

Program Highlights

March 19, 2014



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The beginning of Spring signals nature's renewal. Here at NRPC, staff has spent the winter preparing for a renewal of our own. In each of our core programs, we have acquired new technology and software to enhance the services we offer our member communities.

The Transportation Program has been implementing a couple of new services. Synchro software enables NRPC transportation planners to help communities run simulations of intersections and roadways to understand effects of proposed changes. See the Amherst Middle Street Traffic Study report on page 2 for more details. In addition, we are putting the finishing touches on our new regional travel demand model that will have better capabilities than our current model with more refined data results. Stay tuned for more details.

The Land Use/ Environment Program (as well as GIS) has been learning the capabilities of the new Community Viz software. We are using at the regional level for our buildout analysis (see page 11) and are making it available for local planners and boards who want to use this software at the community or site level. The software has a number of features that are well suited to local master planning and site development.

The GIS Program has acquired a new GPS unit that ensures the accuracy of data mapping and will definitely benefit our on-going trail mapping and other projects. In addition, Live Maps has launched and NRPC staff is offering demonstration sessions for community staff and board members to learn about the great features that this tool has to offer (see page 9).

Finally, NRPC will soon be launching our new website. The site is intuitive to navigate and information is easier to find. It promotes understanding about NRPC: our mission, our services, and the value we provide. It has a wealth of data resources presented in a modern, creative, and interactive manner to meet the evolving expectations of our communities. Additionally, for each of our functional areas, Transportation, Land Use Planning, GIS, and Environment, there are pages that summarize our service offerings with illustrative work examples. There is now a focus on interactive web apps including our new Document Library and Live Maps, and an emphasis on social media, including real-time integration with our Facebook newsfeed and links to Twitter (don't forget to 'Like' and 'Follow' NRPC!).

We look forward to working with you in your communities with our new tools!

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Transportation Programs



EXIT 36S

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) and the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) are continuing 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 a planning

analyses in support of the development of a southbound off ramp on US Route 3 at Exit 36 in Tyngsborough, Massachusetts.

The [draft Existing Conditions Report](#) has been released and comments are currently being taken. An RFQ was issued in January to develop a pre-engineering cost estimate for a new southbound off-ramp at Exit 36. The Future Conditions Report, Recommendations and a Cost Estimate are currently under development and will be released this Spring.

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.

AMHERST MIDDLE STREET TRAFFIC STUDY

At the request of the Town of Amherst, NRPC has recently completed an assessment that examines the impact of closing a portion of Middle Street in Amherst Village to traffic. The Town has observed vehicles heading west on Amherst Road (NH Route 122) that use Middle Street as a "cut through" to avoid the signalized intersection at Boston Post Road and Amherst Road. Middle Street bisects the pedestrian friendly Village Green, and the cut through traffic has raised safety concerns. The study assessed the potential impacts of closing the 200± foot section of Middle Street between Main Street and School Street on the roads and intersections in the immediate vicinity.

The study indicated there would be a negligible increase in delay at the intersections along Boston Post Road, where through traffic from Middle Street and turning traffic from School Street and Middle Street was redistributed. No intersections showed a decrease in Level of Service. The final report concluded that there was no significant degradation to traffic nor any appreciable improvements to pedestrian safety. The report was presented to the Amherst Board of Selectmen. NRPC staff is continuing to work with Town staff to identify potential improvements to pedestrian amenities in the Middle Street area.



REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING

The **2005 NRPC Regional Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan** provides guidance for the planning, development, and implementation of safe, usable facilities for non-motorized transportation in the Nashua region. The Plan seeks to integrate bicycle, pedestrian and other non-motorized modes of travel into the regional transportation system.

A workgroup that includes NRPC staff and regional stakeholders has begun a review of the goals and objectives of the Regional Plan. The purpose of the review is to reaffirm the goals and objectives of the Plan and to identify action steps, partners, required resources, and an implementation timeline. The product of the review will be an updated Regional Plan and associated Action Plan. The workgroup has made good progress this winter and should complete its work by late spring. Implementation of the Action Plan will begin this summer.

New members of the workgroup are always encouraged and welcome.

