



Strafford Regional Planning Commission

“Planning and action for sustainable development and an improved quality of life”.

PRESS RELEASE

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REGIONAL PLANNERS TO DISCUSS NEW URBAN CENTER AND PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION

Developing a new urban center to accommodate 30,000 new residents living in the region by the Year 2020 and possible property tax reductions will be discussed at the public workshop at 7 pm on Thursday, February 24, 2005 at the Frisbie Community Center in Rochester. SRPC is the State designated agency that advises 18 municipalities in the region on planning, development and conservation issues. SRPC’s mission is planning and action for sustainable development and an improved quality of life.

Projected regional growth will require 12-15,000 new dwelling units that could be coupled with innovative technologies for housing, business services, schools, public transportation, waste disposal, and environmental conservation. The location for an urban center has not been decided. This is one of several alternatives being considered to accommodate the projected growth. “ This would be like building the equivalent of a new urban area the size of Dover to accommodate 30,000 residents,” according to Tom Fargo, SRPC Chairman. “Such planned communities have been built elsewhere and could have major advantages to meeting citizen goals of conserving lands and rural character, providing affordable housing, increasing economic development, and minimizing property

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taxes here in NH.” Citizens in the region are concerned about the cost of public services and infrastructure and the rising property taxes needed to finance these costs. What are the costs and what are our options? What are the implications on regional land use policy? These factors will be considered as decisions are made to determine where, when and how we will accommodate additional people in the region. According to SRPC Senior Land Use Planner, Gerald Mylroie, “The issue is do we continue with a “*Business As Usual*” sprawling development pattern across the landscape with little open lands, or promote a ‘*New England Villages*’ development pattern with clustered growth surrounded by open lands, or develop a *New England Urban Center* with growth concentrated in an existing or new urban center surrounded by open lands? The issue is what is best for the region and local communities?”

Citizens concerned about growth management, property taxes, water resources, land conservation, and other regional issues are invited to a Public Workshop sponsored by the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. Citizens are encouraged to not wait for a problem in their neighborhood to express their concerns. SRPC hopes citizens will act now to create the Regional Master Plan for future growth and conservation in the Strafford Region!

The Public Workshop will take place at the Frisbie Community Center in Rochester on Thursday, February 24, 2005 from 7pm to 9pm. Invitees include citizens, municipal officials, business owners, and non-profit organization representatives. The Vision 2020 Workshop’s purpose is to set regional policies and implementation strategies for land use, water and natural resource protection, affordable housing, economic development and transportation. “We hope that the region’s citizens will continue to participate in this important planning program as we set the regional context for local

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development and conservation programs,” said Cynthia Copeland, AICP, Executive Director.

Public Access to Information

Information about the Vision 2020 – Strafford Region Planning Program is posted on the SRPC website at www.strafford.org and is available at the SRPC office, via mail, or by calling SRPC.

Persons wishing to comment on regional planning issues, the vision for the region, goals and projects are welcome to send email at srpc@strafford.org, call (603) 742-2523, or attend meetings of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission.

Additional Meetings

Additional SRPC meetings planned as part of the Vision 2020- Strafford Region Master Plan update process include:

- Thursday, March 24, 2005, 7-9PM
SRPC Commission Meeting: Vision 2020 - Public Workshop on Regional Land Use Implementation Strategies.
Frisbie Community Education & Conference Center, Rochester
- Thursday, April 21, 2005, 7-9PM
SRPC Commission Meeting: Vision 2020 - Public Hearing on Regional Master Plan Land Use Policies and Implementation Strategies.
Frisbie Community Education & Conference Center, Rochester
- Thursday, May 26, 2005, 7-9PM
SRPC Commission Meeting and Vision 2020 - Public Hearing and Adoption of Vision 2020 Regional Master Plan Land Use Policies and Implementation Strategies.
Frisbie Community Education & Conference Center, Rochester

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SRPC's mission is to plan and take action to achieve sustainable development and improve the quality of life in the region. SRPC serves as an advisor to local governments and organizations on planning, development and conservation issues. SRPC has been active in regional planning for over 30 years as one of the nine Regional Planning Commissions established by the New Hampshire legislature through RSA 36:46. SRPC is composed of eighteen communities including all thirteen municipalities in Strafford County, three communities in Rockingham County and two communities in Carroll County.

SRPC works to improve the region by coordinating local planning, balancing economic progress with environmental protection and community well-being, promoting orderly growth and efficient land use and transportation systems, and addressing issues of regional concern. SRPC's professional planning staff assists in land use, transportation, environmental and economic development planning; support services; project management; and geographic information system mapping and analysis.

Municipalities, persons or organizations may contact SRPC by calling 603/742-2523 or by e-mail at srpc@strafford.org

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