

Program Highlights

March 20, 2013



Nashua Regional Planning Commission ~ 9 Executive Park Drive, Suite 201, Merrimack, NH 03054 ~ Ph. 603-424-2240~ Fax. 603-424-2230~ www.nashuarpc.org

Community Assistance

This quarter's Program Highlights shows the broad spectrum of ways that NRPC serves the communities in the Nashua region. From regional-scale projects to local planning efforts, the staff at NRPC provides professional expertise on a wide range of subjects. Take a moment to read about our work on everything from highway transportation safety, to the study of Exit 36S, as well as Baboosic Lake water quality, Household Hazardous Waste Collections, Wilton Master Plan and other projects. Please contact our staff if you have any questions or want to know how we might be able to assist your community.

Transportation Policy

The NRPC Full Commission serves as the policy making body for the region. Over the coming year, NRPC Commissioners will be asked to vote on a number of policies, priorities, visions and strategies. The first instance of this will take place March 20, when the Commission considers the transportation project priorities that will be forwarded to the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for inclusion in the Ten Year Plan. The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) has spent significant time in the past few months developing scoring criteria, reviewing and scoring each project, and determining the ranking that they recommend the Full Commission adopt.

A new element in the Ten Year Plan process is that NHDOT will be using a software package called Decision Lens which will score and compare NRPC projects against all other projects in the state using one set of consistent criteria. The end product from the software package will inform the Ten Year Plan project selection decisions made by NHDOT. This process is expected to greatly increase the transparency of the project selection process.

By adopting a prioritized project ranking, NRPC is sending a message to NHDOT and the state about what the needs are in the region and the projects that we feel best address those needs.

Mark your Calendar!

How can we make the Nashua region the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone? Share your thoughts on **Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at the Nashua Senior Center, 70 Temple Street, Nashua, from 6-9 PM.** This is an excellent opportunity to bring friends, family and those opinionated neighbors to voice their concerns and desires for the future.

Kerrie Diers, Executive Director

ADMINISTRATION

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Transportation Programs

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). Over the last quarter work has focused on developing and implementing criteria to establish project priorities for the 2015-2024 Ten Year Plan. This work is being conducted with NHDOT to ensure a consistent statewide approach to prioritizing needs.

NRPC and NHDOT developed project scoring method based on seven evaluation categories and twenty criteria within those categories. The evaluation categories and criteria were weighted by the TTAC Committee members with input from local communities. The existing regional projects (from current transportation plans) were confirmed and scored by a subcommittee. A preliminary project ranking is to was approved at the March 13 TTAC meeting for consideration by the full NRPC commission.

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.

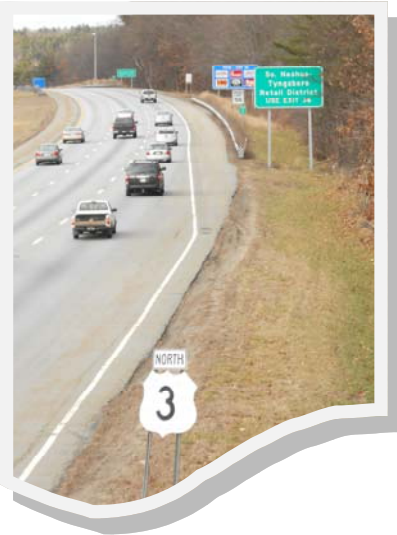
FMI: <http://www.nhdtz.com/resources/detail/18>



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.



Staff has completed the existing conditions traffic analysis. Next steps include developing the future conditions traffic analysis and as well as the existing and future conditions land use analysis.

