

# SWRPC

## Commission Highlights

March 2021

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### 2023 - 2032 Ten Year Plan Recommendations

On March 16<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC's Board of Director's accepted the Transportation Advisory Committee's recommendations to program \$4.29 million federal dollars towards two projects in the draft 2023-2032 Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan update (TYP). The projects include 1) \$525,945 to complete a project in the current 2021-2030 TYP which will widen and reconstruct NH 101 from the historic Stone Arch Bridge to Branch Road in Keene, and 2) \$3,763,290 toward a \$7 million project to redesign and reconstruct West Street in Keene from the NH 9/10/12 interchange to School Street. These recommendations have been submitted to the NH Department of Transportation for further consideration in the TYP update process. For more information, please contact [J. B. Mack](#) of SWRPC staff.

### Broadband Projects Move Towards Implementation

At their March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Monadnock Broadband Group (MBG) discussed and shared ideas relative to public-private partnerships to expand broadband access and modernize infrastructure. This year, 12 Southwest Region communities are moving forward with such partnerships. Since 2019, communities and providers have invested over \$40 million to modernize internet infrastructure. The biggest reason for this success story are the local volunteers who have invested time and energy to make it possible. Many of those involved in this work have assisted neighboring communities as participants of the MBG and through the use of the Monadnock Region Broadband Implementation Guide which is available at [swrpc.org/broadband/resources](http://swrpc.org/broadband/resources). For more information, please contact [Henry Underwood](#) of SWRPC staff.

### Housing Webinar

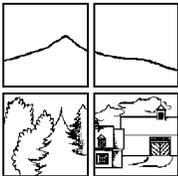
On March 18<sup>th</sup>, the New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) hosted a webinar featuring a panel discussion on regional housing initiatives with presenters from four regional planning commissions, including SWRPC staff member Todd Horner. OSI's webinar series entitled *Planning Lunches at Noon* (PLAN) focuses on a different topic each month. The Housing webinar was informed by [a recent article in NH Municipal Association's Town & City Magazine](#) that highlights how regional planning commissions are helping to foster dialogue about housing challenges and identifying pathways forward. The panel discussion included an overview of the [Monadnock Housing Roundtable](#), a group that has met periodically over the last year to discuss housing-related issues. Slides and a recording of the event can be found on the [NH OSI website](#). For more information, please contact Todd Horner of SWRPC staff.

### Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

The Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the NH Department of Health and Human Services is developing a series of lead poisoning prevention videos. The first, a parent education video on the importance of blood lead level testing, has just been released and can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/NHPublicHealth/videos>. SWRPC is working in partnership with the Monadnock Region Public Health Network on a multi-year project to reduce childhood lead poisoning in the Region. Increased lead testing for children at ages one and two is one of the strategies the partnership is promoting. For more information, please contact [Terry Johnson](#) of SWRPC staff.

## Small Particle Air Pollution Event

On April 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. SWRPC, in partnership with Keene State College, will host a forum on small particle air pollution. This topic is of concern in Southwest NH due to a combination of wood burning for heating, topography and meteorological conditions. This online event will describe the science behind the issue as well as proactive steps to protect human, environmental and economic health. Guest presenters will include Steven Roberge of UNH Cooperative Extension along with staff from Green Energy Options. Content will focus on practices to consider outside of the heating season to maximize efficiency and reduce air pollution. Residents, municipal officials, health care providers, and community and business leaders are encouraged to attend and to submit questions and comments leading up to and during the event. For more information, please visit [www.facebook.com/SouthwestRPC](http://www.facebook.com/SouthwestRPC) or contact [Henry Underwood](#) of SWRPC staff.



## Study of Volunteer Driver Networks and Microtransit

During March, SWRPC was notified of a grant award from the Federal Transit Administration through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to conduct a *Transit and Shared Ride Improvement Feasibility Study*. The Study will examine the feasibility of expanding eligibility for volunteer driver programs – a cost-effective transportation service model that has worked well in rural New Hampshire. More specifically, the Study will look beyond the programs' current focus on seniors and people with disabilities to others with transportation needs including youth and low-income households. The Study will also examine the feasibility of introducing microtransit to the Greater Keene area. Microtransit refers to smart phone-enabled service that provides demand-responsive transportation. This aspect of the project is inspired by the recent launch of microtransit services in the Montpelier, VT area. For more information, please contact [J. B. Mack](#) of SWRPC staff.

## Southwest Region Planning Commission

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