



Strafford Regional Planning Commission News

MAY 2004

Progress Made on Regional Policies & Strategies for Housing and Water Quality Protection

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) announces the availability of our draft Regional Master Plan policies and implementation strategies for housing and water quality protection, now available at municipal libraries and town halls. Comments are welcome and will be received through May 21, 2004.

This effort is part of SRPC's aim to provide useful policies in our Regional Master Plan that help local communities address the important issues of housing and water quality protection.

The current Regional Master Plan is not reflective of our economic, demographic, and environmental conditions within our fast-growing region. According to Tom Fargo, SRPC Chairman, "our mission is to adopt relevant policies and implementation strategies to achieve sustainable development, thus guiding state, regional and local decision-making on planning and development issues." Clarifying what we, as a region, want to achieve and how we will achieve it over the next 15 years will help municipalities and private investors make informed decisions.



Sustainable development policies and practices add value to our region by expanding jobs and economic development and increasing personal income. This is balanced with the needs for health, education, and other community services, and with protection of natural resources in the region. "By working together to understand where we are, and to define where we want to go, we all benefit", said Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director.

Our focus is to understand growth trends and changes to social and economic conditions in an environmental context.

SRPC has completed a regional housing needs assessment. Based on population and employment growth and demographic trends from the 2000 Census, housing production needs were identified. In addition, there was an analysis of affordable housing needs for the workers we need to support a sustainable regional economy.

The information from the regional housing needs assessment was used to set regional housing policies and implementation strategies.

In turn, the housing policies and implementation strategies drive land use allocations within the context of our unique natural resources. Growth policies are set to guide the type of growth, where it should be located, and when an area should grow. These policies will be aimed at balancing growth or development with environmental constraints and opportunities.

Non-point source water pollution (i.e., water runoff from parking lots, roadways, and development) prevention policies and strategies help protect our water quality and sustainability.

Over the last six months, SRPC held a series of monthly workshops. The topics covered have included growth issues, water quality protection using non-point source water pollution prevention strategies, housing needs in the region and state, water quality protection via land use, conservation, and non-point source water pollution prevention planning policies and implementation strategies.



And the results of this work?



SRPC will have new policies for adoption on Housing and Environmental Protection from Non-Point Source Water Runoff. Most importantly for our communities will be the recommendations for revised and new ordinances promoting development that protects natural resources. There also will be suggestions integrated into the ordinances and regulations focused on maintaining a diversity of housing types affordable to the region's citizens.

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In the fall of 2004 and in 2005, further workshops are planned to address the linkage of land use, transportation, public services, and public infrastructure policies to the desired growth for the region. An additional but necessary constraint for our consideration is balancing these policies with regional economic considerations and our ability to finance and maintain current and new development at the local level.

That's life in our region now—growing and more complex. Come join us and your neighbors in making regional policy recommendations for a sustainable future!

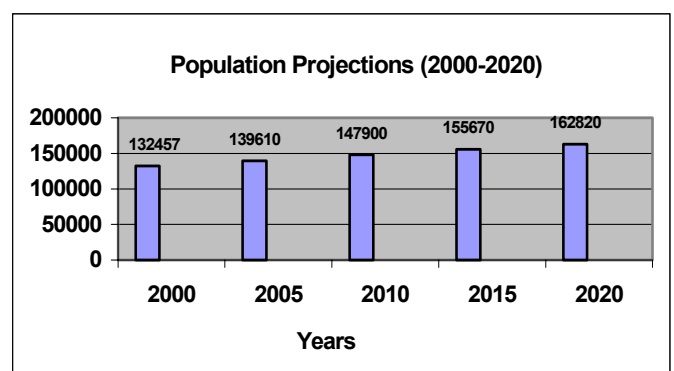
2200 Affordable Housing Units Needed by 2010

The Commission announces that at least 2200 affordable housing units will be required to meet our regional needs by the year 2010. The findings are the result of the state mandated Five Year Regional Housing Needs Assessment prepared by all New Hampshire regional planning agencies. Tom Fargo, SRPC Chairman said, "this will challenge local governments to work together to see how this need can be met and meet our growing job-related housing demand."

The study, financed by a grant from the NH Coastal Program, also projected the need for 9,000 to 11,000 new dwelling units for the region by the Year 2010. According to Cynthia Copeland, Executive Director, "local communities must recognize the importance of permitting affordable housing in order to sustain overall economic development. This can be done while creating livable neighborhoods and protecting conservation lands."

