

DO THE TWO-STEP

There are really just two simple steps to effective participation in transportation projects:

One, do your research and find out what projects are out there and what they are about...what will they build? What impacts and benefits are expected? Then...

"I'm not much of a public speaker"

Two, you don't have to make speeches in front of large groups of people in order to have your say. Get on a project mailing list so that you're aware of the latest developments. Read project reports. Then, draw a picture, write a letter, take a photo, send an email, cut out magazine articles about things implemented in other places, make a phone call, talk at a meeting, join a workshop.... Through your input, the NHDOT strives to achieve full and fair participation of all affected communities.

Other pieces in the Citizen's Guide to Transportation series include:

- #1 Having Your Say in transportation projects that shape your community
- #3 Project Development: Making transportation projects a reality
- #4 Access Management
- #5 Transportation Enhancement Program
- #6 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program
- #7 The Transportation/Land Use Relationship

For more information about statewide transportation planning, please contact your Regional Planning Commission or the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

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#2

New Hampshire Department of Transportation
Citizen's Guide to Transportation Series

PLANNING THE FUTURE of New Hampshire Transportation



Have you noticed more and more cars on the road? That it takes longer to get to places because of traffic? Are you concerned that the situation might get worse? Are you worried that they might build a new road? Are you worried that they won't? Have you ever had a good idea for a walking path or a bicycle trail in your community, or wished there was public transportation to take you to your job or local stores?

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is constantly looking ahead to plan for the transportation needs of New Hampshire, but each community in the State is unique, with distinct character and distinct needs. NHDOT needs input from communities to plan appropriate projects, and wants your knowledge and ideas to help them plan transportation facilities in the State.

"...there is a close relationship between building transportation and building a community."



NHDOT works with local and regional agencies to hold workshops which involve communities in the planning process.

Federal regulation sets the tone

Since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, public involvement has played an increasingly essential role in planning transportation facilities across the country. Since then, NHDOT has worked to expand its public participation processes, involving citizens more and more in developing short and long-range transportation plans for federal approval. ISTEA also introduced:

- The idea of using highway funds for transit;
- The idea of coordinating land use and air quality planning with transportation planning;
- The idea of community-based project leadership; and,
- The idea of focusing attention on walking and bicycling facilities.

In other words, ISTEA recognized that there is a close relationship between building transportation and building a community.

We are now in the era of TEA-21, or the Transportation Equity Act for the

21st Century, the successor to ISTEA that reinforces and expands on the its innovations. As a result, the culture of communities directing transportation planning is growing.



Planning improved transportation facilities can improve access to natural areas and preserve them as well.



PLANNING THE FUTURE

FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE TRANSPORTATION



Now is the time to get involved. Share your insights to ensure the best possible future for your community. What follows is a detailed description, including schedules, for the pieces, which comprise NHDOT's planning tools. There are many, many ways you can be involved.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

First and foremost, the NHDOT maintains an "open door" policy on its planning and project processes. You are encouraged to contact the NHDOT at the number included in this brochure with any questions, comments, or ideas you may have. Any questions. Anytime.

One of the best examples of a visioning process is the 20/20 Vision Plan for Concord. A community interest group called The Initiative for a 20/20 Vision for Concord approached NHDOT to support a visioning process to plan how proposed improvements to I-93 in Concord could contribute to the city's growth and character. Funded by a grant from the federal Transportation, Community and Systems Preservation Program, the year-long process began with an analysis of the issues and opportunities before Concord. That analysis formed the basis of open public discussions and workshops which identified the following Vision Principles, which will influence future transportation and land use policy and projects:

- A vibrant, and livable downtown
- Neighborhoods served by walkable villages
- Preservation and access to the natural environment
- Economic vitality
- Transportation that serves the community

