

MOVING SOUTHERN NH FORWARD

VOLUME 1



2015-2035

Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015



Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission works to make our region a better place by facilitating cooperative and long term decision making. We believe a promising future can be achieved through fiscally sound and responsible planning and development decisions that improve the economy, efficiency and health of our region.

June 2014 – DRAFT

Telling the Story and Plan Implementation



Volume 1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TELLING THE STORY	1
Introduction	1
The SNHPC Region	3
The Region’s Future	4
What the Region Values Most	6
A Vision for the Future	8
CHAPTER SUMMARIES	11
 Land Use: Existing and Future.....	11
 Housing.....	13
 Transportation.....	15
 Community Infrastructure and Facilities.....	17
 Environment, Open Space and Agriculture.....	19
 Economic Development.....	22
 Cultural (Arts and Culture) & Historic Resources.....	24
 Climate Change Impacts Assessment.....	26
 Energy Efficiency.....	28
IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.....	31
Roles and Responsibilities.....	31
Summary of Priority Action Recommendations.....	31

TABLES

Top Action Recommendations.....	32
Prioritized Projects.....	34

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TELLING THE STORY

INTRODUCTION

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) is nearing completion of a major two-year effort to prepare the commission's **Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015: Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward**. This work has been funded by the Granite State Future project, a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Grant, awarded through the Nashua Regional Planning Commission to all nine regional planning commissions in New Hampshire.¹

The planning process in developing the **Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015: Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward** included an ambitious one-year campaign to reach out and involve the public – all ages, abilities, races and incomes - in seeking and obtaining public opinions, viewpoints and recommendations for how to improve and enhance the region's quality of life. This significant public outreach process took place during 2013 and involved face-to-face and online discussions via social media, as well as neighborhood conversations, community events, and public visioning and listening sessions. A project website was also developed, which included interactive tools for public engagement, including Facebook and Twitter. Media blasts, blog posts, press releases, newsletter articles, and Textizen (a texting/website tool), were also used to gather public input.

In addition, many “listening boxes” were physically distributed in key locations around the region where comment cards could be completed and submitted by the public. Flyers and posters were also distributed to community bulletin boards, and many community events and open houses were held on the project. The University of New Hampshire Survey Center also conducted a comprehensive statewide telephone survey among residents within each region of the state.

In all of this public outreach, the SNHPC and its project partners strove to ensure that as many voices as possible in the community and the region were heard, including the voices of the underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized populations (including refugees/immigrants, the homeless, working poor/low income, minorities, disabled/handicapped, veterans, youth and the elderly). A complete overview of these public outreach efforts and all the feedback and public input received is summarized in a

¹ For more information about Granite State Future see websites: www.snhpc.org and www.granitestatefuture.org

Public Outreach Report: Part 2 of the Public Outreach Strategy, available on the SNHPC website at www.snhpc.org.

The development of this DRAFT plan also reflects the hard work of SNHPC staff and a volunteer Project Leadership Team made up of planning commissioners, town planners, and community representatives including residents and businesses from around the region (see Acknowledgement page). SNHPC staff and the Project Leadership Team worked together to prepare and review all the written technical components and chapters of the plan. The Project Leadership Team held a total of 13 advisory committee meetings between 2013 and 2014 in guiding and overseeing the development of these chapters and the completion of this DRAFT plan. All of the meetings of the Leadership Team were advertised and open to the public.

The next step in the planning process is to publish the DRAFT plan and to hold a 30-day public review process proposed for the month of July 2014. Copies of the DRAFT plan will be posted on SNHPC's Granite State Future webpage (see www.snhpc.org), a press release will be issued, and CDs of the DRAFT plan will be distributed to every public library, municipality and county in the region for public review and comment. All public comments received will be recorded and a written response shall be prepared by SNHPC staff. After the 30-day public review, the final DRAFT plan will be presented to the SNHPC Planning Commission for adoption at a public hearing proposed to be scheduled in August 2014.

The primary purpose of this plan is (1) to take a comprehensive look at the SNHPC Region, considering its land use and transportation needs, as well as the overall condition of the region's economic growth and vitality, health, and natural and cultural resources; and (2) to present a new vision for the region based upon what the community values, including setting forth new goals and recommendations for what the planning commission can do in continuing to help improve the SNHPC Region in the years ahead. The ***Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015: Moving the Southern New Hampshire Forward*** also provides a centralized resource of information and data about the region and the region's communities. All of this information is important and can be used by the public and local government in developing and updating master plans, conducting local and regional studies, generating reports, and preparing grant applications.

The plan is divided into two volumes: Volume I containing this introduction, a brief summary of each chapter of the plan, and the plan's key goals and action recommendations; and, Volume 2 containing all nine chapters of the plan. These chapters provide a wealth of information about the following topic areas:

1. Land Use: Existing and Future
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Community Infrastructure and Facilities
5. Environment, Open Space and Agriculture
6. Economic Development
7. Cultural (Arts and Culture) & Historic Resources
8. Climate Change Impacts Assessment
9. Energy Efficiency

It is important to note that SNHPC's ***Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015: Moving the Southern New Hampshire Forward*** has no legal authority or binding requirement upon any local, regional or state agency, organization, municipality or county. All of the goals and recommendations contained in the plan are advisory only and local government "may consider" these goals and recommendations in making decisions and in carrying out various projects, activities and planning programs as they see fit. As such, this plan serves primarily as an educational tool offering guidance to the public and communities about a variety of concepts, tools and planning studies which can aid in enhancing the region's quality of life, economy and environment.

THE SNHPC REGION

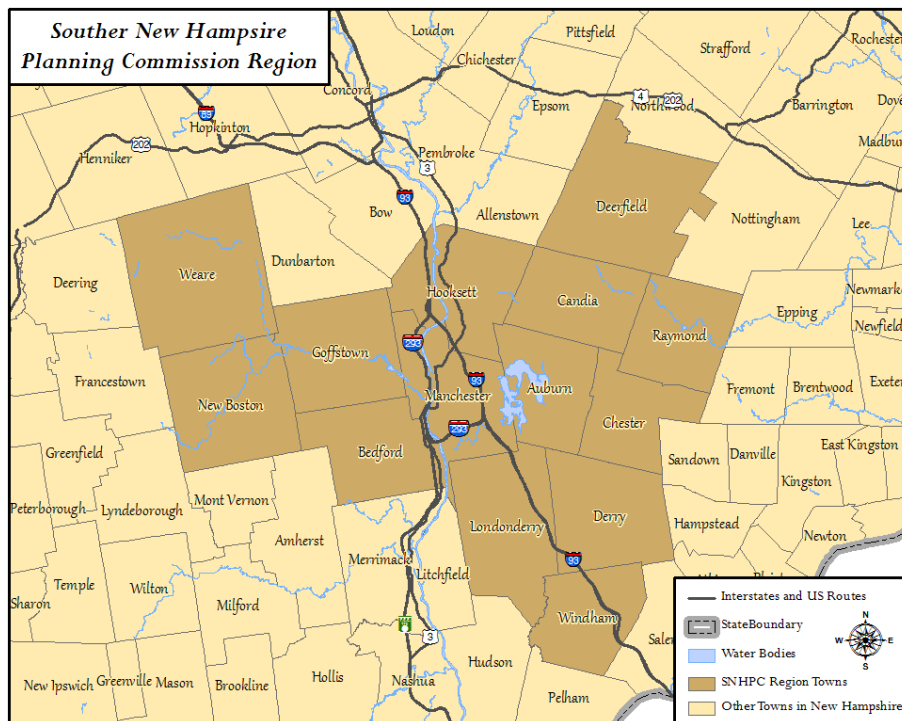
The SNHPC Region is located within what is commonly known as the Merrimack River Valley of the state. The Merrimack River, one of the region's most important natural resources, flows north to south through the center of the region provides a natural geographic and political boundary between Hillsborough and Merrimack counties to the north and west, and Rockingham County to the east. The Merrimack River is the largest single river basin in New Hampshire and as such it has a major influence on the topography and natural landscape of the region.