BROOKLINE ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is a formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent Audit Team. The Audit Team is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders representing multiple disciplines and may include local officials such as police and fire chiefs, business and land owners adjacent to the site, NHDOT engineering staff, and a facilitator to conduct the RSA.



The Brookline RSA is cooperative effort between NRPC, the Town of Brookline and NHDOT. The subject of this effort is the intersection of NH130, NH13, and Quimby Road. The reason for requesting this RSA is because there have been 5 motor vehicle accidents in the past calendar year at this intersection that have resulted in one fatality and two injuries. Citizens of Brookline have expressed increasing concern about this intersection.

NRPC developed supporting information for this project and attended the RSA meeting in Brookline in early March. The next step in the process is for NHDOT to prepare a report with recommendations for improving the intersection. NRPC will provide the necessary technical assistance as the report is developed. It is anticipated that a draft report will be completed sometime in April and final report over the summer.

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Land Use and Environmental Programs

FLUVIAL EROSION AND HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING



NRPC staff is currently working with Amherst, Lyndeborough, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, and Wilton to update their Hazard Mitigation Plans. Hazard mitigation plans identify critical facilities and areas of concern throughout the municipality, analyze potential natural hazards and risks to these facilities, and prioritize mitigation measures to address the hazards. In addition, these updates will include data obtained by the NH Department of Environmental Services' Fluvial Erosion Hazard Program. Under this program, data is being collected in the Souhegan and Piscataquog River watersheds

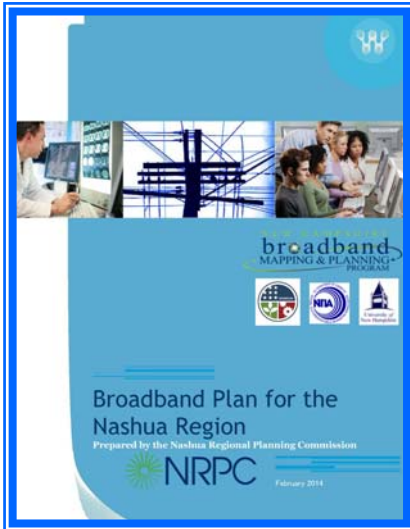
that will identify areas prone to river and stream erosion that can impact public health and safety. For more information, please contact Jill Longval, jillL@nashuarpc.org or 424-2240 x27.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

The first collection of 2014 will be held on Saturday April 19 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. As a reminder, latex paint is not accepted at collection events; instead it should be dried out and disposed of at your local landfill or transfer station. For a complete list of accepted items and the 2014 schedule, visit www.nashuarpc.org/hhw or call 603-424-2240.





NEW HAMPSHIRE BROADBAND MAPPING AND PLANNING PROGRAM (NHBMP)

Our dedicated Broadband Stakeholder Group has played a crucial role in guiding the overall development of a Broadband Plan for the Nashua Region. The [draft Broadband Plan for the Nashua Region](#) has been released for public comment. All comments will be incorporated and final adoption is anticipated in early summer of 2014. For more information on this project, please contact Camille Martineau at camillem@nashuarpc.org.

MILFORD COMMUNITY PLANNING SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT

In 2013, NRPC worked with the Town of Milford Community Development Staff, project committee, and the Planning Board on revising the existing Open Space and Conservation District regulation (OSCD), Article 6.04. The Milford Community Development Staff and the Planning Board will continue to work on Article 6.04 as a top priority in 2014. In conjunction with Article 6.04, NRPC will be working with Milford on a Town-wide pedestrian, bicycle, trail and recreation connectivity plan that will serve as a guide for prioritization and implementation of future pedestrian and bicycle paths, trails and corridors, and locations where connectivity is needed to provide safe and reasonable access to existing and future areas to live, work and play within the community. The Connectivity Plan will serve as a reference for the Town of Milford's regulating boards and commissions and/or those who wish to propose a plan under a proposed zoning change, known as Innovative Residential Design and Development Standards (IRDDS). The Connectivity Plan will be included in the IRDDS to encourage enhancements at locations in Milford that are identified as priorities for building and supporting connections.



