

Program Highlights

December 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

2012 was a busy year for NRPC at the State, Regional and Local levels:

We started off 2012 with a huge showing of support from RPC Commissioners from across the state, as well as local elected officials, state agencies, and others who testified about the significance of regional planning commissions before the NH House Municipal and County Government Committee. The bill, which proposed to eliminate RPCs, was deemed inexpedient to legislate thanks to that outpouring of support from local communities who strongly value regional cooperation and coordination.

Over the course of 2012, NRPC had the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of regional planning and working together. One notable example is the municipal electricity supply aggregation project that NRPC facilitated on behalf of many NRPC communities and school districts. Together these communities saved over \$400,000 on their annual electricity expenditures for municipal facilities. Most of the initial group asked NRPC to issue a request to renew their competitive electricity supply contracts for 2013. We were successful in negotiating a renewal rate that will save those communities close to \$200,000 on their annual electricity bills in 2013.

In big and small ways, NRPC's value is in helping communities achieve municipal goals and visions. This includes things like designing beautiful landscaping for a roundabout in a gateway location, helping to review ideas for future zoning, finding grant funds for studying infrastructure critical to economic development, designing surveys for local master plans, neighborhood planning, conducting household hazardous waste events, and planning for future broadband needs in the region, just to name a few things that NRPC accomplished in the past year. (Annual reports for each community are on the way.)

NRPC's value is also in working together toward a regional vision and goals, which we look to you to help develop over the course of 2013. Through our regional planning project we anticipate having a clear vision for the future of this region and defining goals and actions to achieve it. We need your community's voice heard throughout this process, and we encourage you to be an active participant in the plan.

As we reflect back on 2012 and look forward to 2013, the staff at NRPC would like to thank you for your time, dedication, and support and wish you a very happy holiday season.

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

KERRIE DIERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ~ kerried@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x12

Tanya Reinert, Finance/HR Administrator ~ tanyar@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x10

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

Transportation Programs

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

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

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

Mark Connors ~ Regional Planner ~ markc@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240, x17

2015-2040 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CYCLE

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has initiated a comprehensive and cooperative planning approach to develop programming recommendations for the 2015-2018 Transportation improvement Program (TIP), the 2015-2024 Ten Year Plan and the outer years of the NRPC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This work is being conducted pursuant to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations (23 CFR Part 450), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations (49 CFR Part 613) and New Hampshire RSA 228:99 and RSA 240. NRPC will use a series Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC) meetings as well as public workshops and meetings with community officials to prioritize project recommendations for the region. This process will run through 2014 and culminate with the adoption of the 2015– 2018 TIP, and 2015-2040 MTP.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAMS

NRPC staff has been actively participating in several transportation safety initiatives over the last quarter. NRPC represents New Hampshire's Metropolitan Planning Organizations as a member of New Hampshire's Driving Toward Zero Deaths Coalition, whose mission is "to create a safety culture where even one roadway fatality is one too many." The NHDTZ Program aligns with the Toward Zero Deaths: A National Strategy on Highway Safety program that began in 2009 as a data-driven effort focusing on identifying and creating opportunities for changing American culture as it relates to highway safety. FMI: <http://www.nhdtz.com/>



As a member of the NHDTZ coalition, NRPC transportation planning staff worked on a collaborative effort to develop the 2012 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) update. The SHSP outlines strategies for meeting the goals of the NHDTZ program through a collaborative effort of public and private entities working to implement education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency management solutions. FMI: <http://www.nhdtz.com/resources/detail/18>

The NHDTZ coalition is hosting the 2013 Northeast Transportation Safety Conference to be held in Concord on April 3rd and 4th, 2013. NRPC staff will be facilitating a peer exchange session titled "State\Local Perspective on Data - What we have, what we are doing, and what we need" and Pelham's planning director, Jeff Gowan, will be presenting at the "Rural Roundabouts – Promotion and Design" session on the Context Sensitive Solutions approach used to develop and advance Pelham's dual roundabout project in the town's center. FMI: <http://www.nhdtz.com/news-events/event/39> .

