

Public Participation Plan



Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Adopted June 27, 2023

About the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

The **Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC)** is one of nine regional planning commissions in the State of New Hampshire. SNHPC was formed under New Hampshire Statutes in 1966 and serves as the coordinating agency for the planning initiatives of fourteen (14) communities in the southern New Hampshire region.

The Commission is also the **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** for the region, responsible for conducting transportation planning in a cooperative, comprehensive, and continuous manner. Federal regulations stipulate that highway construction funds in urbanized areas can only be utilized by states with an MPO in place.

SNHPC Communities

Town of Auburn
Town of Bedford
Town of Candia
Town of Chester
Town of Deerfield

Town of Derry
Town of Francestown
Town of Goffstown
Town of Hooksett
Town of Londonderry

City of Manchester
Town of New Boston
Town of Weare
Town of Windham

Contact Us!

Southern NH Planning Commission
438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, NH 03102
Phone: 603-669-4664
Website: snhpc.org
Facebook: facebook.com/snhpc/

Translation / Traduction / Traducción

If you would like an accommodation for language, please contact / Si vous souhaitez un logement pour la langue, veuillez contacter / Si desea una acomodación para el idioma, comuníquese con:

Linda Moore-O'Brien
SNHPC Office Administrator
lmoore@snhpc.org
603-669-4664

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	4
1.1	What is a Public Participation Plan (PPP)?	4
1.2	Public Participation in the SNHPC Planning Process.....	4
1.3	Equity in the SNHPC Planning Process	5
2.0	Public Participation Goals and Strategies.....	9
2.1	GOAL: Expand access to inclusive public engagement opportunities.	9
2.2	GOAL: Grow public awareness of regional priorities, activities, and programs.	9
2.3	GOAL: Strengthen stakeholder partnerships and ensure their input is reflected in regional planning products.....	10
2.4	GOAL: Assess "How are we doing?" by evaluating public participation approaches.....	10
3.0	Approaches to Public Participation.....	11
3.1	<i>Informing</i> the Public.....	13
3.2	<i>Consulting</i> the Public	14
3.3	<i>Involving</i> the Public.....	15
3.4	<i>Collaborating</i> with the Public	16
3.5	<i>Empowering</i> the Public.....	17
4.0	Understanding the SNHPC Planning Process	18
4.1	SNHPC Public Comment Procedures.....	19
5.0	Public Participation Performance Measures	22
Appendix A -	Federal Regulations for Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation	24
Appendix B -	Federal Regulations Defining "Interested Parties by Plan Type"	27

This document has been prepared by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration; the New Hampshire Department of Transportation; and the Federal Transit Administration. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, or the Federal Transit Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

1.0 Introduction

The SNHPC believes that everyone who is affected by a decision has the right to be involved in the decision-making process. As an advisor, advocate, and coordinating agency working with fourteen (14) unique communities in the Greater Manchester New Hampshire area, SNHPC celebrates the diversity of the region and values everyone's input. To ensure the SNHPC's transportation planning programs and initiatives reflect the needs and priorities of the communities the Commission serves, the Commission has made it a priority to actively engage the participation of community stakeholders including those who may not be familiar or understand the transportation planning process.

1.1 What is a Public Participation Plan (PPP)?

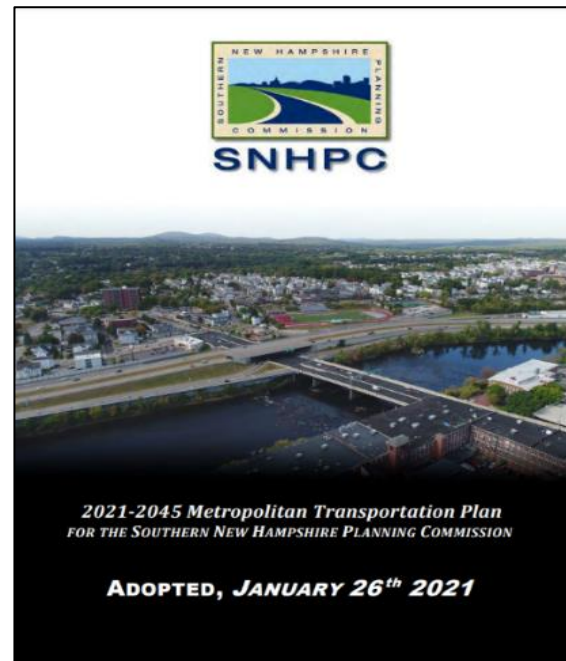
The SNHPC Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides a framework to advance meaningful public involvement in transportation planning efforts throughout the Southern New Hampshire region. The PPP includes the following core components:

- A list of goals and strategies to guide SNHPC's public participation efforts (**Chapter 2**).
- A description of the approaches SNHPC uses to engage residents (**Chapter 3**).
- A summary of the MPO transportation planning process, including a list of key planning documents that incorporate public input (**Chapter 4**).
- A series of performance measures for tracking our progress (**Chapter 5**).

1.2 Public Participation in the SNHPC Planning Process

As an MPO, the SNHPC is responsible for long-term transportation planning and for programming certain federal transportation funds in a region that's home to more than 275,000 people. The SNHPC is responsible for coordinating key planning activities involving the Federal government, the State of New Hampshire, and other MPOs while representing the interests and priorities of the 14 municipalities the Commission serves.