THE BIG PICTURE VIEW OF STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

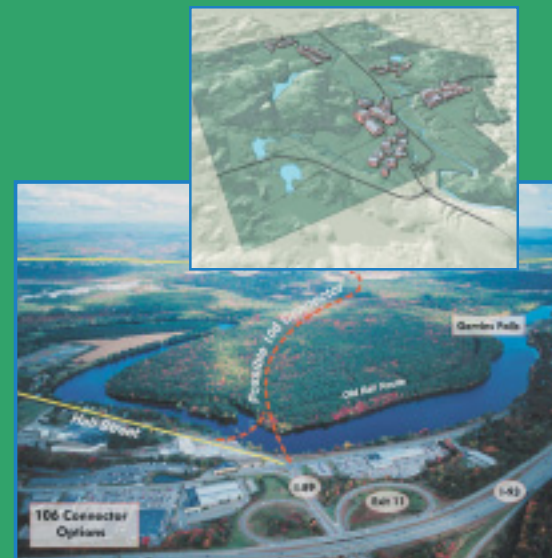
Visioning

NHDOT has worked with citizens and agencies in various villages, towns and cities, to shape desired futures for their communities and to define transportation's role in helping create that future. In a process called "visioning", the public and agencies participate in brainstorming sessions, workshops and discussions to identify:

- Common goals and values shared by members of the community
- Ways to accommodate anticipated growth, or to create desired growth
- Ways to protect and enhance the unique character of their community
- Criteria to evaluate growth and change

The result is a "vision plan" which identifies elements to achieve community goals, some targeted for the short term, others for the long term. Inevitably, future transportation projects are important elements of the vision plan.

A vision plan like the 20/20 Vision Plan for Concord sets a framework of common goals to work toward, identifies community priorities and establishes the foundation for more detailed planning and implementation efforts.



STIP AMENDMENTS: PROJECT CLASSIFICATION

PROJECT LOCATION AND TYPE	PROCESS	PUBLIC INPUT	TYPICAL DURATION OF APPROVAL PROCESS
Attainment area, minor work (paving, etc.)	NHDOT requests approval in writing from FTA/FHWA		up to 30 days
Adding lanes, purchase of right-of-way, major reconstruction, etc.	After consideration of public comment, NHDOT notified of comments and requests approval of proposed change from FHWA/FTA	Public notification of 30-day comment period	40-60 days
Non-attainment area in an RPC	NHDOT reexamines the air quality analysis of non-attainment area Requests that FHWA/FTA make a determination of conformity	30-day public comment period on determination of conformity	90-120 days
Non-attainment area in MPO Exempt	NHDOT and MPO notifies public of change. Otherwise, once MPO public process is complete, the change will be requested of FHWA/FTA by NHDOT	Follows statewide public involvement and MPO public involvement processes	40-60 days
Non-exempt	MPO makes a determination of conformity and a TIP amendment. NHDOT submits the amended TIP to FTA/FHWA for conformity determination and approval If not from a conforming plan, MPO must amend long range transportation plan and make a determination of conformity	MPO public involvement processes with 30-day comment period	90-180 days

Having Your Say

During the two-year statewide transportation process there are regular opportunities to share your ideas:

- Public meetings conducted by the RPCs and MPOs from October to April.
- Public hearings conducted by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation from July to December.
- Public hearings conducted in Legislative Committee from January to June.
- Anytime you contact your MPO, RPC or NHDOT.

But you do not have to attend a meeting to have your say, either. Write a letter, send an email, draw a sketch, make a phone call, send a letter, sing a song – just share your ideas about how to make your community, and transportation, work better for you.



