PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES
NEW HAMPSHIRE
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

A guide to understanding the 21st Century Transportation Improvement Project Process in New Hampshire

November, 2012

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Executive Summary

A carefully planned and well-designed transportation network is crucial to the movement of people and goods as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible. Achieving those goals requires the input and acceptance of the people the system is intended to serve. This report details the outreach initiatives designed by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to allow members of the public the opportunity to make their concerns and suggestions about transportation issues known to decision makers at every stage of the planning process.
Not only does it make good sense to involve the public as fully as possible in transportation planning, it is also required by a number of federal and NH state statutes. To keep this information current the NHDOT is committed to updating this document every 5 years.

There are a number of agencies and organizations involved in transportation planning, including the State's nine regional planning commissions, four of which are designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations and have expanded responsibilities under federal and state law. The Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services also play key roles in the evaluation and approval of planning activities. NHDOT's Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance serves as the central clearinghouse for those agencies and organizations in their efforts to achieve those goals.

The principal recurring opportunities for planning transportation projects in NH involve the preparation and approval of the State's Long Range Transportation Plan, the Ten-Year Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. While there is a significant degree of convergence between those plans and programs, each focuses on a different time period and has distinct requirements. They all, however, depend heavily on public involvement in the determination of which projects should be carried forward.

To assure the effectiveness of its public involvement efforts with respect to transportation planning in New Hampshire, NHDOT strives to:

- Make public meetings as accessible as possible to all parties
- Make special efforts to give traditionally underserved populations and individuals with limited proficiency in English the opportunity to learn about transportation plans, programs and/or projects and to voice their opinions about them
- Reach out to municipalities and community organizations to disseminate and gather information
- And finally, to determine whether those efforts are achieving the desired results, NHDOT conducts and evaluates surveys of the public affected by transportation projects.

1 - INTRODUCTION

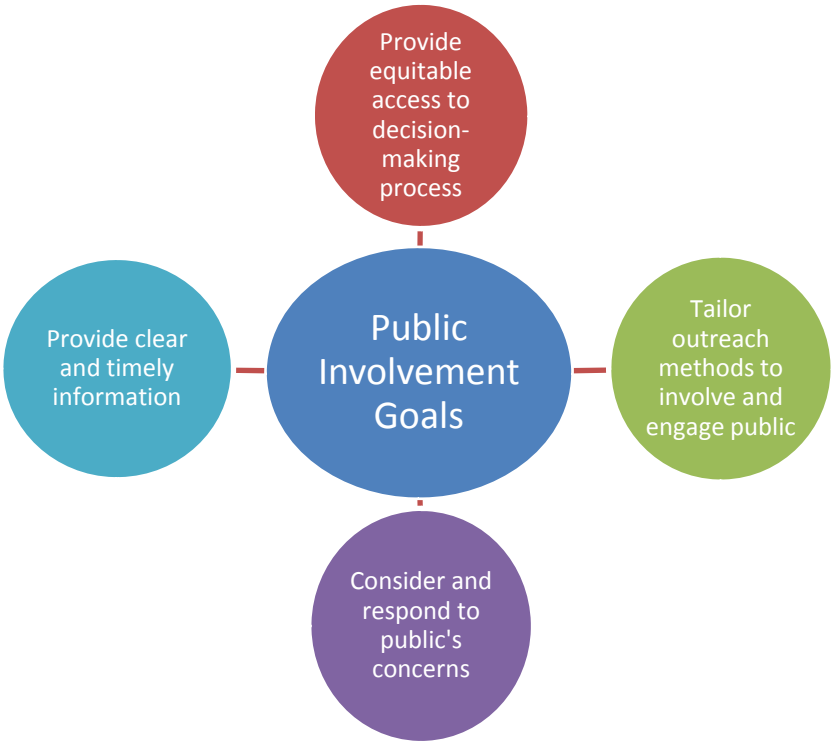
NHDOT and the federal government have implemented a wide-ranging series of outreach initiatives designed to allow members of the public ample opportunity to make their concerns and suggestions about transportation issues known to decision makers at every relevant level of government.

Public involvement and public participation are fundamental components of transportation planning and need to take place not only at the beginning of, but throughout the entire course of the process.

Of course, to be able to participate, the public has to first be aware of the process. With that goal in mind, the NHDOT has developed this document, which replaces a previous one released in 1995. This document explains the opportunities for public involvement in the transportation planning process as it is carried out in New Hampshire. The process described in this document meets the federal requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA). The recent Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation signed July 2012 will replace SAFETEA-LU October 1st, 2012. If there are any impacts to the public involvement procedures the NHDOT will update this document accordingly.

In order to notify "the public", that term must first be defined. Of course, in its broadest sense, the public is everybody. But for transportation planning purposes, the term must be more narrowly focused to include all individuals, groups and organizations who are potentially affected by the transportation issues under consideration. Those parties would include anyone who resides in, has an interest in or does business in a given area potentially affected by the transportation issues being reviewed.

OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS



Purpose
The objective of the public involvement process is to ensure that the concerns and issues of everyone with a stake in transportation decisions are identified, evaluated and responded to in a thoughtful, thorough and timely manner.

The NHDOT maintains an open-door policy and encourages the public to deal directly with its staff regarding state transportation matters. To contact the NHDOT, a list of address and telephone numbers is provided in Appendix B. The map located in that same appendix identifies the nine regional planning commission (RPC) areas covering the state of New Hampshire, and provides the Internet contact details for each RPC.

2 - FEDERAL AND STATE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The statewide transportation planning process is primarily guided by federal and state regulations, which also provide a framework for public involvement. The NHDOT's public involvement procedures were developed in accordance with federal regulations according to SAFETEA-LU and state laws outlined in the State of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA).

2.1 - New Hampshire Law

New Hampshire law requires a wide range of public involvement initiatives for transportation projects in the State, including:

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

- RSA 228:99 outlines requirements for the statewide intermodal transportation planning and improvement program, specifically relating to the STIP. (See Section 3.7 for a more detailed description);

Public Transportation System Discontinues Service:

- Per RSA 228:72, the Department must hold a hearing to determine whether a proposal by an operator of a public mass transportation system to discontinue service is in the public interest;

Layout of Highway Planning Corridor:

- Per RSA 230-A:2, a layout authority may determine upon hearing whether there is occasion for the designation of one or more highway planning corridors. For class I or II highways, the location shall be proposed by the Department of Transportation.

Environmental Requirements for Transportation Projects:

- Per Env-A 1503.09 MPOs and NHDOT must provide a 10 day minimum public comment period before taking a formal action pertaining to environmental analyses for transportation projects.

2.2 - Federal Regulations

Federal Regulation 23 CFR 450.210 defines the scope of the public involvement process, which is closely adhered to by NHDOT

Early and Ongoing Outreach to All Interested Parties

- Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities to provide timely information about transportation issues and decision making processes to all parties involved in making the decisions as well as those affected by their outcomes;

Provide Access to Thinking Behind the Plans

- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);

Public Notice, Review and Comment

- Provide adequate notice of public involvement activities and time for review and comment at key decision points including, but not limited to, a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

Meetings at Convenient Times and Places

- To maximum extent practical, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times;

Easy to Understand Presentations

- To maximum extent practical, use visualization techniques to make it easier to understand to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies;

Information Electronically Accessible

- To maximum extent practical, make information available in electronically accessible format to the public to allow reasonable opportunity for consideration and comment;

Timely and Thorough Replies

- Carefully analyze public comments and provide timely and thorough responses during the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;

Outreach to Underserved Populations

- Include a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

Periodically Review Effectiveness of Public Participation Process

- Provide for periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that it provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate; and

Public Comment on Changes to Process

- Provide for a minimum 45-day public comment period on existing and proposed processes for public involvement in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP.

Federal Regulation 450.210(a)(1)(i) requires that the public involvement process must, at a minimum, establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to the following parties:

- Citizens,
- Affected public agencies,
- Representatives of public transportation employees,
- Freight shippers,
- Private providers of transportation,
- Representatives of users of public transportation,
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities,
- Representatives of traditionally underserved populations,
- Representatives of the disabled,
- Providers of freight transportation services, and
- Other interested parties;

3 - TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS PLANNING

Systems planning includes the identification of transportation demands, analysis of transportation needs and the development of transportation systems through planning, programs and projects. Many participants are involved in taking an improvement project from a regional concept in the systems planning phase through project construction in the Project Development phase.

3.1 - PARTICIPANTS IN THE STATEWIDE PLANNING PROCESS

Transportation Systems Planning - Participants

Key participants in the transportation planning process include the general public, legislators, federal, state and local officials, regional planning commissions (RPCs), NH Department of Environmental Services, NH Department of Historical Resources, the US Environmental Protection Agency and other interested parties, as detailed in Section 2.2.

New Hampshire is divided into nine Regional Planning Commission (RPC) areas. Five of them – Central, Lakes Region, North Country, Southwest, and Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee – are rural in nature but often contain small urban areas (5,000 – 50,000 population). The four remaining planning commissions – Nashua, Rockingham, Southern, and Strafford – cover areas with a central city, or group of cities, that have an urban population greater than 50,000. These areas are designated by the governor as Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs, and must meet certain federal requirements.

The RPCs and MPOs are responsible for identifying transportation concerns and improvement projects through a regional public involvement process. The regional listing of these projects is called a transportation improvement program (TIP), and covers a four-year timeframe. The TIP of each MPO must be financially constrained, which means that state, local and other public or private sector revenues identified in the four-year TIP must be available or committed for the first two years and reasonably expected to be available for the latter two years (in areas that are not meeting federal clean air standards.)