EXIT 36S

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) in conjunction with the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) have begun work to assess the effectiveness of a south bound off-ramp at exit 36 on the F.E. Everett Turnpike, near the New Hampshire and Massachusetts border. The study will evaluate traffic flows and potential economic benefits to businesses in the area and will ultimately complete planning analyses in support of the development of a southbound off ramp on US Route 3 at Exit 36 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts. NRPC and NMCOG staff are currently collecting and analyzing traffic and land use data in the project area. A project steering committee meeting is anticipated in January to officially kick off the project.

The Exit 36 Southbound Planning Study has several desired outcomes that address traffic congestion, improve safety, provide opportunities for transit service and enhance economic development. The final product will be a planning study report which summarizes data collection efforts and analyzes traffic operations and impacts, transit system improvements, pedestrian and bicycling opportunities, and improvements to economic competitiveness. You can follow progress on this project at www.nashuarpc.org/exit36 and on facebook.com/PlanExit36 or twitter.com/PlanExit36



Land Use and Environmental Programs

Camille Pattison, Principal Planner ~ camillep@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x14

Jill Longval, Environmental Planner ~ jilll@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x27

Jennifer DiNovo, Regional Planner ~ jenniferd@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x25

Mary Brundage, Regional Planner ~ maryb@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x16

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER CONTINUITY ASSESSMENT

Over the course of the summer, NRPC conducted field assessments of 14 culverts in the communities of Nashua, Merrimack, Litchfield, and Hudson using the NH Stream Crossing Protocol. The data was then analyzed by NH Geological Survey's Geomorphic Compatibility Tool. Each culvert was assigned a score ranking it on a scale from "fully compatible" to "fully incompatible." These rankings provide guidance on the long-term ability of culverts to handle flow and sediment transport processes and their risk of failure. NRPC then depicted these results on a map and summarized them in an accompanying report. This information was presented to the Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee and will also be shared with each municipality. For more information, contact Jill Longval, jilll@nashuarpc.org.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

Six Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections were held during the 2012 season. Five of the events were located at the Nashua Public Works Garage and one was held in Milford. In 2012, a total of 1,280 households participated in the HHW collections. This was an increase from the 2011 total of 1,032 households. A total of 79,819 pounds of material was collected through the program this year alone. Participants brought an average of 64 pounds per household, which was down from 73 pounds per household in 2011. Paint continues to make up the largest volume of materials collected at 46%. The first collection of the 2013 season is Saturday, April 20, from 8:00AM-12:00PM at the Nashua Public Works Garage. For more information, visit www.nashuarpc.org/hhw.

NEW HAMPSHIRE BROADBAND MAPPING AND PLANNING PROGRAM (NHBMP)

At the end of each quarter of this 5 year program, NRPC is responsible for reporting on a variety of comprehensive tasks, whose goals at large are to understand where broadband is currently available in NH, how broadband can be made more widely available in the future, and how to encourage increased overall levels of broadband adoption and usage. This quarter's tasks have focused heavily on community education and outreach and include some of the following.



- NRPC has developed an overview brochure that communities can have on hand to use as an educational tool about broadband. The brochure is available on the NRPC website at http://www.nashuarpc.org/home_page/pdf/BBOverviewBrochure.pdf and we encourage Towns to post the brochure to their website.
- We have developed a sector-based online survey that has been distributed to many groups across the region in the Education, Health, Community Support/Government, Public Safety, and Business/Economic Development sectors. The survey specifically aims to identify how to better serve these

sectors and on what tools and training they might need. For more information on how to access the survey, please contact Mary Brundage at MaryB@nashuarpc.org.

