



Helping Communities face the challenges and impacts of growth while maintaining their character and sense of place.

Transportation Planning Process Overview

Transportation planning plays a fundamental role in the state's, region's, and community's vision for the future. It includes a comprehensive consideration of possible strategies; an evaluation process that encompasses diverse viewpoints; the collaborative participation of relevant transportation-related agencies and organizations; and open, timely, and meaningful public involvement.

Transportation planning is a cooperative process designed to foster involvement by all users of the system, such as the business community, environmental organizations, freight operators, community groups, and the general public. The public participation process is conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), state Department of Transportation (DOT), and transit operators.

iTRaC is the Nashua Regional Planning Commission's new approach to community planning that focuses on integrating transportation, land use and environmental planning. The program was developed to assist communities in dealing with the challenges of growth in a coordinated way that sustains community character and a sense of place.



Photo: Dan Burden

Transportation planning deals with the facilities, modes, and sectors involved with transporting people and goods. The mode of travel chosen often depends on the type of facility available. For example, people may choose to travel on foot if sidewalks and crosswalks are available.

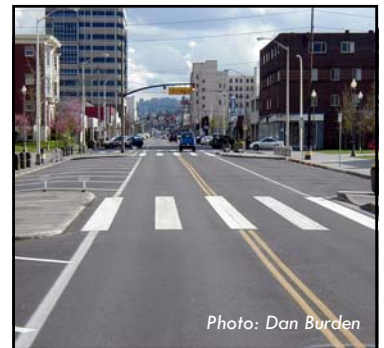


Photo: Dan Burden

Useful Acronyms

TIP ~ Transportation Improvement Program, written by MPOs, contains projects for a four-year time period.

STIP ~ Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan, developed by the State for non-metropolitan areas, incorporates the TIP.

L RTP ~ Long Range Transportation Plan, regional, 25 year timeline.

TTAC ~ Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, members represent each community within the Regional Planning Commission.

MPO ~ Metropolitan Planning Organization, responsible for developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of the State; NRPC serves as the MPO for the Nashua region.

SAFETEA-LU ~ Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users



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Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission serves as the MPO for the region. It is a transportation policy making body made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities, including the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Nashua Transit System. Federal Legislation requires an MPO for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000. The purpose is to administer the federal transportation process and ensure that investments in transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3-C”) planning process. The MPO is required to carry out metropolitan transportation planning in cooperation with the state and operators of publicly owned transit services. The MPO must successfully administer this process in order to acquire and spend Federal money on transportation improvements in the region. The core functions of the MPO include providing a forum for effective regional decision making, evaluating transportation alternatives for the region, maintaining a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for a 20 year horizon, developing a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for a four year period, ensuring that the TIP and LRTP comply with air quality requirements, and involving the public. The MPO is also responsible for coordinating transportation and air quality planning.

State Transportation Planning Process

The Ten Year Transportation Plan as defined under RSA 228:99 and RSA 240 require that the NHDOT proposes a plan for improvements to the State’s transportation system every two years. The Ten Year Plan outlines projects funded with State and Federal transportation dollars and allows NH to manage funding for all transportation projects. The MPO solicits input on improvements to the transportation network from member communities and participating transportation agencies. Input from communities can include requests for new projects or improvements, removal of existing projects that are no longer needed or feasible, or changes in the priority of existing projects. The MPO’s Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) develops a set of recommendations to be considered by NHDOT in the development of the draft Ten Year Plan and for inclusion in the TIP and LRTP. Public Hearings on the draft Ten Year Plan are held by the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). Next, the Governor submits the draft Ten Year Plan to Legislature for consideration. The Legislature holds a series of hearings and then sends the proposed Ten Year Plan back to the Governor to be signed into law. NHDOT then uses the Ten Year Plan project list to develop the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Projects from the Nashua region included in the STIP are broken out by NHDOT to create the Nashua Metropolitan Area TIP. At this point in the process, NRPC updates the LRTP and completes the air quality conformity analyses for the draft TIP and updated LRTP. The process ends with a public hearing to adopt the conforming TIP and LRTP.