Every four years, the SNHPC MPO adopts a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that outlines a 20-plus-year vision for the region's transportation system. The MTP accounts for all current and proposed transportation investments anticipated in the region. The MPO also participates in the statewide Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP) process, which designates funding for all state and federal transportation projects to be advanced during the next 10-year period in New Hampshire.



The 2021-2045 SNHPC Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) reflects the goals and objectives of the SNHPC's metropolitan transportation planning program.

By implementing the PPP, the SNHPC proactively seeks input from stakeholders throughout the region, carefully considers public comments and feedback, and effectively incorporates community insights into the region's projects, programs, and plans. Adherence to the PPP helps the SNHPC build trust with community partners, foster equity and inclusion, and comply with federal requirements to ensure non-discrimination in all aspects of the Commission's work. The SNHPC believes that efforts to advance meaningful participation will result in better transportation plans and programs for our region.


1.3 Equity in the SNHPC Planning Process

The SNHPC considers the "public" to encompass all the region's stakeholders, or anyone who has an interest in the future of the region. This includes everyone who resides, visits, or does business here, as well as local government agencies, local advocacy groups, community-based organizations, public transportation providers and users, private transportation providers, freight shippers, and other interested parties.

The SNHPC tracks demographic information to advance more equitable representation in public participation efforts, making special efforts to address the needs of groups who are traditionally underserved and mitigate barriers to participation. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the SNHPC offers a range of [accommodations for people with hearing or vision impairments](#). In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the SNHPC actively monitors all of its programs and activities to ensure that no one experiences discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The SNHPC maintains and regularly updates a [Title VI Program](#) to protect civil rights and ensure nondiscrimination.


In 2022, SNHPC published an [Equity Analysis Report](#) to begin exploring how the region's transportation investments are impacting key federally protected classes, including racial and ethnic minorities, low-income residents, and residents with limited English proficiency. Additionally, the Equity Analysis looks at other vulnerable groups who are more likely to experience mobility challenges, including seniors, residents with disabilities, and people living in no-vehicle households. The findings from this Equity Analysis illuminate key populations and high-priority geographic areas that should be deliberately prioritized through the implementation of the PPP.

Ninguna persona, por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional, será excluida de participar en ningún programa o actividad llevada a cabo por la Comisión de Planificación del Sur de Nuevo Hampshire, ni se le negarán los beneficios de los mismos, ni será de alguna manera objeto de discriminación.



TÍTULO VI
y la no discriminación

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●



Este folleto está diseñado para ayudarle a entender sus derechos bajo el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964.

A brochure about the SNHPC's Title VI and Non-Discrimination Program is available in English and Spanish.

Figure 1.3.1 – SNHPC Equity Area Boundary

The SNHPC applied a scoring rubric to analyze the region's 63 census tracts according to their proportional population of vulnerable and federally-protected groups. The resulting Equity Area Boundary shows the highest needs area of the SNHPC region, where additional effort should be taken to promote meaningful engagement in transportation planning.



Figure 1.3.2 – Ways to Participate with the SNHPC

Ways to Participate

Are you interested in getting more involved with SNHPC's regional planning initiatives? This checklist provides a few suggestions on how to get started:

- ✓ **Join the SNHPC mailing list.** Visit [SNHPC.org](https://www.snhpc.org) and complete the form at the bottom of the page.
- ✓ **Follow us on Facebook and YouTube.** Visit facebook.com/snhpc/ and click "Follow." Visit youtube.com/@snhpcplanning137 and click "Subscribe."
- ✓ **Attend a meeting.** Members of the public are welcome to attend monthly MPO and TAC meetings. SNHPC also hosts other public meetings and workshops to support a variety of planning initiatives. Everyone is welcome to attend public meetings hosted at the SNHPC, and there are a variety of ways to participate:
 - **Attend remotely via Zoom or telephone.** Links will be posted to [snhpc.org](https://www.snhpc.org) about a week in advance of the meeting.
 - **Attend in person at the SNHPC Office** located at 438 Dubuque St., Manchester, NH. If taking public transit, the nearest bus stop is two blocks South of the office at Dubuque and Putnam on the Manchester Transit Authority #6 route.
- ✓ **Invite SNHPC to join your meeting.** SNHPC staff are available to present on a variety of planning initiatives that may be of interest to your community group. [Contact our staff](#) to discuss your needs.
- ✓ **Provide feedback on draft documents.** When a draft plan or report is developed, SNHPC will post the draft online to gather public feedback prior to adoption. Public comment periods vary from 10 to 45 days in length. Check the "News & Notices" section of the SNHPC homepage for details.
- ✓ **Consider joining the Commission.** SNHPC Commissioners are typically nominated by their community for a four-year term. Each community typically has two to four commissioners, as well as alternates, who participate in monthly Commission meetings. [Click here](#) to see the current list of Commissioners and learn more about their roles. Contact your local town planning official to discuss how you can get involved.

Figure 1.3.3 – Requesting Support from the SNHPC

If you require special assistance...

If you require special assistance in order to participate, the SNHPC is here to help! **Please reach out for support by contacting Linda Moore-O'Brien, SNHPC Office Administrator, at (603) 669-4664.**

Here are some examples of the types of support available:

- ✓ **Language assistance.** In accordance with the SNHPC's Title VI Program, the Commission maintains a Language Assistance Plan to support participation by people with limited English proficiency (LEP). This includes:
 - Translating vital documents into Spanish and French.
 - Using "I speak" language cards to help match individuals to available services.
 - Coordinating telephone interpretation services via Language Bank or Language Line.
 - Incorporating Google Translate technology into the SNHPC.org website.
- ✓ **Disability accommodations.** As a recipient of federal aid, the SNHPC is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state laws to ensure individuals with disabilities have full access to the Commission's programs and services. Examples include:
 - Hosting meetings and activities in spaces that are physically accessible to people with a range of abilities.
 - Coordinating with Relay New Hampshire and other providers to support participation by individuals with vision, hearing, or speech impairments.
 - Incorporating UserWay software to support accessibility needs on the SNHPC.org website.