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

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Land Use and Environmental Programs

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Over the past year, NRPC staff worked to update the Litchfield and Nashua Hazard Mitigation Plans. Both of these Plans were originally approved in 2006. Hazard mitigation plans identify critical facilities and areas of concern throughout the municipality, analyze potential hazards and risks to these facilities, and prioritize mitigation measures to address the hazards. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 encourages natural disaster planning to reduce property damage costs and injuries. Completion of a Hazard Mitigation Plan and participation in the National Flood Insurance Program enables a community to apply for fully funded hazard mitigation grants. NRPC staff met with the Litchfield and Nashua Hazard Mitigation Teams for a series of 4 meetings in order to prepare each Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Both Plans were submitted to FEMA for approval in February.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM



The first Household Hazardous Waste collection of 2013 will be held on Saturday April 20 from 8:00AM to 12:00PM at the Nashua Public Works Garage, 9 Stadium Drive, Nashua. Residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Windham are welcome to attend. There is a \$10 user fee per vehicle, which covers up to 10 gallons or 20 pounds of waste. Residents who bring more than this amount will be charged accordingly to help offset the additional costs. A variety of common household hazardous waste (HHW) products are accepted at the collection events, including non-latex paints, solvents, oven cleaners, pool chemicals, pesticides, drain openers, and auto chemicals. Electronics are also collected at all HHW events. For a complete list of accepted items and the entire 2013 collection schedule, visit www.nashuarpc.org/hhw or call 603-424-2240.

NEW HAMPSHIRE BROADBAND MAPPING AND PLANNING PROGRAM (NHBMPP)

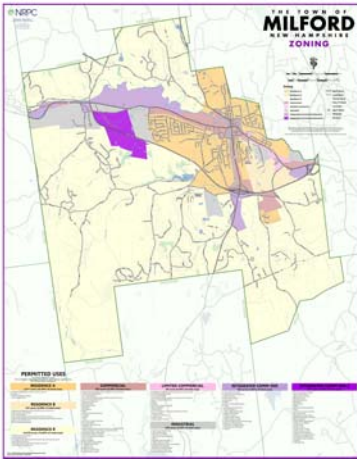
The NRPC Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) has compiled a Broadband Barriers and Needs list for the Nashua Region. A few examples of barriers and needs include precision of broadband availability data, lack of broadband service, cost to expand fiber lines, and choice in service provider. Of the barriers and needs, the BSG identified precision of data and expanding broadband access as the top challenges in the region. As part of the planning effort, NRPC visited 5 communities and attended the Souhegan Chamber of Commerce Tech Fair to discuss the goals and details of the project,



available resources, and to encourage citizens and businesses to take the Broadband Survey and Speed Test (http://www.iwantbroadbandnh.org/speed_test). The more the survey and speed test that are taken, the more precise the data in our region will become, which translates into an understanding of what our region needs as far as broadband access.

Land Use & Environmental Programs

(NHBMPP continued) A sector-based online and in-person survey was distributed to many groups across the region in the Education, Health, Community Support/Government, Public Safety, and Business/Economic Development sectors. The survey specifically aimed to identify how to better serve these sectors and to understand what tools and training the sectors might need. With the information and feedback collected in 2012, NRPC will be drafting a Regional Broadband Plan. Local input is a crucial step in the Plan's development. For more information on this project, please contact Mary Brundage at maryb@nashuarpc.org



MILFORD COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT

In February, 2013 NRPC completed a Regulatory Audit Report to 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. The top 2 recommendations that resulted from the report were 1) to modify Article 6.04.0 Open Space and Conservation District to allow flexible zoning standards for all types of housing development, by relieving development from rigid zoning requirements in exchange for high standards of open space, building design, etc. and 2) perform an overhaul of Article 7.07.0 Senior Housing Development to reflect current housing goals.