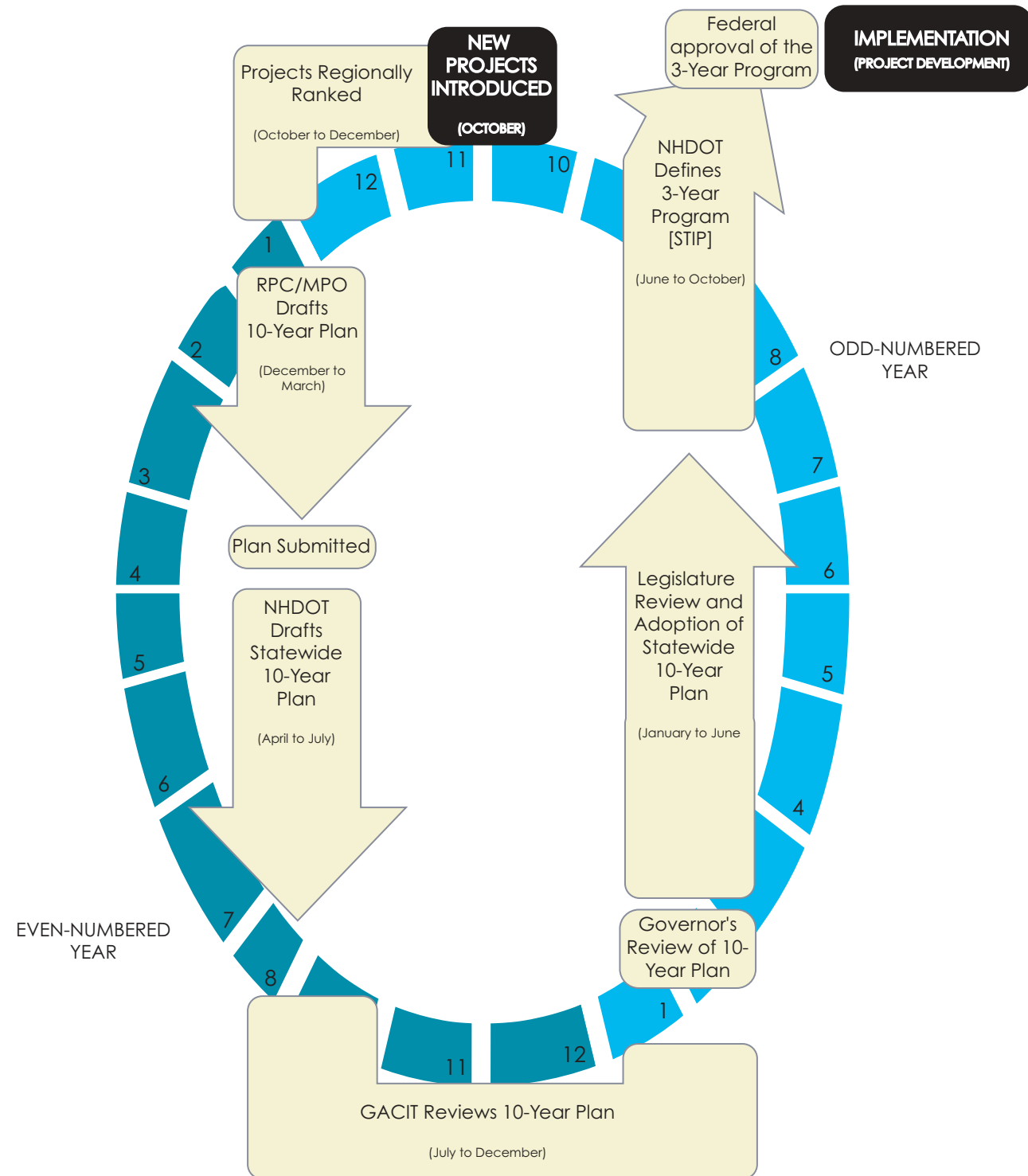
Community input is important in assembling and evaluating transportation plans.

PLANNING THE FUTURE

FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE TRANSPORTATION



THE TWO-YEAR STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CYCLE



Long Range Statewide Transportation Plan - (LRSTP)

This 20-year plan evolves from the recommendations of the RPC/MPO TIPs and sets the statewide goals and objectives for transportation into the foreseeable future. Public meetings, advertised in local papers, are held across the state in conjunction with the RPCs and MPOs.

