

# Program Highlights

## September 19, 2012



Nashua Regional Planning Commission ~ 9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH 03054 ~ Ph. 603-424-2240~ Fax. 603-424-2230~ [www.nashuarpc.org](http://www.nashuarpc.org)

### **Remembering Howard Dilworth...**

As many of you may know, Hudson Commissioner Howard Dilworth passed away in August. I had the privilege of working closely with Howard on the Executive Committee for the last seven years and I wanted to take a moment to remember his work at NRPC. Howard was a long-time Commissioner who took his appointment seriously. He could always be counted on to be at every meeting, in his signature red and black buffalo-checked coat, to provide three important perspectives: that of local citizen, historian, and regional planning Commissioner.



As Treasurer and Executive Committee member, Howard was a wealth of knowledge about municipal auditing and finance. He asked tough questions and provided constructive review of NRPC budgets and other documents. Reminding us that we were ultimately accountable to the taxpayer, he would give bottom line, practical advice. The Executive Committee depended on his motion to “place the monthly financial reports on file for audit” and vote to do so confidently knowing that Howard had thoroughly vetted them.

As unofficial NRPC historian, Howard was always proud to remind us that in 1959, Paul Buxton of Hudson was a founding member of NRPC along with City of Nashua officials. We could look to Howard to remember discussions, programs and policies that NRPC had covered over the years. At the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party in 2009, Howard shared many stories about former staff, directors and commissioners.

Howard was a strong advocate for regional planning. He was quick to provide suggestions for making NRPC a better resource by having top-notch specialized staff and low-cost services for communities. He also promoted NRPC’s strong collective regional voice to send messages to Concord and Washington.

Howard will surely be missed here at NRPC. In his memory, the Executive Committee will be sending a donation to the Hudson Historical Society. If you would like to contribute to this donation, please bring your contribution to the September 19, 2012 Commission meeting.

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

**KERRIE DIERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** ~ [kerried@nashuarpc.org](mailto:kerried@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x12

**Tanya Reinert, Finance/HR Administrator** ~ [tanyar@nashuarpc.org](mailto:tanyar@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x10

**Karen Baker, Program Assistant** ~ [karenb@nashuarpc.org](mailto:karenb@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x11

# Transportation Programs

## **DRAFT 2013-2016 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

NRPC completed the draft 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a four-year work program that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects, as required by federal transportation legislation. The TIP contains an agreed-upon list of specific transportation improvement projects and associated financial information for the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The TIP includes transportation improvements identified for advancement during the program period. The TIP is reviewed and endorsed by the MPO every two years. The endorsed TIP is submitted to the funding agencies for inclusion in their annual programs, including the NH DOT statewide TIP (STIP). The Draft TIP will be available on the NRPC website for public comment and will be acted upon by NRPC in October.

## **DRAFT AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS**

Concurrent with the development of the draft 2013-2016 TIP and minor update to the Long range Metropolitan Transportation Plan, NRPC completed the required air quality conformity analysis. Emissions from motor vehicles using the transportation system are one of several factors in a region's air quality and therefore, they must be considered as part of the transportation planning process. "Nonattainment" areas (NAA) are geographic areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA); maintenance areas are areas that formerly violated but currently meet the federal air quality standards. NRPC has demonstrated that the emissions generated by the transportation network in the NRPC portion of the NAA are within the established budget set by the NH Department of Environmental services. The draft air quality conformity analysis will be available for public comment on the NRPC website and will be acted upon by NRPC in October.

## **2013-2040 DRAFT METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

NRPC has completed a minor update to the existing Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This minor update only addressed the project list and fiscal constraint analysis of the document. It was completed as an interim step towards a full update of the MTP. This minor update of the MTP is will be open for public comment and will be acted upon by NRPC in October.



The full update to the MTP will continue through early 2013 and coordinate with the Granite State Future and Ten Year Plan processes. This approach will improve efficiency and allow improved integration between the Ten Year Plan Process and the update of the MTP. It will benefit the region by allowing for full consideration of the planning analyses completed as part of the MTP, Granite State Future and Ten Year Plan initiatives. The end result will be a fully updated and integrated transportation plan that provides guidance and direction to transportation investment decisions.

## **CENSUS 2010 AND NASHUA TRANSIT SYSTEM OPERATING FUNDS**

With the 2010 population of the Nashua Urbanized Area exceeding 200,000, Nashua Transit System faced the loss of operating funds under the Federal Transit Administration rules. For more than two years NRPC forged a partnership with the Nashua Transit System, neighboring MPO's and the staff of the Federal delegation to address potential impacts of the 2010 Census on the available operating funds for Nashua Transit System. This effort resulted in the preservation of operating funds under the new Federal Transportation Bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the

21st Century (MAP-21).

