



Program Highlights

December 14, 2011

I am pleased to announce that NRPC, as lead applicant on behalf of the 9 NH Regional Planning Commissions, was awarded a \$3.37 million grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program!

The goal of HUD's Sustainable Communities grants is to help communities and regions improve their economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools, and transportation. The Regional Planning Grant program encourages grantees to integrate housing, land-use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure development, through regional planning efforts, in a manner that empowers regions to consider how these factors work together to create employment and economic opportunities. The program will place a priority on partnerships, including the collaboration of arts and culture, philanthropy, and innovative ideas into the regional planning process.

The New Hampshire Regional Planning Project will be a three year project that will coordinate previous long range planning efforts for transportation, land use, economic development, housing environment, energy, cultural and historic resources, public health, and environmental planning into a common comprehensive framework, engage local communities to work together to develop a comprehensive plan for each of the 9 regions, and culminate with an overall vision for New Hampshire's future. We are excited to be leading the way on this innovative statewide effort! You will be hearing more about this in the months to come, but please direct any questions you may have to me in the meantime.

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director
424-2240 x12 kerried@nashuarpc.org

Karen Baker, Program Assistant
424-2240 x11 karenb@nashuarpc.org

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Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission is completing a full update to the NRPC Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in conformance with all planning requirements outlined in the current federal transportation planning regulations.

What is the MTP?

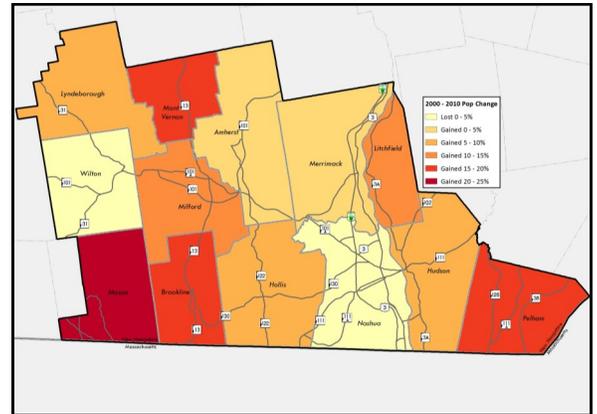
The MTP examines travel and transportation issues and needs in metropolitan areas. It includes a demographic analysis of the region, as well as an examination of travel patterns and trends. The planning process includes an analysis of alternatives to meet projected future demands, and for providing a safe and efficient transportation

Transportation Programs

system that meets mobility while not creating adverse impacts to the environment. In metropolitan areas with a population exceeding 50,000, the responsibility for transportation planning lies with designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). The purpose of the NRPC MTP is to present project specific improvements to promote inter-modal connectivity and efficiency in the movement of people and goods and promote a vision of the region that will enhance the quality of life in the NRPC communities.

Population Trends and Projections

The first step in the update of the MTP is to address population trends and projections. NRPC has developed a summary of the population trends over the last several decades. Using Census 2010 along with historical population and demographic data back to 1960, NRPC has analyzed the population trends over the last 4 decades. A preliminary look at the data indicates the rapid growth in population and housing in the last four decades has slowed significantly. The region's population grew over 57% between 1960 and 1970, but only 4.5% between 2000 and 2010. In addition the 2010 Census showed the first decade where the region's percent growth was lower than either Hillsborough County's or the State's



The population projections are being developed using the Cohort Component Method for each town in the NRPC Region. Base population used was the 2010 US Census population. Natural population change data, births and deaths, were obtained from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. Survival rates were obtained from NH Office of Energy and Planning's past population projections. NRPC is generating unique net migration rates for each town using the past 40 years of net migration and projected as 4 possible future net migration outcomes: high, middle, low and historical average. The most probable outcome will be selected for each community.

Traffic Trends and Travel Demand Model Projections

NRPC is also reviewing traffic volumes and trend across the region. In this update of the MTP, NRPC will incorporate an analysis of congestion along critical east west corridors in the region. This data and analysis will allow NRPC to quantify the level of congestion experienced by users of the road network.

The population, traffic and regional employment data will be fed into an updated travel demand model. This model will be used to estimate future travel demands out to 2040 and is a critical tool in assessing the future transportation needs of the region. Working through the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and member community staff NRPC will develop updated draft goals, objectives and strategies to meet those needs. NRPC will update the project list and associated financial information to include new projects and needs identified through the recently completed 2011 project solicitation process.

Development of the fiscally constrained MTP will include the required Air Quality Conformity Analysis in cooperation with NHDOT and NHDES. An important element of this task will be to identify which long range projects in the plan are the top priorities for MPO endorsement. During the MTP development process, NRPC will hold a series of public information sessions designed to capture input from residents and community decision makers. The process will conclude with a public hearing on the draft MTP, followed by the endorsement of the MPO.

