducted without Federal funds.

Prior to drafting the UPWP, BACTS will solicit public input for proposed planning activities. A Notice of Public Comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*. A period of at least ten calendar (10) days beginning from the date of public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration.

Any public comments received will be compiled and presented to the BACTS Policy Committee for consideration prior to development of the UPWP. The approved UPWP will be posted to the BACTS website and available at the BACTS office.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP covers a 20-year horizon and must be updated at least every five (5) years. The MTP serves as the region's comprehensive plan for transportation investment to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Federal law requires that the MTP "...include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that provide for the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system... to facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand."

The MTP is prepared through active engagement with the public and stakeholders using an approach that considers how roadways, transit, nonmotorized transportation, and intermodal connections are able to improve the operational performance of the multimodal transportation system.

In developing the MTP, BACTS will consult and coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the region that are affected by transportation (including MaineDOT and public transit providers, State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements). In addition, BACTS develops the MTP with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process provides for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

1. Recipients of FTA assistance (under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53);
2. Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the USDOT to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
3. Recipients of Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs assistance (under 23 U.S.C. 201-204).

Developing and updating the MTP can take several months, if not longer. Throughout the long-range planning process, the public will be engaged at key stages of development. Once the revised MTP is in final draft form, a comment period of thirty (30) calendar days will be provided for public review. If the final MTP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment, a second public comment period of at least ten (10) calendar days will be held before final approval by the BACTS Policy Committee.



Photo Credit: BACTS

Public Notification of MTP Development

BACTS shall provide notice to the public of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points in the development or update of the MTP. These notices will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to those on the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*.

BACTS shall also attempt to reach those interested in the Plan's development by using various public outreach strategies which may include, but are not limited to social media posts, news releases, and public service advertisements.

At the onset of the MTP development process, BACTS shall prepare a detailed list of objectives to obtain public input and outline a public participation plan based on those objectives. The MTP specific public participation activities shall be established with the following core principals in mind:

- Establishing early and continuing public participation
- Providing adequate notice of activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points
- Ensuring information and meetings are accessible to all persons, to the maximum extent possible
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those populations traditionally underserved
- Explicitly considering and responding to input received during the development of the MTP
- Consulting with agencies and officials responsible for planning activities within the region.

Preparation of Final MTP

BACTS will prepare the final MTP after carefully considering all of the comments and input received from the public process. All relevant written or oral comments received on the draft will be included in the final plan. If the final MTP contains substantive changes from the one that was made available for public comment, or raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, then BACTS shall provide an additional duly noticed ten (10) calendar day public comment period on the revised draft Plan.

The final MTP shall contain a summary, analysis, and the BACTS Policy Committee responses to all relevant comments received on the draft and if necessary, the final MTP. The final approved MTP will be posted on the BACTS website and will be available at the BACTS office for public viewing.

MTP Modifications or Amendments

In general, the MTP is updated every five years. Whenever significant action is taken by the Policy Committee or planning regulations call for substantive changes between this time period, an amendment to the MTP may be necessary.

If amendments are warranted, a notice of public comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*. A period of at least ten (10) calendar days beginning from the date of public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration. BACTS will make available the proposed amendment to the MTP with a brief description or summary of the amendment(s) and supporting documentation on the BACTS website and at the BACTS office.

BACTS will compile all relevant public comments, or a summary of similar comments, for consideration by the Policy Committee prior to approval of the MTP amendment. All relevant comments received will be included in the Plan, as well as the Policy Committee responses to all relevant comments. The approved amended MTP will be posted on the BACTS website and will be available at the BACTS office for public viewing.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP identifies transportation projects and strategies covering a four-year timeframe and is updated every year. All projects receiving funding by the FHWA and FTA must be listed in an approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) before they are eligible for federal expenditures. These projects reflect the investment priorities detailed in the MTP.

The TIP lists the immediate program of investments that, once implemented, will go toward achieving the performance targets established by the MPO and documented in the MTP. The TIP is the region's means of allocating its transportation resources among the various capital, management, and operating investment needs of the area, based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities prepared through a performance-driven process.

Brewer Riverwalk²



In addition, BACTS shall develop the TIP with due consideration of other related activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

1. Recipients of FTA assistance (under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53);
2. Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the USDOT to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
3. Recipients of Federal Lands and Tribal Transportation Programs assistance (under 23 U.S.C. 201-204).

Under Federal law, the TIP must:

- Cover at least four years of investment.
- Be updated at least every four years.
- Remain fiscally constrained so that projects are only included if their full funding can reasonably be anticipated.
- In air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas the projects in the first two years of the TIP are limited to those with available or committed funding. *
- Conform with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality in nonattainment and maintenance areas. *
- Report on anticipated progress in meeting performance targets.
- Include projects for which Federal funds were obligated in the prior year.
- Be approved by the MPO and the Governor.
- Be incorporated, directly or by reference and without change, into the STIP.

