

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

November 2018

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Age-Focused Planning

SWRPC is undertaking an age-focused planning initiative. The project aims to improve the capacity of communities to respond to changing demographics in the region. The project will include regional and community assessments on issues relating to housing options, economic opportunities, transportation options, and social engagement. SWRPC staff is collecting data through surveys and focus group meetings to inform the project. A survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SWRPCAge-Focused>. This effort is being conducted in partnership with Cheshire Medical Center with support from the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. For more information about the project, please contact Lisa Murphy of Commission staff.

2018 Transportation Fieldwork Season

During November, SWRPC completed its 2018 transportation fieldwork season. SWRPC submitted the last of 124 traffic counts to the NH Department of Transportation Highway Performance Monitoring System, an annual program which tracks changes in traffic volume and composition through short-term studies. Information from the 2018 season will be available this winter at nhdot.ms2soft.com. In addition, SWRPC completed many other traffic counts to inform local roadway projects and planning documents. This fieldwork included studies dedicated to freight, pedestrian or bicyclist use, turning movements, and rideshares. SWRPC also made substantial use of the NH Statewide Asset Data Exchange System, to collect location and condition information about roads, culverts, stream crossings, and sidewalks. These efforts are supported by the Federal Highway Administration. For more information about SWRPC's fieldwork activities, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Open House

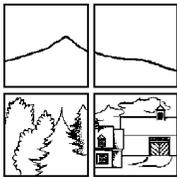
On November 17th, SWRPC hosted a Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail Open House to gather public input for this planning effort which addresses assets and challenges along the 21.5-mile stretch of trail between Hinsdale and Keene. The Open House, held at Whitcomb Hall in West Swanzey, provided attendees with information about the Ashuelot Rail Trail and encouraged them to share how they think the trail could be improved and/or managed. Activities invited attendees to help map assets and challenges along the trail's route and to assist in developing big-picture goals for trail development. Historical maps and photos were on display to share the trail's rich past as an important railroad corridor. A photo slideshow provided examples of other rail trails in rural areas around the country. Approximately 60 people attended including trail users and trail advocates from the Monadnock Region and beyond. Input from attendees will inform the planning process as it moves forward. For more information, please contact Todd Horner of Commission staff or visit the project website at www.swrpc.org/plan-for-ashuelot-rail-trail.

Livable Communities Conference

On November 13th & 14th, SWRPC staff attended the 2018 Annual Livable Communities Conference in Charlotte, NC hosted by AARP. The conference offered an array of informative presentations on topics related to creating age-friendly communities. Several of the breakout sessions focused on issues common to rural communities, particularly transportation and social engagement, and included case studies from around the country. Ideas and information from this conference will benefit the recently launched age-focused planning initiative. For more information about the conference, please contact Lisa Murphy of Commission staff.

Community Development Block Grant Awarded

Cheshire County has received a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$500,000 for the Central Square Housing Rehabilitation project. The County will loan funds to Keene Housing and a related entity identified as CST Housing Associates L.P. These funds, along with Low Income Housing Tax Credits and permanent debt insured by HUD Risk Sharing Funds through the NH Housing Finance Authority, will support the rehabilitation of Central Square Terrace, located at 5 Central Square in Keene. The project's total budget is estimated at \$14.9 million, which includes acquisition and rehabilitation. Central Square Terrace has 90 apartments, all occupied by low and moderate-income elderly and disabled residents. SWRPC will oversee administration of the grant award. For more information, please contact Rebeckah Bullock of Commission staff.



Air Quality Workshop

On November 28th, SWRPC led an Air Quality Workshop at the Keene State College Student Center as an opportunity for area residents to learn about small particle air pollution and its associated health and environmental impacts. The session covered the science behind the issue, best practices for wood-burning, sources for air quality forecasts, as well as recent and upcoming research efforts at Keene State College. Over the next several months, Keene State College and SWRPC will continue efforts to understand and address air quality issues in the greater Keene area. This collaboration is made possible through the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Healthy Communities Grant Program. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff or visit the project website at www.swrpc.org/airquality.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

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