**Tim Roache, Assistant Director/MPO Coordinator** ~ [timr@nashuarpc.org](mailto:timr@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x28

**Julie Chizmas, Senior Transportation Planner** ~ [juliec@nashuarpc.org](mailto:juliec@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x19

**Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner** ~ [jenc@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jenc@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240, x31

# Land Use & Environmental Programs

## GRANITE STATE FUTURE STATEWIDE COORDINATION

As part of the regional plan development program, Granite State Future, NRPC has been coordinating with the eight other regions in NH to share resources and collaborate on the initial phase of the planning process. NRPC as the recipient of the recent grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been acting as the lead statewide, predominantly as the grant administrator, but also in kicking off this first phase of the planning process. Recognizing that there is an abundance of existing resources and data at the statewide level, we have asked state agencies and other organizations to participate in an efficient process that will inform all 9 regions about statewide plans and policies through a single consolidated process, rather than 9 times. NRPC coordinated a kick-off event for the many statewide partners and subject area experts that have agreed to provide assistance to the regions. Following which, all nine RPCs have been staffing a series of Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC) meetings which are focused on collecting base data and research for each of the livability principles as they relate to each of the individual plan components to be developed by the individual regions.

NRPC has taken the lead staffing both the Statewide Advisory and Executive Committees. The Advisory Committee met for the first time on August 30<sup>th</sup> and is focused on identifying some of the common and current issues and trends of importance across the state for consideration by the RPCs. The Advisory Committee will help to consolidate the work of the separate TASCs into one cohesive baseline report later this fall.

The Executive Committee, the nine RPC directors, have met to review progress and coordination between regions. This coordination between regions has allowed each RPC to generate more resources and opportunities; sharing the cost and maximizing the benefits. Shared resources that have been developed at this point include the new Granite State Future website which includes opportunity for public comment collected and reported at the municipal level, general overview of the common elements of the program, and individual plan pages for each RPC. Still under development will include a blog, where each RPC can highlight their work, and a public forum, where residents can share and comment on ideas for their region. Linked to the current public comment element on the website are the listening boxes, brochures and comment cards that have been developed for use by all nine regions and distribution across the state. Comments collected from the listening boxes will be input into the website's public comment database. This online database will provide a valuable tool for all municipalities in hearing what residents like most in their community as well as what they feel could be better; giving local and state decision makers a direct line to public interests. For more information on the statewide coordination efforts please visit [www.granitestatefuture.org](http://www.granitestatefuture.org) or contact Jen Czysz at [jenc@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jenc@nashuarpc.org) or 424-2240 x31.



## GRANITE STATE FUTURE: NASHUA REGIONAL PLAN

At the regional level, NRPC is conducting extensive outreach for the Nashua Regional Plan. The NRPC has attended local events, such as old home days, in Hudson, Mason, and Nashua, with more scheduled for Pelham, Hollis, Mont Vernon, and Merrimack. At these events, staff are asking the public a variety of questions to take the pulse of the region. Questions include a visual preference survey that allows people to choose the types of housing, office, retail, and transportation uses that they prefer.



We have also scattered “listening boxes” throughout the region in popular places like libraries, DMV’s and restaurants to collect data in another way. These listening boxes request that people fill out a two-question comment card. We have already gathered a significant amount of data from these comment cards at the events, and we hope to gain much more data when we collect the listening boxes later in the planning process.



NRPC staff is meeting individually with town officials, staff and governing bodies to update them about the regional plan and solicit ideas about how to involve more members of the community. Additionally, we plan to meet with civic and private groups like rotary clubs, family groups, and health organizations to discuss the plan.

In addition to the website for the state-wide plan, the NRPC will promote the regional plan using both traditional forms of media like newspapers, as well as social media like Facebook and Twitter.

Throughout the fall, NRPC staff will continue these outreach efforts to gather as many opinions about the region as possible. As winter approaches, we will evaluate the data from our outreach efforts and prepare for scenario-based planning engagement.

To schedule a meeting or for more information, contact Jeff Belanger, Project Manager, at [jeffb@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jeffb@nashuarpc.org) or 424-2240 x 29.



## LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER WATER QUALITY PLANNING GRANT

Field assessments were the main focus of NRPC's Lower Merrimack River Continuity Assessment during the 3rd quarter. Early in the summer, NRPC staff received training by the NH Geological Survey to conduct field assessments of culverts using the NH Stream Crossing Protocol, and soon after they began their fieldwork. To date, 14 field assessments have been completed. Next, the data will be provided to NH Geological Survey for use in their assessment tool, which provides measures of aquatic organism passage, geomorphic compatibility, and prioritization for culvert replacement and retrofit. NRPC will use this data to produce a map depicting aquatic organism passage, geomorphic compatibility, and existing crossing conditions for each culvert. This data will also be summarized in an accompanying report. For more information, contact Jill Longval, [jillL@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jillL@nashuarpc.org).

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

Household Hazardous Waste Collections were held in April, May, June, and August of 2012. 270 households took part in the August event, of which 84 were first time participants. Remaining collections for 2012 include October 6 and November 3. Both will be held at the Nashua Public Works Garage from 8:00AM-12:00PM. For more information, visit [www.nashuarpc.org/hhw](http://www.nashuarpc.org/hhw).

