

December 27, 2007

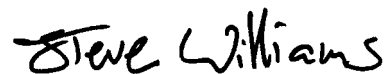
Keith Hickey, Town Manager
Town of Merrimack
P.O. Box 940
Merrimack, NH 03054

Dear Keith:

Attached you will find the report for the Nashua Regional Planning Commission for calendar year 2007. An electronic version is available by contacting Shirley Vance at shirleyv@nashuarpc.org. We have enjoyed the long term working relationship we have had with the Town Council and Planning Board and we look forward to continuing that relationship in the future. Thank you for the continued support of the Town of Merrimack for regional planning. Please feel free to contact either myself or Assistant Director Kerrie Diers if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Stephen W. Williams,
Executive Director

SWW/srv

Enclosure

#200Z-42



2007 Annual Report of NRPC Activities for the Town of Merrimack

Transportation

NRPC as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region is responsible for developing and maintaining the region's transportation planning program. This includes soliciting, prioritizing and making recommendations on regional and local transportation projects that are funded through Federal or State sources. NRPC is responsible for developing the region's portion of the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), maintaining the regional traffic model, and performing required air quality analyses. In addition, NRPC MPO funds are used to provide municipal technical assistance on transportation issues.

- ❖ **Traffic Review of Proposed Outlet Center** – Throughout 2007 the NRPC has worked closely with the town and NH Department of Transportation to review the traffic impacts of the proposed Outlet Center at Exit 10 on the FEE Turnpike. The NRPC has focused its attention on the regional traffic impacts of the proposed Outlet Center and an analysis of the adequacy of the traffic study conducted for the project. The NRPC will continue its involvement as this project moves forward through the review process.
- ❖ **Buildout Traffic Analysis** – Under contract with the town, NRPC has started a study of the traffic impacts of the buildout of major properties in the community. This three phase study will use the NRPC travel demand model to analyze traffic issues successively in the south, north and central portions of the community. NRPC will also analyze the share of traffic increases that can be expected from each major development as well as traffic growth that will result from background land use growth in the rest of the town as well as in surrounding communities. Once NRPC has identified overall traffic impacts a consultant retained by the town will identify specific traffic improvements that are necessary to mitigate the expected traffic increases.
- ❖ **Nashua-Boston Commuter Bus** – Following several years of effort by NRPC and with the support of members of the region's legislative delegation, the Nashua-Boston Commuter bus began operation in February 2007. This service, operated by Concord Trailways, provides express service from Exit 8 and Exit 6 in Nashua to Boston South Station and Logan Airport. This project has been an outstanding success with much higher than expected ridership and enthusiastic support by people from throughout the Nashua region.
- ❖ **Nashua-Manchester Commuter Rail** – 2007 was a very successful year for the Commuter Rail project. In January, Governor Lynch endorsed plans prepared by a task force led by NRPC for commuter rail service to Nashua and Manchester. During the Legislative session, new legislation was passed forming the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority (NHRTA), the administrative organization for the commuter rail service. This legislation was signed by the Governor in July and the NHRTA had its first meeting in September. Under NRPC's leadership the NHRTA is currently working to negotiate operating agreements for the proposed rail service with the M BTA and Pan Am Railways.
- ❖ **Regional Transportation Safety Plan** – During 2007 NRPC prepared and adopted the Regional Transportation Safety Plan. This plan analyzed crash data for the entire NRPC region and identified the highest crash locations in the region and in each community. The plan included a thorough analysis of factors associated with each location and proposed approaches that town officials could use in improving motorist safety.
- ❖ **Regional Traffic Model** – NRPC continued to maintain and update the regional traffic model. This model is now sufficiently detailed that it can be used to analyze the traffic impacts of nearly any type of new development or change in the road network. This capability is available for use by the town whenever there is interest, without cost, and was used extensively by NRPC and NH DOT to analyze the impacts of the proposed Outlet Center development.



