

# COMMISSION POLICIES

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**Adopted by Rockingham Planning Commission Executive Committee on March 29, 1995 and updated July 1991 and July 1991.**

**ARTICLE I     Agency Purpose**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Act as the central agent in coordinating plans and programs relating to the development of the region.
- B.     Assist municipalities and the county in implementing regional plans and programs.
- C.     Serve as a liaison for local governments on plans and programs that deal with the State and Federal Governments.
- D.     Encourage intergovernmental planning cooperation and coordination.
- E.     Promote municipal and regional planning through public information and participation programs and by providing local technical assistance to member communities.
- F.     Develop and maintain a comprehensive plan for the region.

**ARTICLE II         Coordination with Public and Private Agencies**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Provide, at its discretion, assistance to other public and private agencies involved in programs which are consistent with Commission policies.
- B.     Enter into contracts, or memorandums of understanding with public and private agencies to provide the required services or assistance.
- C.     As appropriate, receive financial compensation for services or assistance rendered.
- D.     Develop, compile and/or make available demographic socioeconomic and planning data and related reference materials to other public and private non-profit agencies.

**ARTICLE III        Local Technical Assistance**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Provide technical assistance to member communities on an as needed basis and so consistent with available staff and financial resources; technical assistance shall only be provided in a manner that is consistent with Commission policies and bylaws.
- B.     Develop staff expertise necessary to meet the technical assistance needs of member communities.

- C. Provide, at its discretion, technical assistance to non-member communities on a contractual basis.
- D. Inform member and non-member communities of scope and availability of technical assistance.
- E. Maintain updated information regarding regional land use, socioeconomic, demographic and planning data.
- F. Maintain technical planning expertise in the various planning disciplines necessary to provide local technical assistance and to achieve agency goals.
- G. Develop and make available model ordinances and regulations which promote sound planning and land use principles and meet new legal mandates.

**ARTICLE IV      Natural Resources/Energy**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the proper management of land used for agriculture and forestry.
- B. Encourage the proper management of marshlands, estuaries and attendant wildlife in their natural state.
- C. Encourage the control of sand and gravel mining, insuring that the mining is safe and has minimal effect upon adjoining property and that sufficient vegetation is re-established to control erosion.
- D. Insure that proper study is given to offshore development and the on-shore effects, taking into account the potential for damage to the fishing and recreation industries and the natural environment.
- E. Encourage the protection of water resources, including all surface waters, ground water and wetlands.

**ARTICLE V      Water Resource Management**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the State to take a systematic approach to water resources planning and management which recognizes the complex relationships of the entire hydrologic system, with particular focus on watersheds and addresses quantity and quality issues in an integrated manner.
- B. Encourage the State as well as municipalities to periodically assess water supplies and to predict future water needs.

- C. Encourage the State as well as municipalities to collect data on potential groundwater supplies and to identify and delineate aquifer recharge areas.
- D. Assist communities in the development and implementation of local Water Resources Management and Protection Plans and maintain water resources management element in the Regional Master Plan.
- E. Encourage the development of municipal and regional water conservation programs.
- F. Encourage the establishment of a safe and adequate supply of drinking water as a top priority to be used in conflicting-use situations.
- G. Encourage the maintenance of clear and concise channels to communications and cooperation among, Federal, State and Local officials involved in water resource management.
- H. Encourage the establishment of ordinances to protect watersheds, aquifers and aquifer recharge areas.

#### **ARTICLE VI      Water/Sewer Services**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the protection of marginally-developable areas even though they could be serviced by public water supplies and sewage disposal systems.
- B. Encourage the development of public water supply and sewage disposal where densities make such action appropriate.
- C. Encourage the establishment of regional water and sewage systems where appropriate to the needs of neighboring communities.
- D. Encourage the provision of a safe, potable and sufficient supply of water to residents of the region.
- E. Encourage the disposal of sewage in a manner which will not degrade surface and sub-surface waters.
- F. Encourage the establishment of local wellhead protection program (per EPA and NHDES guidance) ordinances to protect aquifers and aquifer recharge areas used for water supply purposes.
- G. Encourage efforts to ensure that water and sewer extensions are compatible with town and regional plans.
- H. Encourage the most appropriate use of appropriate natural resource protection measures to minimize:

- a) potential soil erosion and surface water sedimentation problems;
- b) potential flooding of homes, business, industries or institution;
- c) potential harm to health from contamination of ground and surface waters through discharge of pollutants;
- d) potential surface water eutrophication problems through nutrient runoff or migration; and
- e) the ultimate need for costly public works projects to abate the above problems.