**The BACTS MPA is currently in attainment for air quality.*

² Brewer Riverwalk image City of Brewer <https://brewermaine.gov/home/brewer-riverwalk/>

Public notice of TIP development and opportunity for public comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*. A period of at least 10 calendar days beginning from the date of public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration. The City of Bangor, as a direct recipient of FTA Section 53 federal funds and fixed route urban public transit provider in the greater Bangor UZA, uses the BACTS TIP public involvement process to satisfy their program of projects (POP) public involvement requirements. Public notices relating to the TIP (and significant amendments of the TIP) shall say, in part, “*public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comment on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program.*”

BACTS will compile all relevant public comments, or a summary of similar comments, for consideration by the Policy Committee prior to final approval of the TIP. All relevant comments received and Policy Committee responses will be included in the final TIP document. The approved TIP will be posted on the BACTS website and will be available at the BACTS office for public viewing.

TIP Revisions

Whenever action is taken at the project level by the BACTS Policy Committee between updates, a revision to the TIP may be necessary. BACTS follows the same TIP revision guidelines and processes as those agreed upon by FHWA, FTA, and MaineDOT in adding, removing, or changing projects to the STIP.

The procedure for formally revising the S/TIP varies depending on the nature of the proposed change to the document. As described in 23 CFR §450, there are two types of revisions to an approved S/TIP:

1. Amendment (Requires public process and Federal approval)
2. Administrative Modification (Information Only)

The degree of MPO, State and Federal action and approval varies based on revision type. As agreed upon by the FHWA, FTA, and MaineDOT, the guidelines included in Appendix A distinguish between an Amendment and an Administrative Modification to revise the S/TIP.

TIP Amendment Public Notification Process

Amendments are major changes; therefore, a public involvement process is required. In accordance with 23 CFR § 450, the S/TIP Amendment process must provide a “reasonable opportunity” for public comment. For any project requiring an amendment, Public notice of TIP Amendment and opportunity for public comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*. A period of at least ten (10) calendar days beginning from the date of public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration.

BACTS will make available the proposed amendment(s) with a brief description or summary of the amendment(s) and supporting documentation on the BACTS website and at the BACTS office. Any technical analysis in support of the amendment will be referenced in the public notice and made available to the public for review and comment.

TIP Administrative Modification Public Notification Process

Administrative Modifications are not significant changes; therefore, no public involvement process is required. For administrative modifications made to Maine-DOT funded and sponsored projects in the BACTS region, MaineDOT submits the request to the BACTS Executive Director who executes the administrative modification following a three-business day notification and comment period to the Policy Committee. BACTS will post TIP administrative modifications on the BACTS website and have the document available for public viewing at the BACTS office.

TIP Project Rating Criteria

Any substantive change in BACTS' TIP project rating criteria is subject to public review and comment. Amendments to the TIP rating criteria shall be accomplished before the initiation of the TIP development process. Public notice of amendments to the TIP rating criteria and opportunity for public comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties*. A period of at least 10 calendar days beginning from the date of public notice will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration. BACTS will make available the criteria and supporting documentation on the BACTS website and at the BACTS office.

