

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

January 2022

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SWRPC Winter Meeting

SWRPC's Winter Meeting, scheduled for February 8, 2022 at 3:30 p.m., will feature a presentation on *Promoting the Region* (PTR) which serves as a research-driven, region-wide branding and marketing campaign. Led by the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber in conjunction with Cheshire County, this effort will help the Monadnock Region stand out in the marketplace by moving toward a more prosperous future. The emphasis is on recruitment and retention efforts for residents, workforce, college students, and tourists. Please plan to attend by registering at admin@swrpc.org. To have your voice heard in developing a brand for the Region, take the survey which can be found here: https://northstarideas.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_81WbaTkkJUgIiwK.

NHDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program

On January 27th, SWRPC staff participated in the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's (NHDOT) Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Committee's first monthly meeting. HSIP is a federal program aimed at funding highway safety improvements designed to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The Committee is comprised of NHDOT and Federal Highway Administration staff, municipal officials and representatives from three regional planning agencies including SWRPC. The HSIP Committee is designed to oversee infrastructure projects around the State, road safety audits and provide input to other activities – like the recent update to *New Hampshire's Strategic Highway Safety Plan* expected to be published in the coming weeks. As part of the January 27th meeting, SWRPC staff provided input on the latest round of road safety audit applications and learned about proposed changes to the program and additional funding made possible as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>). For more information about NHDOT's HSIP, please visit <https://bit.ly/3HhHJIO> or contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

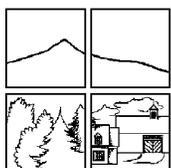
During January, SWRPC staff continued on-going work on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The RHNA, expected to wrap up in December 2022, is a comprehensive study of housing needs in Southwest NH for persons and families of all income levels and is a core-function for regional planning commissions (RPCs). Over recent weeks, SWRPC engaged in a coordination effort with other RPCs and the NH Office of Planning and Development to leverage resources and create a unified approach to determine housing needs across the State. In February there will be a statewide press release announcing this project with SWRPC providing public outreach including a RHNA webpage and web-based surveys. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.

MBG Meeting and Listening Session

On January 31st, the Monadnock Broadband Group (MBG) meeting featured a listening session dedicated to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) upcoming broadband funding announcements. The funding represents a significant opportunity to address broadband infrastructure needs in New Hampshire. The state will receive a minimum of \$100 million for a variety of deployment, mapping and adoption projects designed to address broadband infrastructure needs and digital equity (www.ntia.gov/category/grants). The MBG meeting agenda also included a presentation from representatives of Cell Coverage Mapping on an initiative to map cellular service coverage as well as updates from broadband program staff of the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org or visit www.swrpc.org/broadbandgroup.

Microtransit and Volunteer Driver Program Improvement Feasibility Study

SWRPC staff recently completed the research phase of the Microtransit and Volunteer Driver Program Improvement Feasibility Study, funded by the Federal Transit Administration. This phase of the Study included a literature review, case study research and interviews to examine two innovative models of public transportation service delivery and their potential to improve the cost efficiency, convenience and appeal of public transportation services to a wider user base in the Monadnock Region. Two reports summarizing SWRPC's research, *Microtransit in the Monadnock Region: Factors of Feasibility* and *Research on Volunteer Driver Programs* were recently published and are available on the project webpage: <https://www.swrpc.org/featured-projects/transit-and-shared-ride-improvement-feasibility-study/>. The overall Study, which will conclude in December 2022, is now moving into a feasibility testing phase and will be followed by an action planning phase that will consider implementation plans for public transportation scenarios showing strong potential and feasibility. In the coming weeks SWRPC plans to hire a transportation consultant to assist staff in testing scenarios that could improve public transit service delivery in Greater Keene and other parts of the Monadnock Region. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.



Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire

Census data shows that the rate of growth in Southwest New Hampshire has slowed since the 1990's and has leveled-off over the past two decades. Population projections indicate the region is expected to grow considerably less than the State as a whole. Age-friendly communities are designed to address the needs of residents of all ages. Through support from Point 32 Health Foundation (formerly the Tufts Health Plan Foundation), SWRPC and Cheshire Medical Center have partnered to examine ways to improve access to transportation, housing options, economic opportunities, and social engagement. Thus far, SWRPC has convened a cohort of six communities including Hinsdale, Jaffrey, Swanzey, Walpole, Westmoreland, and Winchester to develop and implement strategies to make their communities more age-friendly from a variety of perspectives. SWRPC has developed the *Implementing Age-Friendly Strategies in Southwest New Hampshire Community Resource Guide* as a tool for municipalities interested in this initiative. For more information, please contact Terry Johnson of SWRPC staff at tjohnson@swrpc.org or visit www.swrpc.org/age-focused.