Cumulatively, the SNHPC Region is roughly 520 square miles in size.² Residential and commercial development is the largest land use, and historically the region has evolved from an agricultural and industrial base to what many consider today as a service and high tech manufacturing economy. Like much of New Hampshire, the SNHPC Region currently enjoys four seasons and shares a climate similar to most of southern New England. Located within an hour drive of the City of Boston to the south, the White Mountains to the north, and the seacoast to the east, the SNHPC Region is centrally positioned in a desirable location with convenient highway access to almost any part of the state.

² NH Granite

This central location and convenient access is a driving force behind the region’s economic growth and its quality of life – both of which are key factors influencing the people and businesses that choose to live or move here. Currently, the SNHPC Region is home to roughly 274,854 people, 6,959 businesses, and 119,405 private and public sector jobs (2010 U.S. Census and NH Employment Security Labor Market Information Bureau, 2011, Annual Averages). The majority of the SNHPC Region’s population resides within the City of Manchester, the largest city and center of employment in the state.

In addition to the City of Manchester, the SNHPC Region includes portions of three counties (Hillsborough, Merrimack and Rockingham) and 13 municipalities ranging in size from as small as 3,909 to as large as 35,000 people (2010 U.S. Census). These municipalities include the towns of Auburn, Bedford, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Derry, Goffstown, Hooksett, Londonderry, New Boston, Raymond, Weare and Windham (see following map of the SNHPC Region).



THE REGION’S FUTURE

As documented in this plan, the SNHPC Region is projected to experience increased population growth, reaching a total of roughly 320,000 people by the year 2035. Much of this growth is anticipated to occur due to new business growth and development and related in-migration attracted to the region as a result of the widening of I-93 from two

to three paved lanes in both directions between the Massachusetts state line and the City of Manchester. This improved major highway will make it much easier for commuters and interstate commerce to travel between the two states, thus attracting more businesses and people to the region.

The City of Manchester and the towns of Bedford, Derry, Hooksett, Londonderry and Windham, which have direct or convenient access to the I-93 corridor, are anticipated to experience the majority of the region's future growth by the year 2035. Many of the smaller towns within the region, including Auburn, Candia, Chester, Deerfield, Goffstown, New Boston, Raymond and Weare, will also experience increased growth, but this growth will be primarily related to the outward movement of people and goods beyond the economic center of the region and the I-93 corridor. As more people move to the region over the next 20 years, some people and businesses will choose to live in smaller communities which have convenient highway access, good schools, adequate public facilities and resources, and most importantly, a sense of community and a rural lifestyle.

With this increase in growth, additional pressures will be placed on local government to expand services, improve public facilities and roads, and provide adequate schools and recreational facilities, including providing necessary services to support an aging population. These pressures will raise the importance and role of local and state government to plan and prepare for the future. This will also include institutionalizing effective leadership in local planning and decision-making, and maintaining an adequate tax base to pay for the new services and facilities that will be required by the public.

In addition to these growth pressures, the SNHPC Region, the state, nation and the world will be facing a major challenge in the 21st century: Climate Change. If the impacts of burning fossil fuels continue to go unchecked without measureable reductions in emissions, it is projected that around 2035 climate change will have very serious implications and impacts on New Hampshire's and the SNHPC Region's economy, environment, and health. Whether we accept this premise or not, we all have an obligation to work together to address the serious threats to our physical environment, public health and food systems imposed by warmer temperatures and droughts; and increased storms, rainfall events and flooding.

We have an opportunity today to address these significant challenges by working together in transitioning to new and innovative ways of doing things. We cannot continue to plan and build our communities as we did in the past. We must take advantage of new forms of renewable energy, build energy efficient buildings and transportation systems, and incorporate low impact and sustainable development practices in planning and constructing our communities. We must continue to grow our economy and protect our environment, and most importantly prepare our children as

they approach a future which will be significantly challenged by forces and events beyond their control, but within ours.

While this plan cannot possibly address the consequences of climate change alone; the plan helps to define the issues and offer ideas, suggestions and approaches which can be embraced now to prepare for a changing world. By working together on climate change, we will also be enhancing the character of our communities and our region – e.g. the core values and characteristics which make our region an attractive place and environment to live and work. All of this will require that we have a good understanding of who we are as a region and what our region values and desires in moving Southern NH forward and building a better future.

WHAT THE REGION VALUES MOST

In preparing this plan, we have learned the SNHPC Region contains a diversity of people, places and communities – a diversity that continues to change daily with new buildings and new people relocating to the region. Yet, among all the people, places and communities in the region, it is clear from the results of our public outreach efforts and campaign, there are many people and places in the region that share similar needs and similar values. Specifically, there are three core themes or values have been identified. These include:

1. Strong Sense of Community
2. Embrace and Preserve Diverse Settlement Patterns
3. Transportation Choices



Strong Sense of Community

One of the major themes reflected among all the different public outreach efforts in developing this plan is that the SNHPC Region has a strong sense of community. Families have deep roots and strong social networks and maintaining these support systems is highly valued. This common value is shared by many throughout the region and many residents agree it is one of the most important characteristics which make the SNHPC Region a great place to live, work and play.

Because many municipalities in the region are relatively small in population (e.g. even the City of Manchester is comparably small when looking at other larger cities throughout the nation), this sense of belonging to a community allows everyone to feel they are part of the fabric and environment where they live, work and play.

Along with this strong sense of community, many residents and businesses in the region also strongly value being a part of the local decision-making process. When decisions are made at the local level, people feel they are heard and valued more so than when those decisions are made at the state or federal level. The local decision-making process is an important characteristic of what makes for a strong sense of community in the region.

From all the results of the public outreach efforts, it was also noted that the region's population is aging; youth are leaving the state; and long-time residents are being outnumbered by newcomers. The ramifications of these changes are concerning to many residents living in the region. There is widespread agreement that we need to plan appropriately for our changing demographics and consider how we can retain our younger generations in order to maintain the region's economic vitality in the future.



Embrace and Preserve Diverse Settlement Patterns



Another major theme emerging out of the public outreach efforts conducted for this plan is a widely held recognition that there are distinct differences in settlement patterns between the many communities of the SNHPC Region and that we should embrace and preserve these differences. In addition, it is clear that many of the small, rural communities in the region value their historical and scenic character and would like to keep their communities on this path.

"I live away, but Manchester will always be home. I've loved watching its revitalization over the last 15 years or so, as the downtown and Millyard have taken off and I can't think of anywhere else in NH – maybe New England – where the natural landscape and urban space co-exist so dramatically, as when I see Saint Marie's lit against the sunset behind Uncanoonuc, or when the Merrimack roars past hulking, 150-year old mills."

A public comment received at PeopleFest held in downtown Manchester on August 25, 2013.

In the City of Manchester and the more densely settled communities of the region, residents value the convenience, services and options for housing, transportation, and other amenities and attractions that urban life provides. Those who live in the rural areas of the region also value access to these services, amenities and attractions with relative ease, while still living in a small town setting.

Conversely, residents in the more densely-settled communities appreciate that they can access the open space, forests and natural beauty located in the rural areas of the region. While all the region's communities are diverse in terms of their historical settlement patterns, it is this diversity in settlement patterns and land use that those residents who live, work and play in the region value the most.



Transportation Choices

In addition to embracing a strong sense of community and valuing the region's diversity in settlement patterns and land use, it is clear that the SNHPC Region also appreciates having more than one choice for transportation. Specifically many residents feel the region could be doing a better job of expanding and making more transportation options available. Residents in the SNHPC Region would like to see better and more transportation infrastructure provided, not just for motorized vehicles, but improved infrastructure for all modes of transportation, including bicycles, walking and public transit. While expanding transportation choices may be limited by the infrastructure that currently exists, everyone agrees more work is needed in developing and finding creative solutions for improving the region's existing infrastructure and expanding alternative transportation options for all modes of travel.

