

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

December 2021

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Spofford Lake Watershed Improvements

During December, SWRPC completed the first phase of implementing the Spofford Lake Watershed Management Plan which addressed stormwater issues through physical improvements at ten sites. A number of stormwater management strategies have been put in place including rain gardens, water bars, infiltration steps, and other methods. In addition, SWRPC was recently awarded a grant by the NH Department of Environmental Services to conduct the second phase of implementation of the Watershed Management Plan. This phase will include improvements to the public boat launch and parking area as well as implementing strategies to reduce stormwater runoff from entering the lake unfiltered at three additional sites. For additional information, please contact Lisa Murphy of SWRPC staff at lmurphy@swrpc.org.

Monadnock Rural Transportation Equity Forum

On December 21st, thirty-two community transportation stakeholders participated in the Monadnock Rural Transportation Equity Forum hosted by the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council (MRCC) with a two-fold purpose: 1) to increase understanding about the links between community transportation and public health priorities in the Monadnock Region; and, 2) to identify specific community transportation improvement projects designed to address the priorities. Transit dependent populations in Southwest New Hampshire face significant challenges in accessing transportation. Approximately 1% of the Region's roadways are served by public bus routes that run on limited schedules. MRCC is one of five rural Coordinating Councils in the state that will receive funding from the NH Department of Health and Human Services to address disparities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic particular to rural populations having difficult access to essential services, testing and vaccinations. These include people who are unable to drive, children, individuals with disabilities, those of lower-income, and older adults. MRCC is working to identify projects aimed at improving access for transit dependent populations. For information about the MRCC and community transportation efforts, please contact Terry Johnson of SWRPC staff at tjohnson@swrpc.org.

Broadband Updates

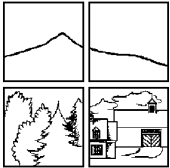
On December 10th, SWRPC staff joined a virtual discussion hosted by U. S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen focused on the passage of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The legislation secured \$65 billion to support broadband activities across the country, much of it through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). A write-up and recording of the event is available at <https://bit.ly/3HujPIN>. Also in December, the NTIA held the first of five listening sessions in connection with five new broadband grant programs authorized and funded by IIJA including the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program; the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program; and the Digital Equity Act Programs, which include the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, and Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. These public virtual listening sessions are designed to collect stakeholder input to help inform program development and implementation. The remaining sessions will be held from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. on the following dates: Wednesday, January 12th; Wednesday, January 26th; Wednesday, February 9th; and Wednesday, February 23rd. Registration information can be found at <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/events/latest-events/>. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

Emergency Operations Planning

During December, SWRPC completed assisting the Town of Nelson with an update to their Emergency Operations Plan and is available to assist other towns in creating and updating their Plans. The New Hampshire Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management offers a grant program which allows municipalities to gain assistance in creating and/or updating their Local Emergency Operations Plans at no monetary cost to the town. These plans must be updated every five years to remain eligible for certain emergency management grants. For more information, please contact Lisa Murphy of SWRPC staff at lmurphy@swrpc.org.

Community Power: Local Resources Available

Community Power, enabled by NH RSA 53-E, allows local governments to have access to competitive electricity markets, negotiate for lower costs with more price stability, and explore options in purchasing local and renewable energy. A webpage has been published by the Monadnock Sustainability Hub with details about Community Power including information on what it is, how it changes the way we get electricity, its benefits, and profiles of Monadnock Region municipalities adopting Community Power. The website can be found here: <https://monadnocksustainabilityhub.org/programs/community-power-purchasing/>. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.



Strategic Highway Safety Plan Update

On December 9th, SWRPC staff joined a workshop to facilitate an update to New Hampshire's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, a process which occurs every five years and outlines specific strategies to reduce crashes, injuries and deaths. Many strategies involve a variety of agencies and organizations, including municipalities. The purpose of the workshop was to review the proposed 2022-2026 Plan and discuss how various working groups involved with the update developed the Critical Emphasis Areas such as Impaired Driving, Distracted Driving, Speeding and Vulnerable Roadway Users. The Plan is expected to be finalized early in 2022 and will be made available at the New Hampshire Department of Transportation Highway Safety Program webpage (<https://bit.ly/32ZZPz3>). For more information about the Plan or other highway safety resources, please contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

