



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

*Allenstown Boscawen Bow Bradford Canterbury Chichester Concord Deering Dunbarton Epsom
Henniker Hillsborough Hopkinton Loudon Pembroke Pittsfield Salisbury Sutton Warner Webster*

June 2016

Prepared by

The Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

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OBJECTIVE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

In the State of New Hampshire, each of the five Rural Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's) and the four Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) is responsible for identifying transportation concerns and projects through a regional public involvement process. This document outlines the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission's (CNHRPC) public involvement process for transportation planning and transportation projects.

The public involvement process is accomplished by agencies searching out the public and soliciting responses from them concerning transportation planning matters within the region. Public involvement is essential for the transportation planning process, because it gives the RPC and other transportation officials the ability to gather ideas from the public concerning transportation plans and programs for the Central New Hampshire Region. Allowing the public to participate permits different perspectives on various transportation policies and projects to be heard and opens discussion for the RPC to explain historic and proposed plans.

The process is intended to ensure that all residents in the region have the opportunity to be involved with CNHRPC's transportation policies, programs and projects being proposed throughout the region. This plan also ensures that Federal, State, local and nonprofit agencies and organizations responsible for plans that may be affected by transportation planning activities are also consulted and included in the public participation process. The purpose of this document is also anticipated to familiarize the public with the transportation public involvement process and encourage the public to become more involved in the planning process.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In order to ensure that all people are given ample opportunity to become involved with CNHRPC's transportation planning process and to guarantee that all opinions are heard, the following standards for information dispersal and public feedback are established.

CNHRPC will:

- Actively seek input and involvement from a wide variety of individuals, groups and organizations who are or will be affected by the area's transportation system, plans, programs and projects by using a variety of involvement techniques;
- Establish effective early and continuing public involvement in the planning process, before key decisions are made and while there is an ample opportunity to affect decisions;
- Make continuous contact between agency and non-agency people from earliest stage to implementation;

- Promote informed public input in the decision making process by providing timely public access to technical and policy information to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of public transportation, and other interested segments of the communities affected by transportation plans, programs and projects;
- Consider the transportation needs of those who are traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including households with low income, minority and disabled persons;
- Seek to eliminate participation barriers and engage minority and low-income populations in the transportation decision making process;
- Ensure that all meetings concerning transportation business will be open to the public and held in accessible locations which can accommodate the needs of the disabled;
- Ensure that the provisions of RSA 91-A (Access to Public Records and Meetings) are followed;
- Use democratic principles and allow public input to open up debate and frame alternative solutions, fully consider and respond appropriately to public input;
- Assure that transportation plans, programs, and projects reflect local, area wide, and state priorities and needs;
- Set goals and objectives and focus public participation on decision making;
- Consider a range of transportation options; and
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)

When developing or preparing major updates to the Plan, the CNHRPC will utilize the following public involvement procedures:

1. Contact List of Interested and Affected Parties

The CNHRPC will develop and maintain a list of interested and affected parties whose input will be actively sought in the plan development process. At a minimum the list will include the following:

- The mayor of the City of Concord and the chairs of the Boards of Selectmen of area towns;
- Planning Boards, highway/traffic safety committees, public works officials and road agents;
- Public and private transit and taxi operators, including public and private demand responsive providers;
- Human service agencies with low income, elderly and disabled clients;
- Representatives from the adjoining RPC's and MPO's;
- Organizations concerned with economic development, such as Chambers of Commerce;
- Members of the legislature representing CNHRPC communities;
- Appropriate state and federal agencies, including the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES),

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);

- Individuals and interest groups with a demonstrated interest in transportation issues;
- Existing members of the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission and Representatives of the CNHRPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC);
- Area newspapers, radio, and television (broadcast and local-access cable) media; and
- School Districts: Concord School District, Merrimack Valley School District, Kearsarge Regional School District, John Stark Regional School District, Hopkinton School District, Pembroke School District, Bow School District, Chichester School District, Epsom School District, Hillsborough-Deering Cooperative School, and Pittsfield School District.

Individuals, groups, and agencies on the list will be informed about the development of the Transportation Plan and programs and will be notified about specific opportunities for public involvement.

