



Granite State Future
Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting
November 29, 2012 | 1:30 – 3:30 PM
NH Local Government Center
25 Triangle Park Drive, Concord, NH 03301

Agenda

- 1. Introductions**
- 2. Project Overview and Updates (Brief)**
 - a. Statewide Research Process
 - b. Regional Planning Process
 - c. Program Website
 - d. Communications and Outreach Process
- 3. Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment**
 - a. Review and Comments on 1st draft
 - b. Brainstorm Future Considerations
- 4. Regional Plan Framework**
 - a. Review and Comments on 1st Draft
 - b. Revisions to matrices?
- 5. Next Steps**
 - a. Committee Membership - Who's missing?
 - b. Committee and TASC roles as we enter phase 2
- 6. Next Meeting – February 28, 2012, Local Government Center**
- 7. Other Business**
- 8. Public Comments and Questions (10 min.)**





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Meeting Notes

Members Present

Deborah Avery, Business Resource Center, NH
Department of Resources and Economic
Development
Glenn Coppelman, Community Development Finance
Authority
Ben Frost, NH Housing Finance Authority
Terry Johnson, HEAL
Bruce Mallory, UNH Carsey Institute, NH Listens
Van McLeod, Department of Cultural Resources
Carolyn Russell, NH Department of Environmental
Services
Mark Sanborn, NH Department of Transportation
Terry Smith, NH Department of Health and Human
Services, Division of Family Assistance

Members Present (continued)

David Preece, Southern NH Planning Commission
Cliff Sinnott, Rockingham Planning Commission
Christine Walker, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission

Members Not Present

Joanne Cassulo, NH Office of Energy and Planning
Tim Fortier, NH Municipal Association
Kevin Peterson, NH Charitable Foundation

Staff

Jen Czysz, Nashua Regional Planning Commission

M. Sanborn convened the meeting at 1:40 PM.

1. Introductions

M. Sanborn requested all meeting attendees introduced themselves and set the stage for meeting rules of procedure and agenda.

2. Project Overview and Updates

J. Czysz gave a brief update of work completed since the last meeting as part of both the Statewide Research and Regional Planning Processes. The work completed to date has been compiled into the draft Existing Conditions and Trends Report and Regional Plan Frameworks on the agenda for discussion today. Regional planning commissions are transitioning from initial outreach and information gathering to begin the process of plan development. The statewide website is complete and all should have received an email announcement of its launch. Advisory Committee members

are encouraged to share their ideas via the newly created blog “My Granite State Future.” The objective of the blog is to serve as a platform for sharing new ideas, research and opportunities of interest to the RPCs, as they develop their plans, and to the many communities and other partners following our progress.

M. Sanborn asked the Advisory Committee members to each share any updates they have that might be of interest to the planning process and other committee members.

B. Mallory related that he heard at the Equity and Engagement Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC) that the Listening Boxes are not being used anymore. General conversation continued about the usefulness of the boxes, some regions haven't been getting comments through the boxes others have received more profane responses. Consensus was that each should proceed as works best for the region.

B. Mallory relayed an account from M. Mears of Strafford Regional Planning Commission of how community engagement has been proceeding within their region and that the tone of meetings has changed significantly for the positive and they have had many more supporters participating in their meetings.

D. Preece received a report from AARP on the impact of baby boomers on travel preference and how they are shifting preferences. He will send the report to J. Czysz for distribution to the Advisory Committee. Generally the report shows that there is some shift and interest in moving out of the suburbs and interest in transit.

V. McLeod noted that the Department of Cultural Resources recently finished its barnstorming tour across NH in partnership with Travel and Tourism and took a look at the new state branding effort. He brought along copies of the GSF brochure and comment cards and made announcements about the regional planning process which was very well received.

C. Sinnott noted that opposition has quieted down and attributes it to getting out accurate information and debunking myths. The Executive Committee has been discussing putting together a statewide survey to get general response to policy questions. Rockingham Planning Commission is working with UNH Survey center to refine the proposal. The survey will be done with a statewide sample and will have oversampling in those regions that have chosen to do so. The next step is to develop questions for the survey. B. Frost suggested looking at the APA's recent national survey for ideas for questions.

3. Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment

J. Czysz gave an overview of how the Report was developed and then asked for the review and comments of committee members. There are still areas that are highlighted for future brainstorming or where comments are particularly needed.

There was some discussion about the structure of the report and will each of the RPC be developing a companion report to highlight regional existing conditions and trends or would such information be included directly within each of the technical plan components? This distinction is important to understand whether the report is sufficient as is in just highlighting state level trends. J. Czysz will ensure this conversation is one the next Executive Committee meeting agenda to ensure a consistent approach is utilized by all RPCs.

B. Mallory recommended preparing an Executive Summary that highlights the major trends, up front without having to sift through and find them in the 40 pages. Recommended adding the SCORP to list of documents identified as existing resources at the front of the report.

C. Russell asked for clarification on where the identified issues and opportunities came from. J. Czysz noted they were from the brainstorming session at the May 2012 Kick-off event. The committee was concerned that the existing conditions and trends assessment should be fact only, so the issues and opportunities section should be in a different document. There was discussion also about the appropriateness of inclusion of the considerations for the future sections as well.