## **ARTICLE VII      Land Use**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the use of land use regulations which base allowable development on the natural and cultural suitability of the land.
- B. Participate with State Agencies, the Legislature and other Regional Planning throughout the region and state.
- C. Encourage communities, when establishing zones to accommodate anticipated industrial and commercial growth, to include direct access to thru-highways, appropriate highways, appropriate utilities, adequate buffer zones and space for off-street parking and loading.
- D. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of established downtown areas.
- E. Discourage strip development and excessive numbers of curb cuts where it has not already taken place; and to encourage the use of frontage roads and shared access points and rear lot development to manage further development of this type.
- F. Encourage the preservation of areas of historic significance.
- G. Assist member towns in the development and adoption of land use ordinances and regulations.
- H. Maintain information regarding land capability and suitability within the region's boundaries.
- I. Utilize the region's land use plan as a guide when assisting municipalities in establishing local plans.
- J. Periodically update regional land use policies and the regional plan based upon improved data and local input.

## **ARTICLE VIII     Growth Control**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Provide assistance in the preparation of times growth ordinances and building moratoriums only to those communities which have a commitment to developing a comprehensive plan for community growth and a capital improvements program that addresses growth constraints.
- B. Encourage municipalities to recognize the effect of growth control ordinances on neighboring communities.
- C. Encourage municipalities to relate growth control ordinances to the local water plan and all ordinances which lead to plan implementation.
- D. Encourage municipalities to recognize that timed growth ordinances alone do not affect the location of development and that sound decision-making as to the type, location and intensity of development must be an integral part of any municipality's land use planning.
- E. Encourage municipalities to recognize that local development policies on rate of growth and the location of growth must be inter-related if either is to be effective.
- F. Encourage municipalities to enter into inter-municipal growth compacts.

## **ARTICLE IX     Housing**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the availability of safe and adequate housing for all citizens in the region.
- B. Develop and maintain a regional housing needs assessment which includes an analysis housing fair share obligation and recommends methods to ensure a balance supply of housing throughout the region.
- C. Encourage the development and adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations which allow for a wide variety of housing types, sizes and costs.
- D. Encourage the rehabilitation and upgrading of sub-standard housing by providing technical assistance to communities and neighborhood associations.
- E. Encourage the construction of single family homes and multi-family dwellings which are economic in their use of construction materials and are energy efficient in design.
- F. Encourage the use of federal and state subsidized housing and financial programs, maintain information regarding housing financing alternatives available in the region and make the programs more responsive to local housing needs.
- G. Assist member communities in developing regulations to control the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round homes.

**ARTICLE X**      **Open Space**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.      Encourage the acquisition and conservation of:
  - a)      large interconnected blocks of accessible open space which allows the free movement of wildlife from one area to another;
  - b)      highly visible open space areas including shorelines, open fields, vistas and hills which contribute significantly to the aesthetic quality of the region; and
  - c)      open space that encompasses or acts as a buffer zone to fragile environments and important natural resource areas.
- B.      Encourage the development of a coordinated open space plan for the region.
- C.      Encourage the continuation of agricultural and forestry land uses which derive sustainable economic value from land in an undeveloped condition.
- D.      Encourage and provide technical assistance to public and private bodies engaged in the establishment of open space areas.

**ARTICLE XI**      **Recreation**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.      Encourage the establishment of recreational areas which are adequate to the needs of the region, serve multiple uses and make the best use of the recreational resources of the region.
- B.      Encourage the establishment of recreational areas that, by their location, serve to promote neighborhood and community identity.
- C.      Encourage and provide technical assistance to public and private bodies engaged in the development and establishment of recreational facilities.
- D.      Provide technical assistance to communities and local organizations in the acquisition and development of land and water for recreational purposes.

**ARTICLE XII**      **Coastal Zone**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.      Encourage local units of government to effectively manage, protect, develop, restore and enhance New Hampshire's coastal zone.
- B.      Participate in the State's coastal zone management program, in the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve and in the Gulf of Maine project to insure appropriate local input and the coordination of efforts.

- C. Initiate, coordinate and stimulate local awareness and participation in matters related to coastal zone management.
- D. Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the natural environment necessary to support marine life.