Each MPO is also required to develop a 20-year, project-specific long-range transportation plan which, like the TIP, must also be financially constrained. The development of the 20-year plan and the four-year TIP must be done cooperatively with the NHDOT and the providers of public transit services. In addition, there must be ample opportunity for public involvement during the development of these documents. Each of the MPOs has established a public involvement process that is governed by CFR 450.316(a) and CFR 450.324(b).

The five rural RPCs, although not required by federal regulations, prepare long-range transportation plans that can be project specific. These RPCs also have an active public involvement process. NHDOT also consults and interacts extensively with the rural RPCs in the planning for transportation projects in their respective regions. (See Appendix E, Public Consultation Process for Regional and Local Officials Involved with Transportation Efforts in New Hampshire.)

All citizens and other interested parties are encouraged to become familiar with their RPC or MPO public involvement process and to take an active role in the transportation planning process for New Hampshire.

NHDOT Transportation Systems Management

Program and Project Reporting

- NHDOT provides general and detailed financial and project-related information to a number of internal and external customers. Staff track and assist in the preparation of the Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Program, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and other related documents and ensure that all related programs meet all necessary regulations in a timely manner.

Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) Special Studies

- NHDOT administers federal funds for planning related studies, including corridor studies/access management plan developments, regional safety plans and various land use inventories

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

- Each state is responsible for developing a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for all areas of the state. The program contains a list of priority transportation projects and covers a period of four years. The STIP is updated every two years in concert with the State's Ten-Year Plan.

System Performance Reports

- NHDOT is responsible for preparing data and other information used by Congress, FHWA and others in reporting the condition of our Nation's transportation system and in calculating funding levels for states. NHDOT provides data related to the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) and local funding and fuel/safety related data.

Technical Assistance

- NHDOT provides technical assistance to municipalities on issues involving state and municipal-owned transportation systems, including their connections to land use. At the request of a municipality, NHDOT technical teams visit the community to help define the problems and potential solutions. Members include NHDOT bureaus such as Planning & Community Assistance, Highway Design, Bridge Design, Bridge Maintenance, Bureau of Traffic, and Highway Maintenance as well as the nine RPCs.

NHDOT Community Assistance

Funding Assistance to Communities

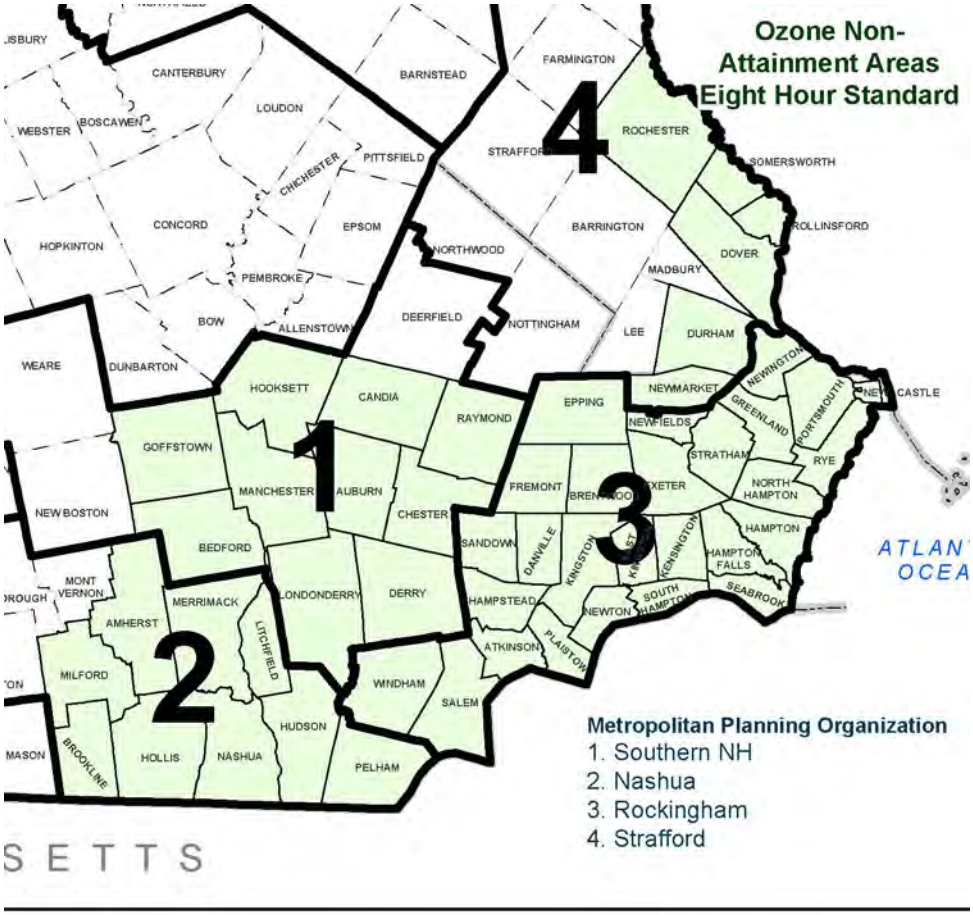
- NHDOT oversees several Federal and State programs for funding improvements to local transportation systems, many of them municipally managed. Programs funded include:
  - Transportation Enhancement (TE)
  - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
  - Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
  - State Aid Bridge (SAB)
  - State Aid Highway (SAH)
  - Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
  - Scenic Byways
  - Municipal Bridge
  - STP-Urban
  - Block Grant Aid
- It is important to note that MAP-21 has combined TE, SB, and SRTS into a new category called Transportation Alternatives, and as more policy direction is given at the federal and state levels, these programs will become better defined.

I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP)

- NHDOT is committed to a long-term comprehensive Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) to support the 26 municipalities that are in the area affected by the reconstruction of Interstate 93. As part of this comprehensive growth management initiative, NHDOT works to engage the public and other stakeholders affected by the project.

Local Public Agency Projects Require Two Public Meetings

- First is to identify local concerns at project outset
- Second is to present results of engineering study and preferred alternatives
- Additional meetings, as appropriate, to:
  - Inform public of potential cultural and environmental impacts
  - Inform abutters of impact to their properties



3.3 - AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the transportation planning process, the objective of improving air quality is carefully considered for each proposed transportation improvement project. Air quality in New Hampshire is continuously measured by a host of statewide testing stations that determine concentration levels for vehicle emissions such as ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons), particulates and carbon monoxide. Those areas that have lower pollutant levels than National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the federal Clean Air Act are considered to have attained compliance with those regulations and are therefore classified as “attainment areas” by EPA. Areas that do not meet Clean Air Act standards are classified as “non-attainment areas.” The ozone non-attainment map above shows the areas EPA designated as non-attainment for the 1997 8-hour

ozone standard as well as the MPOs representing those areas. Non-attainment areas that later achieved compliance with national standards, such as Manchester and Nashua that were in violation of carbon monoxide standards, are classified as "maintenance" areas by EPA and are subject to ongoing evaluation and maintenance plan requirements to ensure continued compliance.

For non-attainment areas, the Department of Environmental Services has created a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that details all the activities and strategies the state will implement, to ensure emissions fall or remain below attainment levels for different air pollutants. The SIP also creates a "motor vehicle emissions budget" of allowable total daily emissions that may be generated by a non-attainment area's vehicles. Federal and State laws require MPOs and NHDOT to show that their transportation projects conform to SIP requirements. Under these conformity regulations, transportation planners calculate their area's total vehicle-generated emissions to show their existing and proposed transportation improvement projects will not exceed their allowed emissions budget. Also as part of the transportation planning process, planners create long-range forecasts of their area's vehicle use. These forecasts are plugged into complex vehicle emissions modeling programs to calculate expected emissions as far as 20 years into the future.

Transportation projects that will not adversely affect air quality in an area are exempt from conformity tests. One example would be a project to replace guard rails along an interstate highway. Any project that could result in a change in air quality is classified as non-exempt and must pass the conformity determination process to move forward. An example would be a project adding additional lanes to an existing highway. The added vehicle capacity could result in an increase in traffic and a corresponding increase in air emissions that could reduce air quality along the route. Before a non-exempt project can be accepted into the approved STIP, MPOs and NHDOT must first subject it to the conformity process that includes considerable public participation.

3.4 - STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

NHDOT conducts its statewide transportation planning activities in compliance with federal and state laws. The three main components of that process are:

- The Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (LRTP),
- State 10-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP)
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Statewide transportation needs are identified in the LRTP, Ten-Year Plan and STIP through the continuing collection and analysis of transportation data as supported by

statewide management systems. Public involvement is essential at all levels of LRTP, STIP and Ten-Year Plan development and throughout the planning process.

The first four years of the Ten-Year Plan, as approved by the Legislature, become the basis for the federally-approved STIP, which can be (and normally is) amended in the interim prior to the adoption of the next Ten-Year Plan.

Transportation Planning Process

LRTP — Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan

- Identifies goals and objectives for next 20 years
- Developed cooperatively with RPCs and MPOs
- Public hearings held per CFR 450.214(k)
- Proposed update at five-year intervals, with other updates as necessary

TYP — Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan

- RPCs and MPOs identify and prioritize projects for next 10 years
- NH DOT coordinates and suggests priorities for projects identified by RPCs/MPOs
- Updated every two years by state law
- RSA 228:99, III requires at least one public hearing in each Executive Council District to gather input by Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation
- Governor reviews projects and includes recommendations in budget bill
- Legislature reviews and incorporates into law
- First four years of TYP used to inform and update STIP

STIP — Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

- Incorporates projects from each MPO's transportation improvement program
- Must be fiscally constrained and MPO TIPs and LRTPs must be fiscally constrained and conform to CAAA
- Interagency consultation to determine conformity requirements and whether a minor revision or an amendment is necessary.
- Public comment periods for amendments, and at least one public hearing in each Executive Council District for tentative STIP (RSA 228:99)
- FHWA and FTA approval required
- Updated continuously

3.5 - LONG-RANGE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The LRTP is an essential tool for identifying future transportation needs. By looking at the present transportation system, the transportation needs for 20 or more years into the future are identified through the development of a series of long-range transportation goals and objectives. In addition, the LRTP attempts to address transportation demand and usage by mode of transportation. The LRTP is developed cooperatively with the RPCs and MPOs to achieve consistency between regional and statewide transportation plans. This cooperative effort is advantageous when planning major construction improvements and developing management strategies. The LRTP requires continuous evaluation and revision.

