



SNHPC

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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Adopted August 25, 2020



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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.

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1.0 Introduction and Purpose

Involving the public in the transportation decision-making process is critical to serving the needs of the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The goals of this plan are to improve the SNHPC's public participation efforts, including improving access for the public to engage in the transportation planning process, increasing the visibility and frequency of public notification, enhancing the public's understanding of metropolitan transportation planning, and assessing the effectiveness of public outreach and involvement efforts.

The plan also identifies methods to expand outreach and engagement to traditionally underserved population groups including minorities, disabled, elderly, immigrants and refugee populations. Additional emphasis is placed on forming new partnerships with organizations directly working with these important stakeholders.

Importantly, the Plan identifies a variety of new media and traditional engagement techniques, ranging from in-person engagement, social media, remote access to virtual platforms, targeted stakeholder interviews, and online survey and meeting options that are intended to supplement and not replace traditional survey and meeting opportunities.

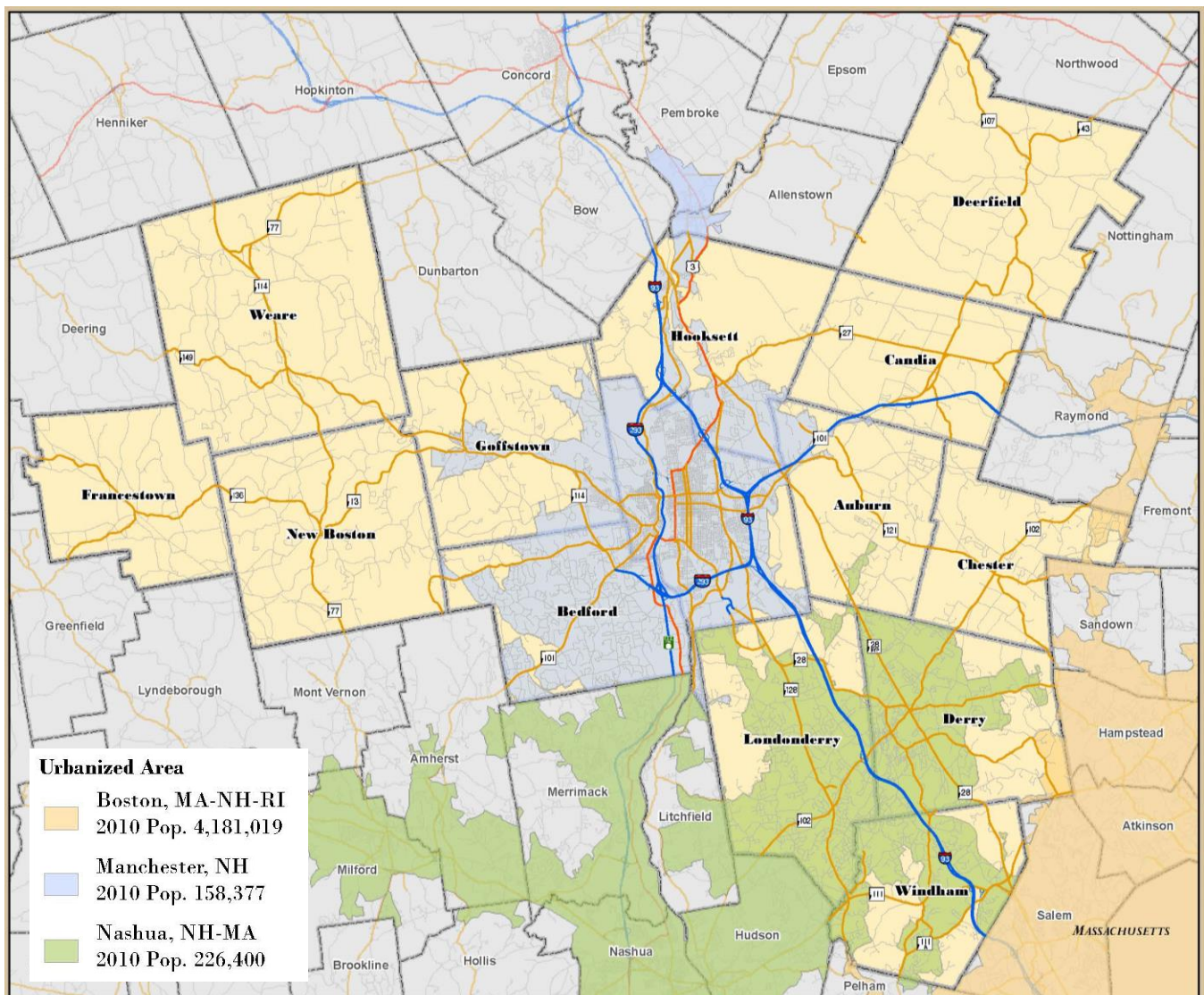


AERIAL PHOTO OF MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The primary role of the SNHPC MPO is to carry out a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, leading to the planning and implementation of transportation projects using federal transportation funds in the SNHPC region. The SNHPC MPO serves 14 communities in the Greater Manchester region of New Hampshire as shown in the figure below, which includes the entire Manchester Urbanized Area, parts of the Nashua Urbanized Area, and parts of the Boston Urbanized Area.

Portions of the Manchester Urbanized Area extend into the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) communities of Bow, Allenstown, and Pembroke. These areas are included in the SNHPC's metropolitan planning area under a Memorandum of Understanding with the CNHRPC. The SNHPC and CNHRPC coordinate closely on both project-level and planning-level public outreach efforts for the Manchester UZA. Similarly, the SNHPC coordinates with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) on public outreach efforts for the Nashua UZA, and Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) for public outreach efforts for the Boston UZA.