BACTS-Sponsored Transportation Studies

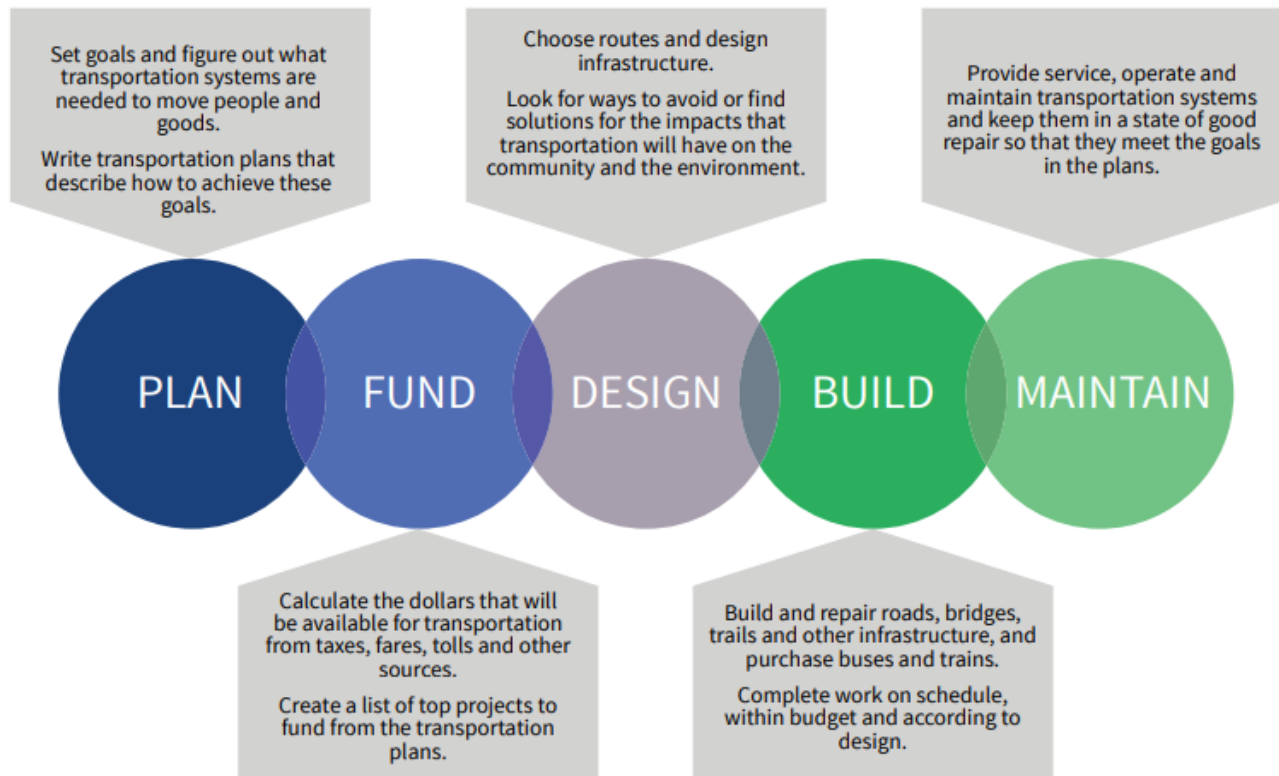
During the two-year implementation of the UPWP, members of the public have opportunities to be involved with the funded studies and other planning efforts. Each study will have its own public participation plan and schedule. Members of the public can serve on or provide input to municipal-level committees convened to advise BACTS-funded studies, attend public meetings or workshops hosted by BACTS, and/or attend and provide comments at BACTS committee meetings during the standing public comment agenda item.



Metropolitan Transportation Planning Key Product Update Schedule

Plan / Program	Time Horizon	Contents	Update Frequency	Current Document Adoption Date
UPWP	2 Years	Planning Activities and Studies	Biennially	9/17/2019 Amended 9/15/2020
TIP	4 Years	FHWA and FTA Funded Projects	Annually	3/16/2021
MTP	20 Years	Future Goals, Strategies, and Products	5 Years	1/16/2018
PPP	NA	Opportunities for Involvement in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process	3 Years	5/18/2018

Five Basic Steps Of Transportation Decision-Making Process³



Public Involvement Procedures

Scheduling And Notice Procedures

See Appendix B - “Chart of Comment Periods and Minimum Notice.”

Public Outreach Strategies

BACTS recognizes public outreach is essential to the planning and transportation programming process and understands a variety of techniques and tools should be used to ensure transparency and increase opportunities for the public to participate. BACTS will track the type and amount of public involvement methods used, and feedback received in developing metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

Interested And Affected Parties Distribution List

In order to promote active, informed public participation in the transportation planning process, a broad range of organizations and individuals are included in the *Interested and Affected Parties* list. Any agency or individual requesting to be included as an Interested and Affected Party will be kept informed during the development of the key products of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process.

³ Five Basic Steps of Transportation Decision-Making Process Image from US DOT Every Place Counts Leadership Academy Transportation Toolkit

<https://www.transportation.gov/leadershipacademy#:~:text=The%20Every%20Place%20Counts%3A%20Leadership,the%20transportation%20decision%2Dmaking%20process.>

The BACTS *Interested and Affected Parties* distribution list includes:

- Public Agencies
- Public Transportation Providers
- Public Transportation Employee Organizations
- Port Authority
- Freight Shippers
- Freight Transportation Providers
- Private Transportation Providers (Intercity Bus and Taxi Operators)
- Healthcare Providers
- Housing Authorities
- Economic and Business Development Organizations
- Tourism Organizations
- Lodging Establishments
- Utility Providers
- Transportation Safety Agencies
- Emergency Management, Law Enforcement and Rescue Services
- Airport
- Environmental Agencies and Organizations
- State, County, and Municipal Representatives
- Advocacy Groups
- Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Large Employers
- Organizations representing the interests of vulnerable and traditionally underserved populations (older adults, minority populations, persons with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged persons)
- Media Contacts
- Private Citizens



The distribution list is periodically reviewed and updated by BACTS staff to ensure adequate inclusion of agencies and individuals traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system. Any agency or individual interested in the BACTS planning process can request to be added to the distribution list by contacting BACTS staff at info@bactsmmpo.org or (207) 974-3111.