During the development of the LRTP, NHDOT will coordinate with each MPO and rural RPC to hold at least one open forum in each MPO and rural RPC area so that the public has an opportunity to provide input on the projects under consideration. Notification of these meetings will be published on the NHDOT website (www.nh.gov/dot) and in a newspaper of general circulation in the State of New Hampshire.

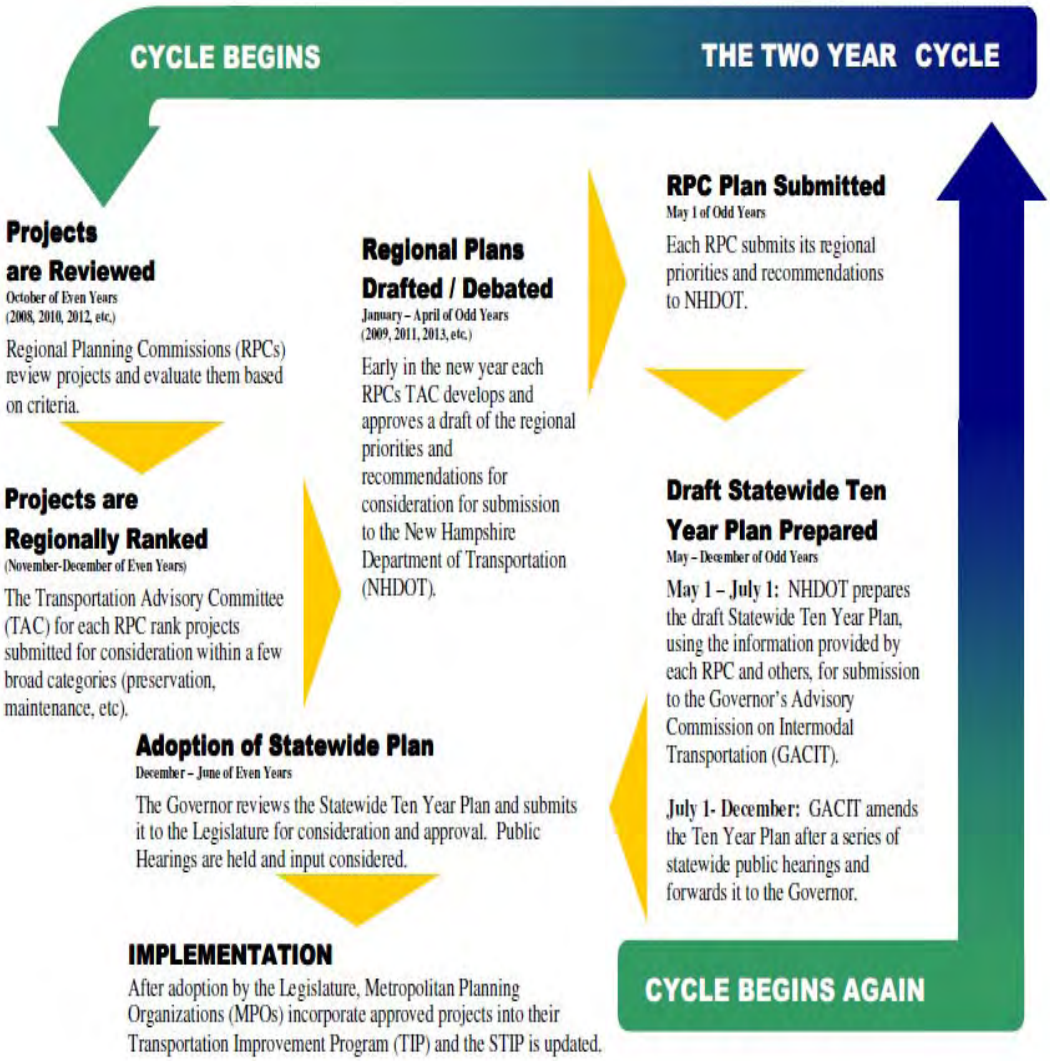
After these NHDOT public meetings, the proposed LRTP is compiled to reflect public input. The NHDOT will again notify the public through a notice in a newspaper of general circulation and on the NHDOT website that the proposed LRTP is available for comment. The comment period will last for at least 30 days. During the 30-day comment period, the NHDOT, in cooperation with the RPC/MPO, will receive additional comments on the proposed LRTP.

The final LRTP reflecting the comments of the public meetings and 30-day comment period is adopted by the NHDOT as a guide for the future development of the State's transportation system. The adopted LRTP is then forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for informational purposes. Electronic copies of the draft and final adopted versions of the plan are posted on the DOT's website, and hard copies are available in NHDOT Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance's office in Concord.

The LRTP will be continually examined and updated every five years. A record of public comments received and the NHDOT's responses to those comments will be kept on file at the NHDOT headquarters in Concord and made available for public review until the plan is replaced or amended. All public comments will be appended to the LRTP, once finalized.

3.6 - TEN-YEAR PLAN

RSA 240 requires that the NHDOT prepare a list of projects intended to be under construction at some point over the next ten years. The Ten-Year Plan is required to include the expected dates and estimated costs of construction for each project and program.



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RSA 228:99 sets out the following timetable for preparation, public involvement and legislative consideration of the State's Ten-Year Plan:

TABLE 1. TEN-YEAR PLAN CYCLE (typical timeframe)

TIME PERIOD	ACTION
Fall/Early Winter – Even Year	MPOs/RPCs begin development of TIPs (for ten-year time period)
May – Odd Year	MPOs/RPCs submit draft TIPs to NHDOT
August – Odd Year	NHDOT submits draft Ten-Year Plan to GACIT
Summer/Fall – Odd Year	GACIT holds public hearings statewide to obtain input on the TYP
December – Odd Year	GACIT submits draft Ten-Year Plan to the governor
January – Even Year	Governor submits Ten-Year Plan to Legislature
June – Even Year	Ten-Year Plan passed into law by Legislature
July – Even Year	NHDOT submits Ten-Year Plan to RPCs/MPOs
August – Even Year	MPOs approve four-year TIPs (RPC approval not required)
September – Even Year	NHDOT submits four-year STIP to FHWA/FTA for approval
October – Even Year	Four-year STIP approved
Fall/Early Winter – Even Year	MPOs/RPCs TIP development begins (for next Ten-Year Plan cycle)

The first four years of the Ten-Year Plan, as approved by the Legislature, become the basis for the STIP. The STIP is normally amended several times prior to the adoption of the next Ten-Year Plan.

3.7 - STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

The STIP is developed within the goals of the LRTP. The STIP is a four-year project scheduling tool required by federal law. It is also a component of the State's Ten-Year Transportation Plan, which is required by RSA 240.

Each MPO prepares a four-year transportation improvement plan (TIP) for its region, prioritizing all improvements. TIPs are guided by the goals and objectives outlined in the MPO's long-range regional transportation plans. Each TIP must include a list of projects that is consistent with the MPO's regional long-range transportation plan, meet the air quality conformity requirements of the CAAA, and be financially constrained.

SAFETEA-LU requires that the STIP include all projects that are in each MPO's TIP. For areas that are not covered by an MPO, the STIP incorporates projects approved in the Ten-Year Plan. During the development of the regional TIPs and the STIP, the opportunity for public involvement is open through contact with each RPC, MPO and NHDOT. (See Appendix B for contact details.) The process for the development of the STIP within the Ten-Year Transportation Plan is a two-year cycle and is outlined in Table 1.

3.7.1 - STIP Amendments

The transportation planning process is subject to a wide range of variables, including changes in local or state priorities, funding constraints, costing issues and permitting requirements. That variability requires continual updating of the STIP. Depending on the significance of a proposed change, the participants in the interagency consultation process will decide whether a full amendment or an administrative modification is necessary.

Once a proposed amendment has been discussed among the interagency group, NHDOT will publish a legal notice of the proposed changes to the STIP in a newspaper with statewide reach. The Department will also post the amendment on its website.

3.7.2 - Interagency Consultation

Representatives from FHWA, FTA, EPA, NHDOT, NHDES, MPOs, and rural RPCs in the attainment area are invited to participate in monthly discussions. Any public input that has been received by any of the participants with respect to the proposed changes to the STIP is discussed during the consultation process.

Through interagency consultation, a recommendation will be made regarding each project's regional significance. At a minimum, that recommendation must meet the standards outlined in 23 CFR 450. Interagency consultation also provides a forum to determine whether a proposed revision will require an air quality conformity determination.

Interagency consultation provides one of the first opportunities for MPOs, as well as the relevant federal and state agencies, to review and comment on potential STIP revisions. Any comments received through the consultation process are categorized and included with the revisions before they are put out for public comment and formal review at the

MPO level. In an urban area, the MPO may choose to process an administrative modification as a full amendment. Alternatively, if an MPO wishes to process a change as an administrative modification that had originally been discussed at the interagency consultation as an amendment, then the revision must be brought back to the interagency consultation process.