Land Use and Environmental Planning

- ❖ Merrimack Town Center – During 2007, NRPC’s Integrated Planning Program (iTRaC) began working with the town on a plan for the creation of a town center. Based on previous studies, this plan will identify specific implementation steps the town should take bring about the creation of the desired town center area. This study is expected to extend through the course of 2008.
- ❖ NRPC TV – One of NRPC’s most important functions is to inform and educate members of the public about local and regional planning issues. This year, NRPC began producing training and information videos. These videos are produced in high-definition and can be accessed in several different ways. NRPC will distribute copies to local cable access channels for their use. Copies of the videos on DVD will also be distributed to town officials and committees. In addition, the digital videos are also available on NRPC’s website.
- ❖ Lower Merrimack River Trails and Access Study – During 2007 NRPC received funding to document all trails and access points along the Merrimack River and to develop plans to improve access to the river. This study will be conducted in close collaboration with the four communities (Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack and Nashua) as well as the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee.
- ❖ Lower Merrimack River Watershed Management Plan – Since 2005, NRPC has been working with Merrimack and other communities in the region on the Lower Merrimack River Watershed Management Plan. The plan identifies important land use issues and resource issues that will impact the health of the Merrimack River as well as improvements that can made to increase public enjoyment and appreciation of the river. The draft of the plan was recently completed and will be adopted by the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee early in 2008.
- ❖ Water System Mutual Aid Study – During FY07 NRPC completed Phase II of the Water System Mutual Aid Study. This study is designed to improve the security of the water systems in southern New Hampshire by showing how they can work together if any water system should lose part of its water supply through nature or a manmade event. The final report for the study identifies low, moderate and high risk scenarios that might threaten the continuation of water service in each of the participating systems, including Merrimack Village District. The report includes specific recommendations and cost estimates that each water system can use to address the identified threats. The plan also includes recommendations for system improvements that will allow water from surrounding systems to be supplied to each water system to sustain service in the case of an extended interruption of water supply.
- ❖ Innovative Land Use Planning Guidelines – NRPC worked with the other NH regional planning commissions and NH DES to develop the Innovative Land Use Planning Guidelines. This document will provide background research and model ordinances for the application of innovative land use techniques in New Hampshire communities.
- ❖ Brownfields – During 2007 NRPC received its second regional brownfield assessment grant. This grant will enable NRPC to conduct Phase I and Phase II brownfields assessments for all hazards. Through this process NRPC staff will work with local officials to identify qualifying brownfields in each of the member communities. NRPC’s consultant will then prepare Phase I and Phase II brownfields assessments for each of the sites. NRPC staff will also work with town staff members and affected property owners to provide education on the brownfield process and on potential funding sources for cleanup activities.
- ❖ Stormwater Education – This year, communities in the region affected by the NPDES II Stormwater requirements have funded NRPC to produce educational materials about stormwater for use in the regions schools. These materials include lesson materials and curricula that will be used by teachers to introduce elementary and secondary students to basic stormwater concepts.



- ❖ Regional Plan – During 2007, NRPC continued the development of the updated Regional Plan. During the early part of the year outreach events were held across the region at which members of the public were asked to identify the most important issues facing the region in the coming 10 years. The NRPC Commission then reviewed input from all the meetings and selected six issues as the most important – Transportation, Water, Energy, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Regional Coordination. During the fall focus group workshops were held using interactive technology to delve more deeply into the issues of Energy, Water and Transportation. During 2008, NRPC will conduct additional focus groups and initiate a small group process to identify regional approaches to these critical issues.
- ❖ Planning Board Training – NRPC conducted four training workshops for Planning Board members during the course of FY07.
- ❖ Regional Resource Conservation Committee – During the year, NRPC conducted six meetings of the Regional Resource Conservation Committee. This group is organized and sponsored by NRPC to provide information and training as well as support for conservation committee members from all NRPC communities.
- ❖ Household Hazardous Waste Program – The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program provides residents of the region with the opportunity to dispose of common household chemicals in an appropriate fashion so that pollution of the region’s watersheds and groundwater can be avoided. In addition to collections events in Nashua, NRPC also conducted collection events in Hudson, Merrimack and Milford. An electronics recycler also participates in these events enabling attendees to dispose of high tech items such as old computers, phones, TV’s and other appliances that include hazardous materials. A total of eight HHW events were held this year.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The GIS staff at NRPC continues to maintain a diverse collection of spatial databases including local roads, real property parcels, zoning, land use, and environmental conditions. This data is applied extensively to provide mapping and analysis for local and/or regional projects.

- ❖ Updated NRPC Standard Map Library for Merrimack. These four standard maps show the Town’s Roads and Town Facilities, Environmental and Conservation Areas, Existing Land Use and an Aerial Image of the Town. Two sets of these maps have been provided to the Town.
- ❖ Provided town volunteers with all the existing GIS data on CD for use on Town projects. This data has been developed and maintained by NRPC and would have cost many thousands of dollars for the Town to develop on its own.
- ❖ Completed regular maintenance tasks and performed updates to the town GIS data which is maintained by NRPC, including digitizing new roads, parcels, protected lands, zoning changes, trails, social service or child care providers, land use and other baseline data.
- ❖ Mapped and analyzed trends relative to real estate transactions for the year to maintain a tool for monitoring sales trends.
- ❖ Addressed numerous mapping requests from the Town officials and the public.
- ❖ Continued to update and expand the regional annotation layers for improved clarity, accuracy and detail in mapping tasks.