



RPC News & Notes

Newsletter of the Rockingham Planning Commission

156 Water Street, Exeter New Hampshire

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• www.rpc-nh.org

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New Wetland Mitigation Rules to be Topic of 2nd Conservation Commission Roundtable

The first RPC Conservation Commission Roundtable got off to a strong start in Hampstead the night of March 31st. Commission members from fourteen towns in the region attended and topics discussed ranged from funding local land conservation and the widening of I-93 to wetland setbacks and bird habitat. RPC staff members were on hand to explain the data collection process for the current statewide update of the NH DES Local Resource Protection Parcels (LRPP) map.

The second Roundtable is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 30th** from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Rye Public Library. At the request of several CC's, the topic to be discussed will be the new wetlands mitigation rules adopted last month by the NH Wetlands Bureau. Lori Summer from NH DES will join us to talk about the rules, including the mitigation ratios for wetlands creation and restoration, the preservation of upland buffers, and several other new requirements. Roundtable invitations will be mailed to all Conservation Commission members in the RPC region. Please contact Theresa Walker at the RPC for more information and to be put on the mailing list.

Get Ready to Explore the American Independence Byway

A summer promotional push is underway for the American Independence Byway, a 29-mi. scenic roadway loop through Exeter, Hampton, Hampton Falls and Kensington. It is one of 15 scenic byways designated by the State of New Hampshire. In designating a byway, not only is the general public invited to experience and appreciate these special places, but the byway communities themselves enter into a process to maintain and enhance the quality of the corridor.



The RPC and American Independence Byway Advisory Committee were awarded funds from the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation's "Martha Fuller Clark Fund for a Scenic Seacoast" to produce a full-color brochure and sign markers featuring the AIB logo (designed by Gwen English of Exeter). The Foundation is a regional division of the NH Charitable Foundation, the statewide community foundation. The brochures were recently printed and are being made available at selected locations along the Byway, including the American Independence and Tuck Museums, Exeter and Hampton Chambers of Commerce and public libraries. Additional outlets are also being explored. RPC staff and the Advisory Committee will coordinate with NHDOT and local road agents on the installation of NH Scenic & Cultural Byway roadway signs at selected locations this summer. Last Fall, a portion of the grant was also used to host a successful trolley tour of the Byway, raising public awareness of the Byway's value and highlighting the need to preserve and protect its unique characteristics. For more information contact Maura Carriel.

Residential Real Estate Transaction Data Available

Housing costs in the region are a favorite topic of discussion, not just among planners, but for nearly any resident of the region. In order to help develop a more complete picture of the region's housing market, RPC staff has been collecting and tracking residential real estate transaction data for the region since January 2002. This work has been funded by the Community Development Finance Authority under its SEED Capacity Grant program, with similar data tracking also underway by the Nashua and Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commissions. Summaries for the Rockingham region for the years 2002 and 2003 are available on-line at www.rpc-nh.org. For purposes of comparison, summaries for the Nashua and Southern New Hampshire RPCs can be found at www.nharpc.org/reports.

The RPC data summaries cover sales of new and existing residential properties (single-family, duplex, condominiums and manufactured homes). An attempt is made to filter out transactions between family members (assumed to be at below market value) as well as all commercial property transactions. The summary tables provide information on average sales prices and volumes of sales for individual towns as well as the entire RPC region, on both a quarterly and annual basis. One note of caution in using the data — relatively small sales volumes in many communities can result in fluctuating average selling prices, particularly from quarter to quarter. As such, the town-level data is best used for year to year comparisons, or as a broad means of comparing housing costs of different communities. Contact Maura Carriel or Robert Pruyne for additional information.

Regional Travel Demand Model Update Completed

RPC staff and consultant Resource Systems Group have recently completed two years of work in overhauling the Regional Travel Demand Model that covers the entirety of the RPC and Strafford Regional Planning Commission regions. The update was undertaken to improve analysis capability as part of the Newington-Dover Turnpike expansion project and proposed improvements to the US 1 Bypass.

The work has included both a shift to more sophisticated modeling software and incorporation of new data on regional employment, housing, population, and traffic volumes. In terms of software, the model has been converted to TransCAD by Caliper Corporation, a much more user friendly application than the previous model, and one that has integrated GIS software. New AM Peak and Off-Peak models were developed to supplement the original PM Peak model. With these three models together, the 24 hour analysis necessary for determining air quality conformity can be much more precise.