2. Public Notification of Plan Development and Biennial (or Major) Update

The CNHRPC will provide a clear and concise notice to the public of the intent to develop or update the Plan at the start of the development or update process. The notice will be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the area; will be posted on the CNHRPC website (www.cnhrpc.org); will be provided to the town/city halls in the region; and will be sent to the interested individuals, groups and agencies on the list of interested and affected parties. The CNHRPC will also consider using other forms of public notice including press release/newspaper articles, local access cable television programming, posting on social media sites, and posting signs in buses and in other public transit facilities.

The notice shall include at least the following information:

- A brief description of the anticipated planning process and action to be taken;
- How the Plan may affect the region;
- A general schedule of the Plan development or amendment;
- An explanation of the opportunities for public comment and participation; and
- CNHRPC's contact person for obtaining further information.

3. Public Information/Discussion Meetings

Workshops and Public Information meetings are useful in soliciting public comments but can also draw public attention to the planning process. At appropriate points during the development of the Plan, the CNHRPC should hold public informational meetings to discuss aspects of the plan, including transportation system deficiencies, alternative solutions, project priorities, project costs, and other issues as appropriate.

At least 20 days prior to the meeting, public notice will be provided to the town/city halls of each community of the region, and to the interested groups and agencies on the list of interested and affected parties. A handout, summarizing the contents of the draft Plan or update, will be made available to all attendees at the public informational meeting.

4. Local Official Review and Comment

The CNHRPC will distribute copies of the proposed Plan to the Boards of Selectmen, the Mayor of Concord, the Technical Advisory Committee, and CNHRPC Representatives for review and comment **at least 30 days** prior to the date on which the CNHRPC is expected to adopt the Plan.

5. Public Hearing on the Draft Plan

Following completion of the draft Plan, the CNHRPC shall schedule a public hearing on the document.

Individuals and organizations identified on the interested and affected parties list shall be notified of the opportunity to participate and/or offer comments.

The CNHRPC will publish, post, and distribute public notice of the hearing in the same manner as set forth in Section 2 above. The notice will encourage the submission of written comments from those unable to attend the hearing. A **comment period of 30 days beginning from the date of the hearing notice** will be provided at the time of the notice. The draft Plan will be available for inspection at the CNHRPC office, will be posted on the CNHRPC website, and will be distributed to each town/city hall throughout the region.

At the hearing, the CNHRPC will present the information developed, distribute the summary of the contents, make a brief presentation, and receive comments on the draft Plan. At the hearing/meeting the CNHRPC will make a brief presentation of the methods and results of the evaluation conducted and of the contents of the draft Plan. Comments will be invited and encouraged. The CNHRPC will document all significant comments received during the proceedings. All written comments will, to the extent feasible, be acknowledged in writing.

6. Preparation and Adoption of the Final Plan

Taking public input into consideration, the CNHRPC will prepare the final RTP. A report on the disposition of substantive comments should be included in the final Transportation Plan. The final plan will include documentation and support for its comments, a review of all public comments received along with CNHRPC's responses and the public involvement process applied to its development.

A **comment period of 30 days prior to final action on the Transportation Plan by the Commission** will be provided. The CNHRPC will provide one copy of the final Plan to each town/city hall in the region. The Final plan will be available for inspection at the CNHRPC office, and the final plan will be posted for review and download from the CNHRPC website. The final adoption of the plan shall be made by majority vote of the full commission at a duly noticed public meeting of the commission.

7. Distribution of Adopted Plan

The CNHRPC will distribute copies of the adopted Plan to the Boards of Selectmen, the Mayor of Concord, the Technical Advisory Committee, and CNHRPC Representatives. The plan will be posted on the CNHRPC website, and the CNHRPC will maintain additional copies for lending to interested parties, and shall distribute notice of availability of the document to individuals and organizations on the list of interested and affected parties.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

When developing the Transportation Improvement Program, the CNHRPC will follow a similar public involvement procedure as described for the Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) when adopted is forwarded to the NHDOT for consideration as part of the NH Statewide Ten Year Plan (TYP). NHDOT uses RPC and MPO TIPs to complete a Draft TYP which is then sent to the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transit (GACIT). The GACIT then completes a lengthy public input process before recommending the TYP to the NH Legislature for adoption. The Statewide TYP must be updated every two years and ultimately approved by the GACIT and the NH Legislature.

