

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

November 2014

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Public Hearing for Monadnock Region Future - Draft Regional Plan

A public hearing will be held on December 16, 2014 to discuss and consider adoption of the draft Regional Plan for Southwest New Hampshire. The hearing is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. at SWRPC's office located at 37 Ashuelot Street, Keene, NH 03431. The draft Plan and supporting documents have been released for public review and comment. These materials were prepared by the Planning Commission as part of its work on an initiative known as *Monadnock Region Future*. This Plan, which is advisory in nature, is intended to be a resource for communities and other partners in the Region to use in local decision-making and planning. It maps out a vision and goals for the future based on an understanding of the Region's assets as well as ongoing initiatives and current challenges. It encourages the reader to think broadly about the Region and presents strategies that can enhance current efforts, as well as promote new and emerging opportunities. A number of supporting documents specific to the Southwest Region, including a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Housing Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, Natural Resource Plan, and Broadband Plan are included as appendix items and are therefore, considered part of the Regional Plan. The Plan and supporting documents can be viewed online at: www.swrpc.org/regionalplan. Comments may be sent either electronically to Tara Germond at tgermond@swrpc.org or by mail to the Southwest Region Planning Commission, 37 Ashuelot St., Keene, NH 03431 through December 15, 2014.

Four Corners Area Plan for Richmond

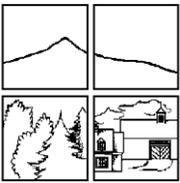
On November 5th, SWRPC facilitated its second "Community Conversation" event in the Town of Richmond's Veteran's Hall to present a draft Richmond Four Corners Area Plan. The draft Plan, which was developed using guidance from a local steering committee, field research, stakeholder interviews, a resident survey, and a Community Conversation this past June, provides recommendations to improve opportunities for strengthening the community through civic projects, programs, transportation improvements and economic development initiatives. In addition to a presentation of the Plan, Andrea Kenter from GeoInsight, Inc. and Josh Whipple from NH Department of Environmental Services presented a history of the former Four Corner's Store site, and several Richmond residents presented activities that they are working on that are related to the draft plan. Two artist renderings were also presented at the meeting showing a mock-up image as well as an aerial view of a future potential Four Corner's area. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of Commission staff.

Broadband Internet: It's Essential - A Workshop for New Hampshire Communities

On November 19th SWRPC staff attended a statewide workshop where community officials, planners, and others learned ways to evaluate and improve internet access in New Hampshire. Attendees heard presentations from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) in four key areas: Economic Development and Broadband, Organizing Your Community, Community Resources, and Action Planning. The Action Planning session featured a panel of representatives from the Ready Communities Initiative, three New Hampshire communities that received broadband planning assistance from UNHCE including the SWRPC Town of Greenfield. The materials developed by UNHCE throughout the initiative will be included in a statewide broadband planning resource available to every community in the state. The NH Broadband Toolkit is available at <http://iwantbroadbandnh.org/toolkit/>. The Toolkit covers the creation of a local broadband committee through implementation and funding of community broadband projects. In mid-December, UNHCE will release a series of Broadband Learning Modules to help inform and educate broadband planning. For more information about broadband in Southwest NH, please visit <http://www.swrpc.org/broadbandplan> or contact Tara Germond and Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

New Hampshire Municipal Association Annual Conference

SWRPC staff participated in a presentation at the 2014 New Hampshire Municipal Association Annual conference on November 12th. The topic of the session, titled “Culvert Assessments & Road-Stream Crossing Studies in New Hampshire Communities” was sponsored by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions as part of a series of sessions related to land use and the environment. Attendees learned about past and recently-updated tools designed to inventory and understand these assets as essential to maintaining both our transportation infrastructure and natural aquatic habitat. The resulting information contained in these assessments including the potential for erosion can inform maintenance strategies, budgets, habitat restoration, and hazard mitigation planning. To learn more about this work, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.



Community Development Block Grant Funding

For towns and organizations thinking about applying for the January 2015 round of Economic Development or Housing and Public Facilities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, now is the time to start the application process. Housing and Public Facilities CDBG funding is available to municipally-sponsored projects in January and July of each year. Eligible projects can receive grants of up to \$500,000 for infrastructure or housing activities which provide a direct benefit to low and moderate income households. CDBG funding is also available for municipally-sponsored economic development projects year-round on a first come, first served basis starting in January. Up to \$500,000 is available for economic development projects that help create job opportunities for low to moderate income individuals and families. For more information, please contact Rebeckah Bullock of Commission staff.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

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