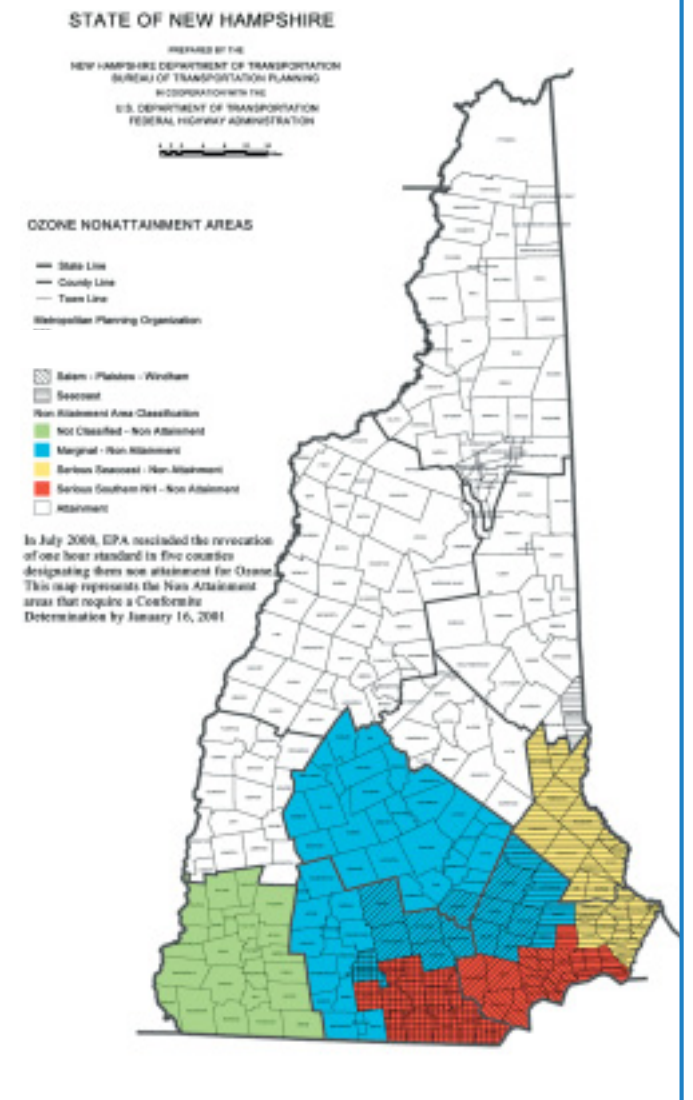
Once the results of the meetings are incorporated in the LRSTP, there is a 30-day comment period, during which additional public meetings may be held to receive comments. Those comments are incorporated as appropriate into the final LRSTP. Once adopted by NHDOT, the LRSTP is then forwarded to FHWA and FTA for acceptance. New Hampshire's LRSTP is not just about roads and cars. It includes plans for rail transportation, air transportation, intermodal connections, pedestrians and bicycles.

AIR QUALITY

Motorized vehicles are a significant source of air pollution, and consequently the planning of new transportation facilities is assessed for impacts on air quality. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) identify areas which do not meet basic air quality requirements called "nonattainment areas". There are several areas in New Hampshire, which are nonattainment areas, particularly around urbanized areas of Salem, Nashua, and Manchester, along the Seacoast, and in Cheshire County.

Transportation projects within nonattainment areas that could affect air quality are considered "Non-Exempt" and must conform to the State's air quality plan or SIP (State Implementation Plan). This requirement ensures a comprehensive view of the relationship between transportation facilities and air quality over time.

OZONE NONATTAINMENT AREAS



PLANNING THE FUTURE

FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE TRANSPORTATION



“10-Year Plan”

This Plan evolves from the goals of the LRSTP and the RPC/MPO. All projects in an MPO’s TIP must meet air quality rules. Public input on the 10-Year Program is concurrent with the public meetings organized by the RPCs/MPOs to receive input on their TIPs.