TransCAD also provides new capabilities such as select link and corridor analysis, census data analysis, screenline analysis, and subarea model work. The integration with GIS improves tremendously our ability to display the model outputs and results on a local and regional level, and opens the model up for use in conjunction with the large volume of GIS data that the RPC already has available.

The model is currently being used to develop traffic volume forecasts for the Newington-Dover project, the US 1 Bypass improvements, and the US 1 Corridor study. In addition, staff are utilizing the model to forecast Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) and emissions estimates for air quality conformity as part of adopting the 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) for both the Seacoast MPO and the Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO later this summer. Contact Dave Walker for additional information.

Round 7 TE & CMAQ Project Funding Finalized by GACIT

At its meeting on June 23, the Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) made the final funding decisions for Round 7 of the federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding programs. Both programs provide up to 80% reimbursement on project costs with federal funds, with a required 20% non-federal match. As in past rounds, projects from RPC communities fared well. The following projects in the RPC region have been recommended for funding:

Transportation Enhancements (TE)

Town of Sandown	Town Center Sidewalk Improvements	\$ 120,000
Pease Development Authority (PDA)	Pease Tradeport Multiuse Path (<i>part of Great Bay Bicycle Loop</i>)	\$ 541,000

Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)

City of Portsmouth	Market Street Extension Sidewalks	\$ 238,750
Greater Portsmouth TMA	TMA Marketing Initiative	\$ 100,000
Town of Salem	SE-TRIP (TMA, Transit, and Pedestrian Improvements)	\$ 1,250,000
NH Department of Transportation	I-93 Expanded Commuter Bus Service	\$ 10,040,000
<i>NH Department of Transportation</i>	<i>Exit 9 Park and Ride on Spaulding Turnpike (late submission)</i>	<i>\$ 1,720,000</i>
<i>NH Department of Transportation</i>	<i>ITS Deployment on I-95 Seabrook-Portsmouth (late submission)</i>	<i>\$ 4,050,000</i>
<i>NH Department of Transportation</i>	<i>I-93 Park & Rides at Exits 2,3, and 5 (late submission)</i>	<i>\$ 10,400,000</i>

Selection of projects for CMAQ funding was more controversial than usual, due to the late submission of four large projects by NHDOT (noted in italics) following conclusion of the regional ranking process. These four projects (three of which are noted here) were approved by the CMAQ Advisory Committee as back-up projects, to be funded with CMAQ dollars only if necessary to spend down other CMAQ funds in danger of lapsing due to delays in the Lowell-Nashua commuter rail project. Contact Scott Bogle for additional information.

Staff News: There's a Doctor in the house!

RPC Land Use Planner **Jill Robinson** recently completed all of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Natural Resources, Minor Concentration in Ecosystem Science and Management, from the Ohio State University School of Natural Resources. Her dissertation is entitled "Land Use Behavior of Private Landowners at the Urban/Rural Fringe." Jill received her degree in June 2004. Way to go Dr. Robinson!



Intern News: Say hello to Jon Atwood, GIS Intern.

Jon works with us throughout the week except for Mondays. He is working on Road Inventory, Regional Environmental Planning Program, Stratham Build Out Analysis, Hampstead Trail Mapping, and various other projects as needed. Jon has a Bachelor's degree in Geography and a minor in geology from the University of New Hampshire. He plans on attending graduate school in the near future to focus on GIS and Remote Sensing studies. Jon currently lives in Durham, but is considering moving to the Colorado region for a change of scenery and to hopefully attend grad school there. In his spare time, Jon enjoys mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, and other outdoor activities.

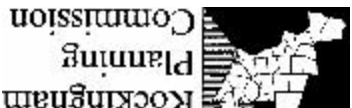


Dates to Remember

- ?? **Wednesday, June 30** — Conservation Commission Roundtable on New Wetland Mitigation Rules. Rye Public Library. 6:30-8:30 pm.
- ?? **Thursday, July 1** — Public Hearing on Newington-Dover Little Bay Bridges Widening Project. Newington Town Hall. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Thursday, July 8** — Forum on the Future of Medicaid. NHDHHS public workshop at the Rockingham County Nursing Home, 117 North Road, Brentwood. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Wednesday, July 14** — RPC Commission Meeting. Location TBA. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Wednesday, July 28** — Salem-Plaistow Windham MPO Policy Committee Meeting. Location TBA. 7:00 pm.
- ?? **Thursday, July 29** — Seacoast MPO Policy Committee Meeting. Location TBA. 7:00 pm.

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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