As a result of the audit, the Town of Milford applied for a Round 2 NH Community Planning Grant "to transform the Town's current Open Space and Conservation overlay district, which guides residential development for five or more acres, into a 'residential cluster regulation' that fully incorporates Master Plan goals. In March, the grant was awarded. It is anticipated that the rewrite will utilize tools allowing for inclusionary zoning, development incentives, flexible techniques, and possible fast track permitting. The new regulation will attempt to be designed to be applicable to each specific zoning district in Town, including those districts which currently limit or not allow any residential development at all. The development of the regulations is anticipated to move quickly. Public outreach is anticipated for the end of the year and approval of the zoning change is anticipated to occur in March 2014. For more information, contact Jennifer DiNovo, jenniferd@nashuarpc.org

WILTON MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Over the course of 2013, NRPC will be working with the Town of Wilton to update the Vision and Land Use Chapters of their Master Plan. As part of the visioning process, a Town wide Community Survey was distributed at the end of 2012 and January of 2013. Additionally, a Community Visioning Workshop will be held on Tuesday, May 7th to collect additional information, which will assist in developing the Vision Chapter.



Land Use and Environmental Programs

BABOOSIC LAKE “SOAK UP THE RAIN” PILOT PROJECT

In New Hampshire, 83 percent of pollution of surface water bodies is directly attributable to stormwater runoff. Any rain or snowmelt that is not absorbed directly into the ground, intercepted by vegetation or evaporated flows directly into our lakes, rivers, streams and other water bodies. As runoff flows over roadways and other surfaces, it accumulates pollutants from motor oils, fertilizers, animal waste and any other substances it encounters before flowing in to water bodies.

In our region, Baboosic Lake, a 228 acre lake on the Amherst and Merrimack border, is a scenic and popular recreation area. However, the lake has long battled stormwater-related pollution in the form of cyanobacteria and excess algal growth. This summer, the Nashua Regional Planning Commission, working in partnership with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) and the Lake Baboosic Association, will be conducting a “Soak Up the Rain” pilot program on Baboosic Lake. As part of the program, an interested property owner will be identified and volunteers will implement stormwater management practices on the property to capture rainwater before it reaches the lake. Additionally, workshops will be held offering guidance and training on “Soak Up the Rain” implementation to other property owners in an effort to continue the program at other locations around the lake.



Lake Baboosic (Image courtesy Amherst Recreation Dept.)

In the coming months, NRPC, working in partnership with NH DES and the Towns of Amherst and Merrimack, will also begin work on drafting a Water Quality Response Plan for Baboosic Lake outlining best management practices to limit stormwater flow into the lake. Water Quality Response Plans will become mandatory for most NRPC member communities under new EPA stormwater requirements expected to take effect next year. The plan will include guidance to municipal officials and serve as a template as they begin to draft their own Water Quality Response Plans. For more information on this project, or the Lake Baboosic “Soak Up the Rain” pilot program, contact Mark Connors at markc@nashuarpc.org.

NRPC REGIONAL PLAN AND GRANITE STATE FUTURE STATEWIDE

The NRPC developed several new resources and public engagement tools during the first quarter, along with launching a series of topical regional plan workshops and listening sessions. Highlights include:

Regional Plan Outreach Report and Strategy

After tallying close to 800 responses from various Old Home Days, Fall Festivals and other community events over the fall of 2012, NRPC staff have completed an outreach summary. This report is available on NRPC's Granite State Future webpage: <http://www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/>

We gathered comment cards from these events asking "What do you like best about this area?" and "What could make this area even better?" The major themes discovered included rural character, economic vitality and transportation choices. Using this input, the process is heading into the next phase of planning. A Regional Advisory Subcommittee will oversee the regional planning process and assist in outreach. In addition, subcommittees are being formed in four different topic areas (Transportation, Housing, Community & Economic Vitality, and Natural Resources). Each topic committee will start with a 2-3 hour workshop that examines existing trends and conditions, existing resources, existing plans and policies, and public input gathered to date. Discussion will then begin on what this information means for our communities. The committees will continue to examine strengths and challenges in this topic and what additional information needed and who else should NRPC be talking to.

Launch of the New Regional Online Forum

Have an idea to share? Or, did you miss us at one of our events but still want to give input on what you like best about the region or what could be better? Through the online forum participants can pinpoint a specific location on the interactive map and talk about what they love about it or what could make it better. Input can also be entered about a particular topic like housing or jobs and the economy. Visit the forum at: nashua.granitestatefuture.org.