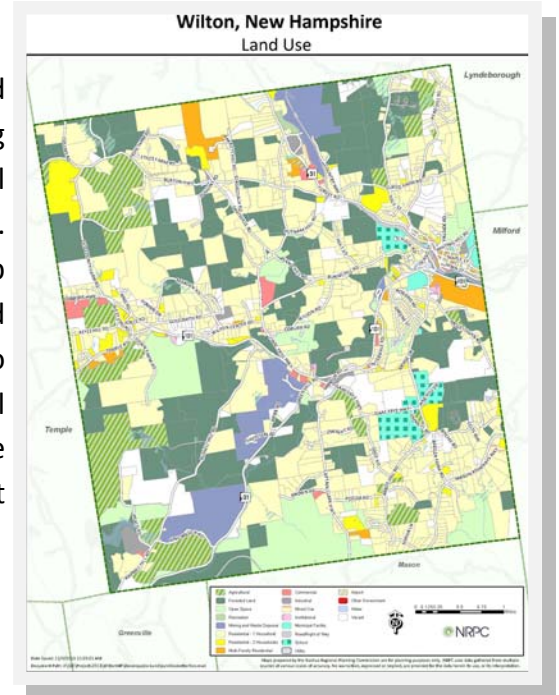
LITCHFIELD COMMUNITY PLANNING GRANT

NRPC wrapped up work this winter with the Town of Litchfield Planning Board to develop strategies to protect the Town's agricultural character and support opportunities for economic development. Using input from the town's many outreach events and hearings, the Litchfield Planning Board presented to the voters amendments to the town's non-residential zoning districts that updates the Town's commercial and industrial zoning districts to align with current development patterns and the community's vision for the future. The Board plans to continue work to revise regulations and zoning to promote the preservation of rural character. For more information, contact Jen Cysz, jenc@nashuarpc.org.

Land Use and Environmental Programs

WILTON MASTER PLAN UPDATE

In the spring of 2013, NRPC and the Wilton Planning Board heard from the community regarding their thoughts on the existing strengths, issues and challenges facing the Town, and local needs and recommendations to be included in the Master Plan. In the summer and fall, NRPC worked with the Board to develop the Vision Chapter. Currently, NRPC is working with the Board on updating Wilton's Land Use Chapter. Both are anticipated to be adopted around May 2014. The new Land Use update will include a vision for land use, an analysis of existing land use patterns, land use constraints, potential development opportunities, and key topics and recommendations.



BABOOSIC LAKE WATERSHED UPDATE PLAN

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 storm-water-related pollution in the form of cyanobacteria and excess algal growth.

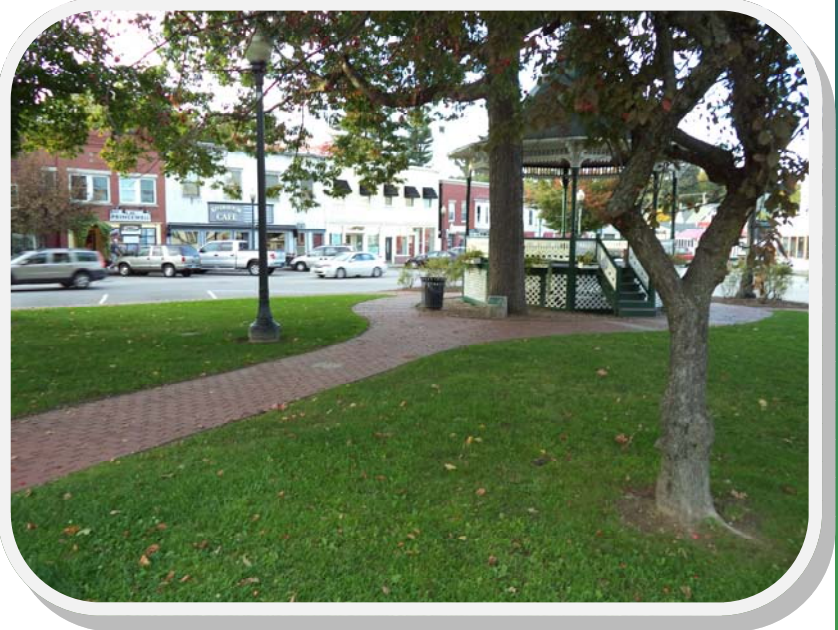
In the coming months, NRPC, working in partnership with NHDES and the Towns of Amherst and Merrimack, is drafting an update to the Baboosic Lake Watershed Plan outlining best management practices to limit stormwater flow into the lake. Currently, Baboosic Lake has a Watershed Management Plan, however, it is in need of updating as many projects have been completed by the Baboosic Lake Association and the Towns of Amherst and Merrimack. The completed projects have already reduced stormwater and phosphorus loading into the lake reducing the impacts to water quality. For more information on this project, contact Kim Goddu at king@nashuarpc.org.

