



# New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives

## Planning Division

### Programs | Services | Resources

The Planning Division of the Office of Strategic Initiatives (OSI) provides assistance and resources to various stakeholders on the laws and regulations pertaining to land use development and municipal planning; the promotion of sound floodplain management practices; monitoring and protecting the conservation values of conservation easement lands; the location and pace of development in the state through population and housing data; maintaining and promoting geographic information system data and mapping; and other statewide planning issues through interagency coordination. The following is a summary of the planning programs, services and resources available at OSI.

## Municipal and Regional Planning Assistance (MRA)

- Provides technical assistance to state and municipal officials, local board members, and members of the public on land use development and municipal planning matters.
- Provides information and guidance to improve: master plans; land use regulations; natural resource management; and local housing and economic development opportunities. This includes publishing annual updates to OSI's Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment handbooks.
- In partnership with regional planning commissions and other planning partners, provides training and outreach to promote effective planning and management for local land use boards, including organizing a popular annual planning and zoning conference.
- Provides various other planning-related services including: maintaining a comprehensive resources webpage; maintaining Plan-link—a listserv providing a forum for online discussion; and conducting an annual municipal land use regulation survey and maintaining an associated statewide database.

## Floodplain Management Program

- Serves as the state coordinating agency for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and provides technical assistance related to floodplain regulations, floodplain mapping, and flood insurance.
- Conducts floodplain management-related outreach, workshops, and trainings throughout the state to various stakeholders and provides information and updates through its quarterly newsletter, *Flood Lines*.
- In partnership with FEMA, annually evaluates community performance in implementing NFIP activities and provides support and training to reduce flood losses for the 219 participating communities.
- Coordinates with FEMA, state and regional planning commissions, and communities in maintaining up-to-date flood hazard maps and other flood hazard information.

## Conservation Land Stewardship (CLS) Program

- Monitors and stewards 86 conservation easements acquired through the Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP), and an additional 102 easements in collaboration with other state agencies, to ensure that the State is meeting its legal obligations to permanently protect these conservation resources.
- Works with 78 municipalities that acquired conservation land interests through the LCIP (240 total) by providing oversight, training, and technical assistance on land conservation and stewardship issues.
- Works with landowners, other state agencies, conservation partners, and municipalities to cooperatively resolve issues and ensure that conservation values are not diminished over time.
- Represents OSI on multiple conservation-related boards and committees, providing professional expertise relative to land protection and conservation easement stewardship.

## State Data Center (SDC)

- Conducts the annual calculation of population estimates and periodic calculation of population projections at the state, county and local level.
- Conducts annual municipal building permit and group quarter surveys for use in the annual population estimates and housing supply report.
- Assists in the dissemination, promotion, and interpretation of information and data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau to state, regional and local governments, and to the general public.
- Provides technical assistance and training to data users to ensure understanding in finding and using state datasets, and U.S. Census data and services.

## Geographic Information System (GIS)

- Maintains and updates GIS data layers, including a recreation dataset, water access datasets, telecommunications facilities, and political districts, including city ward boundaries.
- Supports OSI's GIS activities, including Conservation Land Stewardship Program, floodplain management program, census geography, and energy programs.
- Leads the GIS Technical Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the NH GIS Committee.
- Serves as the state contact for the Federal Board on Geographic Names.

## Intergovernmental Coordination

- Participates in numerous state agency coordination activities related to land use planning, demographics, smart growth, recreation, floodplain management, land conservation, climate change, water resources, and community development.
- Chairs and staffs the Council on Resources and Development (CORD), a state interagency board that is responsible for management and oversight of lands acquired through the Land Conservation Investment Program, implementing the state's smart growth policy and encouraging smart growth consistency in the distribution of state agency funds, oversight of the statewide public boat access program, and for reviewing the disposal of state-owned real property.

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To learn more about the Planning Division's Program and Services, to access the Planning Resources links, and to read about Planning News, please go to: [www.nh.gov/osi/planning/](http://www.nh.gov/osi/planning/)