

# Nashua Regional Planning Commission



Transportation Programs



Land Use Programs



Mapping & GIS Programs



Environmental Programs

## Program Highlights 1st Quarter 2010

# Transportation Programs

## **Broad Street Parkway**

NRPC has continued efforts in support of the supplemental study of the Broad Street Parkway project. In cooperation with the City, NHDOT, and FHWA, NRPC developed a scope of work to complete an environmental re-evaluation required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NRPC is working with the consulting firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. to complete the Environmental Re-Evaluation process. A decision on the re-evaluation from the Federal Highway Administration is expected in the early spring of 2010. Based on that decision the City will move forward with the final design of the project.

## **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality**

NRPC, in cooperation with NHDOT, is administering the 2009-2010 application cycle for the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) program. To be eligible for CMAQ funds, a proposed project must demonstrate air quality benefits to the ozone non-attainment area in southeast New Hampshire. In the Nashua Regional Planning Commission area, the specific municipalities located within the non-attainment area are Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Nashua, and Pelham. Proposed projects may be physically located outside the non-attainment or maintenance area if they can demonstrate benefits within the eligible areas. NRPC has received 4 letters of interest describing 8 potential projects in Nashua, Hudson, Milford, and Amherst. Applications are due to NHDOT and NRPC on April 1 by 3:00PM.

## **Transportation Enhancements**

NRPC staff in cooperation with NHDOT administered the ninth funding round for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program. Staff provided technical assistance, data collection, and GIS services to assist communities with their applications. NRPC reviewed and ranked seven applications for funding, which were then submitted to NHDOT for consideration at the State level. The top ranking project from the Nashua Region came from Brookline for new sidewalk construction along NH Rt. 130. Applications were reviewed at the state level and advanced for consideration for funding by the TE Advisory Committee (TEAC). On March 15<sup>th</sup> the TEAC held a public hearing to listen to presentations from the top 30 project applicants. Funding decisions will be made in early spring.



## **Ten Year Plan Process**

NRPC completed a comprehensive and cooperative planning approach to develop programming recommendations for the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program, the 2011-2020 Ten Year Program, and the outer years of the NRPC's Long Range Transportation Plan. NRPC considered a longer timeframe when developing project recommendations to allow programming flexibility and implementation in a fiscally responsible manner. Recognizing the fiscal limitations faced by NHDOT, NRPC did not recommend adding new projects to the Ten Year Plan.

## **NTS Transit Planning Initiatives**

NRPC resumed work with Nashua Transit System to complete three transit planning tasks. The first is a Marketing Plan to promote NTS and increase ridership. The second project involves reviewing the 2002 Financial Plan and identifying strategies to address the potential funding shortfalls that will accompany the likely re-designation to a large Urbanized Area with the 2010 Census. Finally, NRPC will develop a ridership prediction model to help NTS assess future demand and likely ridership both in the City and throughout the region. In addition, NRPC led a facilitated, iterative process whereby the Mayor's Transportation Task Force will develop a consensus vision for the priority transit system improvements in the City of Nashua from 2010 to 2020.

# Transportation Programs continued

## **Congestion Management Process**

The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a systematic approach that provides for the safe and effective management and operation of new and existing transportation facilities through demand reduction and operational management strategies. NRPC, in cooperation with Rockingham Planning Commission and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, is developing a Congestion Management Process for the region. This will result in a set of recommendations to be implemented in the Transportation Improvement Program that will improve travel on the most congested corridors in the region.



## **Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan**

NRPC staff continues to work with regional human service partners and stakeholders to develop the framework for a Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) as described in the Statewide Coordinated Transportation Plan. Currently, NRPC is working with NHDOT, DHHS, and the SCC to ensure coordination at the state level. NRPC is also working to formalize its relationship with the RCC.

## **Strategic Planning for the Souhegan Valley Transportation Collaborative (SVTC)**

NRPC is working with the SVTC communities, NTS, and NHDOT to transition this service from a pilot program to a more permanent and sustainable service. NRPC was awarded funding through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Federal Transit Administration New Freedoms program to develop a strategic plan that will summarize all key issues and concerns, develop recommendations for expanding the service, and identify a method for sustainable funding of the service in the future.

## **Safe Routes to Schools Program**

The Safe Routes program encourages children to bike or walk to school through education and incentives that remind children how much fun biking and walking can be. The program also addresses the safety concerns of parents by encouraging greater enforcement of traffic laws, exploring ways to create safer streets, and educating the public about safe biking, walking, and driving practices. NRPC continues to pursue Safe Routes to Schools funding for communities and school districts in the region. The Town of Hollis is current at the beginning stages of working with NRPC to develop a SRTS Travel Plan.

## **Smart Commute Week**

Smart Commute Week takes place from May 15 through May 21, 2010. It is a national movement, also referred to as Green Commute Week, that is often held in conjunction with Bike-to-Work Week. The goal of Smart Commute Week is to promote alternative ways of getting to work and around town. Smart Commute Week also seeks to educate employees and employers about the benefits of using these alternative modes of transportation. Smart commuting includes carpools, vanpools, public transportation (where available), walking, biking, telecommuting, and working a flexible schedule. During Smart Commute Week NRPC will offer activities for employers as well as the general public. The goal of these activities is to inspire a change in commuting behavior that lasts beyond the week. Public events will be held in Milford on May 15 and in Nashua on May 21. To learn more visit [www.nashuarpc.org/smartcommute](http://www.nashuarpc.org/smartcommute).