THE SNHPC REGION AND URBANIZED AREAS



This plan serves as a resource and guide to assist the SNHPC and any interested or affected persons or parties. SNHPC leadership and commissioners directed the development of this plan, recommending more emphasis on proactive outreach using new and emerging techniques, including virtual public involvement.

Ensuring opportunities for public input in the various stages of the planning process is vital so the process results in projects and policies that reflect the needs and priorities of the communities and residents the SNHPC serves. The SNHPC's public participation practices aim to consider all populations, including traditionally underserved minority, low-income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations.

A robust demographic breakdown of the SNHPC region can be found in the [SNHPC Title VI and Environmental Justice Program](#) document. As detailed in that document, recent American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates show a total population of approximately 270,000 in the SNHPC MPO region. Minorities make up approximately 13% of the region's population. Areas of minority concentration have been identified in one (1) census tract in Derry, twenty-five (25) census tracts in the City of Manchester, and in the City of Manchester as a whole. These traditionally underserved ethnic groups include, but are not limited to Black, Asian, American Indian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino.

Low-income residents (i.e. living below the poverty line) comprise 8.5% of the region's population. Areas with concentrations of low-income residents include four (4) census tracts in the Town of Derry, one (1) census tract in the Town of Goffstown, twenty-one (21) census tracts in the City of Manchester, and in the City of Manchester as a whole.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) total 4.2% of the SNHPC region's population, with Spanish being the most prevalent non-English language. Areas of concentrations of LEP residents have been identified in one (1) census tract in Derry, twenty-four (24) census tracts in the City of Manchester, and in the City of Manchester as a whole.

The SNHPC aims to tailor its outreach practices and opportunities to consider the barriers these and other populations face. The following sections of this document outline the SNHPC's current and intended practices, goals, and strategies to achieve meaningful public participation and input to plans, programs, and projects that affect the region.