**ARTICLE XIII     Transportation**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage consideration of local and regional interests when transportation (road, rail, air and transmission lines for electricity, gas, oil and water) decisions are made at the State level.
- B. Encourage the development and maintenance of a regional highway system with well located arterial highways, along with the purchase of ample rights-of-way for future widening.
- C. Encourage the full utilization of existing rights-of-way in order to minimize the necessity for new construction, while preserving scenic roads.
- D. Encourage the preparation of adequate environmental impact analyses of the likely consequences of the construction of transportation facilities.
- E. Encourage access and delivery of services to the region from interstate transportation facilities rather than from local highways and arterials.
- F. Encourage the planning, maintenance and expansion of area-wide mass transportation systems with the cooperation of mass transportation providers, both public and private.
- G. Encourage the development and maintenance of transportation facilities designed to meet the special needs of the elderly and disabled.
- H. Encourage efforts to minimize damage to open space, park lands and historic places and cultural natural resources in the development or upgrading of transportation systems.
- I. Encourage the multiple use of utility corridors.
- J. Encourage the development of safe and adequate bicycle facilities, paths and routes in high demand areas.
- K. Encourage the establishment of intercity and commuter rail service to the Boston Metropolitan Area and other areas as needed based on existing and projected demand.  
**(Adopted 07/11/90)**



#### **ARTICLE XIV     Economic Development**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Encourage orderly and diverse economic development within the region with emphasis upon enhancement of the area's existing economic resources.
- B.     Encourage business which provides jobs for the region's population, with minimal adverse environmental, social and financial effect.
- C.     Encourage municipalities to reserve/zone adequate land, of an, appropriate nature, to accommodate commercial and industrial development.
- D.     Provide technical assistance to municipalities, local industrial development agencies and state agencies in the location, planning, organization and marketing of planned industrial parks.
- E.     Develop and maintain pertinent specialized data regarding economic conditions in the Commission area.
- F.     Encourage businesses to locate in unused business facilities and to adapt them to their own needs.
- G.     Encourage those businesses which provide jobs that can be filled by area residents.
- H.     Encourage the maintenance, expansion and local business support of vocational education opportunities.
- I.     Work cooperatively with the Pease Development Authority and the N.H. Port Authority to encourage balanced development of Pease and Port related facilities.

#### **ARTICLE XV     Energy**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Encourage energy conservation in the design, location and siting of housing, commerce and industry.
- B.     Encourage the development and application of alternative energy sources.
- C.     Encourage the use of energy-efficient means of transportation of goods and people.

#### **ARTICLE XVI     Noise**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A.     Encourage the consideration of noise in the preparation of local master plans.

- B. Encourage municipalities to adopt noise ordinances designed to prevent unwanted and unnecessary sounds of all types and to review existing ordinances which relate to noise control for compatibility.
- C. Encourage the development of building codes to insure adequate sound insulation between dwelling units.
- D. Encourage the creation of inter-municipal agreements to reduce noise incompatibilities across municipal boundaries.
- E. Encourage municipalities, counties and the state to include maximum noise level requirements in specifications for equipment purchases, construction contracts and solid waste collection.
- F. Encourage the development and use of noise criteria which indicate the levels and frequencies of noise which adversely affect public health and welfare.

**ARTICLE XVII Air Quality**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage the consideration of air quality in preparation of local master plans and zoning ordinances.
- B. Encourage the development, adoption and implementation of State air quality standards.
- C. Encourage the maintenance of permitting system designed to insure that air quality standards are met.
- D. Encourage continuing efforts at air quality monitoring to insure that standards are being met.
- E. Encourage the continued development of air quality inventories to insure that base data is available against which to measure changes in air quality.
- F. Encourage the assessment to existing air pollution control techniques and measures to insure that the most efficient and accurate measure are utilized.

**ARTICLE XVIII Waste Management**

It is the Commission's policy to:

- A. Encourage source reduction, re-use and recycling to reduce the amount of wastes entering the waste stream.
- B. Encourage long-range planning for waste generation estimates and disposal options.

- C. Provide technical assistance to solid waste districts in the region in their planning and implementation efforts.
- D. Support the position of the NH Department of Environmental Services Waste Management Division which requires that proposed solid waste disposal facilities must prove, among other things, the demonstration of a substantial “public benefit”.
- E. Encourage the provision of adequate capacity for disposal of New Hampshire’s wastes.
- F. Promote the timely development and implementation of closure plans for existing and inactive waste facilities – with priority given to sites that pose environmental/public health risks.
- G. Promote compliance with RSA 14-M:13, which requires that all municipalities provide or assure access to approved septage and solid waste facilities for their residents.
- H. Encourage the provision of disposal options for special wastes (i.e., incinerator residues, tires, bulky wastes, construction/demolition debris, stumps, household hazardous wastes, infectious/pathological wastes, waste oil and wet cell batteries).
- I. Encourage and provide assistance toward the development and implementation of a permanent household hazardous waste collection program and regionally accessible collection center.
- J. Encourage and assist communities to identify the type and amount of hazardous waste generated locally and to identify possible deposit sites.