MILFORD HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) strives for planning that is innovative, inclusive, technically sound, and driven by public participation. These goals are consistent with the goals and outcomes of health impact assessments. What is a Health Impact Assessment (HIA)? An HIA is a systematic process that uses an array of data sources and analytic methods and considers input from stakeholders to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program, or project on the health of a population and the distribution of the effects within the population. HIA provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects.

The Town of Milford, NH will implement the top recommendation that resulted from a regulatory audit conducted on its Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations as part of the Round One New Hampshire Community Planning Grant. The new changes would modify the Open Space and Conservation District to incorporate density bonuses to achieve the Master Plan goals for inclusionary, multigenerational, and affordable housing choice and design; conservation and open space; transportation and mobility; infrastructure and services; and neighborhood character and livability with criteria specific to each of the Town's eight primary zoning districts.

The HIA reviewed the proposed density bonuses and provided recommendations to enhance the proposed density bonuses and reported out the impacts on six identified health areas: opportunities for social cohesion, impacts to water quality, exposure to air pollutants, safety from crime, traffic safety, and housing affordability. The current draft is available for viewing by contacting the Town of Milford or Kim Goddu at (603) 424-2240x29 or kimg@nashuarpc.org.



Land Use and Environmental Programs

NRPC REGIONAL PLAN AND GRANITE STATE FUTURE STATEWIDE

The regional plan is moving into the drafting phase at this time. Chapters are coming together and the subcommittees met during January and February provide input and guidance on the initial development of the chapters' vision, goals and strategies. You can view the full chapter outlines online at www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/documents/.

During February and March NRPC held sub-regional meetings with planning boards to discuss the data and input we have received so far, and to get their thoughts about the future of the region. Presentations highlighted an updated regional build out analysis that looks at current conditions, what development we expect to see in 2040, and what the region might look like at complete build out. The discussion focused on topics such as: Is the build out in line with board expectations for future development? Are there assumptions the board has for future growth/development that we should look at? What are some future growth trends you would like NRPC to test? What indicators would be valuable to the town to understand the impacts of growth on the region/town in the future? The presentation and draft build out analysis results are available online at: www.granitestatefuture.org/regions/nashua-region/missed-meeting/. (See the GIS updates section for additional details)

For more information or general questions on regional plan progress please contact Jennifer Czysz at jenc@nashuarpc.org or Camille Martineau at camillem@nashuarpc.org.

Statewide Coordination

NRPC staff continued to lead the collaborative efforts with the 8 other Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire. This winter NRPC staff coordinated and hosted monthly staff meetings designed to provide the nine regions an opportunity to share ideas and provide continued technical assistance toward draft development. Additionally, NRPC staff met with state partners to develop an approach for the final year of statewide coordination where in NRPC will prepare a Statewide Snapshot with input from the Statewide Advisory Committee and Technical Assistance Subcommittees.



If you are interested in learning more, want to get involved or want more information on the Regional Plan, please contact Jen Czysz at JenC@nashuarpc.org.