A VISION FOR FUTURE

The three themes discussed above – a strong sense of community and local identity; maintaining diverse settlement and land use patterns; and expanding local transportation choices and opportunities are reflected in the following Value and Vision Statements for the SNHPC Region.

These Value and Vision Statements for the region have been reviewed and endorsed by the Project Leadership Team and as such, they provide important guiding principles that are integrated throughout the plan and the plan's key goals/objectives and top actions recommendations.

Values Held Within the Southern New Hampshire Region



Traditional Settlement Patterns: Historical settlement patterns vary from community to community and regional values reflect appreciation for this diversity; residents want future development to largely occur in areas that are already developed.



Housing Choices: Residents demonstrate a preference for a range of different housing types and neighborhoods, but everyone values housing choices that are safe and affordable for all.



Transportation Choices: Expanding and improving upon our local and regional transportation choices for all modes of travel, including bicycling, walking and public transit; choice needs to be a priority to enhance our region.



Natural Resource Functions and Quality: Value for rural living is deeply rooted in enjoyment of the beautiful, quality environment; residents want to keep this way of life and protect the functions and quality of the environment and natural resources.



Community and Economic Vitality: Residents treasure the strong bonds in their communities and want to ensure they address the needs of seniors, attract youth, and serve every child and adult in between. They value the community strength that comes from quality schools, enhanced job creation and expanded economic development opportunities, including small business growth and local agriculture.



Climate Change and Energy Efficiency: Residents support renewable energy choices such as solar, wind, and geothermal that are climate-friendly. They support policies for higher energy efficiency standards in new buildings and incentives for home energy efficiency improvements. Many residents are also concerned about various weather-related events.



Local Decision-Making: Residents believe that equity is found in local decision-making and strongly value being involved in their communities as well as collaborating regionally.

Vision Statement for the Southern New Hampshire Region

In the SNHPC Region, we place a high value on our strong sense of community, our local identity and our local decision making; however, we also recognize that all fourteen (14) municipalities within the region benefit through regional collaboration and cooperation. As we plan for the future, we must continue to value and protect our built and natural environment, prepare for climate change impacts, and increase renewable energy initiatives and choices. We need to take into account the diversity in age and income of the population; respect the distinct differences, settlement patterns and historic characteristics of our communities; and ensure a variety of affordable housing options. Expanding and improving upon our local and regional transportation choices for all modes of travel, including bicycle, walking and public transit, needs to be a priority to enhance our region. Quality education, enhanced job creation, and expanded economic development opportunities will ensure that the region attracts and retains residents and businesses. We believe that through strong communities and local decision-making, the SNHPC Region will continue to grow and prosper in the coming years.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES



Land Use – Existing and Future

Introduction: The SNHPC Region is by far the largest populated region of New Hampshire. While population growth over the past ten years or so has been slow (0.5% annual growth since 2000), economic conditions are improving in the region and signs of new growth and new development can be found in almost every community. The SNHPC is projecting that by 2035, the SNHPC Region will add more than 50,000 new residents. What does this mean for the region’s existing and future land use patterns? Will current land use trends continue? Will residential and commercial development continue to expand as industrial and agricultural land decline? Where will the region’s new business and industrial growth occur? These are key questions and issues that are explored in the **Land Use – Existing and Future Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: In developing this plan, residents and businesses in the region indicated they highly value the geographic location of the SNHPC Region. Being close to Boston and other urban areas in the state with convenient access to recreational opportunities, such as the mountains and beaches, including the opportunity of living in smaller and rural communities is an advantage. Many residents also expressed strong support for mixed use development, as well as living in compact, walkable urban centers with easy access between home, work and cultural activities.

When asked the question “where should future development occur?” More than two-thirds (67 percent) of residents think that future development should occur in areas that are already developed.

Fewer residents (26 percent) support development in undeveloped areas and 7 percent did not know where future development should occur.

67%
want future development to occur in areas that are already developed

89%
want local agriculture to be encouraged in the community

In addition, a majority of residents (90%) responding to the public outreach surveys say that protecting historic buildings and neighborhoods is a priority. Also a large percentage of residents (89%) agree that promoting local agriculture should be actively encouraged in the community as well as promoting safe places to walk or bike. Another 85 percent say expanding or promoting current businesses is equally important.

Key Issues:

- Between 2000 and 2010, the SNHPC Region grew at a slow rate of 0.5 percent per year, reflecting a total increase of only 12,424 people. The towns of Bedford, Hooksett, New Boston, Weare, Windham and the City of Manchester experienced the majority of this population increase while several towns, Candia and Derry, actually lost population.
- Despite this slow population growth, the region is consuming land at a steady and constant rate. In 1995, 30 percent of the region was developed. By 2010, the total amount of developed land increased to 44.5 percent.
- As of 2010, about 26 percent of the region is residential, 3.2 percent is commercial, 1.3 percent industrial, 9.10 percent semi-public and public, and 4.9 percent are utilities and streets.
- The total amount of industrial land decreased by 11.5 percent between 2000 and 2010, while commercial land increased by 145.2 percent.
- Prior to 2010, growth management was the focus of planning activity for many communities. Today, community and economic development is one of the largest concerns, including creating jobs and improving the local and regional economy.
- Maintaining and promoting compatible zoning along the borders between communities and along major highway corridors also continues to be an ongoing need in the region.
- Other important land use issues include promoting agricultural zoning; encouraging growth and development within areas served or planned to be served by public water and sewer; and promoting livable, walkable and mixed use development.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Support existing municipal and traditional village centers, and compact growth patterns.
2. Guide growth to existing developed areas with available public infrastructure and services.
3. Promote a diversity of land uses to support and strengthen local tax base.
4. Make zoning more agriculturally friendly.
5. Reduce development pressures on existing agricultural lands and agriculturally important soils.
6. Encourage infill development within existing commercial and industrial areas, including downtowns, commercial centers and industrial parks.
7. Provide communities with planning tools needed for successful mixed use.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Continue to monitor and map the region's land use.**
2. **Continue to provide land use and zoning ordinance assistance to communities, including master planning.**
3. **Provide assistance to communities in community development, including preparing and administering community development block grants for infrastructure, housing and other community needs.**

4. Assist communities in developing village center overlay zoning districts, site plan and subdivision regulations which are in keeping with the historic character of the community.
5. Assist planning boards in evaluating land use regulations within existing and projected future water and sewer service areas to achieve higher levels of density and mixed use.
6. Assist communities in conducting Cost of Community Services Studies (COCS) that can be used as planning and policy tools to balance land use and strengthen the local tax base.



Housing:

Introduction: Over the past decade and following the “Great Recession”, numerous housing changes have taken place in the SNHPC Region. The number of dwelling units in the region has increased by 11,577 from 2000 through 2010, an increase of 11.53 percent. There are now approximately 111,993 dwelling units in the SNHPC Region (2010 U.S. Census). New Boston had the greatest unit increase (34.54%); Derry had the least (4.26%). In 2013 and 2014, the New Hampshire Housing market began to experience a slow, steady recovery with foreclosures declining and home prices on the upswing. The National Bureau of Economic Research declared the end of the Great Recession in June 2009, and the U.S. economy and housing market is continuing to recover.

Single-family homes are the predominant housing type in the region. The average purchase price of a new home in the region during the first half of 2013 was \$312,713, indicating that purchase prices are trending upward. Median home values range from a high of \$391,500 (Windham) to a low of \$212,000 (Raymond). The cost of renting an apartment in the region has also increased. The highest median gross rents can be found in Bedford, Candia and Windham, all over \$1,300 per month. The low availability of rental units in many communities may be contributing to high rents.