1.1 What is Public Participation?

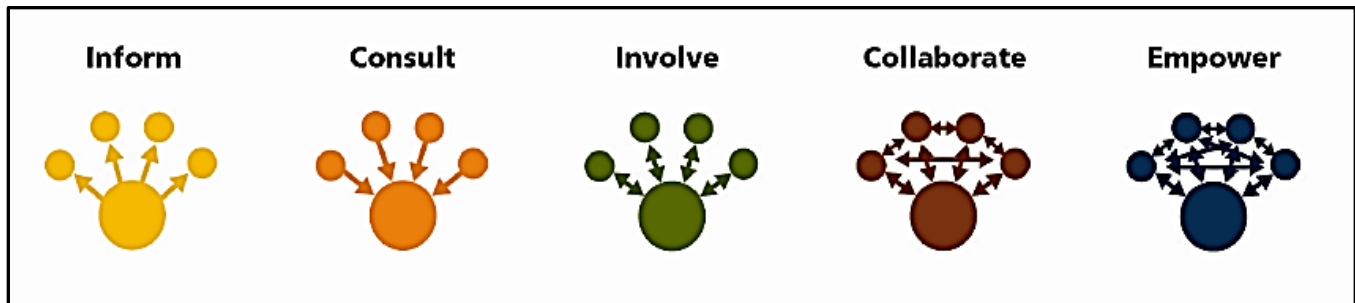
The International Association for Public Participation (IAPP) outlines several core values of public participation. The number one value is:

Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency public participation is defined as “*any process that directly engages the public in decision-making and gives consideration to public input in making that decision.*”

Public participation is a process, not a single event. It consists of a series of activities and actions by a sponsor agency over the full lifespan of a project or program to both inform the public and obtain input from them. Public participation affords stakeholders (i.e. those that have an interest or stake in an issue, such as individuals, interest groups, communities) the opportunity to inform the decisions that affect their lives.

IAPP SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



As detailed in the figure above, the IAPP has developed a spectrum of public participation. The levels increase with the weight of consideration given to the public’s input. The SNHPC aims to improve the quality and frequency of public participation at all levels. By providing more accessible ways of information to the public, the opportunity to engage increases.

The SNHPC also continues to strive for more collaboration through meaningful and engaging public comment opportunities, surveys, and public meetings/hearings. Additionally, the SNHPC recognizes the importance of making content more understandable and engaging at in-person events such as workshops, design charrettes, forums, and public hearings.

1.2 Purpose of the SNHPC Public Participation Plan

The purpose of the SNHPC Public Participation Plan is to outline procedures, strategies and desired outcomes for engaging all interested and affected parties (see Appendix B). It outlines practices for announcing public notices, general information about planning processes, providing visuals, making information accessible and more.

This plan serves as a guide for SNHPC to engage the region’s diverse populations. It also quantifies the goals for increased public outreach opportunities and allows for transparency about the planning processes that SNHPC provides as an organization.

2.0 Goals and Strategies

The SNHPC recognizes that the citizens of the region are better served when their needs and input are incorporated into the transportation decision-making process. This plan identifies five goal areas and specific strategies related to make citizens' participation more accessible, inclusive, and meaningful to the plans and project investments that are ultimately programmed by the SNHPC through the metropolitan transportation planning process. These goals are articulated below with strategies the membership and staff will employ to achieve the goals.

2.1 GOAL 1: Increased Access & Engagement Opportunities

Actively seek out and consider input and involvement from a diverse variety of individuals, groups, and organizations through creative means.

Strategies:

- Identify community groups and service organizations to partner with and identify opportunities to collaborate on public input opportunities whether in-person or through virtual public involvement platforms.
- Develop best practice tools to engage those most in need of transportation services, including traditionally underserved communities.
- Expand translation opportunities for SNHPC projects and work products to better engage English and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) residents, with a focus on the needs of Spanish speaking residents of the region.
- Consult Universal Design standards and ensure that in-person public meetings are held at locations that are accessible for people with mobility needs or make allowances for virtual involvement.



2.2 GOAL 2: Improved Visibility & Effective Notification

Effectively convey plans, programs and projects utilizing visualization techniques such as charrettes, community outreach and simulation techniques and to make these materials readily available in electronically accessible formats.

Strategies:

- Identify significant community events throughout the year where SNHPC staff can reach and engage citizens and other stakeholders “where they are” on current planning and programming initiatives.
- Partner with other New Hampshire MPOs, partner agencies, and trade associations to increase awareness of transportation options, improve outreach, and educate the public on transportation planning issues.
- Develop a “pop-up” banner and kiosk or booth that brands the SNHPC and can be recognizable at community and other civic events.
- Partner with local municipal cable/public access television programmers to promote regional transportation planning topics and ongoing and future planning efforts.