2.0 Public Participation Goals and Strategies

SNHPC has developed the following goals and strategies to support meaningful public participation across all our transportation planning efforts.

2.1 GOAL: Expand access to inclusive public engagement opportunities.

To achieve this goal, SNHPC will:

- **Collaborate with a wide variety of individuals and groups** to effectively capture the diverse perspectives of the region's constituents.
- **Scale public engagement efforts appropriately** to account for community needs and potential local impacts.
- Offer a **variety of opportunities to engage**, both in-person and virtually.
- Ensure outreach efforts **include traditionally underserved communities** and mitigate barriers to engagement related to language, disability, and transportation and computer access.
- **Meet people where they are** by dovetailing outreach efforts with existing programs, committee meetings, and community events. Promote simple methods for organizations to request a presentation on select planning topics.

2.2 GOAL: Grow public awareness of regional priorities, activities, and programs.

To achieve this goal, SNHPC will:

- **Refine the SNHPC brand** and reinforce familiarity via cohesive messaging and design standards.
- Review public-facing materials for **accessibility and legibility**. Simplify language and minimize jargon where possible.
- Develop a **communications strategy** for priority projects or initiatives. Identify key talking points and targeted outreach methods, and develop compelling, highly visual materials.
- Leverage **existing community resource networks** (e.g. libraries, municipal newsletters, transportation providers) to facilitate widespread public outreach.
- Experiment with **creative outreach approaches**. Test new ideas for on-site pop-up activities, social media polls, short videos, and more.
- Work with the region's transit stakeholders and public transit providers to **ensure outreach approaches are effectively coordinated**.

2.3 GOAL: Strengthen stakeholder partnerships and ensure their input is reflected in regional planning products.

To achieve this goal, SNHPC will:

- **Strengthen relationships with key stakeholders** and identify local leaders to champion projects and plans.
- Recruit and convene **active, engaged advisory committees** to leverage local knowledge and expertise.
- **Expand participation** from representatives of traditionally underserved communities.
- Develop compelling, **user-friendly materials** that partners can readily adapt and share with their own networks (e.g. sample slide decks and social media posts).

2.4 GOAL: Assess "How are we doing?" by evaluating public participation approaches.

To achieve this goal, SNHPC will:

- Solidify **public participation performance measures** and share with stakeholders, agency partners, and SNHPC Commissioners.
- Use these performance measures to regularly **track and report on the effectiveness** of public participation efforts.
- **Explore new avenues** for inviting and receiving public feedback (e.g. via website forms, exit questionnaires, surveys, and focused conversations).
- **Embrace flexibility.** Adjust approaches as needed in response to emerging concerns and/or new opportunities.



Visual voting exercise. SNHPC employs creative outreach approaches where possible, like the visual voting exercise above targeted towards kids and parents to learn more about how they access recreation spaces.

3.0 Approaches to Public Participation

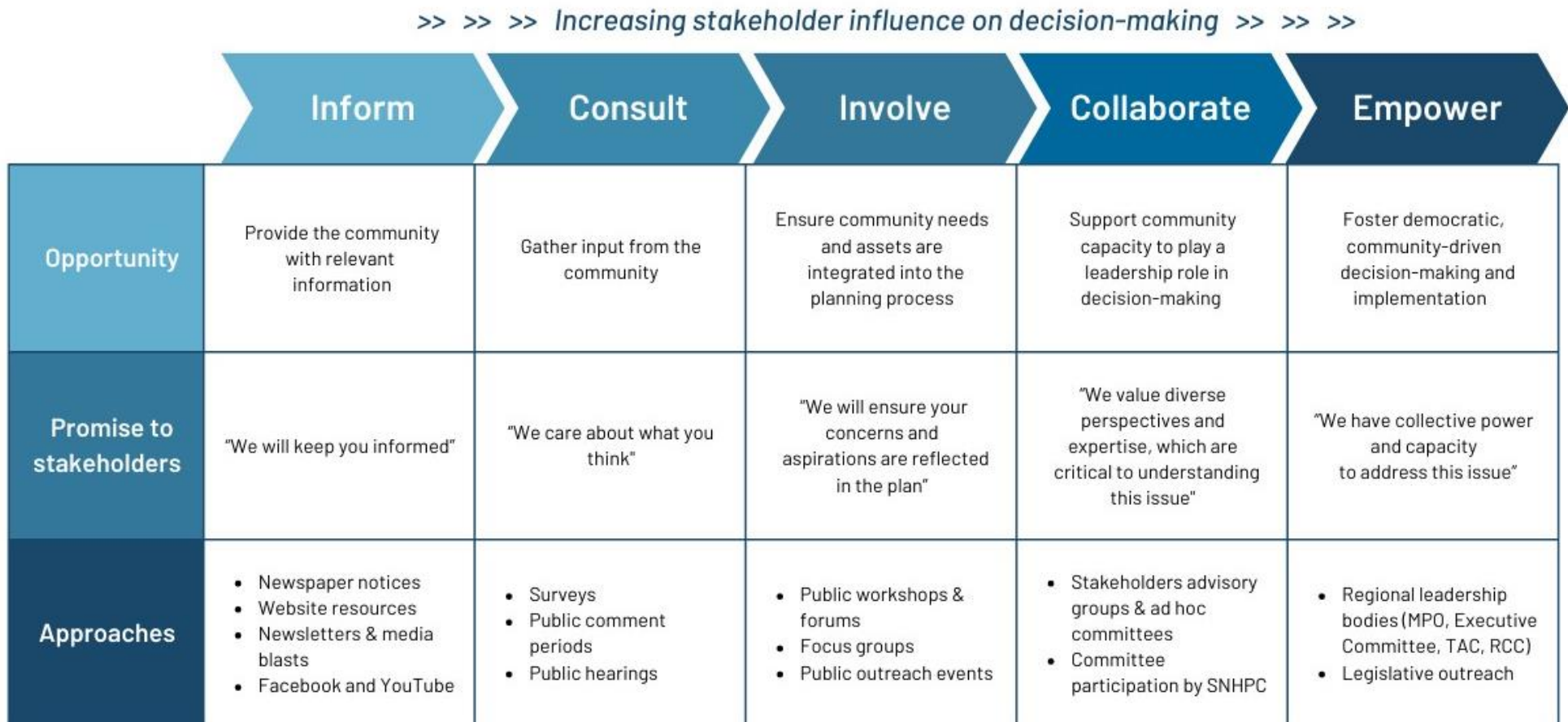
Public participation is a process, not a single event. Public participation can be imagined as a spectrum of ongoing activities that provide a range of opportunities to impact decision-making. Figure 3.0.1 on the following page reflects the SNHPC's vision for implementing a variety of approaches that allow the region's stakeholders to get involved with the Commission's work at any level. A range of approaches to advance the PPP are addressed in further detail throughout the chapter and organized according to five (5) overarching outcomes:

