



RPC News & Notes

Newsletter of the Rockingham Planning Commission

156 Water Street, Exeter New Hampshire

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RPC Legislative Forum Identifies Regional Priorities for 2004-2005 Session

On **Wednesday, October 13, at 6:30 pm at the Rockingham County Complex in Brentwood**, the RPC holds its annual **Legislative Forum** for incumbent legislators and candidates in the RPC region. The purpose of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for commissioners and local officials to meet informally with our legislative delegation and prospective legislators to discuss issues of importance to the region - specifically on issues relating to land use, transportation, community development and natural resources conservation.

For the past several years, and following the model of the Local Government Center (NHMA), the RPC has developed a set of legislative policies which are offered as both general input and specific suggestions for legislative initiatives. They are also intended to guide any position the agency may take on legislation that is filed. The Policies are arranged into three groups. The first group represents the top legislative priorities for the session which the RPC will actively work to support. The second group represents a broader list of policies which the RPC specifically supports but may not take any specific action to initiate. The third group includes additional legislative policies for which the Commission expresses general support.

Included in the top priorities (though not in rank order) are policies relative to: 1) large groundwater withdrawals; 2) the inclusion of the preliminary plan option for site plan review; 3) establishment of a formal definition of affordable housing; 4) creation of a small highway projects program; 5) creation of a funding stream for alternative transportation modes; and 6) establishment of a regional transit district for the Salem-Plaistow-Derry area. A complete list and explanation of these as well as the second and third tier policies can be found on the RPC website.

NHDOT Holding Regional Listening Sessions for Long Range Business Plan Update

The Seacoast MPO will host a Listening Session for NHDOT's Update to the Statewide Transportation Business Plan on **Thursday, October 21, at 7:00 PM at the Oyster River Middle School Cafeteria in Durham**. The Listening Session for the Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO will be held **Wednesday, October 27, at 7:00 pm at Kingston Town Hall**. All MPO Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Members are invited to this session, and we strongly encourage you to attend. Also invited are other stakeholders in the region involved with the transportation planning process, including planners, as well as industry and advocacy organizations.

The update of the Transportation Business Plan is intended to be customer driven, performance based, comprehensive, and transformational. The process is intended to mark a fundamental change in the culture at NHDOT and a new approach to transportation planning in NH. The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) is acting as an independent third party in charge of facilitating the process, and will chair an Advisory Committee that will oversee development of final recommendations in the plan. A second round of public input sessions will be held in January/February. Referred to as Visioning Sessions, these later regional meetings will be geared toward a broad public audience. Contact Scott Bogle with questions at sbogle@rpc-nh.org.

Standard Community Map Sets for RPC Region Now On-Line

RPC has developed a set of 'Standard' maps to be produced for all communities within the region for use in local land use planning and resource protection. The content of the maps was determined based on review of existing master plan maps and GIS data availability. The standard map set includes the following: transportation network, zoning, land use, surface water resources, stratified drift aquifers, conservation lands, composite tax map, community facilities, soil potential for development, and digital orthophotos. The size of the orthophoto map files makes it impractical to house these maps online for all RPC communities, but a sample map is available for download, and printed copies of orthophoto maps are available through the RPC office. All other maps are available on the RPC website at www.rpc-nh.org under the What's New section.

The maps use regional datasets and have standardized legends, which make them more efficient and easier to produce than town-specific maps. They can form the basis for producing more customized maps for communities. They also are a good medium for providing map corrections (missing roads, etc.) to RPC. Once produced, hardcopy sets of the maps are provided to the Planning Boards of each community and when possible, PDF versions are put on the RPC website. Additional hardcopy maps are available to municipal boards and municipal departments of member communities by request. The maps are 24 x 36 inches in size. We are trying to produce standard map sets for five or more communities per year. The order of standard map production for communities is scheduled year to year to coordinate with other RPC town projects like Road Inventory, Coastal Zone Program projects and others. With further questions contact David Wickliffe at dwickliffe@rpc-nh.org.