## NEW HAMPSHIRE BROADBAND MAPPING AND PLANNING PROGRAM (NHBMPP)

The New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program (NHBMPP) is a comprehensive program that seeks to understand where broadband is currently available in NH, how it can be made more widely available in the future, and how to encourage increased levels of broadband adoption and usage. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the NHBMPP comprises two main components: a broadband availability inventory and mapping effort, and a suite of planning and technical assistance initiatives.

Beginning in late 2011, NRPC was tasked to create a Broadband Stakeholder Group (BBSG) from interested member communities that would include individuals representing a wide spectrum of the community. The BBSG meets on a quarterly basis and is charged to:



1. Identify barriers to the deployment of broadband services;
2. Promote collaboration with service providers to facilitate deployment and use;
3. Collect and analyze information on the use and demand for broadband services; and
4. Facilitate information sharing between the public and private sectors regarding use of and demand for broadband services.

Currently, NRPC is working with the BBSG to draft a Regional Broadband Plan, develop educational materials and continue outreach efforts in our communities. NRPC will also start identifying and interviewing representatives across five sectors (Education, Health, Community Support/Government, Public Safety, and Business/Economic Development) on how to better serve these sectors and on what tools and training they might need.

For more information on NHBMPP go to [www.iwantbroadbandnh.org](http://www.iwantbroadbandnh.org) and take the survey, and speed test while you're there. For more details on what's happening in our region, contact Jennifer DiNovo at [JenniferD@nashuarpc.org](mailto:JenniferD@nashuarpc.org).

## MILFORD COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT

The Milford Office of Community Development, on behalf of the Milford Planning Board, received a Community Planning Grant from New Hampshire Housing to complete a comprehensive audit/regulatory review of the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations. NRPC has contracted with the Town to help determine the

consistency of those guiding documents with the adopted vision and goals of the 2012 Housing Chapter of the Milford Master Plan. The project kicked off in August with a listening session with the Planning Board and Community Development Department to identify issues within the regulations. Following a review of applicable Town Ordinances and regulations affecting housing, NRPC will develop an audit report and recommendations on tools and strategies to resolve conflicts and amend regulations to achieve the housing goals of the master plan.

Community outreach is anticipated to occur during year-end. For more information, contact Jennifer DiNovo, [jenniferd@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jenniferd@nashuarpc.org)

**Camille Pattison, Principal Planner** ~ [camillep@nashuarpc.org](mailto:camillep@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x14  
**Jill Longval, Environmental Planner** ~ [jilll@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jilll@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x27  
**Jeff Belanger, Program Manager** ~ [jeffb@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jeffb@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240, x29  
**Jennifer DiNovo, Regional Planner** ~ [jenniferd@nashuarpc.org](mailto:jenniferd@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x25  
**Mary Brundage, Regional Planner** ~ [maryb@nashuarpc.org](mailto:maryb@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x16

## GIS Programs

### GIS DISCOVERY SESSIONS

The GIS Group is currently conducting outreach meetings with our member communities in order to reinforce our goal of providing high-quality, relevant, and accessible GIS products and services. Meeting topics covered include a review of the overall technical investment in GIS at the local level, community reliance on NRPC for GIS services, a discussion of NRPC's GIS capabilities, and recommendations to NRPC about successes and what could be done better. The common themes identified in these discussions will form the basis of broad, strategic steps NRPC will follow to support progressive GIS data creation, cartographic products, and dynamic web services.

### RURAL ADDRESSING PROJECT

The New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program is a comprehensive effort to characterize broadband availability across the state. A key component is capturing the availability of cable, DSL, and other broadband services at the residential property level. NRPC is coordinating the statewide collection of rural address point locations for this project, with the goal of mapping nearly 40,000 households in the State's rural census blocks by end of 2013.

Through August, the collective mapping effort led by NRPC has resulted in the creation of 14,000 household locations throughout New Hampshire. These data are collected using in-field GPS or created on-screen using a variety of public and commercial geospatial reference data such as digital parcels, aerial imagery, and business databases.

Meanwhile, NRPC continues to lead the volunteer coordination effort of the project. In exchange for donating their time to conduct field work, volunteers receive valuable GPS technical training. To date, volunteers have contributed over 100 hours to the project. NRPC's own volunteer training session is taking place in mid-September. In addition to a short introduction to the project, attendees will get hands-on experience with GPS technology, including handheld Garmin devices and new iPads.



### REGIONAL BASEMAP DATA MAINTENANCE

In support of our transportation initiatives the GIS Group manages a substantial regional database of geospatial information such as road and utility infrastructure, landuse, conservation, environmental, and property datalayers. The database content is continually evolving and interested parties are urged to contact NRPC for assistance in receiving or

using these GIS data products.

**Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager** ~ [saras@nashuarpc.org](mailto:saras@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x20  
**Ryan Friedman, Senior GIS Planner** ~ [ryanf@nashuarpc.org](mailto:ryanf@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x20  
**Matt Waitkins, Field Data Mgr./Transportation Planner** ~ [mattw@nashuarpc.org](mailto:mattw@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x18  
**Joe Taranto, GIS Technician** ~ [joet@nashuarpc.org](mailto:joet@nashuarpc.org) ~ 424-2240 x19