# Land Use Programs

## **iTRaC: Integrating Transportation and Community Planning**

NRPC provided marketing and outreach assistance to the Town of Milford to promote the launch of Milford GIS Viewer. This online mapping and GIS application allows users to view their tax card, access assessing information, get links to property maps and aerial photos, view zoning and floodplain layers, and create abutter lists. NRPC

worked with Town staff to create press releases, email marketing, informational fliers, educational posters, and PEG TV presentations. NRPC staff also developed fact sheets on Preserving Dark Skies and the Transportation Planning Process, which can be found at [www.nashuarpc.org/landuse/resources](http://www.nashuarpc.org/landuse/resources). If your community has a special project, needs assistance in implementing master plan recommendations, or would like to schedule a training, call Camille Pattison, Integrated Planning Program Manager, at 424-2240 x14.



## **Circuit Riding Program**

NRPC provides circuit rider planning services to Litchfield, Mason, and Wilton. Litchfield is allowing its Growth Management to sunset in 2010. Currently approved drafts of Conservation Open Space Development and Inclusionary Housing ordinances have been placed on the Planning Board Warrant for Town Meeting. Mason withdrew its final draft of an Open Space Design ordinance after public hearing and will improve the language in 2010. Accessory Dwelling Unit and Multi-family draft ordinances were placed on the Planning Board Warrant for Town meeting. Wilton has approved draft amendments to numerous zoning district locations, added churches to permitted use in the Commercial District, and proposed a new Small Wind Energy ordinance. These have been placed on the Planning Board Warrant for Town Meeting.

## **Hazard Mitigation Planning**

NRPC has begun working with communities to update Hazard Mitigation Plans that are more than five years old. NRPC is currently updating the Wilton plan and assisting Mason to produce the town's first Hazard Mitigation Plan. Over the next few years NRPC will update the plans for Brookline, Hollis, Hudson and Pelham. For additional information contact Camille Pattison at 424-2240 x 14 or [camillep@nashuarpc.org](mailto:camillep@nashuarpc.org).



## **Innovative Land Use Guide Outreach and Education**

NRPC has been working on a cooperative effort with NHDES and the other regional planning commissions on the Innovative Land Use Guidebook, now available through the NRPC website at [www.nashuarpc.org/landuse](http://www.nashuarpc.org/landuse). This guide explores the many tools available to communities through RSA 674:21 – Innovative Land Uses, including model ordinances. Please contact Minda Shaheen at [mindas@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mindas@nashuarpc.org) or 424-2240 x29 if your community is interested in adopting one of the model ordinances; we can assist you in ordinance preparation and specifications as well as provide more information or a public presentation on the available ordinances.

## **North Merrimack Land Use Project**

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission is assisting the Town of Merrimack with a public outreach effort to obtain input on potential future zoning and land use along a 1.75 mile section of Daniel Webster Highway in northern Merrimack. This area is home to a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses. Access to this area is anticipated to significantly change with the connection of the Airport Access Road and the possibility of commuter rail service between Manchester and Boston. Outreach efforts are underway to meet with property owners, realtors, developers, professional planners, areas residents, local boards, and the general public. Project completion is anticipated for late spring. For additional information contact Camille Pattison at 424-2240 x14 or [camillep@nashuarpc.org](mailto:camillep@nashuarpc.org).



## **Nashua Transit System Ridership Prediction Model**

NRPC is working on a project to statistically predict ridership potential for areas of Nashua and surrounding communities currently without bus service. Using a spatial regression method called Geographically Weighted Regression (GWR) and current ridership totals as inputs, we plan to create a model that will best estimate ridership based on surrounding land use. There are two new methods being used to gather independent variables. First, we are creating 1/4 mile walk catchments, or service areas, for each bus stop using the pedestrian network to build the areas. This is an improvement over a simple straight line buffer method. Second we are using parcel based information for independent variables, including number of residential units, average residential assessed value, commercial square feet, and total jobs. This combination of network produced service areas and parcel data gives us much more specific service area data for each bus stop to put in our model. The final predicted ridership totals will be a valuable tool for NTS in future route planning.



## **Broadband Mapping**

NRPC is part of a statewide effort for Broadband Mapping that received a \$1.7 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). \$1.2 million dollars of the grant will be allocated over the next two years to map broadband availability across the state, identify gaps in broadband accessibility, and pinpoint underserved areas. In January, NRPC began to survey and map regional anchor institutions including city and town halls, emergency service facilities, hospitals, medical centers, schools, and libraries. The information collected will be used to create a publicly available state broadband map and will be included in a national broadband map. The national broadband map will display the geographic areas where broadband service is available, the technology used to provide the service, the speed of the service, and broadband service availability at important community anchor locations. Results of the mapping effort will be used to inform decisions on broadband infrastructure grants.