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NRPC'S LIVE MAPS APP HAS LAUNCHED

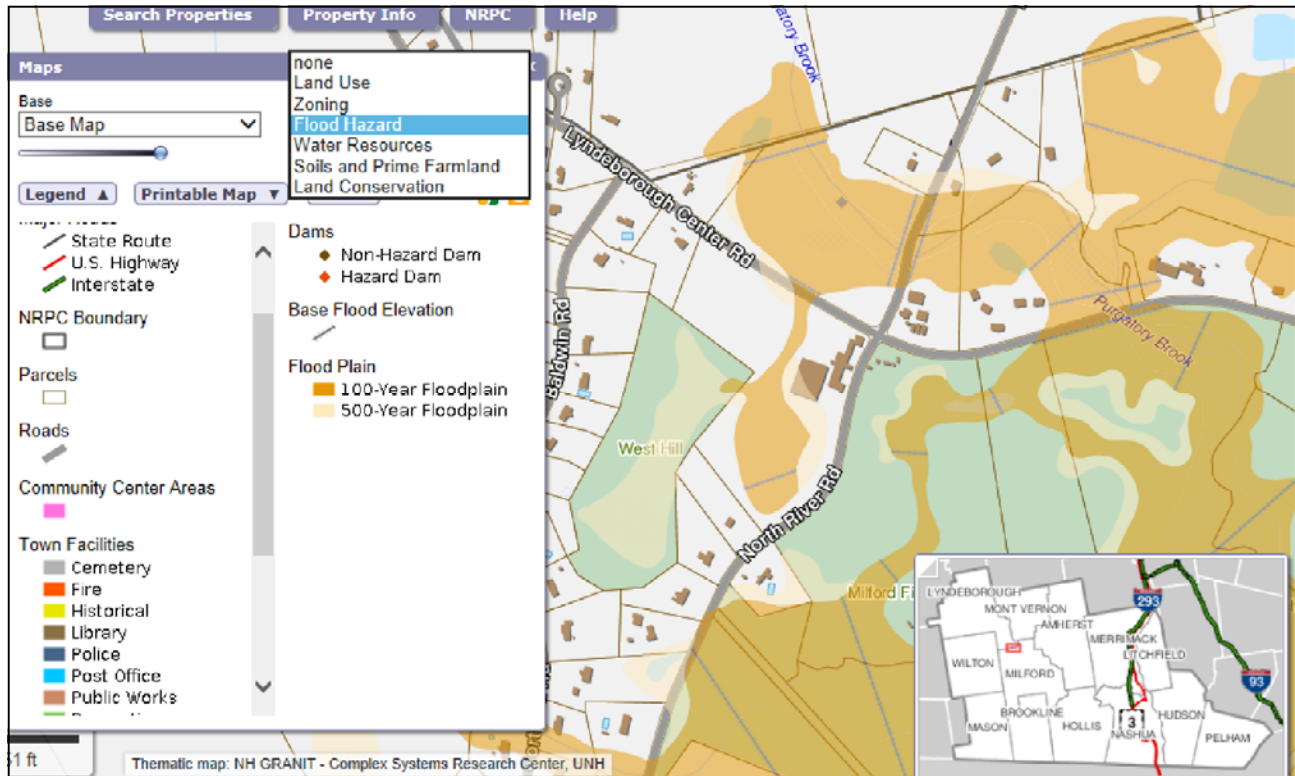
NRPC has launched MapGeo, our GIS Live Maps application.

It features the NRPC regional GIS database including parcels, road inventory, zoning, and landuse for our thirteen communities as well as NHDOT aerial imagery and regional

thematic overlays from NH Granit including water resources, flood hazard, soils, and conserved lands. The site also features integrations with Vision Appraisal, Patriot WebPro, Google Street View, and Bing Bird's Eye aerials.



www.mapgeo.com/nrpcnh



MapGeo February Statistics

- Total Visitors: 714
- Peak number of visitors on any one day: 101
- Average page views per visitor: 38
- Average visitors per day: 25
- Average time spent on the site: 13:39

“Just wanted to let you know that our Assessor is extremely happy with the MapGeo; he wishes we had it years ago.”