**Housing Choice tied with
Community & Economic
Vitality**

as the 3rd most important way to
improve the Region

It is estimated there are 27,339 households paying 30 percent or more of their monthly income for housing in the SNHPC Region. Looking ahead to 2020, it is estimated there will be 40,276 workforce households with this financial burden. These and many other related housing and economic statistics can be found in the **Housing Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Ownership Affordability:

Very Affordable-9%

Somewhat Affordable-56%

Not Very Affordable-24%

Not Affordable-5%

Don't Know-6%

Community Input: While only a few written public comments were received on the topic of housing affordability among the surveys performed for this plan, 65 percent of the residents responding feel that housing affordability is not a major issue within the SNHPC Region. Roughly 29 percent in total, however, believe it is an issue and 6 percent do not know. More information on these survey results is provided in the Housing Chapter in Volume 2.

Key Issues:

- The SNHPC Region and the state’s population is aging. This demographic trend is and will continue to place increased pressures on local and state government to provide necessary social, health, transportation, emergency and other community services in the future.
- New housing development is expanding, but not equally among all communities within the region.
- Most of the region’s workforce housing opportunities are located in the City of Manchester and the towns of Derry and Raymond. Outside of these communities, options are limited and less clear.
- Most of the region’s affordable rental units are becoming scarce in some communities as rental costs rise across the region.
- New home and apartment construction is not keeping pace with trends prior to the recession – recovery continues to be very slow.
- Housing affordability and cost burden for workforce households continues to be an issue in the region.
- Housing affordability is further challenged by high per capita property tax collections in the region and the state.
- More education, training and information is needed on fair housing rights and improving fair housing choices within the region.
- Racially concentrated areas of poverty exist within the SNHPC Region, mostly in the City of Manchester.
- Many of the region’s younger population and families (20 to 30 years of age) cannot afford to purchase a home due to large college debts and low wages.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Continue to encourage a variety of housing choices in every community in the region.
2. Support comprehensive public outreach campaigns to increase education and training opportunities for workforce housing, fair housing, rental and elderly housing needs in the region.
3. Work to address statewide housing issues that impact the Southern New Hampshire region.
4. Continue to monitor statewide, regional and local trends to ensure that housing needs are being met.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Support incentives for investment in reuse and redevelopment of existing structures.**
2. **Encourage cluster housing to provide affordable housing and to protect the environment.**
3. **Encourage walkable and “village neighborhood” development to enhance employment and housing opportunities.**
4. **Seek CDBG funding to improve affordable housing opportunities.**
5. **Encourage broader zoning definitions of “single-family housing” which would permit multi-generational living arrangements, including accessory and in-law apartments.**
6. **Conduct zoning ordinance reviews; develop recommendations to provide workforce housing.**



Transportation

Introduction: It is clear that many residents of the SNHPC Region would like to see improved transportation infrastructure for all modes of transportation; not only for the automobile, but also for bicycles, pedestrians and public transit. According to the NH Department of Health and Human Services, many residents report their communities do not have sidewalks or bicycle lanes. While 24 percent report having paved streets that include sidewalks, only 4 percent report having paved streets with bike lanes (NH Obesity Program). Federal funding sources are increasing opportunities to expand multi-modal transportation networks to incorporate alternate forms of transportation at state, regional and local levels.

Transportation is also a major contributor to climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies transportation in the United State as the second of five major fuel consuming sectors contributing to carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fossil fuel combustion. Between 1990 and 2011, transportation was responsible on average for 39 percent of New Hampshire carbon emissions. Most recently in 2011, transportation accounted for a notable 43 percent of emissions. The data suggests that reducing carbon emissions from transportation is an important climate change mitigation strategy (EPA). How can the transportation systems in the SNHPC Region reduce our reliance on fossil fuels? What is the existing infrastructure and what are its problems? How can public safety and mobility be improved? These and other questions are explored in the **Transportation Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: The results of the public surveys prepared for this plan indicate that many residents want more choices in their transportation systems. With regard to walking and biking, a large majority of residents (89 percent) said they want their community to promote safe places to walk or bicycle when asked

89 percent
of residents want their community to promote safe places to walk and bicycle

“What should be actively encouraged in your community?” This suggests broad support for Complete Streets that provide accommodation for not only automobiles, but also for

73 percent
of residents want policy makers to invest more money maintaining roads, highways and bridges

pedestrians and bicyclists. Public transportation is the most frequently requested transportation improvement with over one third (35 percent) of comments associated with this general outreach question.

Nearly three-fourths (73 percent) of residents think policy makers should invest more money in maintaining roads, highways and bridges (with 55 percent willing to pay more in taxes to do so). About half of residents want investments in expanding bus service between major cities (52 percent). Investing in reduced congestion on major roads is desired by nearly half of residents (45 percent).

Key Issues:

- Many residents of the SNHPC Region want more mobility choices in transportation than currently available within the region.
- Safety is always a goal at the forefront of transportation planning. The SNHPC Region experiences, on average, 20.5 transportation-related fatalities per year (2002-2011) compared to over 100 fatalities per year statewide.
- Rates of obesity and overweight individuals are increasing in the state; healthy transportation choices that allow physical activity to be incorporated into daily routines are needed.
- Many residents in the SNHPC Region spend more than 15 percent of their income on transportation.
- Transportation has large impacts upon the environment and human health. Over a quarter of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the US are attributed to the transportation sector.
- Critical lack of funding at the state level results in continuing deterioration of existing road/bridge infrastructure, as well as a shortage of innovation/new funding for transit and other modes. Economic sustainability for funding the transportation system is challenged by uncertain federal budgets and limited municipal resources as well.
- Transportation plays a central role in economic development. The transportation system needs to not only ensure the mobility of people and goods, but also maximize accessibility to businesses and employment centers that contribute to vibrant downtown and commercial areas.
- Youth need affordable transportation choices, but owning and maintain a car is expensive.
- The region needs increase funding and investment in public transit, both in rural and urban areas.
- The total number of highways (highway sections) currently operating at or near capacity will increase if no improvements are made by the year 2040.
- Transportation infrastructure often bears the brunt of weather-related disasters, such as severe storms and flooding. With climate change, there is a need for investment in infrastructure and adaptation, as well as greater transportation choices.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Achieve safer transportation for all users.
2. Work to reduce trips made by single occupancy-vehicles.
3. Promote increased availability of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
4. Provide increased availability of public transportation.
5. Develop passenger rail to improve access and mobility and improve the economic vitality of the region.
6. Promote smart growth land use and transportation policies.
7. Identify and promote climate change adaptation in transportation planning and infrastructure.
8. Promote increased education about the region's transportation issues and alternatives.
9. Seek sustainable funding for transportation infrastructure.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Develop Bike/Pedestrian plans for the region and communities.**
2. **Encourage/adopt land use policies to provide for transportation options and alternatives.**

3. Prepare guidelines for Complete Streets; prepare a handbook for municipalities to adopt policies.
4. Encourage Bicycle-Friendly Communities. Work with League of American Bicyclists for local designation.
5. Expand and support additional transportation funding sources for municipalities.
6. Expand local bus transit services and make this system more efficient both within and outside the city.
7. Conduct a feasibility study to expand I-93 commuter/inter-city bus services throughout the region, including regional connections to Concord and Portsmouth.
8. Support efforts to establish a passenger rail system in the region.
9. Incorporate CART recommendations into local transportation planning work.



Community Infrastructure & Facilities

Introduction: With the continued growth and development of the region, there will be greater demands placed on local services and facilities, stretching them to the maximum extent and capacity. Ultimately, this could have negative consequences on public health, welfare and safety. Identifying capital facility needs early on and beginning to plan for these needs is an important responsibility.

Successful economic development in municipalities and the region requires reliable public utilities and communication infrastructure, and, in some areas, community or municipal water and sewer services. Often, larger lot sizes are necessary to accommodate private well and septic systems based on underlying soil conditions. This pattern of large lot development often creates the need for additional transportation, public services and other infrastructure costs.

While the region has multiple providers for communications, telephone, internet and wireless services, in order to attract businesses to the region and increase tax revenues, many municipalities still need to break down barriers and expand franchise agreements in order to promote these markets and expand services and improve availability.