Advisory Boards

As necessary, BACTS will convene advisory groups in developing studies and plans and in forming recommendations. Advisory boards do not replace public input, rather provide additional resources, perspectives, and expertise during the planning process. Individuals invited to be part of an advisory board are designated by the Policy Committee. Members of any such advisory board serve in an honorary capacity and, in such capacity, have no right to notice of, or to vote at, any meeting of the Policy Committee, and shall not be considered for purposes of establishing a quorum.

Charette / Public Workshop

On occasion, intense working sessions during which planners, engineers, members of the public, elected officials, and others will come together to collaborate and brainstorm solutions and spark conversation may be held.

News Media

The BACTS designated newspaper for required legal ads is:



Bangor Daily News
PO Box 1329
Bangor, ME 04402-1329

Presentations

Presentations may be delivered by BACTS staff for various purposes and in various settings (as part of a regular committee meeting, a scheduled public meeting, or by request to a specific organization, agency or group with a specific interest). Whenever possible, presentations will be posted to the BACTS website for access to the general public.



Public Hearings

Notices of public hearing will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties* at least ten (10) calendar days prior to a scheduled public meeting. Public Hearings are formal meetings where comments made by members of the public during the hearing go into the public record. The notice will encourage submission of written comments by those unable to attend the meeting and detail the public comment timeframe and procedure for submitting comments for consideration by the BACTS Policy Committee.

Public Meetings

Notices of public meeting will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of Interested and Affected Parties at least seven (7) calendar days prior to a scheduled public meeting. A public meeting is open to the public and provides time for the public to ask questions, present ideas, voice opinions, and discuss the topic at hand. There are different types of public meetings:

- Open House - an informal meeting to learn about a transportation plan or project by viewing displays, exploring scenarios, and talking with project staff or consultants.
- Town Hall - an informal meeting usually facilitated by an official, featuring a question and answer session.

Public Notices

Public notices will be posted on the BACTS website and through direct communication (email or postal mail) with all those on the *Interested and Affected Parties* distribution list. Timeframes for providing public comments vary by product, plan and program (see Appendix A *Chart of Minimum Notice and Comment Periods*). Any significant public comments, or a summary of similar comments, will be compiled and provided to the Policy Committee for review and response prior to approval of any plan or program. Comments of a substantive nature received during the designated comment period will be addressed and included in the final document.

Social Media

Social media has become an essential way to reach individuals. BACTS will use social media to share ideas and information on a variety of transportation-related topics, post meeting announcements, and inform the public about activities related to the metropolitan transportation planning process and public participation activities. Although BACTS will read and consider all comments made on social media platforms, only comments that are submitted in accordance with requirements described in the *Notice of Public Comment* will be part of the official public comment record for a product that is out for public review and comment.

**Facebook**

BACTS uses Facebook as its primary social media presence

<https://www.facebook.com/BangorAreaComprehensiveTransportationSystem/>

**LinkedIn**

BACTS also has a professional social media presence on LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/bangor-area-comprehensive-transportation-system-bacts/>

**YouTube**

BACTS has a YouTube Channel where video content is available to the public

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwXqrOszDlrS_MZPTKj8udQ

Surveys

Surveys can be an integral part of the planning process. Surveys may be developed and compiled as a means of soliciting feedback for a variety of reasons and may be obtained through different methods (online, paper, telephone, and in-person). Any survey undertaken by BACTS will be posted on the website and compiled results will be shared with the Policy Committee and other stakeholder agencies and organizations.

Webinars

A presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted over the web using video conferencing software. Facilitators can share audio, video, and documents with attendees. In some cases, participants can also give, receive, and discuss information in real-time.

Website

The BACTS website, www.bactsmpto.org, is the primary means by which BACTS makes information available to the public. Interested parties may be directed to the site using traditional media, social media, emails and other forms of notification. The website provides public access to a variety of documents, containing both policy and technical information used in the transportation decision-making process. The *Events* section of the website <https://bactsmpto.org/events/> lists all meetings and current public participation and comment opportunities.



Virtual Meetings

With the assistance of MaineDOT, BACTS held a pilot hybrid in-person-virtual public meeting format using Adobe Connect in 2018. The virtual meeting component had no attendees and unfortunately, due to audio technical difficulties, the recording of the meeting was unable to be posted to the BACTS website as planned. Because of these factors, further investment in resources for developing virtual components for public meetings were not made at the time. In early 2019, BACTS began piloting a hybrid in-person-virtual meeting format with the Transit Committee meetings using free conferencing.