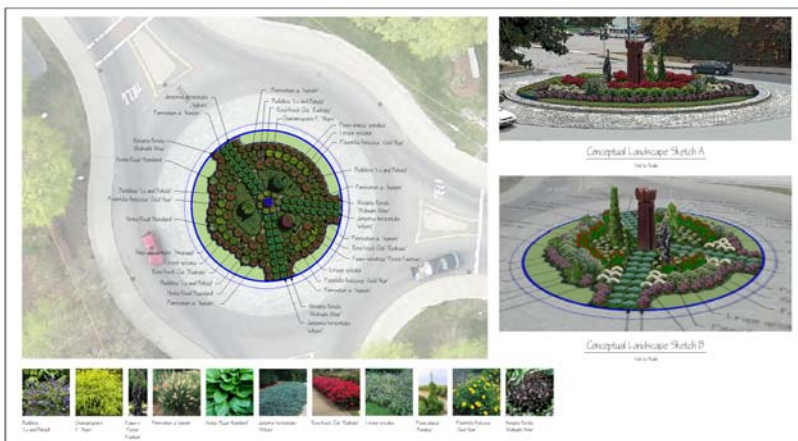
- NRPC has met with various Town Boards to provide an overview of the project, answer any questions, and to inform Towns on how their community can get involved. NRPC will be drafting a Regional Broadband Plan in 2013 and local input is a crucial step in the Plan's development.
- Carol Miller, Director of Broadband Technologies, from the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development provided a presentation to the Greater Nashua Region Stakeholder Group which included an update on investments in current infrastructure (including BTOP awards statewide), economic impacts, and state challenges regarding Broadband.

For more information on this project, please contact Jennifer DiNovo at JenniferD@nashuarpc.org.

MILFORD COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT

NRPC has been working with the Milford Office of Community Development and the Milford Planning Board on a Draft Regulatory Audit Report which will help determine the consistency of the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations with the adopted vision and goals of the 2012 Housing Chapter of the Milford Master Plan. On November 13, 2012, the team worked through a variety of housing topics including Conservation Subdivisions, housing affordability, the benefits and drawbacks to density bonuses, mixed-use development, accessory dwelling units, town water and sewer capacity, etc. NRPC will meet with the Planning Board in January to review the final draft of the Report. Community outreach is anticipated to occur during the beginning of 2013. For more information, contact Jennifer DiNovo, jenniferd@nashuarpc.org

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SERVICES FOR NASHUA ROUNDABOUT



As part of a highway beautification effort, NRPC provided the City of Nashua with landscape architectural services for the design of the Main Street Roundabout located near Rivier University and Hayward's Ice Cream.

Commonly, the modern roundabout is expected to be safe, functional, and attractive. However, the combination of these factors can sometimes be tricky. To

add visual interest, placing a tree here and shrub there may be considered, but it can't be just any tree or shrub. Planting something too tall may compromise safety. The placement of a shrub that is commonly used in a back yard may not be appropriate as it gets sprayed with winter salt from plow trucks and vehicles. With these points in mind, NRPC created a landscape design that aims to achieve year-round visual interest, is easily maintainable, and does not compromise safety.

Land Use and Environmental Programs

The main elements of the landscape design include three narrow and ornamental tree specimens that surround a sculpture located in the middle of the Roundabout. The tree specimens compliment the scale of the sculpture. A concentric pattern of shrubs with multi-color, texture, and seasonal interest surround the sculpture. All plants are easily maintainable and salt tolerant. A 3-D sketch of the roundabout was developed to communicate the landscape idea, using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe SketchUp. The Plan was prepared using AutoCad and was rendered in Photoshop. For more information on landscape architectural services for municipalities, contact Jennifer DiNovo, jenniferd@nashuarpc.org

PELHAM TOWN CENTER MIXED-USE OVERLAY

This fall, the Pelham Planning Board requested feedback from NRPC on draft language for a mixed use zoning overlay in the town center. The intent of the language is to provide flexibility in future development opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the traditional New England town center. NRPC staff reviewed the draft language and provided feedback to the Planning Board on the following topics: soil based zoning; table of permitted uses; education and outreach to the community; and design guidelines. NRPC staff can provide technical support to towns on updates to their Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Regulations. Please contact Camille Pattison at camillep@nashuarpc.org for additional information.

