

# SWRPC

## Commission Highlights

January 2024

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### SWRPC 2024 Winter Meeting

SWRPC's Winter Meeting will be held on Tuesday, **February 13<sup>th</sup>**, at **5:00 p.m.** in Heberton Hall in the Keene Public Library Annex, 60 Winter Street, Keene, NH. The presentation topic is: *2024 NH Legislative Session: A Focus on Planning*. It's looking like an active year at the State Capitol for bills relating to planning. Join us as we hear from the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Government Affairs Counsel, Natch Greyes, about various legislative initiatives and discuss their potential impact on local and regional planning. Mr. Greyes advocates for municipalities at the New Hampshire Legislature and provides legal advice and training to NHMA members and partner organizations. In addition to Mr. Greyes, local state legislators from the Region have been invited to attend the meeting to share information about their efforts and hear from constituents about legislative priorities. To register, please visit <https://forms.office.com/r/rMWwpW61sR> or contact SWRPC at (603) 357-0557.

### SWRPC Food System's Work Spotlighted

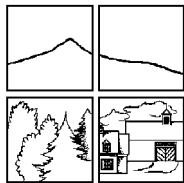
In its January-February 2023 newsletter, the [Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition](#) (MFCC) spotlighted SWRPC's role as a collaborator in creating a thriving local food system in the Monadnock Region. SWRPC's role as a convener and facilitator of cross-jurisdictional and multi-sector dialogue was highlighted, along with the expertise and skills it brings to food system improvement efforts on a wide range of issues including transportation infrastructure, housing markets, the labor force, communication networks, watersheds, wildlife habitat, and food security. SWRPC staff is partnering with the MFCC Food System Work Group in efforts to build collective understanding about the current state of the Monadnock Region food system, celebrating progress made in recent years and identifying opportunities for future growth. The initiative will culminate with a summary assessment that will serve as a resource for collaboration, project development and education in support of the local food system. For more information, please contact Todd Horner at [thorner@swrpc.org](mailto:thorner@swrpc.org) or Jason Cooper at [jcooper@swrpc.org](mailto:jcooper@swrpc.org).

### Transit Expansion Project Underway

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC facilitated a kickoff meeting with a newly created Transit Advisory Task Force. During the meeting, SWRPC staff provided background information and plans for a partner-building approach to expand transit services in the Monadnock Region. Over twenty people representing area municipalities, regional hospitals, Cheshire County, various social service agencies, transportation providers, businesses, and others attended the meeting. The overarching goal of the project is to expand transit services in the Monadnock Region based on a publicly vetted vision recommended in a transit expansion feasibility study facilitated by SWRPC in 2022. The study recommends phasing in new microtransit and fixed route systems starting in the more densely populated areas of Keene, Marlborough and Swanzey, followed by services that connect Keene with Peterborough, Jaffrey, Rindge, Winchester, and Brattleboro, VT. The project endeavors to explore regional transit governance models to sponsor or manage expanded transit services, as well as identify partners that will commit to supporting the lead agency over the long term. For more information, please contact J. B. Mack at [jbmack@swrpc.org](mailto:jbmack@swrpc.org) or Terry Johnson at [tjohnson@swrpc.org](mailto:tjohnson@swrpc.org).

## Focus Group Discussion on Economic Sustainability for Farmers

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC, as a member of the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition's (MFCC) Food Systems Work Group, assisted in facilitating a focus group discussion aimed at hearing directly from farmers about their businesses' economic wellbeing. The event, which was held at Modestman Brewing and catered by CC&D's Kitchen, allowed the MFCC work group to learn more about strengths and weaknesses of economic drivers in the Monadnock Region food system. Such drivers may include traditional farm ventures such as Community Supported Agriculture programs, direct-to-consumer retail models, wholesale retail to grocers, and more. They can also include alternatives to traditional drivers, such as event-hosting or agritourism. This discussion, which will be used to help inform food system projects for potential funding, represents critical coordination when considering the challenge of increasing local food production. For more information, please contact Todd Horner at [thorner@swrpc.org](mailto:thorner@swrpc.org) or Jason Cooper at [jcooper@swrpc.org](mailto:jcooper@swrpc.org).



## NH Digital Equity Plan Public Forum

On January 12<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC staff participated in a public forum on the State's first-ever Digital Equity Plan, available at [nhdigitalequity.org](http://nhdigitalequity.org). The purpose of the Plan is to serve as a blueprint to address barriers to digital resources and opportunities with a variety of potential strategies. Goals include affordable and reliable access to broadband; access to computers and technical support, digital literacy skill, cybersafety and access to essential public resources. Once approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs will implement the Plan over a 5-year period through funds from the Digital Equity Act, a \$2.75 billion national program that supports planning, formula grants to states, and a competitive grant program (learn more at [broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov](http://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov)). For more information, please contact Henry Underwood at [hunderwood@swrpc.org](mailto:hunderwood@swrpc.org) or Rod Bouchard at [rbouchard@swrpc.org](mailto:rbouchard@swrpc.org).