As was the case with all other agencies, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, BACTS stopped holding in-person Committee and public meetings in March 2020 and moved to an all virtual meeting format. With this, BACTS invested in virtual meeting tools. With the global move to virtual meetings and widespread public usage, BACTS intends to continue allowing for a virtual component to Committee and public meetings beyond the pandemic in order to have a wider reach.

Visualization Techniques

Attempts will be made to incorporate visualization techniques in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Visualization techniques used by BACTS include, but is not limited to:

- Maps
- Photographs
- Charts
- Graphs
- Diagrams
- Sketches.

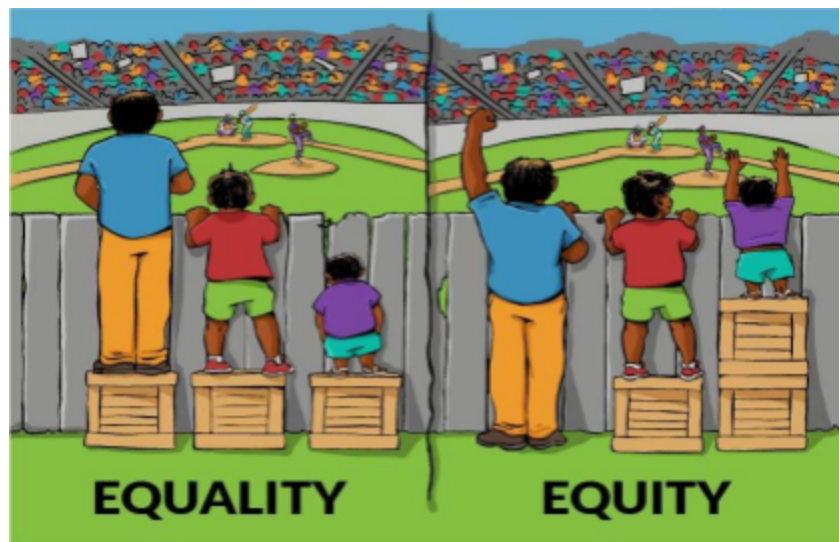
Access to Information

All documents for public review and comment will be posted on the BACTS website. BACTS staff will make printed materials available to the public upon request. When appropriate, a fee may be collected for copies of publications. The fee will cover the cost of production and, if applicable, the cost of mailing the materials. All such materials are available for viewing at the BACTS office at no cost.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

BACTS is committed to ensuring that the fundamental principles of equal opportunity are upheld in all decisions and ensuring that the public-at-large is afforded access to our programs and services. To that end, no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any BACTS program or activity on the grounds of race, color, national origin, income, sex, age, disability, or limited English proficiency. BACTS assures all of its programs and activities will be free from discrimination, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not.

BACTS will ensure all individuals have meaningful access to programs and activities by providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency. Auxiliary aids and/or sign language interpretation services will be provided upon advanced notice. For individuals who speak English less than well, BACTS uses a language card, and LanguageLine Solutions to provide over-the-phone translation services at public meetings. Individuals needing special accommodations to participate in meetings should contact BACTS staff at (207) 974-3111 at least three (3) business days prior to the scheduled meeting in order to make arrangements to accommodate their needs.



*Equality/Equity image Interaction Institute for Social Change |
Artist: Angus Maguire
<https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>*

The BACTS TitleVI/Environmental Justice Non-Discrimination Program is reviewed and updated annually and submitted to MaineDOT by October 1 of each year. BACTS is also required to submit an

annual report of Title VI/Environmental Justice related accomplishments and goals to MaineDOT annually. The Plan is available to the public on the BACTS website and at the BACTS office.

Inquiries concerning BACTS' policies, investigations, complaints, compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and concerns regarding compliance with Title VI/Environmental Justice, may be directed to the Title VI Coordinator:

Connie Reed
Bangor Area Comprehensive Transportation System
12 Acme Road, Suite 104
Brewer, ME 04412
(207) 974-3111
connie.reed@bactsmpt.org

Goals and Performance Measures

Effective public participation is essential to the successful implementation of any planning program or project. Without the involvement of local citizens, it is difficult to design a program that effectively meets the needs of the public. A proactive public involvement process leads to a transportation system that reflects the needs and values of the community. To that end, BACTS actively seeks to incorporate the involvement of the public in its planning efforts.

Public participation efforts are intended to include and afford individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. This PPP is designed to provide all interested parties, including local public agencies and planning partners, with information on how BACTS engages the public in the transportation planning and programming processes.

