

REGIONAL COORDINATION PLAN

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Introduction

Portland is involved in many regional efforts, such as the Casco Bay Estuary Project, Regional Waste Systems, Portland Water District, and PACTS (Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Study). In addition to the City's on-going participation in these regional organizations, the City's strategic plans identify opportunities for regional cooperation within each document. The City's comprehensive planning efforts in transportation, recreation, housing, and waterfront identified potential opportunities for regional coordination. For a complete understanding of these regional issues, please refer to the original document for the analysis, policies, and implementation strategies. Following are the recommendations for regional efforts identified in Portland's plans.

I. Housing: Sustaining Portland's Future- November 2002

Goal

Seek opportunities for economic and social integration throughout the Greater Portland region by encouraging the development of a range of housing options that are available and affordable to all income levels in the region.

Policies

- Educate the public, neighboring municipalities, the State legislature, and our Congressional delegation on the need for affordable housing throughout the Greater Portland area.
- Initiate the development of a regional housing plan.
- Seek innovative solutions and collaborations with municipalities, regional organizations, housing authorities and developers to implement the regional housing plan.

City Resources: City Council, Housing and Neighborhood Services Division of Department Planning and Development

Partners: Greater Portland Council of Governments, municipalities, housing authorities, and developers

Time Frame: Short term 1-3 years for initiating plan. To provide education and implement the regional plan are listed under longer term and on-going efforts.

II. A Time of Change: Portland Transportation Plan - July 1993:

REGIONAL ISSUE: Regional Land Use

Land uses in the region are spreading out, commercial activity is decentralizing, and housing is being built at lower and lower densities. These trends translate into congestion on the city's (and region's) arterials.

Policies:

- Advocate consolidated regional land use patterns so that alternatives to single-occupant vehicles have a chance to succeed. And participate in and support the PACTS regional transportation plan, Destination Tomorrow, which is being developed.

City Resources: City Council, Planning and Development, Transportation and Waterfront, and Public Works (representatives on PACTS)

Partners: PACTS, GPCOG

Time Frame: Regional plan listed under short term for the regional plan (the plan is being prepared) and under on-going implementation.

REGIONAL ISSUE: Economy and Regional Transportation Centers

Portland depends on a network of air, rail, sea, and highway travel to tie it to a global economy.

Policies:

- Plan comprehensively for regional, intermodal transportation centers for the movement of goods and people.
- Develop the infrastructure that supports the development of air, rail, and sea facilities and helps build prosperity.
- Assure that industries with regional and interstate markets locate near of have adequate access to the interstate highway, sea, and rail freight systems.

City Resources: City Council, Transportation and Waterfront, Planning and Development, Public Works

Partners: PACTS, Merrill Transport, Hapag Lloyd, Guilford, Atlantic & St. Lawrence, Airlines, FHWA, MDOT, and others

Time Frame: On-going

REGIONAL ISSUE: Conflict with Neighborhoods

Conflict between regional transportation facilities and neighborhoods is possible, but it creates opportunity to address transportation issues imaginatively.

Policies:

- Recognize and appreciate Portland as a city that draws its strength from a diversity of uses, including transportation facilities and the activities they support.
- Formalize the means of giving an early voice to neighborhoods in the development of regional transportation facilities in conjunction with TEA-21 and the Maine Sensible Transportation Policy Act.
- Minimize conflicts between regional transportation facilities and neighborhoods through land use and facility planning.
- In the development and expansion of regional transportation centers, assume that a balance can be struck and that public participation can help find creative solutions to transportation issues.

City Resources: City Council, Planning and Development, Transportation and Waterfront, and Public Works

Partners: PACTS, GPCOG, MDOT, Neighborhood Groups, Task Forces

Time Frame: Short-term: Peninsula Traffic Study On-going: Traffic Calming Policy, Development Review, Master Plans and Urban Design Charettes

REGIONAL ISSUE: Regional Mass Transit

Significant improvements have been made to expand the availability and to create an integrated system mass transit system. It is important that these efforts continue.