GRANITE STATE FUTURE STATEWIDE COORDINATION

As part of the regional planning program, Granite State Future, NRPC has been coordinating with the eight other regions in New Hampshire to share resources and collaborate on common elements in the planning process. This first phase of statewide collaboration is now nearing completion. As part of this effort, the nine regions have teamed together to staff a series of 23 meetings spread among the six Technical Advisory Subcommittees (TASC's). These meetings focused on collecting base data and research for each of the individual plan components to be developed by the regions. This preliminary research has been compiled into two draft reports including a "Statewide Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment" and a "Regional Plan Framework." Both reports are intended to establish a common foundation for the regional planning efforts as well as help ensure all nine regions are equally equipped with a suite of common resources.

NRPC has continued to serve as the staff lead for the Statewide Advisory Committee, which meets quarterly, and Executive Committee that meets monthly. The Advisory Committee has focused its efforts on refining the two draft reports noted above and in 2013 will dedicate time toward building support for the regional plans and facilitate a series of conversations intended to provide additional coordinated input into the regional plan process with a focus on implementation. The Executive Committee has identified tasks where the RPCs may share resources and strengthen the public input process – two products under development include a statewide survey using a scientific sample and an online public forum.

The Granite State Future website and blog are now complete. Guest blog articles are welcome and the intent is to provide an exchange of ideas and perspectives that may inform the regional planning process.

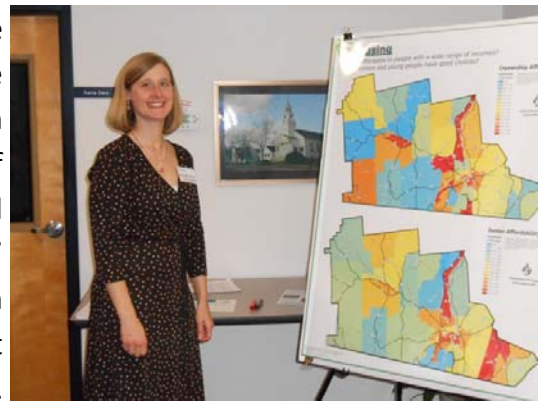


Land Use & Environmental Programs

As each of the RPCs now transition to plan development, and the initial statewide research phase wanes, the University of New Hampshire's NH Listens program has begun the process of conducting a series of 27 focus group sessions, three in each of the nine regions, with representatives of various communities of interest such as organizations that serve low income populations, veterans, seniors, disabled populations, minorities and others who do not usually participate in the planning process. In the spring of 2013 NH Listens will convene a series of general listening sessions across the state with at least one in each region. Stay tuned for an announcement of NRPC's scheduled listening session. For more information on the statewide coordination efforts please visit www.granitestatefuture.org or contact Jen Czyns at jenc@nashuarpc.org or 424-2240 x31.

NRPC REGIONAL PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

The NRPC's regional plan made significant steps forward in the fourth quarter of 2012. Among them was the completion of the first phase of public outreach and engagement, which began in the third quarter of 2012. The outreach consisted primarily of attending public events like Old Home Days, meeting with small groups, municipal officials, and distributing "listening boxes" around the region. NRPC staff administered a two-question survey asking the public for their opinions about what was best about their communities and what could make them better.



Nearly 800 responses were received from both our in-person outreach and comments collected from the Granite State Future website. Staff also gathered over 200 responses to a visual preference survey that was conducted around the region. NRPC staff is now analyzing the results.

With the completion of the first phase of outreach, focus has shifted to research and information gathering. Staff hosted an open house at the NRPC offices on November 29 featuring numerous posters that displayed the results of information collected so far, as well as preliminary results from outreach and information on next steps in the planning process. Approximately 40 guests attended representing the NRPC Commission, local boards, municipal staff, and members of the public.



Looking ahead to next quarter, the NRPC will begin holding workshops based on the subjects of each chapter that will be in the plan, such as transportation, economic development, housing, and the environment. Staff will present the existing conditions of each subject and engage in discussion with attendees about the future in the region.