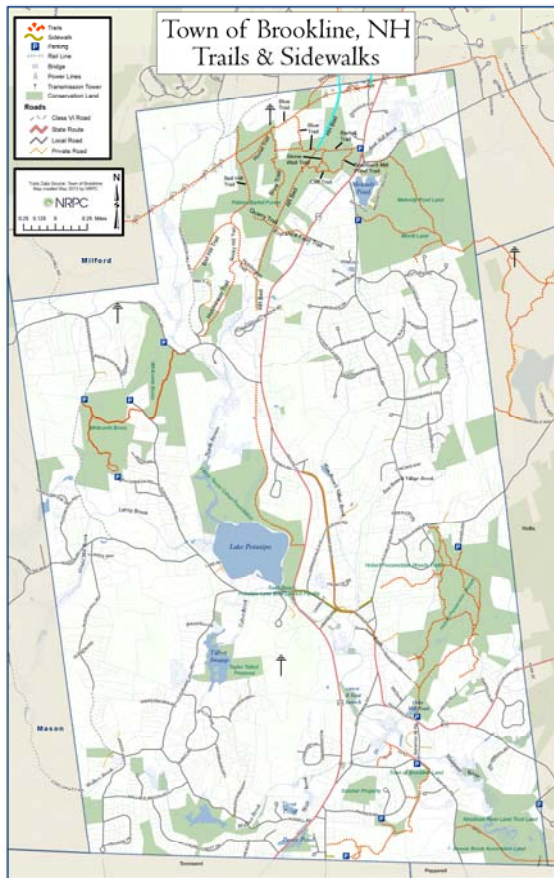
“This is great! I'm happy to have this as a resource for news in the Nashua area.”

“I can vouch for the (former) pain of skipping among three websites and a database just to figure out who owns land of interest adjacent to our conservation parcels...we hope to make serious use of MapGeo.”

“MapGeo won't eliminate the need for shapefiles that detail other aspects of the land...but I admit that it's going to save me time...MapGeo gave me a nine-member abutter list in the time it previously took me to track down each list member--A superb resource!”

“This is a very cool tool!”

NRPC is now arranging a series of **demonstration sessions** onsite in our communities. The sessions will be geared towards town staff and board members. We will walk through the typical workflow of querying an address, identifying property characteristics, toggling between various basemaps, using thematic overlays, bookmarking the extent, pulling up various integrated resources, and then making a map.



GIS BROWNBAG

The NRPC GIS Brownbag Lunch series continues to be popular. On February 20th, approximately 30 representatives from the transportation, conservation, recreation, and historic resources community gathered to discuss the status of trail mapping in the region. The agenda included an overview of NRPC's trail mapping projects to date, a review of the technical support services that NRPC can provide related to GPS and mapping, how trails relate to the NRPC bike/ped plan update, and a discussion of NRPC's GIS trails dataset and strategy for its further development to support the needs of the transportation, recreation and conservation communities. Bart Hunter from SoRLAC also made remarks about a trail mapping effort in the Souhegan River Watershed.

After the presentation, a subgroup of highly interested subject matter experts decided to form a Trail Data Interest Group, under the auspices of the NRPC GIS program. The broad goals of the group are to:

- Ferret out any undiscovered sources of existing data that we can assimilate into our data model
- Review the NRPC trails dataset
- Document our current data resources (source, vintage, quality etc)
- Make recommendations for additional data capture and attribution
- And, for those who may have time and interest, GPS additional trails under NRPC's guidance

Our next action will be for NRPC to compile existing data resources for expert review, then to quantify the extent of additional data refinement and data capture.

GPS AQUISITION

In related news, NRPC has retired our antiquated backpack GPS unit after 15 years of service. We have replaced it with a Trimble GeoXT 6000. This handheld GPS unit is a modern, utility-grade GPS that features Trimble Floodlight satellite shadow reduction technology that minimizes signal obstruction under tree cover and in urban canyons. It also features sub-meter accuracy, a sophisticated data logger, cell data capability, and a 5 megapixel camera. This unit will support a variety of field data mapping at NRPC and will be available as a resource for mapping projects in our communities.