- **Inform** – Provide the community with relevant information.
- **Consult** – Gather input from the community.
- **Involve** – Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into the planning process.
- **Collaborate** – Support community capacity to play a leadership role in decision-making.
- **Empower** – Foster democratic, community-driven decision-making and implementation.



***Collaborative workshops.** Federal, state, and local stakeholders come together to discuss roadway adaptation strategies at SNHPC's inaugural Regional Climate Workshop.*

Figure 3.0.1 – The Spectrum of Public Participation



SNHPC developed this graphic with inspiration from the International Association for Public Participation and the Interdisciplinary Association for Population Health Science.

3.1 Informing the Public

Public participation approaches designed to inform the region's stakeholders tend to have the broadest reach and are essential for building awareness of planning issues and priorities.

- Newspaper notices.** The SNHPC utilizes local news outlets to reach as many constituents as possible. When announcing an official public comment period or public hearing information, the Commission publishes details in *The Union Leader*, the region's newspaper of general circulation. The SNHPC has also established connections with other regional news outlets including *Manchester Ink Link*, *The New Boston Beacon*, *The Goffstown News*, *Derry News*, and *Weare in the World*.
- Website resources.** The SNHPC website, www.snhpc.org, provides a comprehensive overview of all the Commission's activities. The homepage provides an event calendar as well as a "News & Notices" section where all official public notices are posted. In addition, the website is home to a robust library of planning documents and interactive maps available for public reference and use.
- Newsletters and media blasts.** The SNHPC regularly distributes two electronic publications – a quarterly newsletter and a shorter monthly "media blast." These publications offer updates on key regional planning activities as well as upcoming meetings and conferences. Anyone can sign up for the SNHPC electronic mailing list, which currently reaches approximately 500 people, by visiting the SNHPC website and completing the form at the bottom of the page.
- Facebook and YouTube.** The SNHPC routinely shares news, announcements, and resources of regional interest via the Commission's [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/snhpcplanning137). The platform allows for more frequent, informal public communications. Facebook followers can express their interest in a topic by "liking" a post, writing a comment, or sharing a post with their own network of friends. The SNHPC uses its YouTube channel to post recordings of public meetings and provide information about key initiatives. To subscribe, visit youtube.com/@snhpcplanning137 and click "Subscribe."¹



The SNHPC website (www.snhpc.org) is a key resource for informing stakeholders about upcoming activities and public involvement

¹ Please note: The SNHPC does not accept comments on the Facebook or YouTube wall as comments for the record, as these comments can be edited or deleted without the SNHPC's knowledge. Facebook comments sent via direct message will be considered as comments for the record.

3.2 Consulting the Public

Approaches that allow for consultation with the region’s stakeholders enable direct input from anyone who is interested in sharing their perspective.