Policies:

- Encourage mass transit operations to be closely coordinated to create a "seamless" network of convenient, easy-to-use-and-understand passenger services.
- Develop a network of commuter express bus services on principal arterials and freeways to connect Portland's suburbs to the City's peninsula and other regional activity centers. Serve park-and-ride lots in or near the suburbs.
- Develop commuter rail service, to the extent feasible, on existing rail lines into Portland.
- Enhance intercity bus services connecting Portland with other areas in Maine and the nation as an alternative to autos.
- Convert public transit, municipal vehicles, and other large fleets to alternative fuels

City Resources: City Council, Transportation and Waterfront, Planning and Development, Parking Division

Partners: PACTS, GPCOG, METRO, ZOOM, PORTLAND EXPLORER, RTP, Vermont Transit, Mermaid Transportation, AMTRAK, taxi companies

Time Frame: Many improvements in place. There are on-going efforts to expand and improve the system. Specific focus is on the extension of passenger rail service north of Portland.

REGIONAL ISSUE: Ridesharing

Commuting within Greater Portland and into Portland is primarily via single-occupant auto. Given the low-density development of the suburbs, most mass transit options, especially in the second and third-tier suburbs, may not be workable.

Policies:

- Expand a network of convenient park-and-ride lots adjacent to and visible from freeways and principal arterials in Greater Portland. Place close to suburbs and rural centers, serve by mass transit as feasible, integrate into existing activity centers (rather than be located in isolation from other activities), and adequately size, and equip with shelters, signs, lights, and maintenance. Employ existing, underutilized parking sites where possible.
- Aggressively promote regional ridesharing, to match riders, and to market carpooling and vanpooling to employers and commuters in the region.

City Resources: Transportation and Waterfront, Planning and Development, Public Works.

Partners: GPCOG

Time Frame: On-going

REGIONAL ISSUE: Bicycles and Pedestrians

Bikeways and walkways are increasingly recognized as important elements of the regional transportation system and are essential to meeting the goals of this Plan.

Policies:

- Elevate and institutionalize bicycling and walking as legitimate parts of the regional transportation system.
- Major transportation facilities and major public and commercial facilities should build in provisions for commuting by bicycle and walking.
- Promote and develop a continuous, regional network of bikeways.

City Resources: Public Works, Transportation, Planning and Development

Partners: PACTS, GPCOG, bicycle organizations

Time Frame: Longer-term, as part of regional transportation plan and on-going implementation.

REGIONAL ISSUE: Congestion

The City's arterials are increasingly congested, while controlled access highways may not be used to highest efficiency.

Policies:

- Manage land use along arterials so as not to unreasonable rob them of their capacities.
- The interstate highways should be the preferred route for auto and truck through traffic, rather than such principal arterials as Route 1 and Route 26/100.
- Give higher occupancy vehicles preference on the Maine Turnpike.
- Maximize the use of the interstate system to help relieve congestion on the City's arterials, e.g. toll free zone within Greater Portland and 295 Connector Project.

City Resources: City Council, Transportation and Waterfront, Planning and Development, Public Works

Partners: PACTS, GPCOG, MTA, MDOT

Time Frame: Short-term 295 connector, toll free zone. Longer term for planning and initiatives.

III. Brighton Avenue/Main Street Corridor Traffic and Streetscape Study, December 1999. Joint study for Portland and Westbrook, funded by Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Committee

Guiding Principles for Brighton Avenue in Portland and Main Street in Westbrook:

- Access Management- Create a smoother flow of traffic while improving pedestrian safety.
- Reinforce Community Identity- ensure a level of architectural and site design that is more responsive to community identity.
- Streetscape Improvements – Provide pedestrian amenities and elements that enrich the streetscape.
- Improve Pedestrian Safety – Improve the safety of pedestrian crossings with site-specific recommendations and separate the pedestrian from vehicular traffic wherever possible.