2.3 GOAL 3: Broadened and Increased Communication

Promote participation opportunities across appropriate mediums for informed public input to be used in the decision-making process.



Strategies:

- Expand the utilization of a variety of visually stimulating and informative methods to convey information including video productions, narrated PowerPoint presentations, factsheets, live interviews, branded brochures and handouts designed for virtual exploration, and website/social media postings.
- Develop and deploy a cohesive social media strategy that cultivates community networking and regularly engages the public in the SNHPC's work and planning opportunities.
- Identify and develop relationships with media outlets including newspapers, digital local news websites, immigrant community specific outlets, and other "influencers" who can reach members of the public affected by the SNHPC's metropolitan transportation planning projects or programs.

2.4 GOAL 4: Resourcefulness & Compliance

Create transportation plans, programs and projects reflecting local, regional, and State priorities through the consideration of a range of feasible transportation options.



Strategies:

- Strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, and identify and coordinate with leaders who can champion plans and projects.
- Actively engage and seek guidance from State (e.g. NHDOT) and Federal (e.g. FHWA and FTA) partners as well as municipal leaders on their needs as related to plans and projects, as well as those who represent diverse communities.
- Expand participation on the SNHPC's transportation-related advisory committees including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to include participation for representatives of traditionally underserved populations.

2.5 GOAL 5: Assess Effectiveness Performance of SNHPC Public Participation

Establish effective early and continuing outreach throughout the planning process.

Strategies:

- Establish performance measures to provide a means of tracking and reporting the effectiveness of the SNHPC's public participation efforts.
- Develop and post on the SNHPC website a schedule of upcoming public engagement efforts throughout the region.
- Develop a biennial report that assesses and communicates progress on these goals and their effectiveness by quantifying the number of citizens reached and articulating levels of participation based on the established performance measures.

3.0 Existing General Strategies

3.1 Newspaper Notices

The SNHPC utilizes local news outlets to reach as many constituents as possible and regularly publishes public comment period and public hearing information for key metropolitan planning documents in the region's newspaper of general circulation, *The Union Leader*. The SNHPC has also established good connections with smaller local publications such as Manchester Ink Link, The New Boston Beacon, The Goffstown News, and Derry News.



3.2 In-person Meetings

Face-to-face communications often leave the most meaningful impact on a person. The SNHPC hosts a variety of regularly scheduled meetings that are open to the public, including meetings of the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The SNHPC Policy Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee are comprised of representatives appointed by local communities and partner agencies and guide the development and implementation of the SNHPC's metropolitan planning products. These meetings help regional stakeholders to stay up-to-date on transportation planning matters at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. During meetings, SNHPC staff or guest speakers inform committee members and the public about transportation projects, practices, and policies. Information about state and federal legislation, regulations, grant opportunities, best practices, and transportation planning resources are also shared at meetings.



The SNHPC Policy Committee typically meets on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 11:30 AM in the SNHPC Conference Room. The SNHPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meets on the third Thursday of every month at 9:30 AM in the SNHPC Conference Room. During public emergencies, in accordance with the provisions NH RSA 91-A, meetings and business may be conducted virtually.

These committees provide the SNHPC with direction and feedback about planning activities. Committee members also act as representatives for the SNHPC MPO by communicating important planning activities back to their communities and agencies. The public notice and the agenda of SNHPC MPO Policy Committee and TAC meetings are sent to members at least ten days prior to the meeting date. The public notice and meeting agendas are available on the SNHPC MPO website (www.SNHPC.org) and at the SNHPC MPO office.

Staff also sends all stakeholders a monthly e-mailed "media blast" which provides dates and information about meetings, events, funding sources, and other important updates. Meeting packets and minutes are available to the public at the meetings, and upon request by calling 603-669-4664 or by visiting the SNHPC website.