As per 40CFR 93.105 (a), (b) and (c), and Env-A 1503.08 (d) interagency consultation shall address:

- Development of a SIP or SIP revisions, including but not limited to those involving transportation-related issues and mobile sources;
- Development of a metropolitan transportation plan or TIP, minor revisions to a TIP, or any amendment(s) to a TIP, and any determination of conformity for such plans;
- Emissions budgets;
- Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) and mitigation measures pursuant to 40 CFR 93.125(c) and 93.122(a)(4)(ii), respectively, that are in the SIP or are being considered for inclusion in the SIP;
- Evaluation and determination of events that will trigger new conformity determinations; and
- Coordination of emissions analyses for transportation activities that cross the borders of MPOs or nonattainment or maintenance areas or include areas outside of MPO boundaries.

A. STIP Amendments: Metropolitan Areas

Project changes in an MPO area must comply with the provisions of 23 CFR 450.326 pertaining to TIP revisions. Regardless of whether the project change is initiated by the MPO or the NHDOT, the MPO board must include the change in its approved TIP before it can be included in the STIP. There must be a public participation process, consistent with the respective MPO's public participation plan, and a public comment period of 10-30 days, as determined through interagency consultation. Upon formal endorsement of the amendment at a public MPO meeting, the MPO shall provide a copy of the amendment to the State, FHWA and FTA. In non-attainment or maintenance areas, most amendments to the TIP must be accompanied by a corresponding air quality conformity determination by the MPO. That conformity determination, depending upon the discussions through interagency consultation, may or may not require a new air quality analysis.

NHDOT is required to incorporate the amendment into the STIP and submit the amended STIP to FHWA/FTA for approval. The NHDOT must demonstrate that the STIP remains financially constrained. Each amendment must be dated and sequentially numbered. The FHWA/FTA must either approve or reject the STIP amendment in whole or may choose to exclude specific projects from the approval. If the amendment consists entirely of highway projects, the FHWA can approve it unilaterally. The same is

true of the FTA if the amendment consists only of transit projects. Otherwise approval will be by joint letter, and all amendments requiring a conformity determination also require approval by joint letter. The state will forward copies of the approval to the affected MPOs. The MPO will, in turn, notify the affected transit operator(s), if transit projects are involved.

B. STIP Amendments: Non-Metropolitan Areas

For changes to a project in the area of the State that is not located in an MPO region, the NHDOT will notify the appropriate RPC and hold a public comment period of 10-30 days, as determined by interagency consultation, during which the RPCs and the general public will be able to make their thoughts and concerns known.

The Director of Project Development or designee for NHDOT will have final sign-off authority for rural area amendments to the STIP. After the comment period closes, the NHDOT will forward the amendment, along with any comments received, to FHWA/FTA for approval. Based on comments from the RPCs commissions or the public, additional consideration will be given to the proposed changes. The State will notify affected transit operators if transit projects are involved.

4 - OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND METHODS

The NHDOT Public Involvement Process is designed to provide members of the public a variety of opportunities through all stages of the transportation planning process to voice their ideas and concerns. Public involvement in the planning and development of future transportation improvements is essential to the community spirit and pride that New Hampshire has to offer.

This section provides a summary of the various outreach methods and activities. In an effort to provide more comprehensive outreach initiatives the NHDOT will consider the use of various tools that could include social media, locally televised events, as well as other methods not listed in this section. The NHDOT maintains an open door policy and encourages the exchange of information with public officials, agencies and citizens throughout all stages of these phases. In addition, efforts are taken to ensure that all populations - including underserved populations - have access to project information and have reasonable opportunity to participate in the public process. Furthermore, meetings and reviews are routinely held at or near project sites in order to facilitate local input. Careful consideration is given to comments and concerns received from all sources.

- Efforts must be made to ensure that public meetings are held at as central a location as possible for the majority of parties affected by the plan/project under consideration.
- Efforts must be made to ensure that public meetings are held at times as convenient as possible for the majority of parties affected by the plan/project under consideration.

- If the most convenient time to hold a public meeting will result in a significant subset of the population affected by the plan/project under consideration not being able to attend, consideration should be given to conducting a second public meeting at a time more convenient for the excluded group.
- Efforts must be made to ensure that public meetings are accessible to people who rely on public transportation.
- Public meetings must be held in only those locations that can be physically accessed by individuals with disabilities.
- Community leaders, as well as key personnel in organizations where a significant part of their memberships will be affected by the plan/project under consideration, must be contacted to assure maximum awareness of the public meeting.
- When US Census data indicate that a population with limited English proficiency ("LEP") exceeds the greater of 5% of the total population affected by a planned project or 1,000 people, the Planning Bureau's lead person on the project is responsible for contacting and coordinating outreach efforts.
    - At least one week prior to issuing a notice of public hearing, the lead person will request that the NHDOT Bureau of Federal Compliance provide a list of contacts. Among the first parties to contact would normally be the town administrator to determine any local organizations (e.g. faith-based, advocacy, etc.) who can get word out about the hearing or public meeting. Members and leaders of those organizations might be asked to attend the hearing or public meetings and (when necessary) to serve as interpreters to facilitate notification and participation of the affected language group.
    - If local organizations are unable to provide such assistance for individuals with limited English proficiency, the lead person should consider contacting organizations such as, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
        - Language Bank (603-224-8111 or 800-244-8119) for on-site interpretation assistance or
        - Language Line (1-800-752-6096, option 4) for telephone assistance.
    - For individuals who rely on American Sign Language or who require deaf/blind interpretation, the lead person should consider contacting organizations such as, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
        - Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (800 492 0407 or 800 224-1850),
        - NH Association for the Blind (603 224-4039 or 800 464-3075),
        - Disabilities Rights Center (603 228-0432 or 800 834-1721) or
        - Governor's Commission on Disabilities (603 271-2773 or 800 852-3405).
- Public hearing and informational meeting notices should be posted in locations most likely accessed or frequented by members of the target language group(s).
- All notices translated into languages other than English must contain contact information of the NHDOT employee assigned to respond to callers with limited English proficiency. The person responding to the limited English caller should be

prepared to relate the project scope and purpose of the public meeting or hearing. If the caller expresses an interest in attending and requires an interpreter, the request should be forwarded to the project manager or lead person, who will be responsible for arranging the required language services.

The effectiveness of the Bureau's outreach activities must be monitored and evaluated on a timely basis. The following survey questions are a sample of what should be made available to participants of each public meeting, either at the meeting itself or over the Internet (using web-based services):

- Was the information presented in a complete and comprehensive manner?
- Did you feel that comments made by the public were adequately considered?
- Did you feel that you had an opportunity to participate?
- Was the location of this meeting convenient for you?
- How far did you have to travel to the meeting?
- Was this meeting scheduled at a convenient time for you?
- What would be the most convenient time to start such meetings?
- How did you hear about this meeting?
- (Per Nancy, Were people given the opportunity to submit comments verbally or in writing?)
- If you have any comments about how the meeting was planned or conducted (or on how future meetings can be improved), please write them in the space below.

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Numerous techniques are utilized to disseminate project information and identify issues and concerns that might affect project design. These techniques are geared to the scope of work being undertaken. Obtaining public input is typically accomplished in the following sequence throughout the various phases of a project:

- Information on projects under consideration disseminated via NHDOT website, press releases and public notices.
- Public input to NHDOT, RPCs and MPOs through the development of the LRTP and TIPs;
- Hearings and meetings with NHDOT, elected and appointed officials, throughout the development of the STIP;
- Public application process through the RPCs and MPOs for Transportation Enhancement, Safe Routes to Schools, CMAQ and Scenic Byways projects;
- Informal meetings with elected and appointed officials, RPCs, and MPOs, and the general public to review environmental and design studies for the design selection process. (For more complex projects, a citizens advisory task force or steering committee is often established and meets regularly throughout project development);
- Public informational meetings concerning environmental, engineering and right-of-way issues;
- Public review of environmental studies pertaining to a project;
- Formal public hearings concerning proposed or alternative designs or alignments;
- Informal public input with NHDOT concerning right-of-way and construction concerns.

Correspondence about projects is exchanged with federal, state, and local officials, as well as the general public. In addition, newsletters or reports are distributed for review and comment to those with interest in NHDOT documents, such as the STIP, TYP and LRTP. The NHDOT website, newspaper press releases and public notices are used to

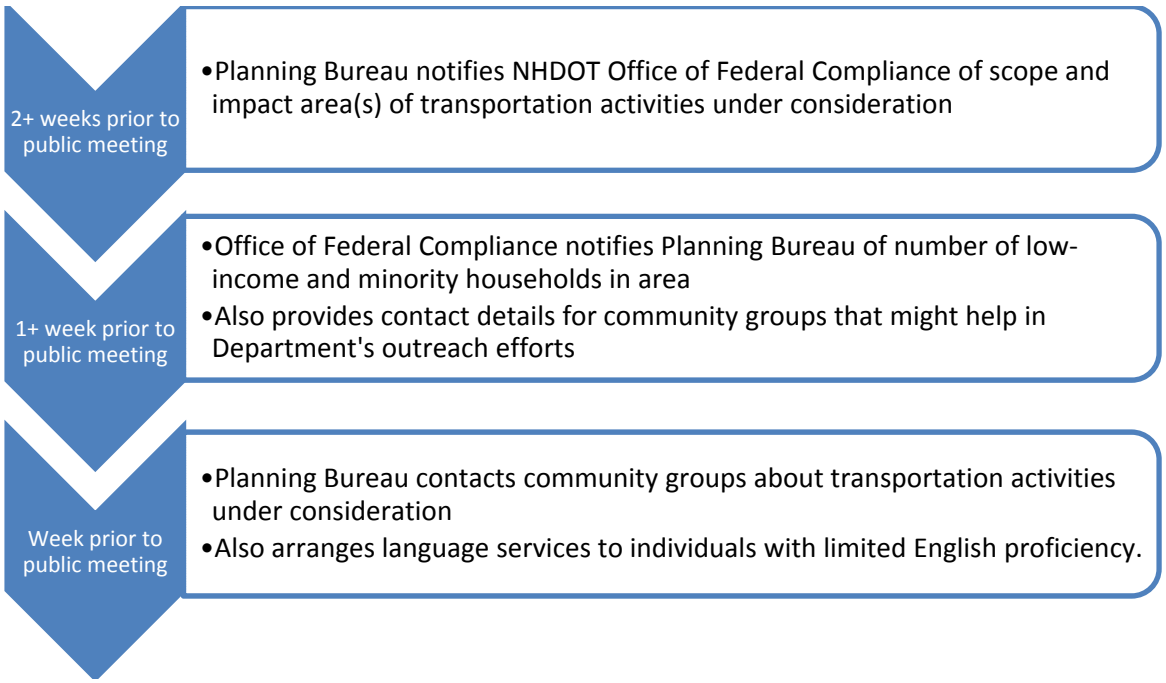
inform interested parties of scheduled meetings or hearings. The media (television, radio, newspaper) is also used to provide information on DOT planning documents.