BACTS' goals for public participation in the metropolitan planning and programming processes are to:

1. Inform and engage local and state agencies, planning partners and stakeholders in plans and programs.
2. Obtain an understanding of transportation needs and desires.
3. Engage the public in transportation decision-making early and often.
4. Provide the public reasonable access at key decision points during the development of plans and programs.
5. Ensure full and fair participation in the transportation decision making process.
6. Provide timely and adequate notice to the public about meetings and plans.
7. Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, who may also face challenges accessing employment and other services, including:
 - a. Low-income households
 - b. Minority households
 - c. Limited-English proficiency populations
 - d. Senior populations
 - e. Zero-car households; and
 - f. Persons with disabilities.

To assess the effectiveness of BACTS' public involvement activities, the following strategies, performance measures, and evaluation criteria shall be used:

Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation Criteria	Method to Meet Goal
Interested and Affected Parties Distribution List	Keep database current	Number of returned items	Make immediate corrections when items are returned
BACTS Website	Increase number of unique website visitors	Number of hits	Use other tools to increase awareness of website
Calendar of Events	Keep calendar current	Calendar reflects all currently known events	Post on website in a timely manner
Meeting and Public Hearing Advertisements	Advertise all required Committee meetings and public hearings 7/10 days in advance	All required Committee meetings and public hearings are advertised 7/10 days in advance	Ensure system is in place to advertise with enough lead time
Translation and Interpretive Services	Satisfy all requests	How many requests are made and how many requests are filled	Advance notice of meetings; opportunity for translation service is prominent and clear on all notices
Social Media	Maintain and post content regularly	Calls, messages, number of followers	Provide information, announcements, access to surveys, and meeting information; maintain and monitor account
Comment Forms; Surveys; Questionnaires	50% of meeting attendees complete; OR 25% of mail/email recipients complete	Number of responses received; number of persons reached	Encourage response by explaining importance of receiving feedback to improve planning process; incentivize completion
Public Forums, Meetings, Hearings, Workshops, Project Meetings	Attendance reflects public interest; progress is able to be made using input from affected parties	Attendance, emails, letters, etc.	Schedule at convenient times and locations; hold multiple workshops to allow for options; use virtual and offline tools to increase awareness
Advisory Committees	80% member participation across length of project	Percent of member participation	Schedule at convenient times and locations; ensure timely distribution of materials; keep members engaged and informed

Periodic Review of Public Participation Procedures and Strategies

BACTS will review this public participation plan and the procedures and strategies used to solicit public participation and feedback and ensure a full and open participation process at least once every three years.

Public Participation

A Notice of Public Comment will be posted on the BACTS website and sent to the list of *Interested and Affected Parties* when the Public Participation Plan is revised. A period of at least of 45 calendar days will be provided during which comments may be submitted to BACTS for consideration. BACTS will make available the proposed Plan with a brief description of significant changes on the BACTS website and at the BACTS office.

BACTS staff will compile all relevant public comments, or a summary of similar comments, for consideration and response (if warranted) by the BACTS Policy Committee. BACTS will prepare the final Public Participation Plan after carefully considering all of the comments and input received from the public process. All relevant written or oral comments received on the draft Plan, with Policy Committee response, will be included in the final Plan. Copies of the approved Public Participation Plan will be provided to FHWA and FTA for informational purposes and be posted on the BACTS website.

The Public Participation Plan was posted for the 45-day public review and comment period on Friday, March 26, 2021. The public comment period ends at 4:00 p.m., on Monday, May 10, 2021.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP) PROCEDURES FOR THE STATE OF MAINE

I. Introduction

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) lists transportation programs and projects covering four years. Projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must be listed in an approved STIP before they are eligible for federal expenditures. A STIP is necessary for states to demonstrate fiscal constraint, adequate public involvement, and compliance with the Clean Air Act. Projects or programs become included in an approved STIP through a comprehensive revision process that supersedes the previous STIP or they are amended to the current STIP, and they must be developed according to the performance-based provisions of 23 CFR Part 450. This agreement between the FHWA, FTA, and MaineDOT, describes the process for adding, removing, or changing projects in the current STIP.

II. STIP Revision Guidelines

The procedure for formally revising the STIP varies depending on the nature of the proposed change to the STIP document. As described in 23 CFR §450, there are two types of revisions to an approved STIP:

- Amendment (Requires public process and federal approval)
- Administrative Modification (Information Only)

The degree of state and federal actions varies depending on revision type. As agreed upon by the FHWA, FTA, and MaineDOT, the following guidelines distinguish between an Amendment and an Administrative Modification to revise the STIP.

NOTE: For financial adjustments, federal funding would come from reserved federal funding, existing projects with excess funding based on latest estimate, bid savings from advertised projects, and/or unprogrammed federal funding associated with the fourth year of the STIP. Schedule adjustments may be required to accommodate the obligation of funding.