- **Surveys.** SNHPC frequently uses surveys as a tool to gather public input on a variety of topics. Survey input is used to guide updates to major documents, inform stakeholders with an understanding of community knowledge and opinions on various topics, and steer the Commission’s transportation planning efforts. Surveys can be deployed electronically, on paper, or via in-person interviews to maximize accessibility to all stakeholders, including those with limited digital access. Surveys can also be translated to reach individuals with limited English proficiency.
- **Public comment periods.** During a public comment period, which can range from 10 to 45 days, members of the public have access to a draft planning document and are invited to provide formal feedback on it. Comments can be submitted in writing to SHNHPC staff via email or regular mail. Public comment periods for required documents typically conclude with a public hearing hosted by the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee.
- **Public hearings.**² During a public hearing, members of the public can offer verbal feedback on a draft planning document prior to its adoption by the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee. Public hearings can be attended in-person at SNHPC offices, or virtually. Details for accessing a public hearing, including links for virtual participation, are posted in the “*News & Notices*” section on the homepage of the [SNHPC website](#) as well as in a legal notice published in *The Union Leader* newspaper— including a point of contact for anyone requiring special assistance in order to participate.
- **Virtual public involvement.** The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in public health restrictions on in-person meetings. Like many organizations, the SNHPC responded by embracing technology to support virtual public involvement (VPI) and continue conducting business electronically despite pandemic constraints. VPI tools increase electronic access to information, as well as remote participation and interaction in public meetings and hearings via personal computers and mobile devices. As the COVID-19 pandemic wanes and many organizations return to in-person meetings, the SHNHPC continues to utilize a variety of VPI tools—including virtual meetings and social media engagement – to maximize opportunities for meaningful public involvement. The majority of the Commission’s meetings and workshops are now held in a hybrid format, meaning people can choose to attend either in-person or virtually, according to their own needs and preferences. It is not uncommon to have as many people attend virtually as those who are in person, a result which underscores the effectiveness of hybrid meetings.

² The SNHPC is a political subdivision of the State of New Hampshire and is governed by the open meeting and open records requirements of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 91-A. Notice for all public meetings and public hearings held by the SNHPC must be posted in at least two locations (one of which may be the SNHPC website) and with appropriate advance warning as defined in NH RSA 91-A. In non-emergency situations, a quorum must be physically present, and the public must be able to physically attend meetings and hearings. During emergency conditions which make in-person meetings impractical or unsafe, the SNHPC may hold public meetings or hearings exclusively through electronic or telephone-only platforms in accordance with the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A.

3.3 Involving the Public

Approaches for directly involving stakeholders are designed to foster dialogue and interaction. Such activities often focus on specific topic areas and can target key interest groups.

- **Public workshops & forums.** Workshops and forums allow for face-to-face, in-depth conversations on topics that are of interest to transportation stakeholders. Participants are often given a prompt question or draft materials to ensure that they have a basic understanding of the topic and can provide thoughtful feedback. Participants may work in small groups to foster collaboration, maximize engagement, and develop an appreciation for various viewpoints. While a public workshop can take significant time and resources to organize, it can also provide a crucial opportunity to delve into topics in-depth, build consensus, and clarify community priorities.
- **Focus groups.** Focus groups typically apply similar interactive methods as public workshops but are targeted to address the unique needs of a particular constituency. For example, a focus group might be used to build relationships and gather insights from key interest groups that are directly impacted by regional transportation planning issues, such as new immigrants, small business owners, disability advocates, or others.
- **Public outreach events.** The SNHPC looks for opportunities to attend a range of public events in order to meet people where they shop, recreate, and socialize. Such activities allow for face-to-face informal interactions and allow for information gathering from community members who may not otherwise attend a more formal public meeting. The SNHPC has participated in public outreach events in a variety of contexts including local festivals and concerts, farmers markets, senior expos and more.



SNHPC staff collected public input on bicycling opportunities at the Downtown Derry Derby Day in May 2022.

3.4 Collaborating with the Public

Public participation approaches that support collaboration are typically more time-intensive, as they require ongoing interaction and partnership-building.

- Stakeholder advisory groups & ad hoc committees.** The SNHPC periodically recruits and convenes advisory groups and ad hoc committees to support specific projects and planning efforts that require specialized knowledge and/or deep community insights. Such committees are typically focused and time-limited in nature and incorporate a diversity of community perspectives. By facilitating collaborative advisory discussions, the SNHPC positions members of the public as experts on the local issues that impact them.
- Local and Regional Committee engagement by SNHPC.** As the coordinating body representing the diverse interests of the Southern New Hampshire region, the SNHPC regularly engages with a number of local and regional committees to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing on transportation issues. For example, the SNHPC regularly participates in meetings of the Manchester Environmental Justice Committee, Manchester Community Action Coalition, Manchester Regional Area Committee on Aging, and more.
- Statewide Board participation by SNHPC.** To represent the needs and interests of the SNHPC region at the state level, the SNHPC holds seats on a number of transportation-related statewide boards and committees including the NH Transportation Council and the NH Complete Streets Advisory Committee. SNHPC participation on these boards and committees provides an opportunity for the Commission to echo the public feedback received at the regional level to state-level decision makers.



SNHPC staff regularly engages with the Manchester Environmental Justice Committee and offers technical assistance for transportation equity projects.

3.5 Empowering the Public

The structure of an MPO incorporates direct representation from each of SNHPC's 14 municipalities, allowing for local influence and voting power in the adoption of transportation plans and programs.