67%
of residents favor using
municipal funds to provide
water lines to existing &
potential development

Other ongoing public utility issues among the region’s communities include recycling and solid waste collection and disposal. With increasing tonnage and fees, solid waste disposal expenses, in general, are continuing to escalate. Another large need facing communities is installing and maintaining sidewalks. Paying for these capital improvements is expensive and typically requires state and federal funding to supplement local bonds

Top Priorities for Public Investment:
 Environmental Protection -24%
 Energy Efficiency-18%
 Safe/Affordable Housing-15%
 Economic Development-14%

and user fees. Typically, these costs are difficult to overcome. These and other concerns are some of the key issues explored in the **Community Infrastructure & Facilities Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: In developing this plan, many residents indicated their top priority for investing public

dollars: the highest priority is environmental protection (24%), followed by energy efficiency (18%), safe and affordable housing (15%), and economic development (14%). More than two-thirds (70%) of the residents responding to our surveys think that future development should occur in areas that are already developed; 23 percent support development in undeveloped area; and (7%) do not know.

Key Issues:

- Financing municipal water and sewer projects is a top priority for many municipalities and requires significant local and state investment.
- Broadband internet infrastructure and connectivity offers many communities enhanced economic development opportunities, but how to pay for broadband improvements remains an issue.
- Stormwater facilities and maintenance is an increasing cost and burden on municipalities.
- Recycling and solid waste disposal are an important, but costly public service.
- Installing and maintaining community sidewalk infrastructure is an ongoing issue in many communities, both urban and rural.
- New England has significant energy/utility supply challenges and natural gas prices have skyrocketed over the past year due to limited supplies. Existing natural gas pipelines in NH and the SNHPC Region are limited and no expansion is imminent.
- Major public utilities such, as water and sewer are not available in many parts of the region.
- School funding, enrollment and capacity issues continue to be an ongoing local issue and regional challenge.
- Local Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) continue to go unfunded among many towns.
- Volunteer Fire and EMS departments in smaller municipalities are experiencing staffing shortages as the population ages.
- Despite increasing department budgets, police staffing ratios remain low throughout the region.
- Local property taxes, user fees and licenses continue to be the primary source of funding for municipal, county and local infrastructure. Funding sources are limited and many communities face continuing local funding issues for basic services and programs.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Water quality and quantity is identified as a key goal of the NH Water Sustainability Commission and maintaining adequate water treatment facilities and public drinking water supplies is critical for public health, as well as the future growth of the region.
2. Support and encourage continued capital improvement programming and community planning to identify critical infrastructure, utilities and public facilities and service needs and opportunities for all residences, businesses and government bodies.
3. Support and encourage adequate levels of funding both state and local to ensure the provision of adequate public facilities, services, utilities and infrastructure throughout the region to improve the region's quality of life, economic vitality and growth.

4. Support and encourage continued use of available financing tools such as Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFDs), impact fees and bonds to fund necessary infrastructure and capital facilities.
5. Promote the continued mutual sharing of local and state resources, facilities, staff, equipment and series including participating in group purchasing programs and opportunities to allow municipalities, counties and schools to save money and improve services.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. Support efforts to improve and expand public water and sewer infrastructure and services.
2. Encourage/support Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFD), impact fees and bonds to fund necessary infrastructure and capital facilities.
3. Support/promote continued and improved funding for public education at state and local levels.
4. Support/enhance local recycling as a means to reduce solid waste disposal costs.
5. Support/assist municipalities in capital improvement programming and public facility planning and financing.
6. Support local, regional and statewide efforts to maintain adequate funding for public facilities and services at all levels of government through:
 - Increased mutual sharing and group purchasing of services and equipment;
 - CDBG funding for economic/housing and public infrastructure; and
7. Continue to encourage and support municipalities in local drinking water supply protection.



Environment, Open Space and Agriculture

Introduction: Many municipalities in the SNHPC Region are working to preserve large tracts of open space knowing there are both cost saving benefits and advantages to water supply and quality, wetlands, wildlife, flood prevention and overall quality of life to its residents. However, with increasing development trends roughly 10 percent of the region’s forest land is projected to be lost by the year 2025. The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) predicts about 60,000 acres of open space will also be lost in Rockingham, Hillsborough, and Strafford Counties. Researchers estimate that within the next 25 years, southeastern New Hampshire will be virtually built-out, meaning that all the available land not conserved will be developed.

Farmland preservation is also closely related to open space preservation as it shares similar environmental benefits including protected wildlife habitat, clean air and water, flood control, groundwater recharge, and carbon sequestration. However, many acres of productive farmland soils in the region remains unprotected and lands that are desirable for agriculture are also the easiest to develop. What are the remaining largest

89 and 95 percent support making clean air and clean water higher priorities

existing forested or agricultural tracts of land in the region and how can these lands be best protected? What are the regulatory means and funding sources communities need to know about to acquire open space and protect farmland? What are the economic and social benefits to preserving open space and protecting land from development? These and many more issues are addressed in the **Environment, Open Space and Agriculture Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: In the public outreach and surveys conducted for this plan, many residents indicate that they appreciate living in a beautiful, quality environment and enjoy the region’s opportunities for rural living. They want to protect the functions and quality of the natural environment. From the Visual Public Space Preferences survey, there was overwhelming support for making clean air (89 percent) and clean water (95 percent) higher priorities. Maintaining and expanding local food sources is another issue that many residents

77 percent
feel that farms and
agricultural land preservation
should be prioritized

identified as important. 77 percent of respondents feel that farms and agricultural land preservation should be prioritized in the next ten years, while 75 percent said protecting aquatic habitats are important issues in the near future. Overall, an overwhelming majority of residents in the Southern New Hampshire Region feel that new development should be restricted to areas that are already developed in order to preserve natural resources.

Key Issues:

- The region’s natural resources are not limitless and are under continuous development pressures.
- Staffing and program cutbacks at federal and state environmental agencies means that non-profit organizations, local conservation commissions, land trusts must provide a greater role in protecting the region’s and local natural resources.
- Municipalities have a significant leadership role in environmental protection and can successfully work to both protect the environment and maintain community growth and development.
- With continued growth and development there will be fewer opportunities in the future to preserve and protect the important natural and cultural lands that exemplify the open space and livability of the region.
- Researchers estimate that within the next 25 years, southeastern New Hampshire will be virtually built-out, meaning that all the available land not conserved will be developed. This will place tremendous strains on local budgets, community resources, and natural resources.
- Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions have a responsibility to ensure important open space is protected and recreational opportunities are made available to the public.
- The NH DRED cannot do it alone. Monitoring state parks and lands is also becoming a financial burden as costs continue to rise, ridership and user fees are not able to keep pace with demands, and public use of state facilities continues to climb.
- The lack of agriculture-specific zoning and other protections also contributes to the rapidly diminishing supply of farmland and important farm soils.

Key Goals/Objectives:

Natural Resources

1. Achieve coordinated, planned development of the region by utilizing established, as well as new and innovative land use principles and planning concepts, as authorized by RSA 674:21.
2. Protect and improve the quality of the natural environment while developing a complementary man-made environment.
3. Facilitate greater collaboration and discussion between local planning boards and conservation commissions regarding land use regulations and natural resource conservation.

Goals for Open Space & Recreation

1. Improve use of and access to public spaces, parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities, including after-hour access to school facilities for public use.
2. Provide a community public space map on the town website, in town offices and in the town annual report to promote the use of public parks and recreational facilities.
3. Establish or enhance recreation programs for all age groups in the community.