For further information regarding the regional plan, please contact Jen Czyns at jenc@nashuarpc.org.

GIS Programs

Sara Siskavich, GIS Manager ~ saras@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x21

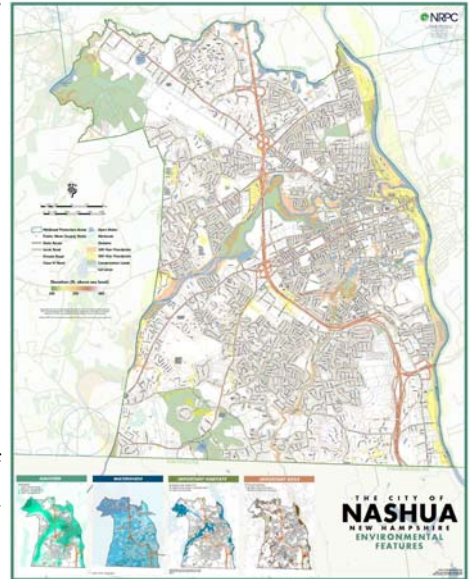
Ryan Friedman, Senior GIS Planner ~ ryanf@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x20

Matt Waitkins, Field Data Mgr./Transportation Planner ~ mattw@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x18

Joe Taranto, GIS Technician ~ joet@nashuarpc.org ~ 424-2240 x19

2012 UPDATE TO NRPC STANDARD MAPSETS

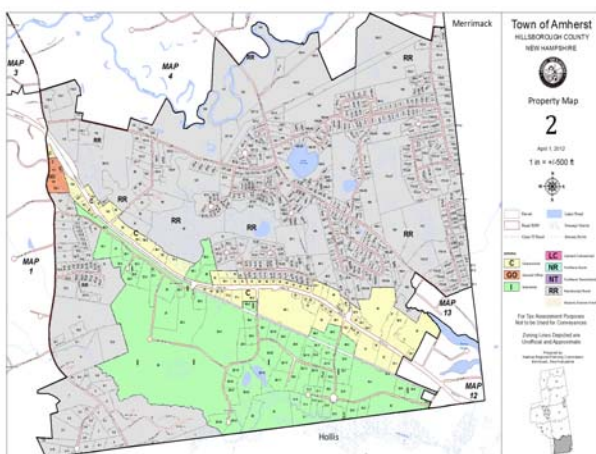
As a service to our member communities, NRPC maintains four poster-size thematic maps that display streets, zoning, land use, and environmental features respectively. NRPC has updated these maps with current 2012 data and has worked with communities to approve the map content. PDF versions of the new maps can be downloaded at: <http://www.nashuarpc.org/gis/mapsets.htm>. Hard copies will be mailed out to communities after the New Year.



RURAL ADDRESSING PROJECT

NRPC is coordinating the statewide collection of statewide rural address point locations to help characterize the availability of broadband services at the residential level. We are approximately 50% to our goal of mapping nearly 40,000 households in the State's rural census blocks by end of 2013. NRPC conducted a volunteer training session in mid-September to train volunteers in the use of handheld Garmin and iPad GPS technology used to collect data for the project. For anyone interested in GPS fieldwork experience and making a contribution to this landmark project, there are still opportunities to get involved in volunteer data collection in neighboring regional planning agencies areas.

TAX MAPPING FOR TOWN OF AMHERST, NH



NRPC maintains up-to-date parcel data in GIS format for our member communities. GIS parcels are a cost-effective way to create high quality tax maps. The Town of Amherst, NH has been working with GIS staff at NRPC to create modern tax maps from the NRPC GIS parcel database. The new tax maps for Amherst, NH will be posted online at <http://amherstnh.gov/town-maps/tax-maps/>. NRPC also maintains the official tax maps for Mont Vernon, NH using GIS technology. Other communities interested in cost-effective GIS tax mapping services are encouraged to get in touch with NRPC.