- **Regional leadership bodies.** The SNHPC coordinates monthly meetings with several regional leadership bodies. While each group has a standing membership, all meetings are open to the public and can be attended in-person or via the electronic link posted in the meeting notice.
 - **Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission MPO Policy Committee (SNHPC MPO).** This group includes representatives from the region's 14 municipalities as well as representatives from key partner agencies, including transit providers. As the MPO Policy Committee, this group guides the development of regional transportation policies and coordinates the implementation of regional plans and programs in accordance with federal and state requirements. A select subset of members make up the **SNHPC Executive Committee**, which is responsible for approving budgets and overseeing the business operations of SNHPC.
 - **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).** The TAC advises the MPO and Commission staff on key transportation issues and projects of regional concern. TAC membership is comprised of technical personnel and volunteers from SNHPC's member communities, as well as representatives from neighboring RPCs, MPOs and transit providers. The TAC also includes representation from key state (e.g. NHDOT and NHDES) and federal partner agencies (e.g. FHWA).
 - **Regional Coordinating Council (RCC).** The RCC focuses on coordinating public transit and human services transportation in the region, including public transit, private shuttles, elderly and disabled transportation services, volunteer driver programs, and more. The RCC is tasked with improving the accessibility and efficiency of these services and oversees the development of the Regional Transportation Coordination plan.
- **Legislative engagement.** New Hampshire has a citizen legislature, which depends on subject matter experts to inform potential legislation. While the SNHPC is non-partisan and does not conduct lobbying activities, the SNHPC can provide analysis and testimony on transportation-related state legislation upon request to help the State Legislature understand the potential impacts of proposed legislation in a regional context.

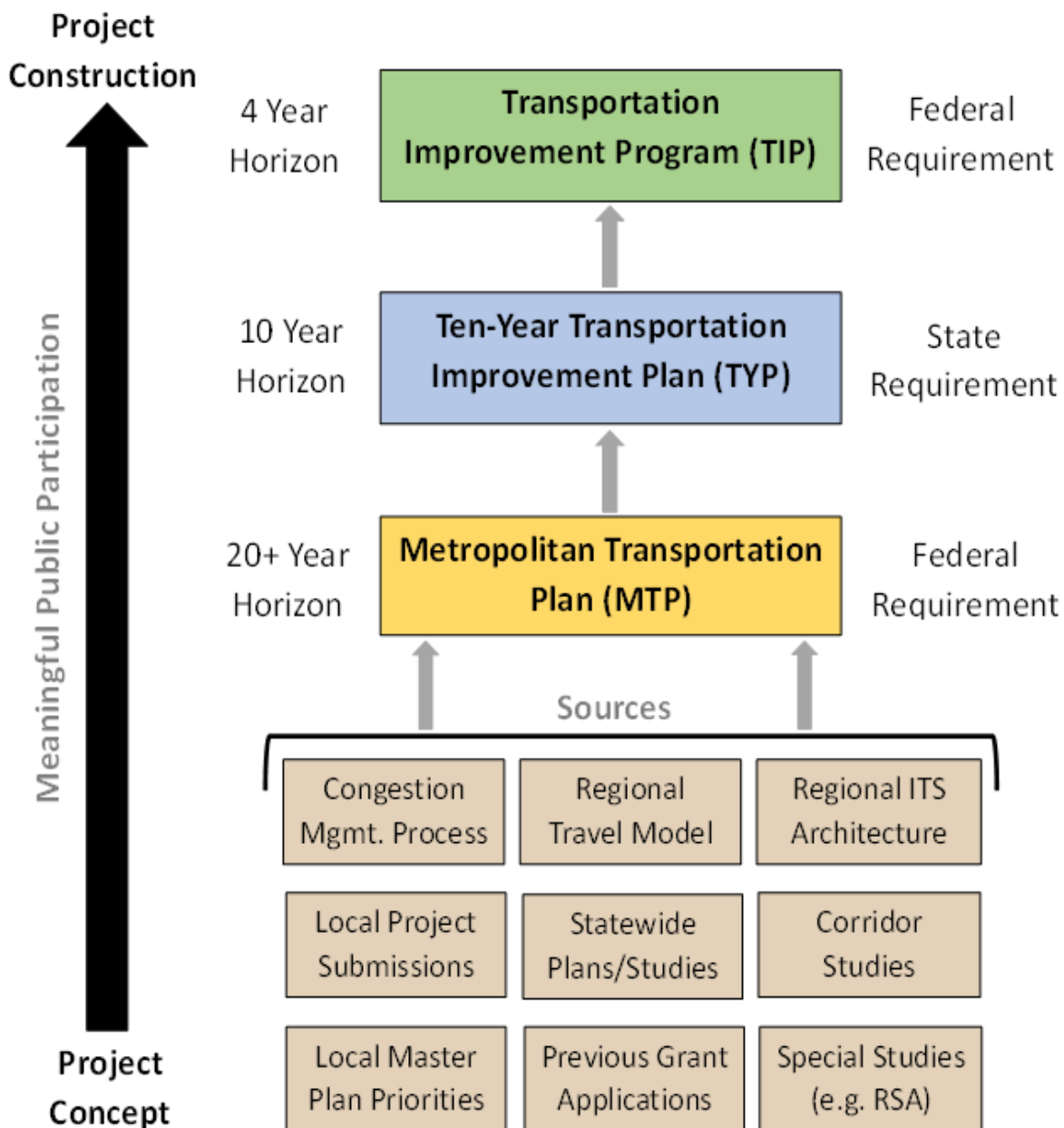


Members of the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee participating virtually in a meeting during the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2021.

4.0 Understanding the SNHPC Planning Process

SNHPC regularly develops and updates a range of interconnected planning documents to support continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive regional transportation planning. These documents address federal and state requirements to ensure the Southern New Hampshire region can effectively program and fund a wide array of transportation improvement projects throughout the region. The graphic below shows how projects move through the transportation planning process to become eligible for funding and construction. Opportunities for public participation exist in each step in this process.