Goals for Agriculture

1. Protect lands for agriculture for existing and future generations to continue providing a sustainable food supply for the residents of the region and to allow and promote small scale agriculture in inner-city and suburban areas.
2. Municipalities within the SNHPC Region can take specific actions to support agriculture and enhance community life in three areas: reducing development pressure for productive agricultural land, integrating agriculture into the local economy, and ensuring the farmer's right to farm.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Provide support to communities in the use and adoption of innovative land use controls and environmental characteristics zoning techniques.**
2. **Assist conservation commissions in developing comprehensive science-based natural resources inventories and conservation plans.**
3. **Support and offer training to planning boards and conservation commissions in developing local and regional master plans for parks and recreation facilities, open space protection and agricultural development.**
4. **Continue to educate and raise public awareness and benefits of open space, conservation and recreation, and agriculture.**
5. **Encourage and provide support to communities developing local agricultural commissions as well as local and regional networks to support local farmer markets, community service agriculture, food to table, and other agricultural educational programs.**



Economic Development

Introduction: The SNHPC Region’s economy is growing stronger every year since the great recession of 2008/09. The region’s economic diversity of businesses and industries and its highly educated and skilled workforce helps to sustain the region’s economic resiliency. With the widening of I-93 and natural population growth, there will be an expected influx of 50,000 new residents between 2010 and 2035. This will present numerous challenges to the region, but also opportunities for economic growth, workforce development and an improved standard of living.

Among the 14 municipalities in the SNHPC Region, the following industries had the highest employment numbers: Health care and social assistance, retail trade, local government and manufacturing, respectively. For the Manchester labor market area, health care and social assistance was the largest industry followed by retail trade, manufacturing and local government. Some of the largest existing employers in the region include Elliot Hospital, Catholic Medical Center, FairPoint Communications, Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), Citizens Bank, TD Bank, and Insight Technologies, each providing over 1,000 jobs.

89%
of respondents favored
fostering local employment

The core goals and strategic initiatives highlighted in this chapter can be used to help maximize the region’s economic development potential. Continued collaboration between the SNHPC, Access Greater Manchester and all the communities in the region on economic development measures can achieve these goals. This collaboration also includes working together with state and federal government to obtain funding, develop and implement collaborative projects, and generate ideas for economic growth and development. By identifying and addressing the region’s strengths and weaknesses and taking key steps toward future growth, the region will continue to maintain a vibrant and sustainable economy. These elements and many more economic issues and strategies are explored in the **Economic Development Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

What Could Make Communities Better?
Community & Economic Vitality-47%
Transportation Choices-45%
Housing Choices-3%

Community Input: It is clear that many residents in the region (47%) value community and economic vitality, more so that expanding opportunities and choices for transportation and housing. Community and economic vitality comes from quality schools, strong communities, job creation and expanded economic opportunities,

including small business growth and local and regional investment.

Key Issues:

- The region's economy is currently showing signs of improvement, but growth is still slow.
- Unemployment in the state and region is decreasing, but region still has few high-pay jobs.
- Many workers in the region have to commute to work out of the region and state.
- Property values are showing signs of improvement and are increasing again.
- Building permits and development is improving, but not back to pre-2008 levels.
- Population growth in the state/region is slow – some towns in the region are losing people.
- Limited municipal funding is available for services and improvements. Federal and state aid is also declining and constraining local budgets and capital improvement needs.
- Wages and incomes are up and the region continues to remain economically diverse and resilient.
- There is a continuing widening of the income gap – squeezing the middle class.
- Region's overall cost of living is relatively higher than nationally, but better than Boston.
- Forty eight percent of NH high school students leave the state for college.
- NH and the SNHPC Region's population and workforce are continuing to grow older.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Transportation – Strengthen and expand aviation capacity; place high priority on highway improvements; develop multi-modal transportation strategies; encourage reliable, efficient passenger and freight rail service along NH Capitol Corridor.
2. Infrastructure – Place high priority on expanded public water/sewer systems; enhance telecommunication and broadband services.
3. Land Use – Smart Growth – Seek balanced growth and development to broaden tax base and improve quality of life, community character and environment.
4. Labor/Workforce Development – Strengthen region's workforce and vocation training programs; improve integration of apprenticeships and education in the workplace.
5. Education – Strengthen region's colleges, universities and professional schools; place priority on increasing number of graduates to stay/work/play within region.
6. Energy – Explore and encourage development of renewable, environmentally friendly and lower cost forms of energy.
7. Economic Development – Promote economic development opportunities.
8. Entrepreneurship – Implement programs to support start-ups, incubators, innovative businesses, creative arts and sustainable/agricultural businesses.
9. Real Estate Development – Site Readiness – Work to promote available sites and buildings for economic development and redevelopment purposes.
10. Funding Resources – Work with key groups to promote region nationally/internationally.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. Continue to support and market the strengths of the region statewide and nationally.
2. Promote local business growth and support efforts to help advance start-up companies, business incubators, arts and culture, and local agricultural economies.
3. Continue to support and foster regional collaboration in economic development through Access Greater Manchester and other regional initiatives.
4. Support and foster improvements in transportation, public works, water and sewer and broadband.
5. Encourage and promote renewable, environmentally friendly and lower cost forms of energy and fuels.
6. Continue to explore funding opportunities to sustain regional and local economic development efforts.
7. Provide assistance to communities in establishing and maintaining local economic development committees and councils, and preparing local economic development plans and chapters in community master plans.
8. Continue to work to implement and expand SNHPC’s Certified Site Program both within and outside of the region.
9. Continue to work with and expand the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning process in cooperation with Central Regional Planning Commission and adjacent communities in Hillsborough and Merrimack counties.
10. Continue to support and seek state and federal funding for Brownfields Assessments and Clean Up programs.



Culture and Historic Preservation

Introduction: Historic resources are vulnerable to loss. Many municipalities in the region recognize the importance of preserving the historic character and recommend the establishment of Historic District Commissions or Heritage Commissions, who can utilize tools for preservation, such as the historic resources survey and inventory; historic district overlay zoning; preservation easements; including grants and loans. Established organizations may find it easier to apply for a variety of state and federal designations to aid in protecting historic resources. Despite the advantages of designation, it is important to note that communities need to continually educate themselves and their citizenry about the advantages and disadvantages of historic preservation and implement historic preservation techniques that are most suited to their historic resources.

Historic preservation designations and policies geared toward bolstering arts and cultural resources can help boost economic development and provide education, attract visitors and add dollars to the community’s bottom line. Historic preservation and the Arts

Main Art/Cultural Themes:

Reinstate arts programs that have been cut.

Protect remaining arts programs in public schools.

Raise awareness of the importance of arts and culture.

and Culture are further explored in the **Culture and Historic Preservation Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: In July 2013, the Survey Center of the University of New Hampshire conducted a telephone survey through the Granite State Future project seeking public input across the state of New Hampshire on a variety of planning related topics, including the arts, culture and historic preservation. The survey results indicate that 86 percent of New Hampshire residents value protecting historic buildings and neighborhoods; the second highest scoring response among 13 categories. When asked “what should actively be encouraged in your community?” 68 percent of respondents indicated their community should sponsor cultural and sporting events. Other public outreach efforts showed many residents also value a variety of cultural events, activities and recreational opportunities.

Key Priorities:

Protect local agriculture -91%

Protect Historic Buildings/Neighborhoods -86%

Promote Safe Places to Bike & Walk -86%

When asked “what should actively be encouraged in your community?” 68 percent of respondents indicated their community should sponsor cultural and sporting events. Other public outreach efforts showed many residents also value a variety of cultural events, activities and recreational opportunities.

When asked “what should actively be encouraged in your community?” 68 percent of respondents indicated their community should sponsor cultural and sporting events. Other public outreach efforts showed many residents also value a variety of cultural events, activities and recreational opportunities.

