



Program Highlights

March 21, 2012

This quarter we faced HB 1561, a proposal to eliminate Regional Planning Commissions. The testimony before the House Municipal and County Government Committee was overwhelmingly supportive of the RPCs. Only the co-sponsor testified in favor of the bill. I would like to thank all of you who submitted letters of support or contacted your legislators on behalf of the Regional Planning Commissions, and our own Representative Bill Condra of Wilton for testifying in support of the work we do here at NRPC.

This challenge to our existence provided us an opportunity to talk about the value of the work we do here at NRPC, but it is clear that we should continue to improve outreach and education beyond our traditional constituents so that more citizens and public officials are aware of the programs and projects we undertake on behalf of our member communities.

To that end, the Executive Committee has been working on a mission statement along with supporting goals and actions. We hope to have a meaningful discussion at the March 21 Commission meeting about the future of NRPC, what you would like to see NRPC do for your community, and how we can achieve these goals. We particularly need your thoughts and guidance as we look forward to beginning work on the Regional Plan. I look forward to seeing you on the 21st.

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

424-2240 x12 kerried@nashuarpc.org

Tanya Reinert, Finance/HR Administrator

424-2240 x12 tanyar@nashuarpc.org

Karen Baker, Program Assistant

424-2240 x11 karenb@nashuarpc.org

Transportation Programs

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

NRPC Staff continues to update the Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The focus of the update in the coming months is to complete a transportation needs analysis for the region based on existing conditions, trends, and projections of the region's population and traffic growth. NRPC will be working with member communities, holding public input sessions and surveying residents of the region for their perspective on the condition of the transportation system.

EXIT 36S

NRPC Staff have been hard at work putting the finishing touches on the scope of work for the Exit 36S Planning Study. In late 2011 NRPC partnered with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) and was successfully awarded a Transportation Community Systems Preservation grant.

The Exit 36S study will complete planning analyses in support of the development of a southbound off ramp on US Route 3 at Exit 36 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. The Exit 36 Southbound Project is of both local and regional significance. The project has been included in the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for many years and is widely accepted as having significant benefit to the region for a relatively small investment. The project was also recommended as part of the Daniel Webster Highway and Spit Brook Road Corridor Study completed in 2002. Most recently, the City of Nashua Transportation Task Force included Exit 36 Southbound (Exit 36S) in its report to the Mayor as a high priority project for the City – citing congestion relief and economic development opportunities to the City. The significance of this project is also recognized in Massachusetts by the Town of Tyngsborough and Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG). This project is included in the Northern Middlesex Region's recently updated 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The Exit 36 Southbound Project has several desired outcomes that address livability and integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices. The goals of this project, which are consistent with the project selection criteria, include:

- ◆ Improve the operation of the major roads in the vicinity of the proposed Exit 36 Southbound;
- ◆ Create safer roads for all modes of transportation;
- ◆ Provide efficient access to services and local and regional job centers;
- ◆ Generate opportunities for sustainable growth and economic development;
- ◆ Support existing, and initiate new opportunities for innovative financing and public/private partnerships; and
- ◆ Develop a plan for mitigating traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation sector.

The final product will be a planning study report which summarizes data collection efforts, analyzes traffic operations and impacts transit system improvements, pedestrian and bicycling issues, and opportunities to improve economic competitiveness. A land use analysis will result in recommendations that will foster a more sustainable future for the residents and businesses in the study area.

The project will feature public outreach strategy which includes public meetings, workshops, the use of social media, and websites. Work on the plan is expected to begin in the spring of 2012 and take approximately 12 to 18 months to complete.

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

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

Jen Czynsz, Senior Regional Planner
424-2240, x31 jenc@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

Jennifer DiNovo, Regional Planner

424-2240 x25 jenniferd@nashuarpc.org

NH REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM

This effort funded through US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is an innovative statewide project that coordinates 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 framework, engages local communities to work together to develop a comprehensive plan for their region, and culminates with an overall vision for New Hampshire's future.

NRPC staff will be conducting an extensive outreach process to gather input resulting in a comprehensive regional plan aiming to achieve economic vitality while safeguarding the natural resources, character and rural landscapes that we so deeply value. NRPC's regional plan will:

- ◆ Address the unique needs of local and regional communities.
- ◆ Develop a vision statement and set goals and priorities.
- ◆ Integrate housing, transportation, water infrastructure, natural resources, economic development, cultural and historic resources, public health, climate change and adaptation, and energy efficiency planning.
- ◆ Conduct scenario planning that informs future development patterns.
- ◆ Identify and prioritize place-based implementation projects.



Throughout the Spring, NRPC staff will be identifying local and regional partners to participate on the Regional Advisory Committee and the Regional Equity Team. The Regional Advisory Committee will be comprised of regional partners and volunteers will facilitate the local and regional outreach processes, review local information, prioritize implementation, and track progress. The Regional Equity Team will be comprised of representatives of underserved and marginalized populations in their region that will ensure the voices of these populations are reflected in the regional plan. For additional information contact Camille Pattison, 424-2240 x14 or camillep@nashuarpc.org.

ENERGY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

During the 1st quarter of 2012, NRPC continued to provide technical assistance to increase municipal energy efficiency in the Nashua Region through the Energy Technical Assistance and Planning program (ETAP). ETAP is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and is being administered through the NH Office of Energy and Planning. Through this program, NRPC worked with 10 towns and 6 school districts to form an aggregation for electricity supply. As a result of a successful bidding process, the towns and school districts will see a substantial savings on their electricity bills. For more information, contact Jill Longval, jilll@nashuarpc.org.

LOWER 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 is underway to identify and map culverts in the Lower Merrimack River communities of Hudson, Nashua, Merrimack, and Litchfield. NRPC is also seeking input from the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee to develop criteria for selecting roughly 30 culverts to analyze in the field. 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

Data production has begun for the rural addressing project, the goal of which is to map the 40,000 households in rural census blocks across New Hampshire in support of the New Hampshire Broadband Mapping and Planning Project. The other eight RPCs in the State have recently all signed on to participate in the project and are currently submitting points that can be gathered from local parcel and assessing data, along with aerial photography. NRPC continues to coordinate these efforts, including the creation of data standards, procedures, and outreach materials. During the last few months, NRPC GIS staff was hard at work, producing over 600 field maps—one for each census block—that will be distributed to the RPCs.

For points that cannot be determined using the above methods, the RPCs will be counting on volunteers to GPS driveway locations the field. We will be taking an innovative approach to this aspect of the project by offering free GPS training and further mapmaking support to anyone who is interested in volunteering. The goal is to create and maintain a relationship between our communities and the types of GPS and GIS applications available at NRPC. Training is currently expected to begin sometime in the Spring with data collection starting shortly thereafter. Please contact NRPC if you are interested and would like more information.



UPDATED PARCEL AND ASSESSING DATA

NRPC GIS prides itself on maintaining currency of data, from annotation to zoning and everything in between. One of the most important data layers we maintain is local parcels and their attributes. Staff is constantly updating parcel lines based on new subdivisions, consolidations, or adjustments, and recently, NRPC began contacting all our communities in order to obtain the most recent set of assessing data to join to those parcels.

This new data will help NRPC in numerous ways—it provides specific demographic and household counts for our traffic model, up-to-date land uses and building values for planning documents, and accurate street addresses for data analysis and map labeling.

NRPC appreciates the efforts of local staffs in sending us this data and working with us to ensure that our products are backed by the best information available.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201
Merrimack, NH 03054

Phone ~ 603-424-2240
Fax ~ 603-424-2230

Website ~ www.nashuarpc.org
Online Newsletter ~ nashuarpc.blogspot.com