



Strafford Regional Planning Commission

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

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: April 5, 2005

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REGIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROPOSED FOR ADOPTION

Strafford Regional Planning Commission will consider adoption of Regional Master Plan Amendments to improve the quality of the region after a public hearing to be held Thursday, April 21, 2005 at 7 pm at the Frisbie Community Center in Rochester. To accommodate a projected growth of 30,000 new residents in the region by the Year 2020, SRPC proposes to adopt a Quality Improvement Plan to target development and protect conservation areas. The Plan responds to citizen comments and survey results. Citizens, municipal officials, business owners, and non-profit organization representatives are urged to review the Plan and comment at the hearing. “We hope the region’s citizens will continue to participate in this important public hearing and continue to set the regional context for local development and conservation programs and cooperate in its implementation,” said Cynthia Copeland, SRPC’s Executive Director. SRPC is the state designated agency that advises 18 communities on how to plan for development and conservation.

In prior workshops, citizens agreed they do not want continued sprawling development across the landscape, or “Business as Usual”. Targeting growth and development into existing urban and/or village centers and creating “Quality Centers” are preferred. Quality Centers are planned, mixed use,

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livable / walkable urban or village areas and their adjacent neighbors, surrounded by Conservation Areas. The Conservation Areas could be used for agricultural, forestry, park and recreational uses, or natural resource protection.

Implementing the Plan could save a minimum of \$60 to \$100 million in property taxes according to Gerry Mylroie, SRPC's Senior Land Use Planner. Savings include reductions in roadway construction, maintenance and snow plowing. Also implementing the Plan could improve land use, water quality, natural resource protection, availability of affordable housing, economic development and transportation.

To enable existing villages and urban centers to become Quality Centers, municipalities need to work together and adopt a new Quality Planning Strategy, according to Mylroie. This will create economic incentives and environmental benefits. The Strategy includes improving development standards while increasing the number of housing units in a Quality Center. This Quality Planning Strategy, known as planned unit, mixed use, or infill development, will permit a village's or urban center's central area, and their adjacent neighborhood's to achieve improved development. In addition, municipalities need to change land uses, and vary lot sizes and densities to promote development and conservation, limit curb cuts and access on state highways, increase municipal impact and service fees outside the Quality Center, and adopt a local and regional transfer of development credits program.

Citizens who want to avoid urban sprawl, higher property taxes, poor or insufficient water quality or quantity, more traffic congestion, loss of conservation lands, and other regional issues should attend

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this SRPC Public Hearing. Citizens are encouraged to not wait for a problem in their neighborhood to express their concerns or describe how things should be improved. SRPC hopes citizens will act now to create the Regional Master Plan for future growth and conservation in the Strafford Region and improve our quality of life!

Implementing the Quality Centers plan will have major advantages in meeting citizen goals of minimizing property taxes, creating livable walkable communities, conserving lands and rural character, providing affordable housing, and increasing social capital and economic development. Targeting development with better development standards could address citizen concerns about the cost of public services and infrastructure and the rising property taxes needed to finance these costs.

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 include:

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

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- Thursday, May 26, 2005, 7-9PM – (Back up date for Additional Public Hearing Discussion or Action if required.)
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

Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC)

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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