Transportation Workshop



The Nashua Regional Planning Commission conducted its' first in a series of workshops on February 12, 2013 with the focus on transportation. Sixteen people attended the workshop including Town Planners, NRPC Commissioners, representatives from the NH Department of Transportation and NH Department of Environmental Services, and the members of the Regional Advisory Subcommittee. The major subthemes examined were mobility, quality of life, and system sustainability. The results of this workshop are available now [online](http://www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/) on the Granite

State Future website (<http://www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/>).

Land Use and Environmental Programs

NRPC's regional plan has several upcoming events planned for the next quarter including:

Housing Workshop

The NRPC is hosting a Housing Workshop on Friday, March 29, 2013 from 11:30AM - 3:00PM as the second in the upcoming series of topical workshops. The workshop will feature an educational session, including guest speakers from NH Housing who will review NH's Workforce Housing Statutes. NRPC staff will seek input from attendees who will be asked to share their ideas for more diverse housing options that are affordable and adaptable to current and future needs. Discussion topics will be focused on existing housing supply and demand, affordability and access to opportunity.

Regional Listening Session Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at the Nashua Senior Center, 6-9 PM.

The listening session asks *"How can we make our region the best place to live, learn, work, and play for everyone?"* We have asked UNH Cooperative Extension and NH Listens to design and host an opportunity for *neighbors to talk with neighbors* to identify local assets, local needs, and ways to effectively use limited government resources. On-site childcare will be available. *All perspectives are welcome and we hope you will join us!* Several of these conversations will be taking place statewide. To register or for additional event dates and locations go to: <http://granitestatefuture.org/>

My Granite State Future Blog

NRPC staff have been coordinating the My Granite State Future blog as part of its statewide project management role. Blog articles include great ideas and opportunities for collaboration. [My Granite State Future](#) strives to provide an exchange of ideas by regional planning commissions and the many project partners. Contact [Jen Czysz](#) at Nashua Regional Planning Commission to post a blog article. (<http://www.granitestatefuture.org/get-involved/blog/>)

Regional Plan Framework

Staff from all nine RPC in collaboration with Granite State Future's six Technical Advisory Subcommittees and Advisory Committee, have completed the Regional Plan Framework that is now available online with an appendix of all compiled research. The Framework outlines the basics of regional plans and compiles the many resources and considerations for plans using an integrated planning approach. This new resource provides a jump start for not only regional planners but local communities looking to update their master plans. The Framework can be downloaded at: <http://www.granitestatefuture.org/our-plans/>.



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Regional Housing Workshop March 29th, 2013

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is hosting a Housing Workshop in support of the Regional Plan. The workshop will feature an educational session, including guest speakers from NH Housing who will review NH's Workforce Housing Statutes. NRPC staff will seek input from attendees who will be asked to share their ideas for more diverse housing options that are affordable and adaptable to current and future needs. Discussion topics will be focused on existing housing supply and demand, affordability and access to opportunity. Your input is greatly valued and we hope to see you at the event!

Lunch will be served and attendees must RSVP by March 22nd to Karen Baker at karenb@nashuarpc.org or at 603-424-2240, ext. 11. **Space is limited.**

NRPC Office, 9 Executive Park Drive, Merrimack NH

Directions to the NRPC Office: <http://www.nashuarpc.org/aboutnrpc/directions.htm>



Regional Housing Workshop

Developing a long term vision for housing in the Nashua Region

MARCH 29, 2013 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch Served

NRPC Offices, 9 Executive Park Dr., Suite 201, Merrimack, N.H.

Supply and Demand

Affordability

Access to Opportunity

Does our region offer the type of housing we want and need?