City Resources: Public Works, Planning and Development

Partners: MDOT, MTA, local businesses

Time Frame: Short-term: Streetscape improvements (2002/2003) on Rand Road and at the Rand Road and Brighton Avenue intersection. Short-term: Streetscape improvements for Nason's Corner. Longer-term: other sections of Brighton Avenue

IV. Green Spaces, Blue Edges: an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the City of Portland

Open Space and Recreation Policy:

- With the success of the Portland Trails network within the City limits and similar efforts in each adjoining community, connections have been forged across political boundaries. Portland and South Portland were the first to join trail segments, and Westbrook and Falmouth soon followed. The waterfront walk connects with Spring Point Shoreway, The Stroudwater trail with the Clark's Pond trail, and the Presumpscot is continuous through Falmouth, Portland, Westbrook, and points west all the way to Sebago Lake. The historic Cumberland Oxford Canal System has been partially restored, and an interpretive trail exists along most of its length.
- Ensure that Portland residents have access to public natural freshwater swimming opportunities.
- Develop design plans and management plans for all parks on ongoing bases and update accordingly. Develop Master plans for regional, community and historic park facilities.
- Develop management plans for stream corridors (Capisic Brook, Fall Brook and Nason's Brook) and river corridors (Presumpscot River, Stroudwater River and Fore River.)
- Link open spaces in Portland with open spaces in surrounding towns.

City Resources: Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Works

Partners: Land Bank Commission, Land for Maine's Future, Portland Trails, Friends of the Parks, Friends of Evergreen Cemetery, Friends of Capisic Pond, Friends of Deering Oaks, Friends of Riverton Trolley Park, neighborhood groups.

Time Frame: Short term: Rezoning and plans for Presumpscot River property recently purchased and includes annexed property from Falmouth. Implementation of management plans for Capisic and Fall Brooks. Eastern Promenade master plan is to be done in 2003. On-going: extensions of trail system.

V. Waterfront Task Force Recommendation, Portland Harbor Maine - April 1990

Berthing Recommendations

- Examine the landside consequences of recreational boating when considering future marina proposals and mooring locations in both cities.
- The South Portland side of the Harbor could be a suitable location for future tour and charter operations. Federal, State, and Local Regulatory Agencies should meet and continue to cooperate in Harbor matters. Portland and South Portland should facilitate this process.

Marketing Recommendations

- Attract more fish processors to the Portland/South Portland Area.
- Market the marina and related restaurant businesses in both Portland and South Portland.
- The State of Maine should continue to participate in Capital Improvements at the International Marine Terminal.

Economic Impact of Land Use Regulations

- Encourage South Portland to develop a complementary waterfront plan designed to protect marine related businesses and services.
- The Planning Department, Planning Boards and Councils of Portland and South Portland should coordinate their waterfront Planning and Zoning Processes.
- The Cities of Portland and South Portland should ask the State to fund a study of the economic impact of marine businesses.

VI. PHASE II STORMWATER REGULATIONS

Federal EPA Mandate: Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is currently in the process of applying to US EPA for General Permits to cover regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4's), small construction sites, transportation facilities, and State and Federal facilities. MS4's are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the governing authority by March 10, 2003. Sixty (60) days following that the MS4 must submit a five-year plan that outlines how it will achieve compliance with the six minimum measures in MeDEP's General Permit.

Regional Approach: The City of Portland has joined an Interlocal Stormwater Working Group made up of eleven (11) communities in the Casco Bay watershed. The partnership hired the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) to develop a regionally focused baseline model for the Phase II five-year plan. (Refer to Major Implementation Measures, Environmental Initiatives for more information.)

City Resources: City Council, City Manager, Department of Public Works, Department of Planning and Development

Partners: Maine DEP, Interlocal Stormwater Working Group, Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, other municipalities.

Time Frame: Notice of Intent (NOI) is due on March 10, 2003 and a five-year plan is due within 60 days of filing the NOI. Implementation will be ongoing.