

SWRPC

Commission Highlights

February 2022

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Housing Survey

During February SWRPC launched an online survey to gather perspectives regarding housing in local communities and the Southwest Region. This survey is intended to inform the preparation of an updated Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Please add your voice on this important topic by taking our survey and referring the weblink to your neighbors and friends. To take the survey please go to <https://www.swrpc.org/housing/survey/>. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.

Culvert and Stream Crossing Asset Inventories

How many culverts and stream crossings are in your community? If you don't know, the answer will probably surprise you. SWRPC has completed hundreds of assessments and many town-wide inventories throughout Southwest NH as part of our transportation asset management services (www.swrpc.org/asset-management). These inventories are beneficial in support of hazard mitigation planning, habitat restoration activities, prioritization of repair, and routine maintenance. Our approach follows a method developed by a statewide interagency workgroup comprised of transportation, environmental and public safety entities. SWRPC is able to map and evaluate these assets by providing condition, fish passage and flood vulnerability ratings. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of SWRPC staff at hunderwood@swrpc.org.

Planning for Pavement Maintenance

If you are concerned about the condition of paved roads in your community or budgeting for future road repairs, SWRPC offers a technical service program called the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) assessment that assists the decision-making process. The RSMS is a two-phased project that assesses the current condition of all paved, town-maintained roads and then models future pavement conditions and the cost of future repairs. The end product is a 10-year paving plan that will allow a town to analyze the current and future road conditions while planning for future repairs. This is a great time to consider undergoing the RSMS assessment to inform the budget process at 2023 Town Meeting. For more information, please contact Andrew Smeltz of SWRPC staff at asmeltz@swrpc.org or visit www.swrpc.org/rsms for more information.

SWRPC 2022 Winter Meeting

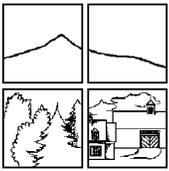
On February 8th, SWRPC held its 2022 Winter Meeting at Cheshire County's Delegation Hall. The meeting featured staff updates and a presentation on the *Promoting the Monadnock Region* effort led by the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber. This represents a branding and marketing campaign focused on attracting workers, college students, visitors, and others to Southwest New Hampshire. For more information, please visit the Chamber's project webpage at <https://www.brandingmonadnock.com/>.

Local Emergency Operations Plan Updates

Local Emergency Operations Plans should be updated every five years and are integral in keeping your community safe and well-organized in the event of an emergency. With the on-going pandemic and more frequent heavy weather events, we can learn from current deficiencies and build upon them to be better prepared for emergency situations. Funding for these plans is made available by FEMA through NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management. For more information, please contact [Lisa Murphy](mailto:lmurphy@swrpc.org) of SWRPC staff at lmurphy@swrpc.org.

Resident-Owned Communities

During February, SWRPC Senior Planner Todd Horner contributed perspective to a recently published video about resident-owned communities (ROC) and their ability to expand housing opportunity. The video was produced by the NH Community Loan Fund, which plays a critical role in the financing and establishment of ROCs. Statewide, there is a critical shortage of affordable housing, and it's putting a strain on working families and preventing businesses from recruiting and retaining workers. Communities are searching for solutions to provide residents with housing regardless of income, and ROCs have emerged as an affordable option. ROCs are private communities of manufactured homes that are cooperatively owned by residents. These homes are smaller than conventional single-family homes and provide an affordable option for people who couldn't otherwise afford to buy a home. Mortgage costs for these homes can be significantly less than rentals of similar size and taxes are relatively low. ROCs provide a good option for young professionals, older adults and individuals with disabilities. They are one-story homes and access ramps can be easily installed. New manufactured homes in ROCs are high-quality and customizable, and they offer energy efficient features. To view the video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMX9lkefN4Q>. For more information, please contact Todd Horner of SWRPC staff at thorner@swrpc.org.



Community Power - Schedule an Information Session

On February 3rd, SWRPC staff and the Monadnock Sustainability Hub (MSH) visited with the Town of Westmoreland to discuss New Hampshire's Community Power law and answer questions. According to the US Energy Information Administration, New Hampshire has the 7th highest electricity rates in the Nation. Additionally, NH is only one in five states where the residential sector is the largest energy consumer. Given these circumstances, NH's relatively new Community Power law (RSA 53E) is an opportunity that municipalities should know more about. The program allows local governments to purchase electricity on behalf of their residents and small businesses at wholesale rather than default retail prices. Municipalities work in collaboration with experienced service providers who know the electricity market so town staff do not need expertise in the energy sector. While communities can purchase electricity on the wholesale market, they do not own or maintain the poles and wires. Repairs, power outages and routine upgrades are maintained by the utilities. Community Power can allow municipalities to save on electricity and, in some cases, shift to a more renewable energy portfolio. For more information or to schedule a presentation, please contact J. B. Mack of SWRPC staff at jbmack@swrpc.org.