Population Projected to Grow 20% by 2020

The Office of Energy and Planning projects the population of the region will grow by 20% or 28,000 persons by the year 2020. Want more details on this? **Go to www.strafford.org and look for SRPC State of Region under "Regional Master Plan."**



NOTICE: Our Newsletter is available via email. Please send an email to srpc@strafford.org with the words "subscribe to SRPC News" in the subject line.



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and an improved quality of life.”*

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More Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Coming

The third round of hazard mitigation plans includes the Towns of Farmington, New Durham, and Strafford. SRPC is positioning these plans as adoptable chapters of local master plans in an effort to promote master plans as active, strategic documents. SRPC will present each plan to the Planning Board for review prior to submittal to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its approval. Once FEMA approves a town's plan, the plan can be adopted by the municipality thereby qualifying the community for FEMA mitigation and disaster funding. With these plans in place, FEMA is looking to break the costly damage-rebuild cycle by promoting hazard-resistant communities. Funding for these plans and an additional fourth round is provided by the NH Bureau of Emergency Management.

From the GIS Lab

Local Resource Protection Priorities Update—SRPC is collecting information for an update to this five year old GIS data layer. This layer contains the locations and descriptive information on natural and cultural resources selected by communities as priorities for protection. This update is funded through the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP) grant with Department of Environmental Services. Contact Ti Crossman for more information or to schedule a meeting.

Regional Indicators—A statewide workgroup, under the leadership of the Department of Environmental Services, is creating systems to track land use development patterns. The first GIS layer will be for Town Centers and Destinations needed for the calculation of regional indices of development patterns. The next step for the work is to develop the indices.

Local Indicators Mapping—Under this year's Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) grant, SRPC is assisting the Dover Main Street Program in mapping local economic indicators from monthly data reports. The Main Street Programs in Durham and Somersworth are also eligible for GIS assistance.

Land Use and Zoning Update—The land use and zoning data layers are scheduled to be updated this summer. These data layers are the basis for regional planning and are necessary for updates to the regional transportation model and air quality conformity runs.

Plotter Arrives—All of us are happily getting acquainted with our new plotter. A 42" HP5500ps plotter has replaced our venerable (old and irreparable) HP650c. Fast, reliable, networked printing is now ours! And HP threw in a new 120nr graphics printer for free—also a beautiful machine.

Transportation & Non-Point Source Pollution

Roads and highways are a source of significant contributions of pollutants to our nation's waters. Contaminants from vehicles and activities associated with road and highway construction and maintenance are washed from roads and roadsides when it rains or snow melts. A large amount of this runoff pollution is carried directly to water bodies.

Runoff pollution is associated with rainwater or melting snow that washes off roads, bridges, parking lots, rooftops, and other impermeable surfaces. As it flows over these surfaces, the water picks up dirt and dust, rubber and metal deposits from tire wear, antifreeze, and engine oil that has dripped onto the pavement. These contaminants are carried into our lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans.

Oils and Grease: Oils and grease are leaked onto road surfaces from car and truck engines, spilled at fueling stations, and discarded directly onto pavement or into storm sewers instead of being taken to recycling stations. Rain and snowmelt transport these pollutants directly to surface waters.

Road Salts: In New Hampshire, road salts can be a major pollutant in both urban and rural areas. Snow runoff containing salt can produce high sodium and chloride concentrations in ponds, lakes, and bays. This can cause unnecessary fish kills and changes to water chemistry.

Source: EPA, Office of Water, August 1995

Get Ready to Pedal to Work on May 21st

May is National Bicycle Month. Bicycles are a non-polluting form of transportation. In the spirit of reducing non point source runoff from the transportation system, how about trying your work commute on your bike? May 21st would be a great day to start! It is Bike to Work Day in the NH Seacoast. SRPC is working with Seacoast Area Bike Routes (SABR) to plan activities in Dover, Durham/UNH, Exeter, Stratham, Portsmouth, and at Pease. In each community, cyclists will be able to stop in at a Energizer station for light refreshments before continuing on to the office.

The goals of Bike to Work Day 2004 are to promote bicycling as a healthy and safe way to get to work, decrease traffic congestion, improve air and water quality, and raise public awareness about biking in the Seacoast. Biking to work is a good way to stay in shape and arrive at work awake and refreshed! For more information, contact Tim Roache at 742-2523 or troache@strafford.org.