1. Solicitation of TIP Projects

The CNHRPC will solicit proposed TIP projects from member communities, as well as local and regional

transportation agencies for potential inclusion into the Regional TIP. The CNHRPC will also request from the member communities, as well as the local and regional transportation agencies, updated information on projects already within the Regional TIP including additional project statements of need, design studies, or cost estimates. CNHRPC will solicit proposed TIP projects and project updates **at least 30 days prior to the preparation of the Draft TIP**. This is to allow CNHRPC time to review the proposals, request additional information or clarification of the project information, and allow the opportunity for the local community to address any deficiencies in the proposed projects and the opportunity to submit additional supporting documentation prior to preparing the draft TIP. The proposed project information shall be submitted in the format determined by the CNHRPC which will allow ranked projects to be forwarded to the NHDOT in manner required by the Department.

2. Development of Project Selection Criteria

A portion of the TIP can include amendments to the CNHRPC's project selection criteria, which is used to select and rank projects for inclusion in the Regional TIP. In amending the project selection criteria, the CNHRPC will also consult with the TAC, the NHDOT, NHDES-Air Resources Division, and other agencies and organizations as appropriate. The project selection criteria have been developed in prior TIP cycles and are coordinated with the criteria used by the NHDOT, and other regional planning commissions, to ensure consistent state wide review. Changes to the existing project selection criteria will be incorporated into the public participation process for the Regional TIP.

3. Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall review and make recommendation on changes to the selection criteria, the extent and validity of the proposed projects, and a ranking of the proposed projects at least 14 days prior to consideration of the proposed Regional TIP by the Commission. Consideration of the TIP by the TAC shall occur at scheduled meetings and shall be included in an agenda which shall be posted no less than 10 days before the TAC meeting. Whenever amendments to the Plan or the TIP are proposed between updates, CNHRPC shall determine the appropriate level of public involvement.

4. Public Information/Discussion Meetings

At appropriate points during the development of the Regional TIP and if time permits, the CNHRPC may hold public informational meetings to discuss aspects of the planning process, the proposed draft TIP, including transportation system deficiencies, alternative solutions, project priorities, project costs, and other issues as appropriate. **At least 20 days prior to the meeting, public notice will be provided to the town/city halls** of each community of the region, and to the interested groups and agencies on the list of interested and affected parties. A handout, summarizing the contents of the draft Plan or update, will be made available to all attendees at the public informational meeting.

5. Public Hearing on the Draft Regional TIP

The CNHRPC will post the draft Regional TIP and notify the availability proposed Regional TIP to the Boards of Selectmen, the Mayor of Concord, the Technical Advisory Committee, CNHRPC Representatives and interested parties to allow for review and comment **at least 30 days** prior to the date on which the CNHRPC is expected to adopt the Regional TIP.

The CNHRPC will provide a clear and concise notice to the public of the intent to adopt the Regional TIP, the notice will be posted on the CNHRPC website (www.cnhrpc.org), will be provided to the town/city halls in the region; and will be sent to the interested individuals, groups and agencies on the list of interested and affected parties. The CNHRPC will also consider using other forms of public notice including press release/newspaper articles, local access cable television programming, posting on social media sites, and

posting signs in buses and in other public transit facilities.

The notice shall include at least the following information:

- a brief description of the TIP process and action to be taken;
- how the TIP may affect the region;
- an explanation of the opportunities for public comment and participation; and
- CNHRPC's contact person for obtaining further information.

The notice will encourage the submission of written comments from those unable to attend the hearing. A **public comment period from the date of the public hearing notice to the hearing** shall be provided. The draft Regional TIP will be available for inspection at the CNHRPC office, will be posted on the CNHRPC website, and will be distributed to each town/city hall throughout the region.

At the hearing, the CNHRPC will present the information developed, distribute the summary of the contents, present the TAC recommendations, and receive comments on the draft Plan. At the hearing the CNHRPC will make a brief presentation of the methods and results of the evaluation conducted and of the contents of the draft Plan. Comments will be invited and encouraged. The CNHRPC will document all significant comments received during the proceedings. All written comments will, to the extent feasible, be acknowledged in writing.

6. Adoption of the Final TIP

The final adoption of the Regional TIP shall be made by majority vote of the full commission at a duly noticed public meeting of the commission. Taking public input into consideration, the CNHRPC shall adopt the final Regional TIP.

Whenever amendments to the Plan or the TIP are proposed between updates, CNHRPC shall determine the appropriate level of public involvement.