Amendment Guidelines

- Any change to a project in the current STIP/TIP that impacts the regional air quality conformity emissions analysis used for the current conformity determination
- Adding or removing a significant project (Project requiring an EIS and a construction cost greater than \$35M)
- Adding or removing a Non-Exempt phase of a project
- Adding or removing a project
- Adding or removing a phase(s) to a project with a financial adjustment in accordance with Table 1
- A scope change resulting in a financial adjustment in accordance with Table 1
- A change in the total cost of a project in accordance with Table 1
- Creating a lineage WIN with a total project cost in accordance with Table 1
- Project location/limits (by reference or otherwise) can be revised/updated in accordance with Table 1 and/or Table 2
- Adding a project from a prior STIP to the current STIP.

Administrative Modification Guidelines

- Statewide and Regional Capital Projects
Capital projects identified as “Statewide” and/or “Regional” or “Region #” in the current MaineDOT STIP can be re-established as location-specific project(s) in the current STIP, given the following requirements are met.

Public Participation Plan

- Located in non-metropolitan and/or rural areas – any located within the metropolitan planning area (MPA) must be programmed in the MPO's TIP
- Statewide and regional capital projects are developed using MaineDOT's documented public involvement process
- Scope of location-specific work is consistent with or not materially different with the scope of the statewide or regional effort from which it is derived
- Qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion per the Programmatic Agreement between FHWA and MaineDOT
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, project is exempt as defined in the EPA's transportation conformity regulations

*NOTE: Activities that do not meet the above requirements must be added to the STIP and/or respective MPO's TIP per the Amendment process.

- Financial adjustments in accordance with Table 1
- Combining or separating two or more projects that are part of an approved STIP/TIP
- Combining or separating phases within a project that are part of an approved STIP/TIP
- Adding or removing phase(s) to a project with a financial adjustment in accordance with Table 1
- Creating a lineage WIN with a total project cost in accordance with Table 1
- A scope change resulting in a financial adjustment in accordance with Table 1
- Project location/limits (by reference or otherwise) can be revised/updated in accordance with Table 1 and/or Table 2
- Can add a fully obligated project from a past STIP to the current STIP
- Can add "Other" funding (non-federal) to a project, which is not associated with the state and/or local match to the FHWA or FTA funding, which pertains to work not associated with FHWA and/or FTA funding such as utility work, local work, or other work regardless of Table 1
- Can change the time frame of the expenditures for projects listed in the current STIP.

Table 1 - Financial Tables Guidelines		
Project's Current Approved Funding	Funding Change Thresholds	
	Administrative Modification	Amendment
Less than or equal to \$2 Million	For changes up to \$1,000,000	Required for changes greater than \$1,000,000
Greater than \$2 Million	For changes up to 50% of current approved funding	Required for changes greater than 50% of current approved funding
Contract Awards and Change Orders require no action. (Changes to MPO-sponsored projects require approval by the MPO).		
Table 2 - Linear Project-Location Limits Change Table		
Asset	Administrative Modification	Amendment
Interstate	Unlimited	n/a
Non-interstate	Up to 1 Mile	> 1 mile
*NEPA review covers the revised limits.		

III. STIP Revision Approval Process

Public Participation Plan

Administrative Modifications are not significant changes to the existing STIP. Therefore, no public involvement process is required. For Administrative Modification, MaineDOT e-mails FHWA and/or FTA and updates the STIP change information on the MaineDOT website. FHWA and/or FTA shall reply in a timely manner to MaineDOT if they have concerns.

Amendments to the STIP are major changes. Therefore, a public involvement process is required. In accordance with 23 CFR § 450, the STIP Amendment process must provide a “reasonable opportunity” for public comment. The level of public involvement is scaled to the significance of the change. For any project requiring a STIP amendment, each of the following public involvement activities constitute a “reasonable opportunity” for public comment and satisfies the public review and comment requirement:

- Public meetings
- Public hearings
- Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings
- City/Town Council or Select Board Meetings
- Announcements on MaineDOT’s website (can be concurrent with MPO public process if applicable)
 - 10 calendar days
- Meetings with Municipal Professional Staff that have been Open to the Public; or
- A project that has been included in a published MaineDOT Work Plan that has been made available to the public via MaineDOT’s website per the parameters set in the 5th bullet above concerning "Announcements on MaineDOT's website".

For new projects (excluding lineage projects) or any projects that have not had adequate public involvement as defined above, MaineDOT will allow a minimum public comment period of 10 calendar days prior to requesting FHWA and/or FTA approval. STIP amendments will be posted on MaineDOT’s website. Once the public involvement period ends, MaineDOT will respond to or address all substantive comments received. FHWA and/or FTA may assist MaineDOT in determining whether a comment is substantive.