SNHPC STAFF PRESENTS A PROJECT TO COMMISSIONERS

3.3 Virtual Public Meetings/Public Hearings

Although much of SNHPC's public engagement takes place electronically, generally public meetings and hearings are held in person at the SNHPC office. In non-emergency situations, a quorum must be physically present and the public must be able to physically attend in addition to having electronic access. However, during emergency conditions including pandemics, natural disasters, or other situations which make in person meetings impractical or unsafe, the SNHPC may hold public meetings exclusively through electronic or telephone-only platforms (e.g. Zoom, etc). In all cases, the SNHPC will follow the prevailing requirements of RSA 91-A when holding meetings that are exclusively electronic or telephone-only.

When electronic meetings are utilized during emergency conditions, the meeting information is sent out to all affected stakeholders and posted on the SNHPC website at least one week prior to the meeting. In the spring of 2020, the State of New Hampshire began strategic measures in dealing with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Under these extreme circumstances, SNHPC began exclusively facilitating meetings on a virtual platform (Zoom). The SNHPC will continue exclusively utilizing virtual meeting platforms until State and Federal guidance dictates that the resumption of in-person meetings is safe.

Additionally, when electronic meetings are utilized, a quorum of the members of the body must be confirmed by a roll call. Meetings may be recorded to ensure the meeting minutes are accurate and all voting requires an individual roll call.

3.4 Project-specific Advisory and Ad Hoc Committees

Advisory committees comprised of stakeholders and interested members of the public may be utilized in the creation of documents like the *Regional Transportation Plan*, *Congestion Management Process*, *Public Transit-Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan*, or other key metropolitan planning products. Input from these committees helps SNHPC staff to focus the content, strategies, and projects included in these documents.

Ad hoc committees are occasionally established for short durations to assist on specific planning tasks and functions when specialized knowledge is needed. The meeting schedules of these groups are variable and on an as-needed basis. Ad hoc committee and work group meetings are public meetings by New Hampshire law and membership on these short-term committees typically includes non-biased representatives from member communities, partnering agencies, and experts on the relevant committee topic. Members of the public are often experts on local issues and play an important role in these small groups. Notably, the SNHPC has historically utilized an Ad Hoc committees in the development of the regional *Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture*.

3.5 Public Forums, Workshops, & Focus Groups

Public forums, workshops, and focus groups provide a setting for public discussion. These events are occasionally organized by the SNHPC to work with stakeholders on a specific project, to gather public feedback about a specific topic, or to develop a strategy on a programmatic issue.



Public forums, workshops, and focus groups allow face-to-face interactions in small groups to foster collaboration amongst participants, which can encourage a lively dialog about a specific issue. The SNHPC utilizes this form of outreach to ensure involvement from various stakeholders and to understand their views in depth.



SNHPC ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

3.6 Public Outreach Events

The SNHPC occasionally “piggybacks” on existing local events to meet people where they are, ensuring onsite explanation of services, improved visibility of key programs, input on a survey, or better understanding of a service to community members. Local events are an effective way to reach a diverse population in a community gathering space and actively engage the public face-to-face in informal settings. The SNHPC has been present at local farmers markets, old home days, senior center lunches, local fairs, voting events, and more. Recently, SNHPC staff conducted surveys and helped to introduce seniors to community transit options with a “*Touch the Bus*” and “*Meet the Driver*” event. These types of community involvement may attract those in need of services including underrepresented and/or hard-to-reach populations. In reaching out and engaging a variety of community members at these events, the SNHPC also helps to address the goals of the region’s Title VI and Environmental Justice Program.



