



Youth Transportation Forum

On March 6th, the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation (MRCC) will host a day-long forum on building an innovative, coordinated and resilient youth transportation network in the Monadnock Region. The forum will be facilitated by a youth transportation expert from the National Center for Mobility Management. Increasing capacity to provide youth transportation is identified as a priority project in the MRCC's [Coordinated Community Transportation Plan](#). The goal of the forum is to strengthen the region's youth transportation network by mobilizing collective action. This can be done through increased awareness and understanding of youth transportation challenges and identifying the opportunities to address them. The registration deadline is **March 4, 2020**. Those interested in attending the event can register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/monadnock-youth-transportation-forum-tickets-93161754315?aff=General>. For more information about the event, please contact either Terry Johnson or Todd Horner of SWRPC staff at tjohnson@swrpc.org or thorner@swrpc.org.

Broadband Coordination

On February 3rd, SWRPC staff facilitated a meeting of the Monadnock Broadband Group. The meeting was an opportunity to learn about proposed broadband legislation in NH – including the possible creation of communication districts – as well as bills proposed at the federal level. The meeting also featured presentations from leaders tied to collaborative models to improve broadband such as ECFiber, Vermont's first communication union district providing fiber-based internet service in over a dozen communities, and ValleyNet, a non-profit focused on designing, building and operating fiber networks in both Vermont and New Hampshire. On February 10th, staff attended a meeting of the New Hampshire Broadband Investment Initiative facilitated by New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs that covered USDA's ReConnect Program, FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and utilizing the Community Reinvestment Act to improve broadband. On February 20th, staff participated in a roundtable discussion convened by U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan dedicated to rural broadband issues and possible solutions. For more information about SWRPC's activities related to broadband, visit www.swrpc.org/broadband or contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Project Update

On February 12th, the Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge Project Advisory Committee met. The Committee receives administrative and technical support from SWRPC and the Windham Regional Commission to provide the NH Department of Transportation and the Vermont Agency of Transportation final design guidance on a project to construct a new bridge over the Connecticut River. The Committee recommended twenty-seven pedestrian-scale solar lights for the new bridge and adjacent sidewalks and interpretive signs to be placed on two nine-foot wide overlooks planned for the bridge. The Hinsdale-Brattleboro Bridge project is scheduled for advertising in August 2020, with construction planned from 2021 to 2023. For more information about this project, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.

2020 Winter Meeting

On February 18th, SWRPC held its 2020 Winter meeting which focused on the topic *Addressing Opioid Addiction in the Monadnock Region: Challenges for Communities*. A panel presentation was delivered by leaders of the Monadnock Rural Communities Opioid Response Planning Project (MRCORPP). Panelists highlighted a number of themes including how the opioid and substance addiction crisis results in irreversible harm. Among the factors contributing to the crisis are underlying community issues related to stigma, poverty, transportation, and access to appropriate care. SWRPC completed a needs assessment on behalf of the MRCORPP consortium late last year. The Consortium recently created a strategic blueprint aimed at building and strengthening the community by reducing the harms associated with opioid misuse and substance use disorders. For more information, please contact Terry Johnson of SWRPC staff at tjohnson@swrpc.org.

New Hampshire Statewide Rail Trail Plan

The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) recently hired a consultant to update the New Hampshire Statewide Rail Trail Plan, which was last updated in 2005. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure the preservation and integrity of state-owned rail trails and provide direction for future development. In addition to defining the role of NHDOT in preserving the corridors, the Plan will determine the best way to maximize return on investment and leverage investment in the state's corridor assets. SWRPC staff member J. B. Mack represents NH's regional planning commissions on a Statewide Rail Trail Advisory Stakeholder Committee which had its first meeting on February 27th to provide a project overview and discuss the project's scope of work and schedule. For more information about this project, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.



2020 Census

In mid-March, homes across the country will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once it arrives, residents will be able to respond online, by phone, or by mail. The data collected will inform decisions about the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funds over the next decade. School lunches, highway funding and housing assistance for older adults are just some of the many examples of programs whose funding is tied to data gathered for the Census. The 2020 Census will assist businesses regarding decisions about product development, distribution, manufacturing, and retail by providing workforce and consumer demographics. The Census can also be used by communities in planning for the future. To learn more about the 2020 Census, please visit 2020census.gov or contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

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