C. Walker liked how the report is set up, but agrees with Carolyn that the values based information included in the issues and opportunities sections were too “squishy” and should not be part of a fact based document. B. Mallory also agreed and recommended removing the brainstorming session information as it gave undue weight to a single brainstorming session and also makes it look like we’ve already made decisions about what the issues and opportunities are before we commence the listening sessions. However, he felt the considerations for the future were important to include, as they provide a stepping stone from the data to next steps for RPCs, but need to make sure that they are framed in a way that doesn’t include final decisions. He said that he would like to see each of the considerations for the future framed as a question. All agreed that this helps get to the intent of this section that is simply to ask what is important to think about for the future.

V. McLeod said we need to ask who the audience is. If the document is to go beyond being useful for planners we need to look at how it is written and put together. The ability to write a document that is accessible is crucial. Need to also think about what the future trends are that we need to think about. The final report can have a significant amount of value if we can make cross connections and the report understandable by all.

C. Sinnott stated that some of the trends are trying to say too much in one sentence and suggested maybe break them apart. For example, aging and migration may take more than one trend statement each. In response to V. McLeod’s question of who is this report for? His opinion is that the audience for his regional plan is the municipalities and municipal officials he works with.

T. Smith asked if this will be a living document that is subject to updating in the future. All felt that this was a good idea and suggested that the Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment be iterative so as to set the stage as we see the state now and then allow for a refinement after the regional plans are complete. The title was suggested to be revised as Initial Research on Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment for the first iteration of the report.

T. Smith commented on the paragraph about child care on page 28 that is mentioned in the existing needs statement but doesn’t have a tie in component in the “considerations for the future.” This is an important consideration for the future and economic development need that needs to be built into our local planning efforts.

C. Russell commented that she didn’t see the timber industry information provided by the Natural Resources TASC and wanted to ensure it was incorporated as the TASC viewed it as very important.

C. Walker noted that the use of the word “loss” on page 25 as currently used is pejorative and stated it should be edited to read “a transition” from one use to the other.

T. Smith asked about the methodology to calculate the unemployment rate and whether a state-to-state comparison was valid given the potential for inconsistent calculation methods. All agreed that the unemployment data was some of the least reliable data but was the best there was available.

C. Walker asked what the time frame or constraints for going forward and recommending changes? B. Mallory said NH Listens would need it completed, or at least a revised draft, before February 1st when they will hold the first listening sessions. Ideally they will need a five page summary by mid-January. The committee agreed that comments on the Existing Conditions and Trends Assessment should be submitted after a month.

Comments should be submitted to J. Czyns by January 2nd, 2013. She will send a reminder before the holidays. She is looking for comments on areas flagged for brainstorming, and for committee members to flag any language that may not be easily understood or may sound pejorative, and any existing data items that may have been overlooked.

4. Regional Plan Framework

J. Czyns gave an overview of how the framework was developed and then asked for the review and comments of committee members. The committee members had questions about the regional plan outline and consistency with traditional master plans. The committee requested that the plan outline be on the next Executive Committee agenda to decide whether the outline needed modification. There was concern however that given the degree of research that has already been completed, changing the outline would require some work to need to be revised, such as the matrices prepared by the TASCs.

B. Frost asked how much time each should invest on revisions to the individual matrices versus just making sure critical information is cited at least once for specific chapters. J. Czyns noted that she would be consolidating the matrices by plan chapter and removing any redundant listings of existing resources, policies, and baseline information. That said, redundant citations would be noted through the identification of which livability principle each item related to.

Regarding the matrices, C. Sinnott had a question on p. 25 and thought the title was incorrect. C. Russell noted that in fact it did have the wrong title, it was the work of the Natural Resources TASC not that of the Traditional Settlement Patterns TASC. C. Sinnott noted the framework was a great resource for staff to start their work and would help ensure major pieces were not missed.

C. Russell noted that the Natural Resources TASC has refinements to the definition of the livability principle and would make sure to forward those changes for incorporation into the framework.

V. McLeod was interested to know how communities will use and interpret the framework. From his perspective the project is all about collaboration.

All refinements and suggested edits are to be sent to J. Czyns by December 13, 2013.

5. Next Steps

Committee Membership – The committee discussed who might still be missing from the conversation. Suggestions included town welfare, the Forest Society, and Granite state Independent

Living (GSIL). B. Mallory did note that GSIL is on NH Listens' list of groups they will be meeting with as part of their focus group based community of interest sessions.

M. Sanborn felt that at this point it might be best to go forward with the group that we have already rather than bring in new individuals and have to back track or redo work.

Committee and TASC roles as we enter phase 2 - D. Preece suggested perhaps having a few Advisory Committee meetings with legislators and other think tank type groups to get specific feedback. All agreed that it would be good to take this approach for meetings in May and August 2013 – inviting additional attendees to host a roundtable type focus group oriented discussion.

6. Next Meeting – February 28, 2012, Local Government Center

7. Other Business

There was no other business to come before the committee.

8. Public Comments and Questions

There were no members of the public present or questions posed during the public comment and question period.