Figure 4.0.1 – SNHPC Transportation Planning Process



4.1 SNHPC Public Comment Procedures

When a draft document or planning product is developed and released, there is often a defined public comment period ranging from 10 to 45 days depending on the document as detailed in Figure 4.1.1 below. The announcement of the comment period is published in the region's newspaper of general circulation (*The Union Leader*). Notice of public comment periods and public hearings are also available on the SNHPC website (www.SNHPC.org).

For all draft documents, a summary of public comments received is vetted by the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee, which directs staff to make any necessary revisions or edits to the documents based on the comments. In the event that a final planning document, including but not limited to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, differs significantly from version released for public comment, the SNHPC MPO will provide an additional opportunity for public comment no shorter than the original public comment period.

Below are the approved avenues which the public can use to submit formal comments on SNHPC plans and documents.

- By U.S. Mail at 438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, NH 03102.
- By Fax at 603-669-4350.
- By E-mail at Imoore@snhpc.org (or to the specific person identified on the public notice).
- By attending a public hearing and providing comments in person.
- By sending a direct message via SNHPC social media.

The SNHPC translates all public notices for planning products into Spanish as a regular practice. Upon request, the SNHPC will facilitate additional translation services for persons with Limited English Proficiency, or interpretation services for deaf, hard of hearing, and blind persons by utilizing the following resources:

- **Language Bank** (www.thelanguagebank.org) and **Language Line Solutions** (www.languageline.com) for translation services.
- **Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services** (www.ndhhs.org) for deaf and hard of hearing interpretive services.
- **Future in Sight** (<https://futureinsight.org/>) for interpretive services for blind persons.

SNHPC MPO public meetings and hearings are held at the SNHPC's office at 438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, NH typically at 11:30 AM on the 4th Tuesday of each month (unless otherwise noted on a published public notice). Meetings are held in the 2nd floor conference room accessible by the right rear entrance. This building is ADA compliant, and the 2nd floor meeting room is accessible by elevator.

Whenever possible, including for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, the SNHPC shall utilize visualization techniques to inform the public of the intent and effect of the Commission's transportation plans and programs. Much of the work at SNHPC is technical and data-driven, which may not always translate well to the general public. Concepts that are heavily relied on in transportation planning such as ranking systems, formulas, and other measurements can be complex. Visualization techniques can help to better communicate these concepts to members of the public who may not have technical backgrounds. Visualization techniques may include maps, concept drawings, infographics, and more.

Figure 4.1.1 – Summary of SNHPC Public Participation Strategies by Planning Product

SNHPC MPO Planning Product	Description	Public Comment Period	Public Participation Strategies Always Employed	Public Participation Strategies Sometimes Employed
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	Long-range (20+ year) plan identifying how the SNHPC will achieve an effective multi-modal transportation system to meet the region's transportation, economic development, and sustainability goals while remaining fiscally constrained in accordance with anticipated transportation revenues. The final MTP includes a summary of public comments received and how the SNHPC addressed those comments.	30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings, Newsletter Articles, Social Media Postings, Visualization Techniques	Ad Hoc Committees, Public Forums/Workshops, Public Outreach Events, Surveys
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Short-range (4 year) program of transportation improvement projects to be funded in the SNHPC region in accordance with anticipated transportation revenues. The final TIP includes a summary of public comments received and how the SNHPC addressed those comments.	10-30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings, Newsletter Articles, Social Media Postings, Visualization Techniques	Public Forums/Workshops, Public Outreach Events
Congestion Management Process (CMP)	A plan that identifies congested locations in the SNHPC region, causes of congestion, and congestion mitigation strategies to improve transportation system performance and reliability.	30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings, Visualization Techniques	Ad Hoc Committees, Public Forums/Workshops, Public Outreach Events, Newsletter Articles, Social Media Postings

SNHPC MPO Planning Product	Description	Public Comment Period	Public Participation Strategies Always Employed	Public Participation Strategies Sometimes Employed
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	A program of all transportation planning activities to be undertaken by the SNHPC during a given timeframe (typically two years).	N/A	MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings	Surveys, Website Postings, Newsletter Articles
Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture	A framework for the integration of technology into the SNHPC regional transportation system.	30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings	Ad Hoc Committees, Newsletter Articles, Social Media Postings, Visualization Techniques
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	A plan outlining the goals, strategies, approaches, and performance measures to be utilized to advance meaningful public involvement in the SNHPC's regional transportation planning efforts.	45 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings, Social Media Postings	Surveys, Newsletter Articles
Title VI Program	A plan detailing how the SNHPC will conduct its planning activities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.	30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Postings, Social Media Postings	Surveys, Newsletter Articles
MPO Prospectus	A document that describes the organization and structure of the SNHPC MPO and outlines the MPOs roles and responsibilities in the transportation planning process in New Hampshire.	30 Days	Newspaper Notice, Public Hearing, MPO Review Meetings, TAC Review Meetings, Website Posting	Social Media Postings

5.0 Public Participation Performance Measures

A performance measure (PM) is an indicator that helps organizations track their progress toward achieving their goals. The SNHPC has identified a series of performance measures, which will be tracked to ensure the goals discussed in Chapter 2 are met.

In order to facilitate data collection and tracking across many different workflows, SNHPC has organized public participation performance measures according to the six (6) categories described below. This framing helps clarify the many ways that regional stakeholders may interface with the SNHPC.