Key Issues:

- Greater public attention is needed at both the regional and local level to actively promote and preserve the region’s historic and cultural resources today and in the future. Specifically, more communities in the region need to be better positioned to achieve Certified Local Government status, which opens more doors for preservation funding and success.
- Many communities within the region need a comprehensive vision, as well as a plan to effectively protect and promote historic resources and cultural qualities and assets.
- In addition, a greater emphasis is needed at both the region and local levels to include and expand the arts and promote cultural activities as an economic development tool.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Promote greater collaboration between the public and private sector in historic preservation and the arts and culture.
2. The SNHPC should work with the region’s communities to collaborate in establishing historic, arts and cultural commissions and developing local arts and historic preservation plans, visions and goals and recommendations that can advance historic preservation and the arts and culture.
3. Developing a “sense of place” within the region’s communities through urban design principles such as “place-making” can and should be a centerpiece of local historic, arts and cultural plans. Development of these plans must involve the public and key stakeholders within each community.
4. Specifically, it is important that communities keep the arts in local budgets; promote businesses and organizations that can provide the leadership skills necessary to build and maintain public and private support; conduct comprehensive inventories of the historic and cultural infrastructure; obtain and provide planning grants and training to communities to promote the arts; establish cultural and mixed use zoning districts; seek legislative authority to create and implement new tools such as cultural

enterprise zones; and most importantly create and foster an environment, places, amenities and events that can stimulate investment, create new jobs and business opportunities, attract young workers, and build a talented workforce.

5. Artistic talent and historic preservation are essential for revitalization and economic growth. Artists need places to live, work, perform and to exhibit their work.
6. Communities need historic buildings and places to sustain community character and place. Reuse of existing older industrial space and historic properties for artists, cultural events and organizations will improve quality of life, attract creative industries and businesses and promote economic growth and development.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. Create land use regulations that support historic preservation and the arts and culture to sustain community character and place.
2. Assist planning boards in authorizing local historic preservation ordinances, inventory and mapping historic properties and sites, and developing local arts and cultural plans.
3. Promote greater collaboration between public and private sector in local arts and cultural planning.
4. Foster traditional village and neighborhood centers and walkable downtowns rich in cultural arts and history.
5. Support funding for historic preservation and the arts/culture in local and state budgets.
6. Help to restore and protect arts programs in local schools.
7. Encourage and support the establishment of local historic districts and heritage commissions.
8. Assist communities in achieving local certified government status through the NH Office of Historic Resources.
9. Support and promote the establishment of coordinated and organized leadership networks for the arts and culture.



Climate Change Impacts Assessment

Introduction: Temperatures in southern New Hampshire have been increasing since 1970 (the region’s annual average temperature has increased 1.1 to 2.6°F) and by 2100, it is projected that the region’s annual average temperatures may increase as much as 4 to 8°F. The region’s annual average precipitation has also increased during the same time period (12-20 percent) with more extreme precipitation events occurring (*Climate Solutions New England, 2014*).

It is projected that the climate in New Hampshire in 2040 will be more like that currently in Maryland, and the New Hampshire of 2070 could be more like North Carolina (New England Climate Impact Assessment, 2007). Warmer temperatures will increase many natural hazards, such as flooding, erosion, extreme heat, etc. as well as the frequency and severity of storms and storm related damage. Over \$68 million in FEMA public assistance grants were given to the State of New Hampshire between 2007 and 2011 alone.

The SNHPC Region will experience negative economic impacts from the timber and maple industries, as the forest industry migrates northward. Agriculture will be challenged with droughts and warmer weather impacting apples and blueberries. Higher food costs will have an impact on people living in poverty in the region. What are the strategies to work towards more renewable energy sources and a long-term reduction in greenhouse gases? How can the region prepare itself for increased heat-related illnesses including more mosquito and tick-borne illnesses? What can be done to prepare towns in the region for the global warming impacts? These questions and other global warming impacts are some issues are explored in the **Climate Change Impacts Assessment Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: This chapter is based on a Value Statement made by residents stating how they support renewable energy choices such as solar, wind, and geothermal that are climate-friendly. They support policies for higher energy efficiency standards in new buildings and incentives for home energy efficiency improvements. Many residents are also

57 percent of residents are concerned about their community's level of preparedness

concerned about various weather-related events. Over half (57 percent) of residents in the region are concerned about their community's level of preparedness in weather-related situations (13 percent are very concerned and 44 percent are somewhat concerned). The majority of Americans (83 percent) want the country to make an

72 percent of Americans want more research funding for renewable energy

effort to reduce global warming, even if it has economic costs. Two-thirds (72 percent) want more research funding for renewable energy and 71 percent support providing tax rebates for people who purchase energy-efficient vehicles or solar panels. Over half (67 percent) want to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant.

Key Issues:

- It is important the region's communities recognize and politically support local, regional, state and federal efforts to address climate change to secure a sustainable future.
- There is a general overall lack of knowledge about climate change among both among elected officials and the public.
- The complexity of climate change science often complicates educational efforts to inform the public.
- There are continuing challenges in our society in transitioning from fossil fuels to alternative and renewable forms of energy which can lower emissions and improve the environment.
- Recognizing and making choices now to improve the region's infrastructure and prepare for the future requires public investment and commitment.
- Developing local, state, and national climate change leadership is an important step in addressing and adapting to the consequences of climate change and increasing natural disasters.
- Municipalities in the region are not leading and working together to adopt lower emissions goals. These goals and actions could be developed through local and regional sustainability plans and policies as part of the community's master plan.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Work to increase understanding, education, and training opportunities for adapting to and preparing for climate change.
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts in order to lessen the impacts of climate change on the SNHPC Region.
3. Work toward climate change impact adaptation; prepare for and mitigate hazards associated with climate change.
4. Increase leadership and cooperation on climate change issues throughout and beyond the region at all levels of government.
5. Develop and identify funding sources and innovative financing tools and programs for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Encourage developers to locate structures in suitable areas less prone to natural disasters**
2. **Support public transportation and local and state fleets which utilize alternative fuels which generate less greenhouse gas emissions.**
3. **Establish and promote climate change training programs for municipal employees to prepare for increased natural disasters.**
4. **Encourage greater participation and support for mutual aid among all levels of government.**
5. **Support climate change education and sustainability programs in public schools.**
6. **Increase public awareness of the health implications of climate change, including emergency preparedness.**
7. **Work with all levels of government to decrease stormwater runoff and flooding and promote and implement low impact development practices, standards and ordinances.**
8. **Support use of higher frequency design standards in designing drainage structures and improving the region's infrastructure.**



Energy Efficiency

Introduction: New Hampshire's average electricity price in 2012 was 16.47 cents per KWh, which is the sixth highest in the country. This is an economic challenge for residents, municipalities and businesses in the state and the SNHPC Region. Energy efficiency and energy conservation can be the most sustainable, cost-effective and least polluting means of reducing our demand for energy. Almost all existing buildings have the potential to reduce energy use by up to 60 percent with relatively simple and low cost practices. With climate change there is a strong interest in reducing our use of fossil fuels so renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and biomass, are being seriously considered. The state's renewable portfolio standard, a regulation that requires the increased production of energy from renewable energy sources, calls for 24.8 percent of electricity from renewable energy by 2025. There are some solar arrays in the SNHPC Region, including the largest in New

Hampshire, a 525kW solar array installed on the top level of the Manchester Airport parking garage, as well as a 51kW solar array on the PSNH roof, and a 50kW array on the Stonyfield Farm Yogurt Factory roof. Biomass is another feasible option for the region. What are the best resources available to improve energy efficiency and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels? What funding sources are available to support renewable energy and achieve the state’s energy goals? This and other energy related information is addressed in the **Energy Efficiency Chapter** of this plan (see Volume 2).

Community Input: Many residents in the region view energy efficiency and energy choices as the second most important priority for investing public dollars.

77 percent
support incentives for
home energy efficiency
improvements

Three in four residents (77 percent) support expanding incentives for home energy efficiency improvements (with 52 percent who “strongly support”), followed by higher energy efficiency standards in new buildings (74 percent), and promoting renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal (73 percent). Meanwhile, only 34 percent were in support of public charging stations for electric vehicles. Half of residents (49 percent) think local governments should be very involved in guidelines for renewable energy (such as large wind farms). Half of residents (49 percent) think local governments should be very involved in guidelines for renewable energy (such as large wind farms).