4.1 - Underserved Populations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) provides that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial assistance."

In order to fully serve the needs of the State's underserved populations and to comply with the requirements of CFR 450.210, NHDOT makes substantial efforts to reach out to low-income and minority households to assure that their transportation needs are identified and met to the greatest extent possible, given the resources available.

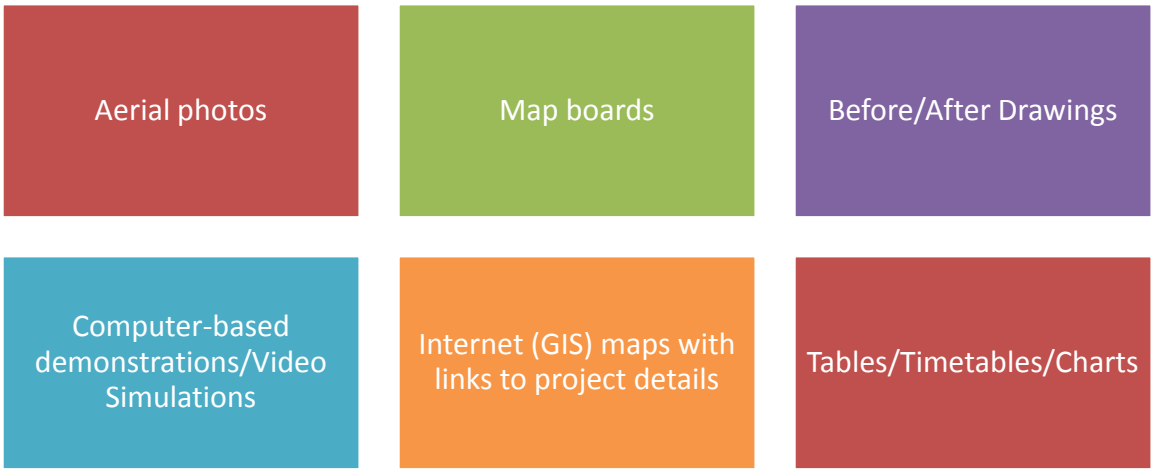
Outreach to Underserved Populations



In compliance with 23 CFR 450.218, NHDOT also submits with each STIP amendment a self-certification for the joint approval of the FHWA and the FTA that the Department carries out its responsibilities in the transportation planning process in accordance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

4.2 - Visualization Methods

A variety of visualization techniques are used to help describe the findings, alternatives, or recommendations of a plan/project to the public. Major, large-scale projects have a dedicated website with project information including maps, before and after computer animated drawings, photos, video simulations, and other images.



For the STIP, NHDOT includes a detailed schedule demonstrating how the projects are fiscally constrained, which is to say that adequate resources have been identified to support the project spending anticipated for each of the STIP years.

The STIP schedule also breaks out the projected spending by phase (preliminary engineering, right of way and construction), by year and by general funding category.

5 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS EVALUATION

While public involvement efforts are intended to generate feedback about proposed transportation projects, it is critical to have confidence in the results of those efforts. To achieve the desired level of confidence, the efforts must be subjected to performance measures to determine whether they were effective in identifying problems and needs, conveying useful information to every party affected by the proposal and leaving all participants in the process feeling that they had an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns about the project.

To that end, NHDOT will conduct the surveys outlined in Section 4, and then evaluate the responses and adjust its public involvement procedures accordingly in order to ensure the broadest and most effective outreach possible for the planning of transportation projects in New Hampshire.

Appendix A – Glossary of Acronyms Used

CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality
CTAP	Community Technical assistance Program
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GACIT	Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation
HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHDES	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
NHDOT	New Hampshire Department of Transportation
NHDHS	New Hampshire Department of Historical Resources
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RSA	Revised Statutes Annotated
SAB	State Aid Bridge
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SAH	State Aid Highway
SRTS	Safe Routes to School
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TE	Transportation Enhancement
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TYP	Ten-Year Plan

Appendix B – Contact Information

NHDOT, Planning and Community Assistance
Bureau46@dot.state.nh.us
603 271-3344
PO Box 483
7 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302-0483

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan
Nick Alexander
603 271-8457
nalexander@dot.state.nh.us

Ten-Year Plan
Bill Watson
bwatson@dot.state.nh.us
603 271-3344

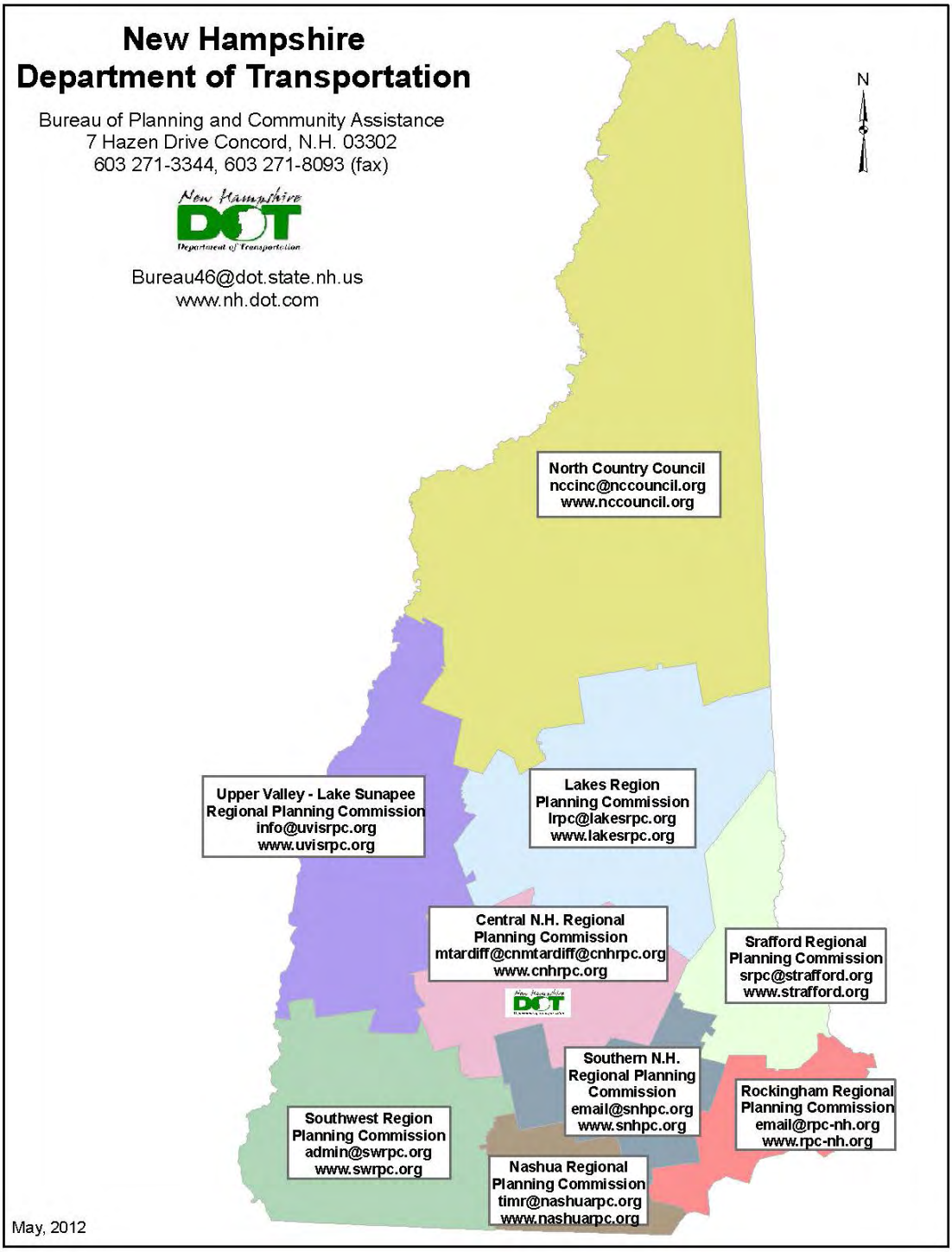
Executive Officers		Telephone	Location
Commissioner	Christopher Clement	(603) 271-1484	Executive Office
Assistant Commissioner & Chief Engineer	David Jeff Brillhart	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Deputy Commissioner	Michael Pillsbury	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Director of Finance	Patrick McKenna	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Director of Operations	William Janelle	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Director of Policy and Administration	Fran Buczynski	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Director of Project Development	William Cass	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office
Assistant Director of Project Development	Craig Green	(603) 271-1486	Executive Office

