

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

November 2013

Vol. 19 - No. 11

Keene State College Biennial Symposium: Air as the Ultimate Commons

On November 5th Planning Commission staff participated in a panel entitled *Air as the Ultimate Commons* during the eighth biennial symposium hosted by Keene State College. The theme of the 6-day event was “Finding Your Place in the Evolving Commons.” Other panel participants included representatives from the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES), Keene State College (KSC), and the City of Keene. Panelists highlighted past research and ongoing activities to improve wintertime air quality in the Keene area which has a documented issue of episodic small particle air pollution. DES representatives described the science behind the small particle air pollution issue and associated health impacts. SWRPC staff summarized the rationale and outreach efforts of the Greater Keene Air Quality Education and Outreach Campaign. KSC Environmental Studies and Geography Department faculty discussed ongoing student research and preliminary findings. For more information, please visit <http://www.swrpc.org/airquality> or contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

MRTMA Receives Grant to Promote Bicycling

The Monadnock Region Transportation Management Association (MRTMA), a public-private sector coalition staffed by SWRPC, has been awarded \$5,000 by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation for its “Rack It Up” initiative. “Rack It Up” is a program derived from the MRTMA Action Plan (www.monadnockTMA.org) that seeks to advance bicycling as a legitimate form of transportation in the Monadnock Region. The grant will purchase an inventory of bicycle racks and place them in visible and convenient locations where there is a deficit of bicycle parking in Keene. The MRTMA will work with the City of Keene and private businesses to install the bike racks. Bike rack placement is expected to occur in the summer of 2014. The initiative is intended to address cost of living, improve community health, reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce demand for parking and associated construction and maintenance expenses. For more information about this initiative, please contact J. B. Mack of Commission staff.

Connecticut River Scenic Byway Tri-State Bike Map Project

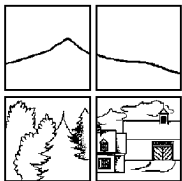
SWRPC staff have been involved in a joint effort with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (MA) and Windham Regional Planning Commission (VT) to collect bicycle routes within the Connecticut River Valley Byway. The project involves developing and producing an online and print version of a regional map showing bicycle routes designed to educate Byway residents about the options and resources available to them as well as encourage bicycle tourism throughout the Tri-State region. The project also includes a component of identifying appropriate locations for signage indicating the location of bicycle routes, bike racks, etc. The project will continue over the coming months with completion anticipated in Spring 2014. For more information, please contact Steve Waleryszak of Commission staff.

Monadnock Region Future Completes Fall Focus Group Discussions

On November 21st, Planning Commission staff concluded a series of seven focus groups on the topics of housing, transportation, economic development, public health, energy, environment, and water infrastructure. These discussions, which took place throughout the fall of 2013, were a part of Monadnock Region Future, an initiative to update the regional plan for Southwest NH. They served as a chance to engage knowledgeable individuals in discussions about the issues and opportunities that are most important to the Region related to the various topic areas. Over eighty individuals representing a diversity of regional organizations, communities, and fields of expertise participated in these facilitated sessions. Staff is in the process of summarizing these conversations and will be incorporating this information into the development of the Regional Plan. For more information, please contact Tara Germond of Commission staff.

Save the Date: Statewide Broadband Conference

NH's regional planning commissions are coordinating with the University of New Hampshire and other partners in promoting the upcoming New Hampshire Broadband Conference. This day-long event is scheduled for **May 16, 2014** at the Grappone Conference Center in Concord, NH. Attendees will include municipal officials, business leaders, internet service providers, and representatives from the health care, education and public safety sectors. The conference will feature broadband experts and concurrent sessions on a range of topics including e-governance, medical applications, putting your business on the digital map, tools and resources for municipalities, legislative initiatives, new technology, and much more. For additional information as it becomes available, please visit http://www.iwantbroadbandnh.org/nhbroadbandconference_2014.



Community Development Block Grant Implementation Workshop

SWRPC staff attended the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Implementation Workshop on November 6th hosted by the NH Community Development Finance Authority. The workshop covered the following topics: use of the online grants management system, municipal adoptions/approvals, environmental reviews, subrecipient agreements and monitoring, procurement, financial management, construction management, municipal responsibilities, housing rehabilitation, acquisition and relocation, and documenting job creation. For more information about the workshop or the CDBG program, please contact Rebeckah Bullock of Commission staff.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

37 Ashuelot Street Keene, NH 03431 603-357-0557 www.swrpc.org