Every two years NHDOT generates a 10-Year Plan, from April to July of an odd-numbered year. In July the 10-Year Program is submitted to the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT) for review and public hearings are held.

By December of the odd-numbered year, the GACIT’s recommendations are forwarded to the Governor for review and approval. The Governor then forwards the recommendations by January 15 of an even-numbered year to the Legislature.

The recommendations are reviewed by Legislative committee, which includes hearings for public input. The 10-Year Plan is then approved by the Legislature by June of that even-numbered year.



Along Route 124 in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, public input helped shape the landscaping and roadway design in a historic district.

“3-Year Program”

By June 15 of an even numbered year, NHDOT sends the final 10-Year Plan back to the RPCs/MPOs to review the changes which may have occurred under State review. The RPCs/MPOs then approve a Three-Year STIP (the first three years of the 10-Year Plan) by the end of July.

TEA-21 requires that the STIP must include all projects from the MPOs’, TIPs. Other projects may come from the RPC’s TIPS.

Once the regional TIPs are approved, NHDOT compiles a Three-Year STIP to forward to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration for approval by October 1 of the even-numbered year.

One of their criteria for approval is compliance with Clean Air standards, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency’s review of the plans.

The two-year planning cycle begins again the following January.

STIP Amendments

After Federal agencies approve the STIP, there may be a need to adjust, or “amend” the plan during the following two-year planning process. Depending on the location of the project (is it in an air-quality non-attainment area?) and the type of the change to be implemented in the project, there are different approval processes and different opportunities for public input for each project classification (see chart on next page):

A More Detailed View: Two-Year STIP Planning Cycle Summary

Federal agencies (such as the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency) play important coordination, permitting and funding roles in transportation projects. Because of the oversight role of these agencies, federal regulation sets the standards for statewide planning processes across the country. Although there are minor variations in process from state to state, the process is geared towards updating a state transportation plan every two years to submit to Federal agencies for approval.

In New Hampshire, statewide transportation planning is an iterative process, beginning every two years in October of an even-numbered year. It begins with the regional planning agencies, which meet over time with the public to develop their recommendations for the transportation plan for their region of the state (The Transportation Improvement Program or TIP). The nine agencies submit their plans to the State to incorporate into a statewide plan (The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, or STIP). That program is reviewed by the Governor’s Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), which conducts public hearings on its contents. The GACIT makes their recommendations on the program, and submits it to the Governor for input. The Governor, in turn, passes it on to the New Hampshire Legislature for committee hearings and additional public input. The Legislature then approves the plan by June of the next even-numbered year, some 20 months after the process began.

But our state’s transportation plan is not complete without Federal approval, because Federal agencies play an important role in coordinating and funding transportation and in regulating related environmental issues. Between June and October, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approve the first three years of the program to complete the two-year process.

The Transportation Improvement Program

There are two types of regional planning organizations, which work with NHDOT regularly: Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). RPCs govern areas that are primarily rural in nature, with smaller urban areas (less than 50,000 persons), while MPOs include a city or group of cities whose population exceeds 50,000 persons.

Transportation concerns and projects are identified by RPCs and MPOs through a regional public involvement process that begins in October of every even-numbered year, and extends to the following April:

- MPOs are required to develop a twenty-year long-range transportation plan, and a three-year TIP outlining projects and budgets. These elements are developed in conjunction with public, NHDOT and transit providers’ input.
- RPCs also develop long-range transportation plans 10-Year Plan and three-year TIPs, with active involvement of the public, agencies and transit providers.

NHDOT and transit providers, special interest groups, other agencies, legislators, federal, state and local officials are also included in the process.

Recommendations for the Ten Year Plan are submitted to NHDOT by each MPO and RPC to incorporate into statewide planning.