

Nashua Regional Planning Commission Outreach Strategy

1. Overview

Each of the state's nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's) is required by state statute to prepare coordinated plans for their respective region. In 2011, the RPC's were awarded a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This grant offers a unique opportunity for the RPC's to share data and resources in state wide planning process called *Granite State Future*. It allows the RPC's to explore broader and deeper into issues such as housing, transportation, economic development, energy & climate issues, and natural resources that affect their regions. It will provide an opportunity to invite and engage members of our communities who are not normally included in the regional planning process to be heard. Each RPC will develop a public outreach and engagement strategy to identify these groups to become part of the process that will help inform the development of the regional plan.

2. Goals and Objectives

- a. Engage the public and gather as many perspectives as possible
 - i. Engage the public in face to face conversations
 - ii. Use online tools such as newsletters, website and social media
 - iii. Engage the public out in the community.
 - iv. Tailor the outreach process to reach specific target audiences that may not always be included in the planning process.
- b. Spread the message that we are actively seeking input from everyone in the region.
 - i. Frame the message in a way that will engage the public.
 - ii. Use as many different formats as possible to distribute the message.
- c. Ensure all communities in the region are included.
 - i. Work with local communities to identify opportunities for outreach
 - ii. Ensure that individuals, in addition to groups and organizations, are reached out to.
- d. Engage and coordinate with local partners and organizations
 - i. Work with Regional Advisory Subcommittee to reach out to their networks.
 - ii. Actively seek out local partners and organizations to spread the message to them and their connections.

3. Phase 1 Outreach:

- a. **Community Events** – NRPC staff attended numerous community events in the summer and fall of 2012 including Old Home Days, Fall Festivals, Business expos, etc. People were asked to fill out a comment card to answer what they liked best about this area and what could make it better.
- b. **Listening Boxes** – Comment card boxes were left at various locations throughout the region. They were put in places that are frequented by members of the public such as libraries, restaurants, town halls, etc.
- c. **Website** – the Granite State Future website (<http://granitestatefuture.org/>) was developed as a way for people to give their input on line. Also, a QR code was added to the comment cards, boxes and posters, so that people could scan the survey in the smartphones and take it at their convenience.
- d. **Open House** – In November 2012, NRPC hosted an Open House to provide an update on what heard so far from our communities. Several stations were placed throughout the office including Economic Development, Natural Resources, Transportation, and Housing. Each station included existing conditions data, and related maps and charts. Participants were invited to add their input on each of the topic areas.

4. Phase 2 Strategies:

- a. **NRPC Full Commission Meetings** –The NRPC Commissioners meet quarterly to review the regional plan progress, and to offer guidance and suggestions. The Full Commission will be responsible for adopting the final plan.
- b. **Regional Advisory Subcommittee** – The Regional Advisory Subcommittee was created to work with NRPC staff to ensure a broad spectrum of local participation and inclusion during the planning process. They will advise on the best manner to achieve the greatest results in terms of engaging the largest number of participants and ensuring a diversity of participation. The subcommittee will meet on a monthly basis.
- c. **Topic Committees** - There are four topic committees (Transportation, Housing, Community and Economic Vitality, and Natural Resources) whose responsibilities will include developing chapters in their respective topic areas and will assist in identifying other groups that we should be reaching out to (see Neighborhood Conversations below). They will also report out at full Commission Meetings, participate in Scenario Planning and Visioning Sessions in the fall of 2013 and review and provide comments on draft chapters. Each will start with a workshop and then will have at least two follow up meetings:
 - i. Meeting #1
 1. Review, refine and affirm workshop results

2. Existing Conditions & Trends
 3. Vision/Goals
 4. Strengths, Needs & Opportunities
 5. Objectives, Strategies & priorities
 6. Discuss equity & environmental justice issues – who isn't at the table? Who else do we need to talk to?
 7. Look at Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) recommendations
 8. Discuss chapter content and data
- ii. Meeting #2
 1. Results of neighborhood conversations
 2. Reaffirm Vision/Goals/Objectives
 3. Finalize Implementation Strategies and identify investment priorities
- d. **Topic Oriented Workshops** – NRPC will be hosting a series of workshops in each of the topic areas. These will be used as a way to kick off the topic committees and to solicit input. It will also be used as a way to identify other groups that NRPC should be talking with. The following outline will be used for each workshop:
- i. Review NH Livability Principles
 - ii. Draft Vision & Goals
 - iii. What we've heard from Phase 1
 - iv. Existing visions/recommendations/goals from local master plans
 - v. What is working (Regional Strengths)
 - vi. What are issues we need to address (Regional Needs & Opportunities)
 - vii. Identify objectives and strategies
- e. **Communities of Interest** - UNH Cooperative Extension will identify and engage specific interest groups for each RPC made up primarily of underserved populations. These will be in the form of focus groups and interviews.
- f. **Communities of Place** – NH Listens and UNH Cooperative Extension will be conducting at least one public conversation in each of the regions focusing on the question, “How can the places we live, work, and learn become sustainable, livable, and meaningful for ALL our residents?” These community-based, facilitated dialogues will be grounded in the NH Livability Principles and guided by NH Listens' core commitments to inclusive, civil, and safe dialogue and emphasize the particular nature of the place in which the conversations are occurring. NRPC will work with these partners to get as much participation in the workshop as possible. Nashua will be hosting their Community of Place conversation on April 30, 2013.

- g. ***Neighborhood Conversations*** – In addition to the above outreach activities, NRPC will attend various meetings and events with existing groups and organizations in the region. NRPC will also hold interviews with individuals to talk about issues that impact them. Working with HEAL, NRPC will be addressing issues of equity and environmental justice by not only identify marginalized groups in the region but also how to frame the conversation. A few meetings identified include:
- Nashua Elder Wrap (meets monthly)
 - Breakfast Exchange Club
 - The Greater Nashua Continuum of Care (meets monthly)
 - The Greater Nashua Healthy Community Collaborative
 - The Greater Nashua Area Committee on Aging
 - Seniors Count (meets monthly)
 - Nashua Police Department – monthly meeting with the Latino community
 - Others to be identified by the Regional Advisory Committee
- h. ***Scenario Planning Workshops*** – In the Fall of 2013, NRPC will host scenario planning workshops throughout the region that will test the various future visions that will be collected throughout the Summer. Feedback from these scenario planning exercises will be used to create the Regional Vision, and direct the development of final goals, objectives & strategies.
- i. ***On-line Communication*** – In these modern times, a strong on-line presence is critical to any outreach strategy. NRPC will be using a combination of a website, social media outlets and an email newsletter.
- i. Website – The Granite State Future website will continue to be used as a way for people to give their input. The NRPC subpage will also contain upcoming events, related documents and other information for the region.
 - ii. Social Media – NRPC will use Facebook and Twitter to report on progress of the committee meetings, neighborhood conversations, etc. It will be also used to update on upcoming events and related articles will also be posted.
 - iii. E-news – At least monthly, an email newsletter (Constant Contact) will be sent out to interested members of the community.