Bureau/District/Division	Administrator	Telephone	Location
Aeronautics	Tricia Lambert	(603) 271-2551	Room G31 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Bridge Design	Mark Richardson	(603) 271-2731	Room 230 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Bridge Maintenance	Douglas Gosling	(603) 271-3667	Room 240 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Construction	Ted Kitsis	(603) 271-2571	Room 260 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Engineering Audit (Construction)	Dennis Herrick	(603) 271-3463	Room 270 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Environment	Kevin Nyhan	(603) 271-3226	Room 160 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Finance & Contracts	Leonard L. Russell	(603) 271-2546	Room 170 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Fuel Distribution (Highway Maintenance)	Brian Pike	(603) 271-8931	Room 130 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord NH 03301
Highway Design	William J. Oldenburg	(603) 271-2171	Room 200 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive

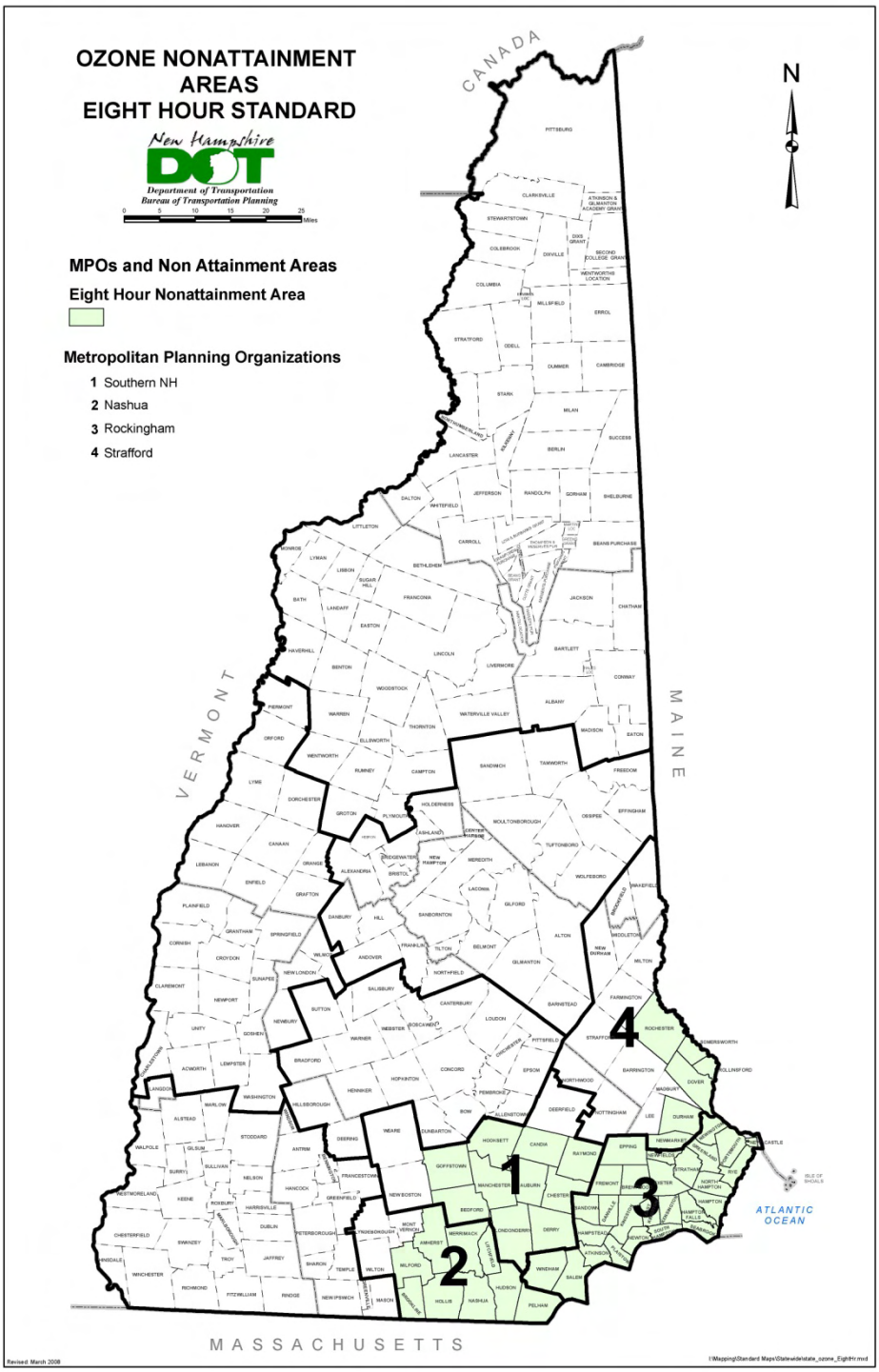
			Concord, NH 03302
Highway Maintenance	Caleb Dobbins	(603) 271-2693	Room 120 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
District One	Brian T. Schutt	(603) 788-4641	641 Main Street Lancaster, NH 03584
District Two	Alan Hanscom	(603) 448-2654	I-89, Exit 16 8 Eastman Hill Road Enfield, NH 03748
District Three	Mark Morrill	(603) 524-6667	2 Sawmill Road Gilford, NH 03246
District Four	Doug Graham	(603) 352-2302	19 Base Hill Road Swanzey, NH 03446
District Five		(603) 666-3336	16 East Point Drive Bedford NH 03110
District Six	Doug DePorter	(603) 868-1133	271 Main Street PO Box 740 Durham, NH 03824
Human Resources	Fran DeCinto	(603) 271-8313	Room 140 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Information Tech Services	Gail Hambleton	(603) 271-3281	Room G41 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Internal Audit	Carol Macuch	(603) 271-6674	Room 187 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH

			03302
Labor Compliance	Jay Ankenbrock	(603) 271-2467	Room 140 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Materials & Research	Alan Rawson	(603) 271-3151	5 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Mechanical Services	William Dusavitch, Administrator	(603) 271-3721	33 Smokey Bear Blvd. Concord, NH 03301-0456
Planning and Community Assistance	Bill Watson	(603) 271-3344	Room G01 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Public Information	Bill Boynton	(603) 271-6495	Room 190 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Public Works* Public Works is no longer a DOT Bureau. See the Department of Administrative Services.	Mark T. Nogueira	(603) 271-3516	Room 250 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Rail &Transit		(603) 271-2468	Room G25 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Right-of-Way	Chuck Schmidt	(603) 271-3222	Room 100 JOM Building 7 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03302
Traffic	William Lambert	(603) 271-2291	NH Route 106 Concord, NH 03302
Turnpikes	Christopher M. Waszczuk	(603) 485-3806	I-93 Exit 11 (Hooksett) PO Box 2950

Concord, NH
03302


New Hampshire
Department of Transportation
Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance
7 Hazen Drive Concord, N.H. 03302
603 271-3344, 603 271-8093 (fax)
Bureau46@dot.state.nh.us
www.nh.dot.com
N
North Country Council
nccinc@nccouncil.org
www.nccouncil.org
Upper Valley - Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission
info@uvisrpc.org
www.uvisrpc.org
Lakes Region
Planning Commission
lrpc@lakesrpc.org
www.lakesrpc.org
Central N.H. Regional
Planning Commission
mtardiff@cnmtardiff@cnhrpc.org
www.cnhrpc.org
Strafford Regional
Planning Commission
srpc@strafford.org
www.strafford.org
Southern N.H.
Regional Planning
Commission
email@snhpc.org
www.snhpc.org
Rockingham Regional
Planning Commission
email@rpc-nh.org
www.rpc-nh.org
Southwest Region
Planning Commission
admin@swrpc.org
www.swrpc.org
Nashua Regional
Planning Commission
timr@nashuarpc.org
www.nashuarpc.org
May, 2012

Appendix C - Ozone Non-Attainment Area Statewide Map



Appendix D – Performance Measures

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Post-Meeting Survey

- Was the information presented in a complete and comprehensive manner?
- Did you feel that comments made by the public were adequately considered?
- Did you feel that you had an opportunity to participate?
- Was the location of this meeting convenient for you?
- How far did you have to travel to the meeting?
- Was this meeting scheduled at a convenient time for you?
- Which of the following would be the most convenient time to start the meeting?
- How did you hear about this meeting?
- If you have any comments about how the meeting was planned or conducted (or on how future meetings can be improved), please write them in the space below.

Appendix E – Public Consultation Process for Regional and Local Officials Involved with Transportation Efforts in New Hampshire

Public Consultation Process for Regional and Local Officials involved with Transportation Efforts in New Hampshire

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Finalized March 4, 2011

Background

The Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities. SAFETEA-LU requires the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to develop short and long range transportation plans, programs, and projects so the state may accommodate current and future transportation needs.

Federal regulations found under 23 CFR 450.210(b) state that "…The State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. The State shall have a documented process(es) for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. Although the FHWA and the FTA shall not review or approve this consultation process(es), copies of the process document(s) shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes…..". Though the local officials' consultation procedures have been established through federal regulations, NHDOT has been having ongoing local consultation since the early 1990s.

As part of this effort, NHDOT is defining consultation as "NHDOT conferring with other parties in accordance with established processes and procedures, and prior to taking actions, considering the other parties' views and periodically informing the parties of actions taken." Where formalized processes and procedures are not in place, NHDOT will attempt to document the practices followed, and comment on the practices for consideration as future formal processes and procedures.

The purpose of this document is to identify the many processes that allow for non-metropolitan local official participation in numerous efforts led by NHDOT, not only in the development of the federally recognized long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, but also the State of NH Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan process, local project selection and ongoing public involvement efforts. Public involvement, at all levels of state, regional and local levels are critical to the success of transportation projects in NH and NHDOT is committed to ensuring that the partnerships established by this involvement and communication continue to improve and expand in the future.