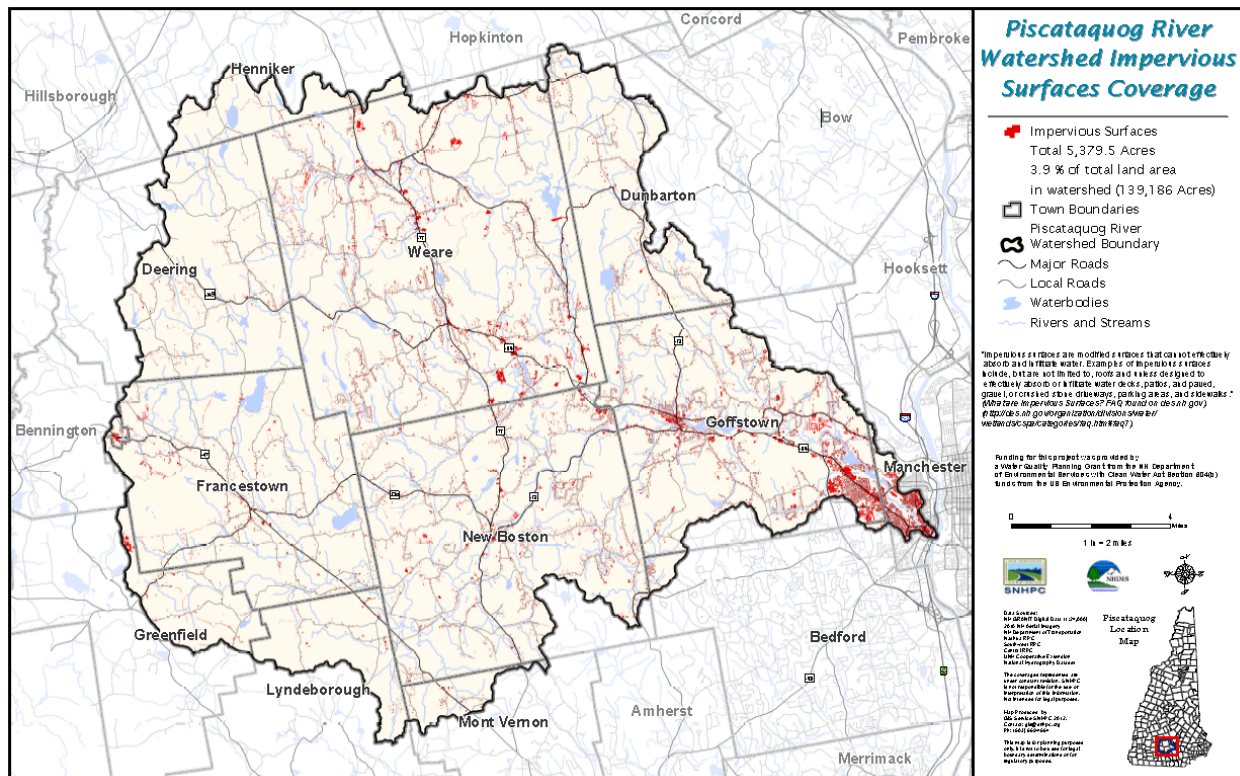
Please come share your ideas for what the region needs. Are our housing options affordable, accessible to community and natural resources, and adaptable to current and future needs?

Space is limited. Please RSVP to Karen Baker at KarenB@nashuarpc.org or (603) 424-2240, ext. 11 by March 22.



PISCATAQUOG RIVER WATERSHED IMPERVIOUS SURFACE MAPPING

Impervious surfaces are those through which water cannot penetrate, and include roadways, parking lots, rooftops, paved driveways, and other paved surfaces. Accurate impervious surface characterization supports environmental impact analysis and storm water management, however accurate and timely GIS data on impervious surfaces is not uniformly available in all areas of the state.



NRPC partnered with New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES), UNH Complex Systems, and the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) to generate, for the first time, a comprehensive and accurate impervious surface coverage map of the Piscataquog Watershed. UNH conducted the initial identification of impervious surfaces through automated image processing techniques; NRPC subsequently reviewed and refined the data in our region from visual inspection and interpretation of aerial imagery.