Additional Funding for Transportation Projects

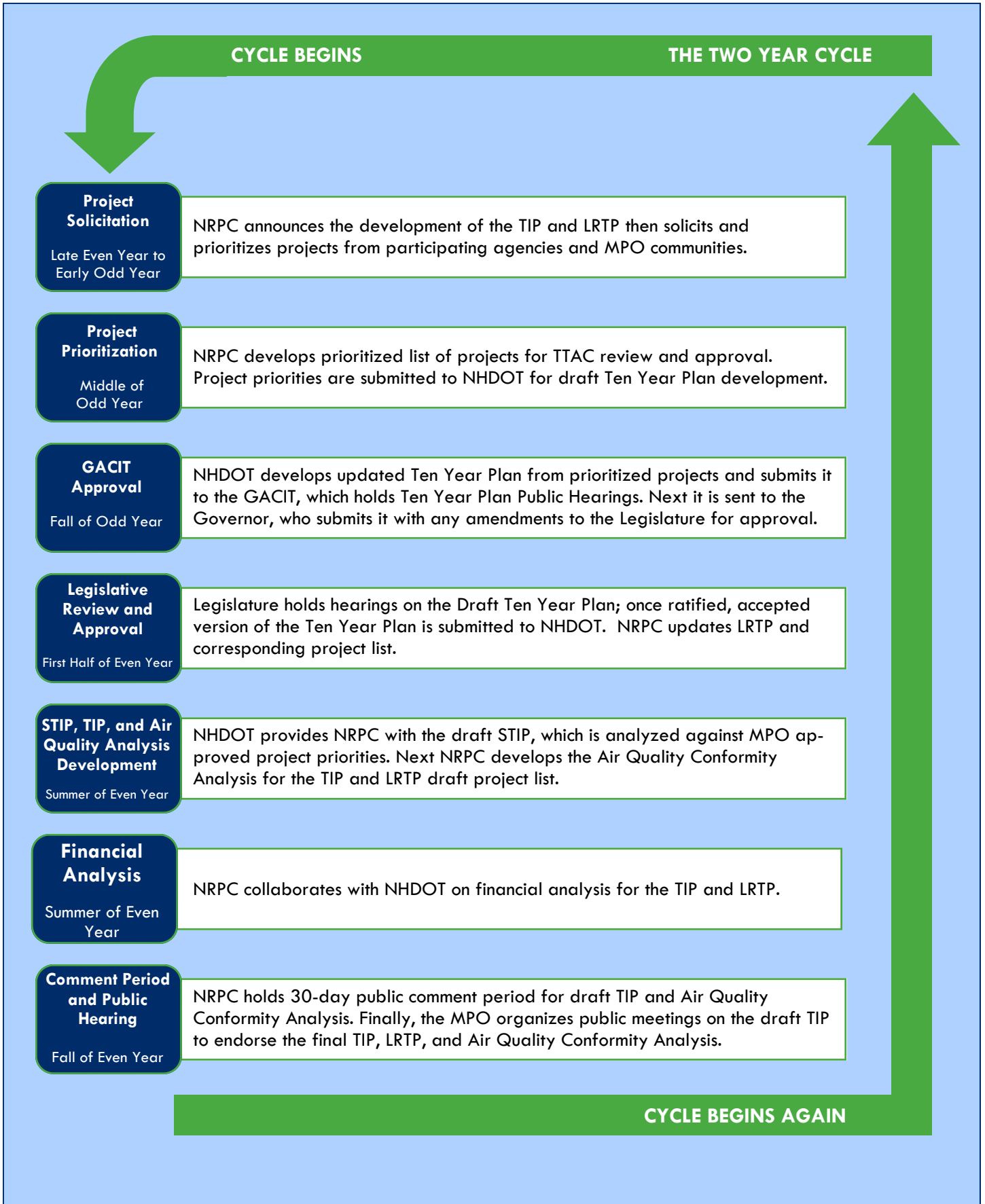
Transportation Enhancement Activity (TE)

The TE program aims to develop and reinforce livable communities by financing projects that maintain the historic culture of the transportation network and/or enhance the operation of the system for its non motorized users. Notable projects include construction of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, preservation of buildings significant to the history of the transportation, landscaping and other scenic beautification, and environmental mitigation.

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ)

The 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) created the CMAQ Program, expanding the focus and function of federal transportation funding and programs to manage air quality. CMAQ provides assistance for air quality and congestion mitigation projects in urbanized areas identified as non-attainment. Projects receiving emphasis include transit, rideshare programs, alternative clean fuels, and demand management.

Ten Year Planning Process



Supporting Legislation

The State and Federal government have ratified several statutes that underscore their commitment to providing travelers with effective and efficient transportation networks for generations to come.

RSA 228:99 and 240 ~ Mandate that the NH Department of Transportation propose a comprehensive plan for improving the transportation infrastructure of the state every two years. The goals of the Ten Year Plan strives to formulate and initiate a plan allowing New Hampshire to fully participate in nationally funded transportation improvement projects as well as to outline projects and programs funded by transportation revenue of the State.

Federal Highway Aid Act of 1962 ~ Designates that federally funded projects in urbanized regions with a population of over 50,000 must enact a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative “3-C” planning procedure with both state and local recommendations.



Title 23, SAFETEA-LU ~ Signed into law in 2005, SAFETEA-LU aims to address the numerous transportation related issues of the nation by guaranteeing federal funding totaling \$224.1 billion for highways, highway safety, and public transportation. It endorses more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation concerns at a national scale while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexible options in their communities.

SAFETEA-LU Planning Objectives

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by permitting international competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized usage.
- Facilitate the security of the transportation network for motorized and non-motorized usage.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and/or freight.
- Protect and improve the environment, promote energy conservation, and enhance quality of life.
- Promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and locally planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation networks, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation network.

For more information on Transportation Planning, visit www.nashuarpc.org/transportation.

For an overview of the entire iTRaC program, visit www.nashuarpc.org/landuse or contact Camille Pattison, iTRaC Program Manager, at camillep@nashuarpc.org or 603-424-2240 x14. Produced by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission in partnership with the NH Department of Transportation and NH Office of Energy & Planning.