Tim Roache, Assistant Director/MPO Coordinator
424-2240 x28 timr@nashuarpc.org

Jen Czysz, Senior Regional Planner
424-2240, x31 jenc@nashuarpc.org

Julie Chizmas, Transportation Planner
424-2240 x19 juliec@nashuarpc.org

Land Use & Environmental Programs

Camille Pattison, Principal Planner

424-2240 x14

camillep@nashuarpc.org



Jill Longval, Environmental Planner

424-2240 x27

jilll@nashuarpc.org

Master Planning

Many communities in the region are facing the need to update their master plan with fewer resources and limited time from volunteers and staff. Where Master Plans are recommended to be reviewed and updated every 5 to 10 years, it becomes a time-consuming and often costly undertaking for Planning Boards to keep up with this duty. At a minimum, each master plan is required to have a Visioning Chapter and a Land Use Chapter however most plans include additional sections such as: Transportation; Community Facilities; Economic Development; Natural Resources; Natural Hazards; Recreation; Utility and Public Service; Cultural and Historic Resources; Regional Concerns; Neighborhoods; Community Design; Housing; Energy and Implementation. To assist communities with Master Plan updates, NRPC has developed a menu of services that accommodates varying levels of needs and budgets. NRPC staff will work with your town to create a custom approach to best meet the needs of your community. For additional information contact Camille Pattison, 424-2240 x14 or camillep@nashuarpc.org.

Fluvial Erosion

NRPC will be collaborating with NH DES on a Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant to perform river condition assessments in the Souhegan River watershed in New Hampshire. In each watershed, field assessments will be conducted to delineate fluvial erosion hazard (FEH) zones along the rivers and identify those areas at greatest risk for river erosion effects that can potentially impact property and infrastructure during large floods. As part of these assessments, we also assess stream crossings (bridges and culverts) to identify those that are undersized for the rivers that flow through them, as undersized culverts can blow out during high flows, creating potential public safety impacts to landowners and infrastructure downstream. The information collected on the Souhegan River mainstem and many of its tributaries will be presented to the communities in the watershed and used to update their hazard mitigation plans. For additional information contact Camille Pattison at 424-2240 x14.

Energy Technical Assistance

On Nov. 16, NRPC issued a Request for Proposals on behalf of the municipalities and school districts in the region. The RFP is open to competitive electricity suppliers, brokers, and aggregators currently registered with the NH Public Utilities Commission. If a proposal is accepted, the municipalities and schools will have the opportunity to enter into a 12 month contract for their municipal and/or school electricity accounts based on their combined electricity usage, allowing for greater negotiating power and a more competitive rate than if they went out to bid on their own.

Supported through grant funding provided by the NH Energy Technical Assistance and Planning program, Peregrine Energy Group, at no cost to municipalities, has provided assistance to prepare the RFP, answer questions from potential bidders, compare information on prices offered, make recommendation based on current utility rates and their sense of the market, and help negotiate a contract. The ultimate selection of an electricity supplier will be the decision of the individual participating municipalities and schools. For more information, contact Jill Longval, jilll@nashuarpc.org.

Merrimack River Water Quality Planning Grant

NRPC received \$9,071 in funding through the 2012 Water Quality Planning 604(b) program to develop the Lower Merrimack River Continuity Assessment. This project will take place in the Lower Merrimack River Corridor of the Merrimack River watershed. The goal of this continuity assessment is to determine the level of aquatic habitat fragmentation resulting from bridges and culverts and to identify and prioritize specific stream crossing locations that could be targeted for improvement to reconnect aquatic habitat. Work on this project will begin early in 2012. For more information, contact Jill Longval, jilll@nashuarpc.org.

GIS Programs



Ryan Friedman, Senior GIS Planner

424-2240 x20

ryanf@nashuarpc.org

Matt Waitkins, Field Data Manager/Transportation Planner

424-2240 x18

mattw@nashuarpc.org

Joe Taranto, GIS Technician

424-2240 x19

joet@nashuarpc.org

Rural Addressing Project

NRPC is currently wrapping up preliminary coordination efforts for this project, the goal of which is to create the first publically available master address point dataset in New Hampshire. The project is one arm of the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Program. The data collected will help refine broadband availability mapping and analysis as well as improve the efficiency of basic local mapping projects.

We have completed an inventory of existing data from community and commercial sources to identify data gaps. The next steps are to finalize subcontracts with the other planning commissions in the State and to begin coordinating the volunteer effort for collecting the actual data in the field. NRPC is looking for volunteers who would like to collect GPS data beginning in the Spring of 2012. Free training on various equipment will be provided. Please contact NRPC if you are interesting and would like more information.

Travel Model Data Input

As part of the large effort to update NRPC's travel demand forecasting model, staff is currently meeting with local planners about future changes to the road network and land use in their cities and towns. By providing specific information to NRPC about potential residential and commercial developments, your communities are helping NRPC pinpoint where projected population increases may be added to the model. NRPC hopes to have draft model input data out to 2040 available after the new year, leading to calibration of the base year model and creation of future-year scenario models thereafter.

Map Updates

NRPC GIS staff is always working behind the scenes to keep pertinent data layers as current as possible. NRPC is currently updating its standard map series—available on our website—but in the meantime, we'd like to remind people that maps with the latest parcel and road information are available for print or digitally on a constantly updated basis. Two other specific data updates are currently in development—regional conservation lands and regional traffic counts. NRPC will keep you updated regarding the release of these datasets.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201
Merrimack, NH 03054

Phone ~ 603-424-2240

Fax ~ 603-424-2230

#201P-257

Website ~ www.nashuarpc.org

Online Newsletter ~ nashuarpc.blogspot.com