- A. Systematic approaches.** These PMs capture activities that are regularly occurring and integrated into larger local, regional, or statewide systems.
- B. Tailored outreach activities.** These PMs reflect any activities that the Commission develops independently to address specific project needs or achieve broader PPP goals.
- C. Surveys.** Surveys are an important part of regional outreach and data collection efforts. The SNHPC tracks participation indicators for the surveys that the Commission administers, either independently or in conjunction with other partners.
- D. Publications.** These PMs capture the SNHPC's digital and analog media, including materials that are developed by the SNHPC and published externally, as well as independent journalism that discusses SNHPC initiatives.
- E. Web and social media.** The SNHPC regularly captures data analytics to understand the reach and impact of our electronic media outreach.
- F. Mobility management.** Individuals regularly reach out to SNHPC to request transportation support and get connected to transportation resources, including transit providers and volunteer driver programs. These PMs capture mobility management outreach efforts.

Figure 5.0.1 on the following page outlines a full list of the SNHPC's PMs organized by category and indicates how they support the PPP Goals discussed in Chapter 2. By regularly updating and reviewing these PMs, SNHPC is able to gain insight into the effectiveness of outreach strategies, pinpoint potential challenges, and uncover new opportunities for enhancing public participation in our region. The SNHPC staff will internally review PM data on a quarterly basis, and publicly report on progress at least once a year.

Figure 5.0.1 – SNHPC Public Participation Performance Measures

Performance Measures	Goal 1: Expand access to inclusive public engagement opportunities	Goal 2: Grow public awareness of regional planning priorities	Goal 3: Strengthen stakeholder partnerships; ensure input is reflected	Goal 4: Assess "How are we doing?" Evaluate and refine approaches
A. Systematic activities – regularly occurring and integrated into larger state, regional, and local systems.				
Attendance tracking at standing monthly meetings (MPO, TAC, RCC)			X	
Number of committees regularly attended by SNHPC staff			X	
Instances of SNHPC participation at legislative hearings, including letters submitted as testimony		X	X	
B. Tailored outreach activities – strategized independently to address project needs or PPP goals				
Number and type of public outreach events	X	X		X
Number of participants at public outreach events	X	X		X
Number of outreach events targeting traditionally underrepresented stakeholders and advocacy groups	X	X	X	X
C. Surveys – surveys implemented by SNHPC, independently or in collaboration with other organizations				
List of surveys conducted and number of survey responses	X			X
D. Publications – digital and analog media, released by SNHPC or externally published				
List of publications & media coverage		X		
Number of materials translated for LEP (limited English proficiency) stakeholders	X	X	X	
Number of people on SNHPC mailing list; average open rate		X		X
E. Web and social media – online data analytics				
Number of unique visitors to SNHPC website		X		
Social media stats (# of posts, followers, shares)	X	X		X
F. Mobility management – "I need a ride" resources and associated outreach				
Number and type of mobility management outreach events	X		X	
Number of referrals received & processed				X

Appendix A -Federal Regulations for Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

23 CFR 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under [subpart B of this part](#); and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations ([40 CFR part 93, subpart A](#)), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201–204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in [paragraphs \(b\), \(c\), and \(d\)](#) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under [§ 450.314](#).

Appendix B - Federal Regulations Defining “Interested Parties by Plan Type”

Federal surface transportation legislation, known as the IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) and signed into law in November 2021, underscores the need for public participation. The law requires MPOs such as SNHPC to provide “*individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties*” with a reasonable opportunity to comment on metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

The IIJA also requires SNHPC when developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to coordinate transportation plans with expected growth, economic development, environmental protection and other related planning activities within our region. Toward this end, the SNHPC Public Participation Plan outlines key decision points for consulting with affected stakeholders and local, regional, state and federal agencies.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person shall, on the basis of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Therefore, Title VI prohibits the SNHPC from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin in carrying out its federally-funded transportation planning and programming activities. Title VI was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of statutes enacted in the 1990s.

An Executive Order is an order given by the President to federal agencies. As a recipient of federal funding, the SNHPC assists federal transportation agencies by complying with these orders.

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

Executive Order 12898 mandates that federal agencies make achieving environmental justice part of their missions. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- Avoiding, minimizing or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;
- Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and Preventing the denial, reduction or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income communities.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

- Executive Order 13166 states that people who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency, should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. It requires that all federal agencies identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency and develop and implement a system to provide those services so all persons can have meaningful access to services.

Executive Order 12372: Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

- Executive Order 12372 calls for intergovernmental review of projects to ensure that federally funded or assisted projects do not inadvertently interfere with state and local plans and priorities. The Executive Order does not replace public participation, comment, or review requirements of other federal laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) but gives elected officials of state and local governments an additional mechanism to ensure federal agency responsiveness to state and local concerns

The table below reflects that the *Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan*, the *STIP*, and the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* each list the same interested parties. The *Metropolitan TIP* does not list the interested parties, but refers to the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan* in 23 U.S.C. 134

23 U.S.C. 135 Statewide Transportation Planning		23 U.S.C. 134 Metropolitan Transportation Planning	
(e) LONG-RANGE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN	(f) STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM	(g) DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLAN	(h) METROPOLITAN TIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Private providers of transportation • Representatives of users of public transportation • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities • Representatives of the disabled • Providers of freight transportation services • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Private providers of transportation • Providers of freight transportation services • Representatives of users of public transportation • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities • Representatives of the disabled • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens • Affected public agencies • Representatives of public transportation employees • Freight shippers • Providers of freight transportation services • Private providers of transportation • Representatives of users of public transportation • Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways & bicycle transportation facilities • Representatives of the disabled • Other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested parties... in accordance with subsection (g)(4)