7. Distribution of Adopted TIP

The CNHRPC shall post the adopted Regional TIP on its website and provide printed copies for public review at the CNHRPC offices and the City of Concord Public Library. The CNHRPC will provide notice to the Boards of Selectmen, the Mayor of Concord, the Technical Advisory Committee, interested parties, CNHRPC Representatives, and each public library in the region that the Regional TIP has been adopted and where it is available for review, printing or download.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COORDINATION WITH THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

As a result of the 2010 US Census, the Manchester Urbanized Area (UZA) boundary was extended to include areas in the town of Bow along NH 3A and into the towns of Allenstown and Pembroke along the US3/NH 28 corridor. The inclusion of these areas within the CNHRPC region has resulted in the necessity to modify the Southern NH Planning Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary to include those areas. Allenstown, Bow and Pembroke are now designated as voting members of the SNHPC MPO in order to ensure that they are allowed every opportunity to actively participate in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process for the Manchester UZA. CNHRPC will also act as a non-voting member of the SNHPC TAC and MPO.

Federal regulations governing metropolitan transportation planning activities specify the minimum standards which the MPO public involvement program must achieve. These standards form the basis for defining criteria that are used to guide the MPO in the course of carrying out its public involvement program.

CNHRPC will encourage representatives from Allenstown, Bow and Pembroke participate in the transportation planning process at the MPO level. In addition, CNHRPC staff will make every effort to attend MPO and TAC meetings and update communities who may be affected by plans, projects and policies discussed at those meetings. CNHRPC will ensure that town officials, interested parties, traditionally underserved populations and the general public who may be affected by projects in the Manchester UZA are given notice of opportunities for public involvement. CNHRPC will assist the MPO in updating its list of contacts for public involvement and encourage the MPO to expand its dispersal and dissemination of program and project information to promote public participation in Allenstown, Pembroke and Bow.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The sections above describe the public involvement procedures for the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and Regional TIP. This section elaborates on the public involvement tools and techniques and can assist CNHRPC in selecting the most effective measures for public involvement. On a biennial basis, the CNHRPC will review and certify that this public involvement process is being followed and is effective in meeting the purpose, objectives and criteria set forth herein.

Public Notice of Public Hearings

A Notice of Intent to develop, or public hearings on the Regional Transportation Plan or Regional TIP will involve all of the following:

- notice to contact list of interested parties; and
- posting on the CNHRPC website.

The following types of notices will be utilized where timing is appropriate and funding is available:

- published in the Concord Monitor;
- distribution to town/city halls and libraries throughout the region;
- published in weekly/biweekly local newspapers and community newsletters;
- press releases to Concord Monitor, local newspapers and community newsletters, local radio and television stations;
- posting on social media sites;
- noticed in CNHRPC newsletter; and
- creation and distribution of posters and flyers.

Public Notice of Informational Meetings

All of the above listed tools may be used to notice a public informational meeting.

Universally Accessible Locations

All public hearings and meetings shall be held in universally accessible locations with the information made available to anyone with special considerations as needed.

Availability of Documents, Publications and Public Comments

All notices, documents and minutes shall be posted and maintained on the CNHRPC website for downloading during the life of the plan or TIP. Older Regional Plans and Regional TIPs may be retained on the CNHRPC website for up to five years after the adoption of the updated plans to allow for the new plans to be compared with prior documents.

CNHRPC Web Site

The CNHRPC web site is the best resource for people who want to be involved in updates to the Regional Transportation Plan or Regional TIP. At a minimum the web site will have:

- a project schedule;
- a staff contact;
- information about the update (for example, handouts and presentations from meetings);
- informational meeting or hearing dates and times;
- a downloadable copy of the current plan (draft or final); and
- information about how to submit comments.

Mechanism for Receiving Comments

The CNHRPC will make commenting on the Plan or TIP as convenient as possible by soliciting and accepting comments in the following forms:

- e-mail;
- letter;
- phone (these conversations will be documented by CNHRPC staff);
- verbally at public meetings and or community events (comments will be documented by CNHRPC staff);
- surveys; and
- social media.

Documentation of and Response to Comments

The CNHRPC will document and maintain a file of all comments received. These comments will be considered in all project decisions and included as an appendix to the Regional Plan and TIP updates. To the extent possible, CNHRPC will respond to each comment in writing.

Social Media

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have rapidly become a significant communication medium for many people, especially younger people which are disproportionately absent from public meetings. The CNHRPC will establish a presence on social media sites and may utilize the sites to garner comments on plans, the Regional TIP, and to publicize the work of the CNHRPC, the communities in the region and the role of Planning in general.