49 percent residents want
local governments involved
in guidelines for
renewable energy

Key Issues:

- Although cost-effective in the long run, many building efficiency and renewable energy projects require significant up-front costs that municipalities, businesses and homeowners cannot afford.
- Many energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in New Hampshire are complex and difficult for the general public to understand.
- Having a mix of energy supplies can reduce disruptions and mitigate the price volatility of fossil fuel and improve local energy security. The Southern New Hampshire region will face many decisions related to energy security in the future and will need to assess the pros and cons of government intervention to achieve diversity goals.
- There is a need for close coordination between energy and environmental policy to more effectively achieve common goals and to ensure respective development and implementation does not inadvertently work at cross purposes.
- Current zoning regulations and disperse patterns of development are not always conducive to reductions in energy consumption.
- Transportation is an activity that consumes a great deal of fossil fuels and public transportation options in the Southern New Hampshire region are lacking.
- The Northern Pass project projected to bring 1,200 megawatts (MW) of clean, low-cost energy from Hydro-Québec’s hydroelectric plants in Canada to New Hampshire and New England continues to be a major issue confronting the state and the SNHPC Region.

Key Goals/Objectives:

1. Promote and support greater collaboration among all levels of government in implementing effective energy efficiency practices and renewable forms of energy within the state and region.
2. Promote greater deployment of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and biomass within the region's communities through local tax exemptions and streamlining local approval processes.
3. Support and provide assistance to local energy commissions in helping municipalities set local energy policies, achieve greater energy efficiency, and reduce energy costs.
4. Provide assistance to municipalities and local energy commissions in developing and updating municipal energy plans and master plan chapters, and measuring energy use and building performance.
5. Support smart growth and green building and infrastructure practices to reduce energy costs and improve energy efficient development.

Top Action Recommendations:

1. **Assist communities in developing and updating local energy plans/master plan chapters and measuring energy use and building performance.**
2. **Carry out solarize program for the region's communities to decrease system and installation costs and expand residential solar deployment.**
3. **Develop a region-wide Energy Plan based on state's energy strategies and local needs.**
4. **Promote and encourage standardized and flexible zoning, site plan and subdivision regulations to allow for greater deployment of renewable energy installations.**
5. **Promote land use and tax policies that allow for efficient and renewable energy opportunities.**
6. **Promote coordination between energy and environmental policy-makers to achieve common goals.**
7. **Encourage state building codes to increase energy efficiency in new buildings and reduce fossil fuels.**

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Roles and Responsibilities

The SNHPC has the primary responsibility in implementing this plan and working with the region’s municipalities and the state to address the issues raised, as well as the identified goals and key action recommendations contained in the plan. Other partners, including federal agencies, local and nonprofit organizations, and the private sector can also play an important part in carrying out the plan.

Funding is a key part of implementation and the SNHPC will have to continue to work cooperatively with the region’s municipalities and other partners to identify grant opportunities, raise monies and generate funds to implement the top action recommendations of the plan.

Given the projected future growth of the region as outlined in this plan, the need for community and regional planning will continue to grow in importance as an important activity to help move Southern New Hampshire forward to 2035.

Summary of Top Action Recommendations

All of the Top Action Recommendations and priority projects of the Leadership Team are identified in the following two tables. These recommendations and projects, while advisory only, help to set a roadmap for the SNHPC in its future planning work for the region and the region’s communities.

Moving Southern New Hampshire Forward
Prepared June 2014

Top Action Recommendations

Priority Rating	Recommended Actions	Level of Action*	Relevant Sectors*						Potential Partners	Notes*
			Economic	Education	Government	Health	Public Safety	Residential		
Land Use	* Continue to assist planning boards with Master Plans and land use regulations	Local							Planning Boards	Continuous planning and special projects
	* Assist planning boards in mapping/evaluating existing/potential areas for mixed-use development				x					
Housing	* Support incentives for investment in reuse and redevelopment of existing structures	Local and Regional							Planning Boards	Continuous planning and special projects
	* Encourage cluster housing to provide affordable housing and protect the environment		x		x					
Transportation	* Develop bike/pedestrian plans for the region and communities	Local and Regional							Municipalities and State	Special Projects and Transportation Alternative Funding
	* Encourage/adopt land use policies to expand transportation options and alternatives, including passenger rail		x		x	x				
Community Infrastructure & Facilities	* Support efforts to improve and expand public water and sewer infrastructure	Local and Regional							Municipalities and State	Special Projects and CDBG Funding
	* Encourage/support TIFDs, impact fees and bonds to fund necessary infrastructure and capital facilities		x		x	x	x	x		
Environment, Open Space & Agriculture	* Promote/encourage adoption of innovative land use controls and environmental characteristics zoning	Local and Regional							Municipalities and State	Special Projects
	* Develop comprehensive science-based natural resource and conservation plans region		x		x	x				

<p>Economic Development</p>	<p>* Continue to support and market the strengths of the region and state, statewide/nationally</p> <p>* Promote local business/support development to help advance start-ups/incubators/arts/agriculture</p>	<p>Local and Regional</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>Municipalities and State</p>	<p>Continuing assistance to Access Greater Manchester Economic Development Alliance; CEDS planning with Concord and Manchester; EDA Grants</p>
<p>Cultural & Historic Resources</p>	<p>* Support use of historic locations for arts and culture to sustain community character/place</p> <p>* Assist planning boards to enable the creation/coordination/enhancement of historic preservation and cultural opportunities</p>	<p>Local and Regional</p>	<p>x</p>		<p>x</p>			<p>x</p>	<p>Municipalities and State</p>	<p>Increased level of participation will be required; Seek Funding Sources</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>* Encourage developers to locate new development in suitable areas; cluster with open space where appropriate</p> <p>* Establish training program for key municipal employees</p>	<p>Local and Regional</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Municipalities and State</p>	<p>Increased level of participation will be required; Seek Funding Sources</p>
<p>Energy</p>	<p>* Assist communities in developing and updating local energy plans/master plan chapters</p> <p>* Develop region-wide renewable energy plans and programs</p>	<p>Local and Regional</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Municipalities and State</p>	<p>Increased level of participation will be required; Seek Funding Sources</p>

Top Action Recommendations		
Planning Chapters	Potential Projects	Potential Funding Source(s)
Land Use	Master Plan Updates; Land Use Regulations Update and New Ordinances; Cost of Community Services Studies; Zoning Studies	Local funding & community planning grants
Housing	Housing Plan Updates; Fair Housing Assessment; Regional Housing Needs Assessment	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); State OEP Block Grant funding; Local Funding
Transportation	Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plans & Regional Plans; Special Corridor Studies; Passenger Rail Studies; Scenic and Historic Byways Plans	Community and Foundation Funding; Transportation Alternatives Funding; Federal Transportation Funding
Community Infrastructure & Facilities	TIFD Plans and Assistance; Capital Improvement Program Updates; Impact Fee Feasibility and Assessment Reports; Broadband Plans; Mutual Sharing; Group Purchasing	Local funding & community planning grants
Environment, Open Space & Agriculture	Natural Resources Inventories; Open Space Plans; Master Plan Chapters; Local, Regional State studies and special projects; Recreation Plans; Local Agricultural Plans; Food Desert Mapping	Local and state funding and grants
Economic Development	CEDES planning; regional economic development cooperation; Economic Development Plans and Master Plan chapters	Local and state funding; EDA planning and infrastructure grants
Cultural & Historic Resources	Local and Regional Historic Preservation Surveys, Mapping and Planning Studies; Historic District Commission assistance; Land Use Regulations	Local and state funding; private funding
Climate Change	Local and Regional Climate Adaption Plans; Public Infrastructure Upgrades - culvert assessment and vulnerability; public health mapping	Local, state and federal funding; private funding
Energy	Update local energy plans & master plans; assistance to Energy Committees, including energy monitoring and performance; solarizing campaigns and local permitting	Local, state and federal funding; private funding