Regional Planning Commissions in NH

New Hampshire is divided into nine Regional Planning Commission areas. Five of them – Central, Lakes Region, North Country, Southwest, and Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee – are rural in nature but may contain small urban areas (5,000 – 50,000 population). They are known as RPCs. The four remaining planning commissions – Nashua, Rockingham, Southern, and Strafford—cover areas with a central city, or group of cities that have a population greater than 50,000. These areas are designated by the governor as Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPO's, to meet federal requirements. The RPCs and MPOs are responsible for identifying transportation concerns and projects through a regional public involvement process. The regional listing of these projects is called a transportation improvement program (TIP).

The MPOs are required to develop a 20-year, project specific long-range transportation plan and a four-year financially constrained TIP. The development of these two items must be done cooperatively with the NHDOT and the providers of public transit services. In addition, there must be ample opportunity for public involvement during the development of these documents. Each of the MPOs has established a public involvement process.

The non-MPO RPCs, although not required by federal regulations, prepare long-range transportation plans that outline recommended approaches for addressing regional transportation needs which may or may not be project specific. In addition, they prepare TIPs that cover a ten year period and updates are completed every two years. These RPCs also have an active public involvement process.

Other key participants in the transportation planning process include the general public, legislators, federal, state and local officials, other agencies, and special interest groups. You are encouraged to become familiar with your RPC or MPO public involvement process and to take an active role in the plan and program development for New Hampshire.

In all of the processes noted below, regardless of the MPO/non-MPO status of the nine regional planning commissions, public involvement, coordination and consultation is addressed in the same manner by NHDOT, unless there is a federal regulation that requires separate treatment. That is, whenever statewide transportation planning processes occur, all of the regional planning commissions and communities represented are equally able to be fully involved in the transportation planning process.

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRSTP) is an essential tool for identifying future transportation needs. By looking at the present transportation system, the transportation needs into the future are identified through a series of long-range transportation goals and objectives.

NHDOT's LRSTP was most recently updated between 2008 and 2010, and included review through and by the nine regional planning commissions through public meetings and staff reviews to achieve consistency between regional and state transportation plans. In addition, public comment periods were announced through the NHDOT website and the New Hampshire Union Leader, and information hearings and discussions occurred through the Legislature. This cooperative effort is advantageous when planning major construction improvements and developing management strategies.

The LRSTP requires continuous evaluation and revision. As part of future revisions, NHDOT will develop a formalized process for communications, review and comment. NHDOT is committed to include as part of this process presentation to regional planning commission technical advisory committees and policy committees. NHDOT shall invite the regional planning commissions to share this document with their communities for further review and input. NHDOT may also include additional public opportunity for input through public meetings. Notification of these meetings will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the State of New Hampshire, NHDOT website and by other interested parties. Notifications will be made through statewide newspapers, the NHDOT website, and other sites such as the regional planning commissions (which we will request) that allow for electronic access to LRSTP documents for review and comment. The NHDOT is committed to using technology as much as possible to maximize the opportunities for comments.

Through these opportunities for comment, the proposed LRSTP is compiled to reflect public input. Federal regulations declare that, "….the State shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan."

The final LRSTP reflecting the comments of all of the above mentioned communications methods is adopted by the NHDOT as a guide for the future development of the transportation system.

In the public consultation process used by the Department for the development, revision and update of the Long Range Transportation Plan, all regional planning commissions and public officials are consulted with equally, regardless of their status as a metropolitan or non-metropolitan regional planning commission or community.

Ten Year Plan Process

The process of involving local planning officials is specified under the New Hampshire RSA 228:99. The decision by New Hampshire Legislature to fully involve the local communities served by all of the regional planning commissions in the State Transportation Improvement Program's/Plans development has proved successful in all of the past development rounds. One measure of this success is that the NH Legislature typically does not touch any of the projects recommended through the public hearing process, which is described in more detail below. Key to the initiation of the process is the input of local officials through their regional planning commission.

Once the programs have been evaluated and a draft statewide program is produced, local officials have the opportunity for input at a series of statewide hearings held by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). In the most recent update of the Ten Year Plan, 37 public hearings were held throughout the state in the fall of 2009.

All regional planning commissions have participated in the presentation at the GACIT Public Hearings and shall continue to be invited in the future, explaining their process and identified regional needs. NHDOT is also exploring the potential of inviting the regional planning commissions to take more of a lead role in the GACIT hearing process. Additional opportunities for local input occurs during the hearings on the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan held by New Hampshire Legislature as the Plan is reviewed and ultimately enacted into law. All of these hearings are publicly noticed in advance by the Legislature and are open to the public.

In the public consultation process used by the Department for the development, revision and update of the State's Ten Year Plan , all regional planning commissions and public officials are consulted with equally, regardless of their status as a metropolitan or non-metropolitan regional planning commission or community.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Federal regulations, as codified in title 23 part 135 and 49 part 5305 of the United States Code (USC), stipulate that each state will develop a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a statewide transportation improvement program (STIP).

In New Hampshire the STIP is updated every two years and is developed through a coordinated statewide and metropolitan planning process. The metropolitan planning process, as defined in 23 USC part 134 and 49 USC part 5303, is carried out by the four MPOs. Each of the MPOs has adopted a metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIPs were developed and approved in accordance with 23 part 450.322 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and include a financially constrained program of transportation projects within their regions. The MPO TIPs are consistent with the regulations outlined in 23 CFR §450.324, including requirements related to financial constraint, and have been incorporated, without change, most recently into the approved 2011-2014 NH STIP. This process will continue as outlined in the future.

The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), through cooperation and coordination with all of the regional planning commissions maintains the STIP. The approved STIP is frequently revised to reflect changes in project status. Changes in project schedules, funding needs, and project scopes require revising the approved STIP. These changes may be initiated from the NHDOT or at the MPO and depending upon their significance and complexity, require coordination from several agencies and may also require Federal approval. STIP Revisions procedures have been adopted by NHDOT in consultation with the MPO and rural RPCs, FHWA, FTA, EPA, and NHDES. These are available for public inspection through the NHDOT website, as noted at the end of this document.

Through interagency consultation, the NHDOT participates with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), MPOs and RPCs to discuss issues, effects of, and requirements regarding revisions of the STIP. These issues include MPO public comments and participation periods, statewide comment periods, financial constraint and air quality conformity determinations. NHDOT is also committed to participate in and share STIP revision information to regional planning commission technical advisory committees and policy committees as part of their approval process.

For non-MPO areas, the NHDOT utilizes the TIPs prepared by the RPC during the development of the Ten Year Plan although project by project inclusion is not required. During the development of the regional TIPs and the STIP, the opportunity for public involvement is open through contact with the regional planning commission and the NHDOT.

In the public consultation process used by the Department for the development, revision and update of the STIP, all regional planning commissions and public officials are consulted with equally, regardless of their status as a metropolitan or non-metropolitan regional planning commission or community and regardless of the requirements that govern metropolitan planning organizations that do not govern rural regional planning commissions.

Other opportunities for consultation

A number of additional initiatives have been advanced through the years to facilitate project development and expedite interagency coordination. Through this approach of Context Sensitive Solutions, local Officials and Communities have an opportunity to participate in open forums as a project advances through the design.

All regional planning commissions also participate in the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) project selection process. All have the opportunity to be directly involved in other program application and funding rounds including Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects, Scenic Byways designations and projects, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) projects, as well as corridor studies and other related local assistance activities through biennial contracts the regional planning commissions have with NHDOT. All of these opportunities provide direct involvement, participation and consultation opportunities to regional and local officials.

NHDOT also has created or been invited to be part other communication and outreach opportunities with the regional planning commissions. These include more formal Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) development efforts to provide greater understanding, transparency and consistency among all of the regional planning commissions, a Transportation Planning Collaborative (TPC), which consists of planning staff from NHDOT and all of the regional planning commissions who meet on a regular basis, and NHDOT is regularly invited to participate regional planning commission Executive Director meetings, which are held monthly.

In addition, during the development of projects managed by the Department, there are requirements and numerous opportunities for local consultation through development of engineering concepts, during the assessment of environmental studies and impacts, through the identification of preferred design alternatives, public hearings, through final design and construction.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is one NHDOT utilized public involvement approach to planning and designing transportation projects based on active and early partnerships with communities and project stakeholders. CSS involves a commitment to a process that encourages transportation officials to collaborate with stakeholders from the community and environmental resource groups so the design of the project reflects the goals of the people who live, work and travel in the area. Such collaboration results in creative and safe transportation solutions.

Numerous NHDOT engineers, planners, project managers and community relations representatives, as well as consultants and community leaders have been trained in CSS techniques: flexible design, respectful communication, consensus-building and community participation, negotiation and conflict resolution.

The Department has also previously published Public Involvement Procedures, most recently in 1995, which are currently being updated. These procedures outline many of the items addressed here, but in greater detail. Once completed in FY 2011, these procedures will be made available through the NHDOT website. The Department will then commit to updating these procedures at least once every five years, using all of the communication methods identified here in this documentation for other efforts such as the STIP and LRSTP.

In the public consultation process used by the Department for the development, revision and update of many locally focused transportation programs, all regional planning commissions and public officials are consulted with equally, regardless of their status as a metropolitan or non-metropolitan regional planning commission.

Conclusion

It is clear that the State shall provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. All opportunities for participation and involvement offer the accommodations of resources to allow for accessibility by all wanting to be involved. The State shall have a documented process(es) for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation. From the information presented here, the Department is confident through this documentation that it is complying with the regulations that are in place. The Department will continue to strive and document its efforts to provide for regional and local official participation in all of its transportation programs, regardless of metropolitan status.