To request a STIP Amendment, MaineDOT e-mails FHWA and/or FTA. FHWA and/or FTA shall approve or reject the Amendment and notify MaineDOT as soon as practicable, but generally within 10 business days. If an Amendment is rejected, the notification will explain the reasoning and provide guidance on the corrective action needed to obtain approval.

IV. Air Quality Conformity Analysis

As indicated above, any project that is not exempt from air quality conformity requirements must be included in a conforming TIP and STIP. Under the provisions of Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act, as amended, in 1990, certain types of projects, primarily those that add capacity in federally designated “non-attainment” or “maintenance” areas, must be included in the regional emissions analysis for the current TIP and STIP. For purposes of this agreement, it is understood by MaineDOT, FHWA, and FTA that any project requiring an air quality conformity analysis will be included in the regional emissions and air quality conformity determination for the current TIP and STIP and provide that determination with project information during the public process.

V. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Requirements

For projects funded by FHWA, the most current Programmatic Agreement between FHWA, Maine Division and MaineDOT will be followed for a Categorical Exclusion (CE). For anything above a CE, FHWA and MaineDOT will coordinate.

For projects funded by the FTA, the project sponsor should coordinate with the FTA Region 1 office to complete NEPA.

Public Participation Plan

VI. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Maine's four MPOs approve MaineDOT-derived Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) project listings for their respective MPA and revise them as needed, which MaineDOT then incorporates into its STIP. MaineDOT and the MPOs coordinate under the same guidelines and public involvement periods described in this agreement such that MaineDOT will request STIP amendments from FHWA and/or FTA commensurate with this process. These are documented in each organization's respective public involvement plans.

In witness thereof, the parties hereto have approved these procedures on the day and year below.

Maine Department of Transportation

This is to certify that these procedures have been reviewed by the Department, and approved as to form and execution, and are considered adopted.

Date 8/10/18

By: 

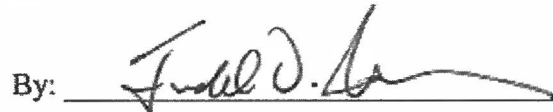
Printed Name: David Bernhardt, P.E.

Title: Commissioner

Federal Highway Administration

This is to certify that these procedures have been reviewed by the Administration, are approved as to form and execution, and are considered adopted.

Date 8/21/18

By: 

Printed Name: Todd D. Jorgensen

Title: Division Administrator

Federal Transit Administration

This is to certify that these procedures have been reviewed by the Administration, are approved as to form and execution, and are considered adopted.

Date 8/28/18

By: 

Printed Name: Peter Butler

Title: Acting Regional Administrator

Appendix B - Comment Periods and Minimum Public Notice

The following table clarifies the required notice for meetings or public hearings for each of BACTS planning activities. All notices of public meetings and public hearings will be posted to the BACTS website.

Plan or Program	Minimum Public Comment Period (Calendar Days)	Notes
New or updated Public Participation Plan	45 Days	<i>Plan reviewed every three years, or as deemed necessary through the planning process.</i>
New UPWP	10 Days	<i>Prior to UPWP development, odd numbered years</i>
New or updated MTP draft	30 Days	<i>Comment period is 30 days from notice of public hearing, and at least 10 days from date of the first public hearing</i>
Final MTP	*10 days	<i>*only if the Final Plan contains substantive changes from the draft made available for public comment, or raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts</i>
MTP Amendment	10 Days	
New TIP	10 Days	
TIP Amendment	10 Days	
TIP Project Rating Criteria	10 Days	
Other Transportation Studies or Plans	TBD	<i>At the discretion of the BACTS Policy Committee</i>

Meetings	Dates	Notice of Meeting	Notes
Policy Committee	At least once each quarter. Usually held the third Tuesday of the Month.	Seven (7) calendar days prior to scheduled meeting	<i>Meetings may be held more often or at different dates and times as deemed appropriate by the Committee Chair.</i>
Executive Committee	At least once each quarter.	Seven (7) calendar days prior to scheduled meeting	<i>Meetings may be held more often or at different dates and times as deemed appropriate by the Committee Chair.</i>
Transit Committee	Once each quarter. Usually held the first Wednesday of the month.	Seven (7) calendar days prior to scheduled meeting	<i>Meetings may be held more often or at different dates and times as deemed appropriate by the Committee Chair.</i>
Public Hearing		Ten (10) calendar days prior to scheduled meeting	
<p><i>Meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with applicable law; provided however, that the Board shall have the power to go into executive session and exclude the public when authorized under applicable law.</i></p> <p><i>There is opportunity for public input at each BACTS committee meeting during the standing public comment agenda item. Public input is limited to five minutes per person. The Committee Chair has the discretion to allow additional time for public input or limit public comments when they determine comments are redundant.</i></p>			



12 Acme Road
Suite 104
Brewer, Maine 04412
www.bactsmpto.org