## **Merrimack Village District (MVD) GIS Implementation**

NRPC is continuing work on the second phase of GIS Implementation for the Merrimack Village District Water Utility. GIS staff members have been gathering GPS location points for residential service or shut-off valves in the network. Staff members have collected over 1,600 service valves and attributes to date. We have located these valves to sub-meter accuracy and collected various attributes including type, material, and diameter. The field work involves coordinating with MVD staff who locate and flag the valves and NRPC staff who take a GPS point and remove the flags. NRPC has also assisted MVD in the purchase of a Trimble GPS receiver and is in the process of training MVD field personnel in its use. NRPC purchased two desktop licenses of GIS software and installed them on MVD computers. Data, to the extent it has been completed, was also installed on an MVD server and preliminary training has been provided. Over the winter months when fieldwork is not possible, NRPC staff members will continue cleaning data based on suggestions from MVD.

## **CTAP Open Space Plans**

NRPC created Open Space Plans for the Towns of Litchfield and Pelham as part of the CTAP planning process. The goal is to create a Green Infrastructure overlay of important lands for protection and to identify priority areas or parcels. The process was Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping intensive. A co-occurrence analysis was conducted for both Towns using important environmental layers identified by an Open Space committee. Typical layers include aquifers, floodplain, wetlands, important habitat, developable areas, and others. The co-occurrence analysis consists of overlaying multiple datasets or map layers to identify the amount of coincidence or overlap on any given location. Products for this process include a final report, a map identifying a Green Infrastructure overlay, and a map identifying priority areas or parcels.

# Environmental Programs

## Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program

Residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Windham may participate in the HHW collections. In the 2009 collection season, over 70,000 pounds of household hazardous waste was collected and disposed of safely as a result of the program. Collection dates for the 2010 season are April 24, May 8 (in Milford), June 3 (3:00-7:00 PM), August 7, October 2, and November 6. Collections are held from 8:00 AM-12:00 PM at 6 Riverside St. in Nashua unless otherwise noted. Volunteers are always needed to assist in the collections. Please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x 29 or [mindas@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mindas@nashuarpc.org) if you are interested in volunteering for this important program. For more information visit [www.nashuarpc.org/hhw](http://www.nashuarpc.org/hhw).



## Outreach for the Souhegan River Watershed Management Plan

Five communities within the Souhegan River Watershed and NRPC region will soon be receiving information related to incorporating the Souhegan River Watershed Management Plan into their community master plans and permitting processes. The management plan was completed in 2006 by NRPC and the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee. NRPC will be planning public meetings within each of the watershed communities; please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x29 or [mindas@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mindas@nashuarpc.org) if you are interested in scheduling a presentation.

## Brownfields Assessment Program

NRPC staff and the Brownfields Advisory Committee are in the process of reviewing the current inventory and adding new sites to our list of potential brownfields in the region. NRPC is working with a project consultant for assistance with Phase I and Phase II reporting for the all-hazards EPA assessment grant. Under this grant, two properties in Milford have undergone Phase I Environmental Site Assessment reporting and are entering into the Phase II portion of the assessment process. If you are interested in helping develop this inventory or have a potential site in need of assessment funding, please contact Minda Shaheen at 424-2240 x29 or [mindas@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mindas@nashuarpc.org).

## Energy Planning

To date, NRPC has completed energy inventories and action plans for Milford, Hollis, SAU 41, Mason, and Lyndeborough. NRPC also collaborated with Clean Air-Cool Planet to facilitate an energy inventory for the town of Amherst with the assistance of a UNH student. Pelham is the final community we will be working with under our EPA grant and data collection has begun for their energy inventory.



NRPC will hold a Regional Energy Roundtable on March 18 at 12:00 PM in our office. Eric Doberstein of LighTec, Inc. will discuss methods and financial incentives for reducing electric costs in municipal facilities, schools, and commercial buildings. For additional information please visit [www.nashuarpc.org/energy/index.htm](http://www.nashuarpc.org/energy/index.htm) or contact Jill Longval, 424-2240 x27 or [jilll@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jilll@nashuarpc.org).

## Low Impact Development Guidebook

NRPC is drafting a guidebook to help communities understand and implement techniques related to low impact development (LID). LID is commonly used to meet stormwater management goals and improve water quality. If you would like to contribute to the guidebook or have suggestions for topics to be discussed, contact Minda Shaheen at [mindas@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mindas@nashuarpc.org) or 424-2240 x29.

## Your Work

You've just read about what we've been working on.  
Now tell us what's happening in your community.

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission exists to serve you, our members. Please take a minute to let us know about the work taking place in your community and how NRPC may be able to help. You can complete the form below and mail it to us or you can email this information to Kerrie Diers at [kerried@nashuarpc.org](mailto:kerried@nashuarpc.org). Thanks for helping us to provide you with the best possible service.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/Town** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email or Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_

**What are the important issues being discussed in your community?**

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**What planning projects are currently underway or upcoming in your community?**

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**What assistance can NRPC provide to you?**

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*If returning by mail, please send form to:*

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