The NHDOT continues to be committed to reviewing and updating these consultation procedures at least once every five years, using all of the communication methods identified here in this documentation for other efforts such as the STIP and LRSTP.

Additional Reference Information:

Long Range Transportation Plan Information:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/lrtbp.htm

Ten Year Plan Legislation:
http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XX/228/228-99.htm
http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XX/240/240-mrg.htm

Ten Plan Document:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/typ/index.htm

STIP:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/stip/index.htm

STIP Revision Procedures:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/planning/stip/documents/NHSTIPAmendmentProcess.pdf

Locally Administered Projects:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/business/municipalities.htm

NHDOT CSS Process:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/highwaydesign/contextsensitivesolutions/index.htm

NH Regional Planning Commissions:
http://www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/regions/RegionalPlanningCommissions.htm

NH Transit Providers:
http://www.nh.gov/dot/nhrideshare/links.htm

	Comments on Public Involvement Procedures Draft
Page	**Comment**
Last	(Although the comments relate to the March 2011 document and may not be able to be addressed). Under "Additional Reference Information" the title "Ten Plan Document" should be "Ten Year Plan Document". Also, final page is numbered 7 of 8. There is no page 8...
5	Federal and State Legal Requirements. Do we want to at least mention that MAP-21 has been enacted? We do not yet know all its ramifications, but it would be good to mention that it has happened, thus giving the best information we have at the moment.
Pg 3, Appendix E	Sixth paragraph, third line says "NHDOT is also exploring the potential of inviting the regional planning commissions to take more of a lead rold in the GACIT hearing process." Do we want to continue to say this, is it going to actually happen? I am aware that this is a finalized version as of March 4, 2011, but has this issue been resolved?
6	Add following: Environmental Requirements for Transportation Projects: Per Env-A 1503.09 MPOs and NHDOT must provide a 10 day minimum public comment period before taking a formal action pertaining to environmental analyses for transportation projects.
7	Federal Regulations 23 CFR 450.210 and 23 CFR 450.316 define the scope of the public involvement process which is closely adhered to by NHDOT and MPOs. Additionally, 40 CFR 93.105 (c) and (e) define interagency consultation procedures and public consultation procedures allowing public comment and input to environmental decisions for transportation plans and projects.
12	Air Quality Considerations (**<u>Commenter suggests following rewrite of draft section</u>**): As part of the transportation planning process, the objective of improving air quality is carefully considered for each proposed transportation project. Air quality in New Hampshire is continuously measured by a host of statewide testing stations that determine concentration levels for vehicle emissions such as ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons), particulates and carbon monoxide~~ and air quality in New Hampshire is generally very good~~. Those areas that have lower pollutant levels than National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the federal Clean Air Act are considered to have attained compliance with those regulations and are therefore classified as "attainment areas" by EPA. Areas that do not meet Clean Air Act standards are classified as "non-attainment areas." The ozone non-attainment map above shows the areas EPA designated as non-attainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard as well as the MPOs representing those areas. Non-attainment areas that later achieved compliance with national standards, such as Manchester and Nashua that were in violation of carbon monoxide standards, are classified as "maintenance" areas by EPA and are subject to ongoing evaluation and maintenance plan requirements to ensure continued compliance. (could be more information than necessary to make the point) For non-attainment areas, the Department of Environmental Services has created a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that details all the activities and strategies the state will implement, to ensure emissions fall or remain below attainment levels for different air pollutants. The SIP also creates a "motor vehicle emissions budget" of allowable total daily emissions that may be generated by a non-attainment area's vehicles. Federal and State laws require MPOs and NHDOT to show that their transportation projects conform to SIP requirements. Under these conformity regulations, transportation planners calculate their area's total vehicle-generated emissions to show their existing and proposed transportation improvement projects will not exceed their allowed emissions budget. Also as part of the transportation planning process, planners create long-range forecasts of their area's vehicle use. These forecasts are plugged into complex vehicle emissions modeling programs to calculate expected emissions as far as 20 years into the future.
20	3.7.2 Interagency Consultation Although it is true NHDOT invites participants in the IAC process, 40 CFR 93.105 (a), (b) and (c), Env-A 1503 .08 very clearly define the structure, purpose, members and member responsibilities of the IAC. As presently written, the IAC sounds like a voluntary meeting of NHDOT, FHWA, MPOs, etc. As per Env-A 1503.08 (d), IAC meetings shall address: • Development of a SIP or SIP revisions, including but not limited to those involving transportation-related issues and mobile sources; • Development of a metropolitan transportation plan or TIP, minor revisions to a TIP, or any amendment(s) to a TIP, and any determination of conformity for such plans; • Emissions budgets; • Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) and mitigation measures pursuant to 40 CFR 93.125(c) and 93.122(a)(4)(ii), respectively, that are in the SIP or are being considered for inclusion in the SIP; • Evaluation and determination of events that will trigger new conformity determinations; and • Coordination of emissions analyses for transportation activities that cross the borders of MPOs or nonattainment or maintenance areas or include areas outside of MPO boundaries. I thought you might want to cut and paste these bullets into your description of IAC functions.
23	This section discusses outreach activities and methods. The last set of bullets provides suggested survey questions that should be made available to public meeting participants. I would suggest moving this paragraph and bullets to Section 5 (Public Involvement Procedures Evaluation) since these will provide after-meeting information that could measure the success of public participation outreach efforts. I would also include a question like: • What person, group or organization should we contact, for future public events? This might assist an agency in developing better outreach for future public events.
16	Page 16 refers to 30-day comment periods for LRTPs. Has that been reduced to 10 days or is the 10-day period only for STIP revisions?
Index	Who is the audience? State, regional, and local officials or public or all of them? Or is it just for NHDOT staff?
3	This report should also educate citizens about the planning and programming processes; explain where in those processes the public can participate; and explain how the public's input will be used

3	The first bullet should be to design/develop a public involvement plan that is unique to that specific to the project and who the audience should be. The use of nontraditional or alternative ways of engaging the public/audience should be explored.
3	It would be more efficient if NH DOT and the MPO/RPCs conduct it together.
5	The MPOs/RPCs should be also be listed.
5	Some goals for public involvement during planning and programming could be: Identify improvements to the transportation system that will help citizens meet their mobility needs; Identify and document community support or concerns with planned transportation improvements, and carry that information forward for consideration in project development decisions: Prioritize proposed improvements and recommend which should be programmed and moved forward in the project development process. This document should encourage the public to contact first their MPO/RPCs first and then NH DOT.
5	This should be more specific - "To provide all citizens with ongoing opportunities to participate in the transportation project development process, which includes planning, programming, design, right of way acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of roadways and transit facitities."
7	There should be a discussion about the NEPA requirements and how that is integrated into the NHDOT planning and programming. Should you also mention the title VI.
7	Should we also mention the growing population of the elderly? Also under-employed households where the adults are working two or three jobs to survive.
8	How about including the elderly and economic disadvantaged?
10	We (NH DOT and MPOs/RPCs should do a better job identifying transportation concerns in our regions and state. In the past, we have identified projects but not problems.
11	Shouldn't this be a partnership between the NH DOT and the MPOs/RPCs like in other states?
12	This needs to be updated with MAP-21.
12	Is there a plan to implement Phase III of CTAP since it was part of the mitigation of the I-93 Widening Project EIS? If not, this should be eliminated and the 26 communities need to be told that NH DOT will not be fulfilling its requirements.
12	Such as construction
15	When is the LRTP going to be updated? It's time.
19	Needs to be updated MAP-21
20	Department of Safety and Homeland Security should be involved because of emergencies and climate change.
22	I think we can do better.
22	Public Meetings need to be televised so that the meetings can be televised through the local cable television companies or through the internet. The majority of the public views these meetings if they are televised.
23	NH DOT should also use social media..such as FACEBOOK to get the word out.
23	Getting the information out in a nontraditional or alternative way is very important.
25	This should be procedure if you are not all ready doing it: announcing public meetings in local newspapers 30 days in advance and again a week before the meeting; using kiosks, mass mailings, or television and radio ads; sending press releases to the media, which often generate news stories; using to NHDOT and the MPO/RPCs web sites to post the notices
25	MPO/RPCs web sites should also be used.
25	Social media should be used.
	The Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) project development process is only mentioned in passing. The NHDOT should consider placing more emphasis on CSS in the document. Additionally, the Department should consider providing guidelines about the types of projects the CSS process could be applied to, and the appropriate scale of the CSS process for different types of projects. Perhaps the "Scaling CSS" document developed in 2008 could be used as an appendix: http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/highwaydesign/contextsensitivesolutions/documents/CSSScaling.pdf
	Project-level Public Involvement Plans should be mentioned in Section 4 as a means of documenting and coordinating project-level outreach activities.
	References to specific programs (e.g. TE and SRTS) should be revised as necessary in the context of MAP-21.
	Some of the language in Section 3.1 (and potentially other sections) may need to be revised in the context of MAP-21. It was noted that the Department's long-standing, strong consultative process with rural RPCs means that New Hampshire is "ahead of the curve" when it comes to complying with MAP-21's RTPO provisions.
Pg 5, Appendix E	In Appendix E (Public Consultation Process), the Department commits to updating the Public Involvement Procedures every five years, but we didn't see the same five-year commitment in Section 5 of the actual Public Involvement Procedures text.

3	Bullet point #2 in the Executive Summary reads as follows: “Make special efforts to give traditionally underserved populations and individuals with limited proficiency in English the opportunity to learn about and voice their opinions.” It was noted that this reads as if people will be given the opportunity to learn about their opinions rather than learning about transportation plans, programs, and/or projects.