

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

September 2021

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SWRPC's 2021 Fall Meeting

The Southwest Region Planning Commission's 2021 Fall Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, **October 19, 2021** at 5:00 p.m. at the Cheshire County Delegation Room of the Historic Cheshire County Courthouse, located at 12 Court Street in Keene. The featured presentation will be on a recently completed study on food access in Southwest NH (see related entry below). Announcements for the event will be distributed soon. For more information, please contact Rich Clough of SWRPC staff at rclough@swrpc.org.

Website Dedicated to Regional Economic Development Planning

During September, SWRPC launched a website for a new economic development planning initiative: *Our Economy, a Strategy for Southwest NH*. This effort aims to: 1) build shared knowledge about the current state of the regional economy; 2) establish goals for advancing regional economic prosperity; and 3) take action towards implementing specific economic development projects. Extensive outreach to SWRPC's member municipalities and other economic development stakeholders will be integral to the initiative. The website will evolve as the project continues to take shape with data analysis, project materials and other information being published on an ongoing basis in the months to come. For more information, please visit www.oureconomy.info or contact Todd Horner of SWRPC staff at thorner@swrpc.org.

2021 Monadnock Region Food Access Study

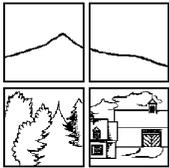
SWRPC recently completed a comprehensive analysis of levels of household food insecurity as well as assets and gaps in present children's and families' food security programs in the Monadnock Region. The analysis was conducted on behalf of the Monadnock Children's Food Access Alliance. Led by the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition (MFCC), the Alliance is a diverse network of partners committed to improving the overall health of children and families in the Monadnock Region through increasing access to affordable, healthy food. Key findings of the study include:

- At 12.7% and 14.4% respectively, childhood food insecurity rates in Cheshire and Sullivan counties are higher than the state average of 10.9%.
- The average annual food budget shortfall reported by food insecure individuals in Cheshire, Hillsborough and Sullivan counties is higher than the state average.
- 40% of Cheshire County's food insecure population does not qualify for federal nutrition assistance programs because they do not meet the threshold eligibility criteria.

On October 19, 2021 beginning at 5:30 p.m., the MFCC will host a virtual community forum where participants will become familiar with the key findings from the report, hear feedback from individuals experiencing food insecurity and provide input about which projects best address gaps identified for implementation. Those interested in attending can register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/monadnock-food-access-analysis-report-community-forum-tickets-171429749997>. The Monadnock Region Food Access Analysis report is available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FPim7VBtob_Eo410hR4fOB6y4yn4v6q4/view. For more information, please contact Terry Johnson of SWRPC staff at tjohnson@swrpc.org.

Road Safety Audit Applications

The NH Department of Transportation has announced that applications are being accepted for Road Safety Audits (RSA) to be undertaken in 2022. Road safety audits are comprehensive safety evaluations performed by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of individuals from NHDOT and the participating community. The RSAs evaluate safety issues and propose a range of improvement alternatives, which are then potentially eligible for federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding. Successful candidate locations must have experienced a fatal or serious injury crash in the last ten years and show a sustained history of crashes indicative of a safety problem. The application deadline for candidates for the 2022 RSA program is December 1, 2021. The RSA application is available at <https://bit.ly/3ogCIsq>. Communities interested in applying are encouraged to seek the assistance of SWRPC to identify candidate locations and developing an application. SWRPC has published an interactive map of crash locations covering the period 2010 to 2019 which can be found at <https://arcg.is/HWim4>. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.



SWRPC Kicks Off Regional Housing Needs Assessment Effort

During September, SWRPC staff joined others in a statewide effort for updating regional housing needs assessments (RHNAs). Oversight and facilitation is being provided by the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. This work includes two components: 1) develop a common approach/methodology for conducting RHNAs; and 2) using this approach, conduct RHNAs in each of the State's regional planning districts. Regional planning commissions are empowered by New Hampshire law (NH RSA 36:47, II) to compile RHNAs for persons and families of all levels of income. A purpose of the assessment is to serve as a resource for municipalities in developing or updating the housing section of local master plans. The information can be useful to a variety of stakeholders, including housing authorities, human service agencies and housing developers as they seek to improve the condition and availability of fair housing opportunities. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.