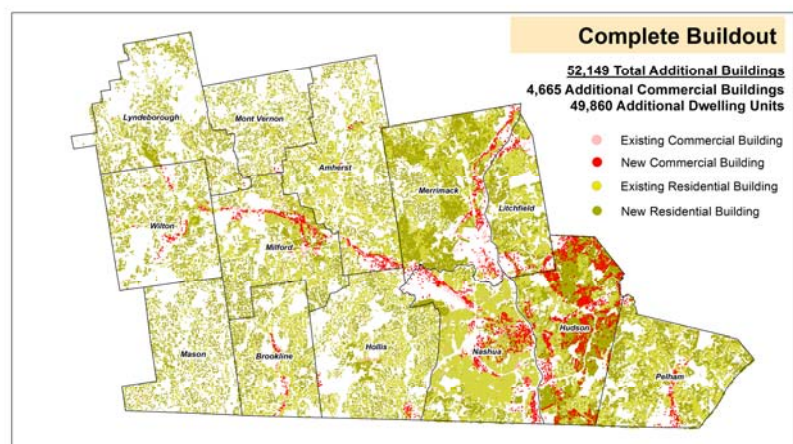
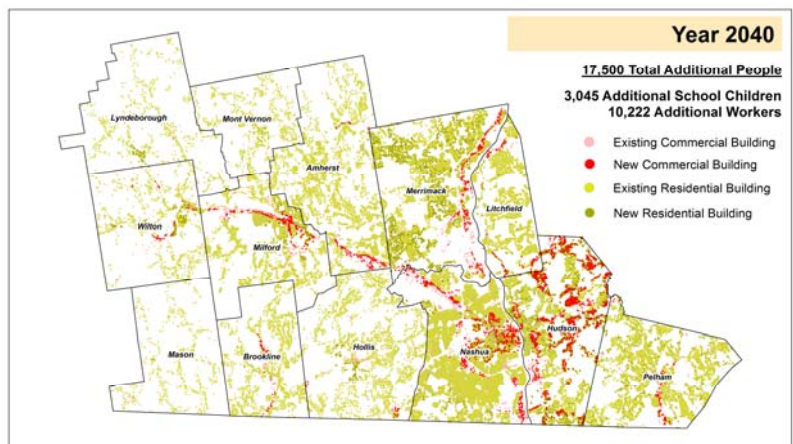
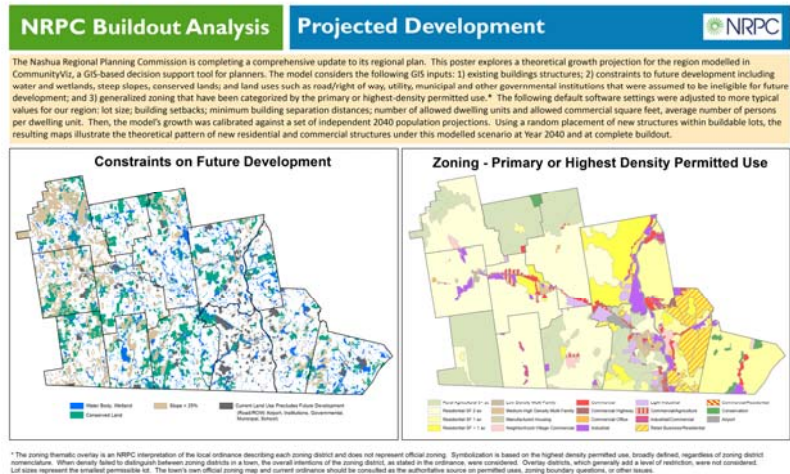


SCENARIO PLANNING IN SUPPORT OF THE REGIONAL PLAN

The GIS group has prepared a theoretical growth projection for the region modelled in CommunityViz, a GIS-based decision support tool for planners.

The model considers the following GIS inputs: 1) existing buildings structures; 2) constraints to future development including water and wetlands, steep slopes, conserved lands; and land uses such as road/right of way, utility, municipal and other governmental institutions that were assumed to be ineligible for future development; and 3) generalized zoning that have been categorized by the primary or highest-density permitted use.

The following default software settings were adjusted to more typical values for our region: minimum lot size; building setbacks; minimum building separation distances; number of allowed dwelling units and allowed commercial square feet, average number of persons per dwelling unit. Then, the model's growth was calibrated against a set of independent 2040 population projections. Using a random placement of new structures within buildable lots, the resulting maps illustrate the theoretical pattern of new residential and commercial structures at Year 2040 and at complete buildout.



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