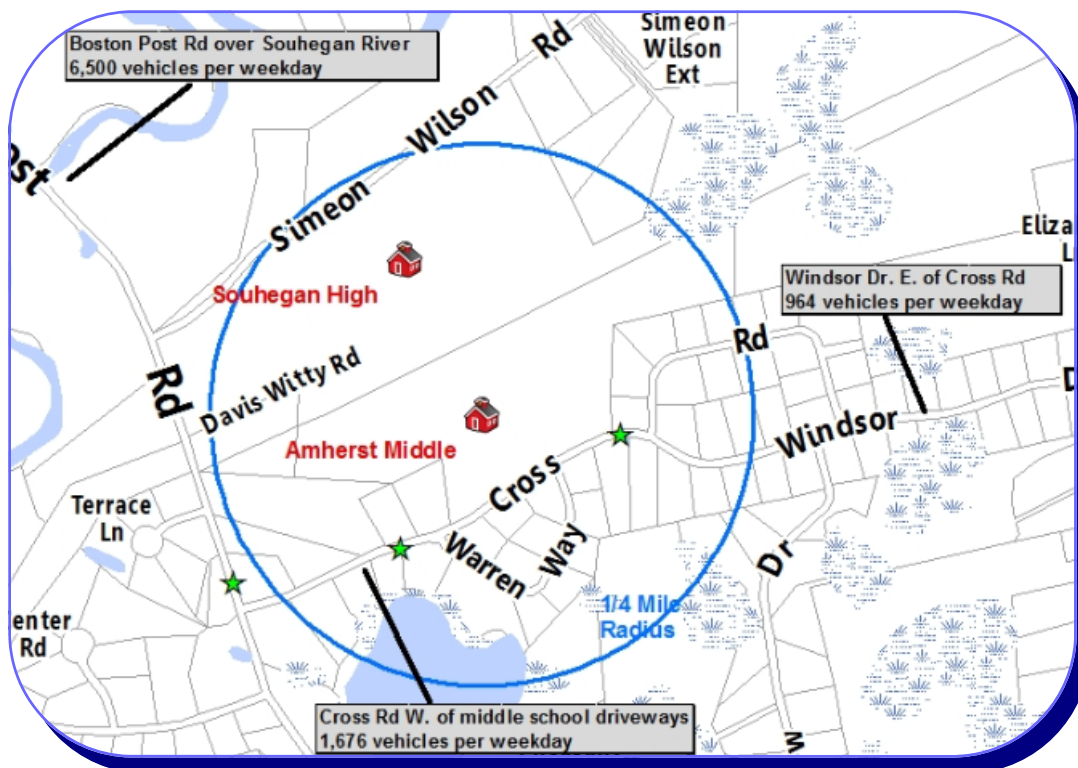
NRPC made presentations to the Planning Boards of Lyndeborough and Mont Vernon to publicize the project. NRPC displayed the maps and discussed a factsheet authored by SNHPC which described the purpose of the maps, the associated benefits, mapping methodology, and their potential uses. Both Boards acknowledged receipt of the map products and indicated their acceptance of the maps as technical information to support the community planning work.

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. NRPC continues to make steady progress toward the goal of mapping nearly 40,000 households in the State's rural census blocks by end of 2013. As of March 1st, staff and volunteers at all nine of New Hampshire's regional planning commissions have collected and submitted nearly 24,000 address points; in the Nashua region, 1,416 points have been mapped, representing virtually 100% of the expected total based on 2010 Census data.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

NRPC is using GIS to support the Safe Routes to School planning process. These travel plans provide a blueprint for how to encourage more children to bike or walk to school. In GIS, traffic volume and speed data is combined with other data such as sidewalk location, sidewalk quality, and availability of pedestrian amenities such as crosswalks to inform safety perceptions and recommendations on transportation infrastructure improvements. NRPC has been facilitating the Safe Routes to School planning process for the Town of Amherst and will be conducting a similar analysis for the Town of Merrimack.



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