Regional Housing Assessment Points to Need for Over 14,000 New Units by 2010

The Rockingham Planning Commission recently revised its Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and will be taking the new draft to the full Commission for review and discussion in the near future. The main purpose of the Needs Assessment is to project the total demand for housing in the RPC region in the year 2010, as well as demand by tenure (ownership and rental) and income level. RPC staff utilized the projection methodology developed by the NH Housing Finance Authority, which was offered in part to gain some level of consistency among the approaches of the state's nine regional planning agencies.

So how much additional housing does the region need? In a nutshell, the assessment estimates that the RPC region needs to add 1,420 housing units annually from the year 2000 to the year 2010 - for a total of about 14,200 units over the 10 year period - in order to provide an adequate housing supply for the projected number of working residents in the region in the year 2010. About 3,600 of the 14,200 needed units should be rental housing. To place these figures in context, the RPC region added an average of about 1,970 housing units per year during 1980-1990, and about 780 units per year during the decade from 1990-2000.

Housing Needs Assessment Continued

Recommendations are offered to move the region toward achieving an adequate housing supply: one which includes a variety of housing types and costs, while also promoting community goals. To assist municipal officials and residents in better understanding the situation in their own community, the Needs Assessment also contains a customized "housing profile" for each community, with a side-by-side comparison to the profile of the region overall. For more information contact Maura Carriel at mcarriel@rpc-nh.org.

Communities Complete Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans with RPC Assistance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Management (NHBEM) have contracted the RPC to draft Local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans for some of its member communities. The purpose of these plans is to reduce the potential impact of natural hazards that can, and do, affect municipalities in the RPC region. These hazards include: flooding, hurricanes or other high wind events, severe winter weather, wildfire, and earthquakes. The plans profile hazards that could affect local communities, describe mitigation strategies that communities currently have in place, and suggest potential actions that could further reduce the potential for injury and damage to property.

The RPC is currently working on plans for the communities of Exeter, North Hampton, Seabrook, Rye, Portsmouth and Plaistow. Our first final approval of a plan was just received from FEMA for Fremont's plan. The next round of funding has just been approved by Governor and Council, so the communities of Hampstead, Windham, Hampton Falls and New Castle will soon be contacted about forming a committee of town department heads and other community members to begin work on Hazard Mitigation Plans of their own. The final draft of the Town of Plaistow's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan was recently sent to FEMA for review, and is available on the RPC website (<http://www.rpc-nh.org/Hazard-Mitigation.htm>). This plan was developed by members of Plaistow's emergency management staff, the Building Inspector, Planning Coordinator, Highway Supervisor, Town Administrator, and Staff from the RPC. With questions about Plaistow's Plan, or hazard mitigation plans in general, please contact David West at dwest@rpc-nh.org.

Dates to Remember

- ?? **Friday, October 15** - Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO TAC Meeting. Hampstead Town Hall. 9:30 am.
- ?? **Thursday, October 21** - Seacoast MPO Listening Session for NHDOT Long Range Transportation Business Plan. Oyster River Middle School Cafeteria. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Tuesday, October 26** - 4th Annual NH Downtown Conference. Sponsored by the [NH Main Street Center](#). Church Landing at Mill Falls, Meredith, NH. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.
- ?? **Wednesday, October 27** - Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO Policy Committee Meeting. Kingston Town Hall. 5:30 pm.
- ?? **Wednesday, October 27** - Salem-Plaistow-Windham Listening Session for NHDOT Long Range Transportation Business Plan. Kingston Town Hall. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Thursday, October 28** - Seacoast MPO Policy Committee Meeting. Portsmouth City Hall. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Monday, November 1** - 6th Annual Statewide Housing Conference - NH Housing Finance Authority. Radisson Hotel Manchester/Center of New Hampshire. 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.
- ?? **Tuesday, November 2** - General Election Day
- ?? **Wednesday, November 10** - RPC Commission Meeting. Location TBA. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Monday, November 15** - Livable Walkable Communities Grant Proposal Deadline. Obtain the RFP on the RPC website
(*Extended from October 15*)

**For more information on any of these meetings,
contact the RPC office at 778-0885,
or check the RPC website at www.rpc-nh.org.**

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