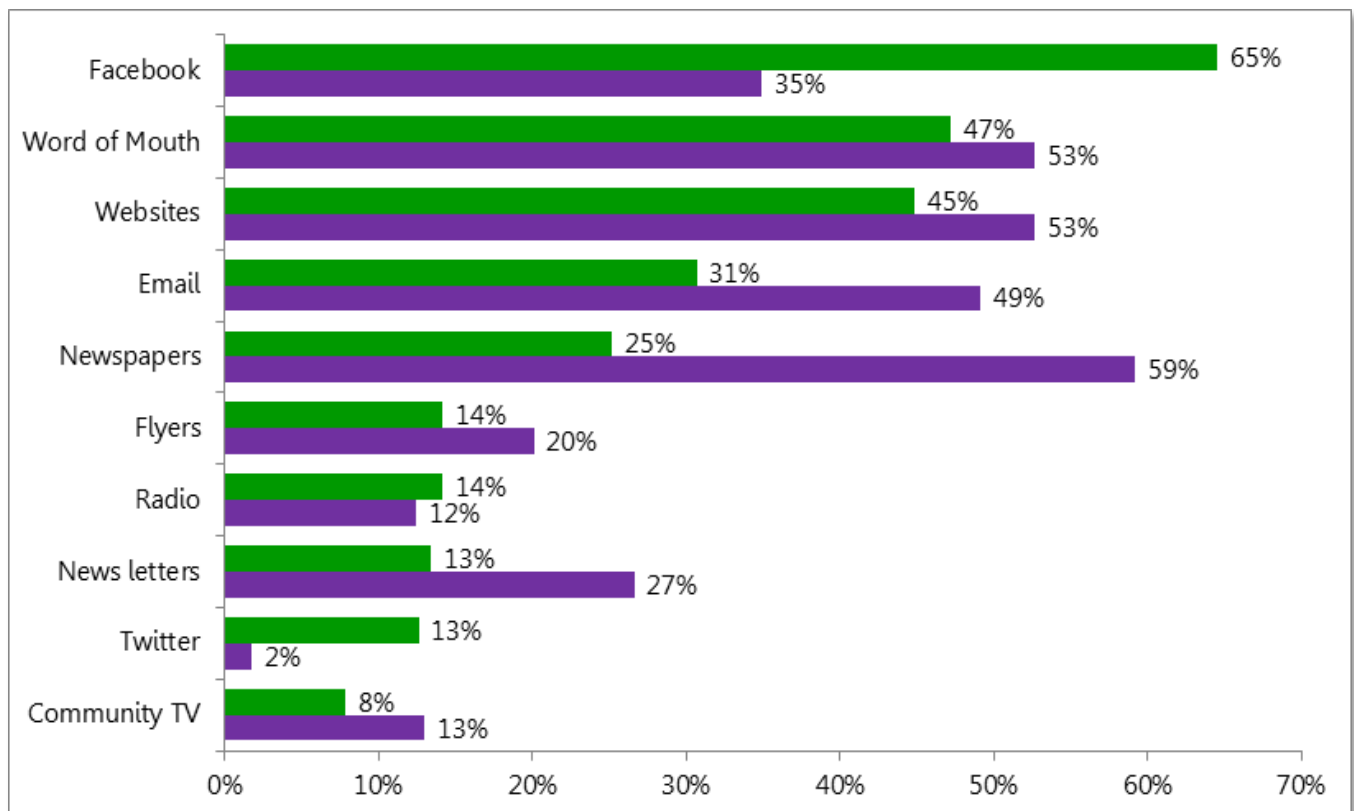
3.7 Surveys

The SNHPC uses surveys as a tool to get public input on any variety of topics to gather information for major document updates and to help guide general transportation planning. Electronic surveys can be circulated to reach a broad audience or target certain demographics. Increased broadband deployment in rural areas of the SNHPC region is making it more efficient to collect information in this way. Collecting and distributing surveys electronically can be much more efficient than paper surveys. However, SNHPC



typically encourages both electronic and paper surveys in order to reach those that may not have access a computer, or those with limited digital proficiency or Limited English Proficiency.

In the past, the SNHPC has utilized surveys for various planning efforts including SNHPC's Age Friendly Program, which focuses on the challenges that New Hampshire's populations encounter as they age. In a recent region-wide survey, SNHPC discovered there are significant differences on how younger (shown in green) and older adults (shown in purple) get information. The graph below shows that young adults would rather get information through social media, specifically Facebook, while older adults would prefer newspapers or email. Similarities also exist in that adults of all ages also rely on word of mouth and websites. This information has helped to inform how best to disseminate information regarding transportation programs.

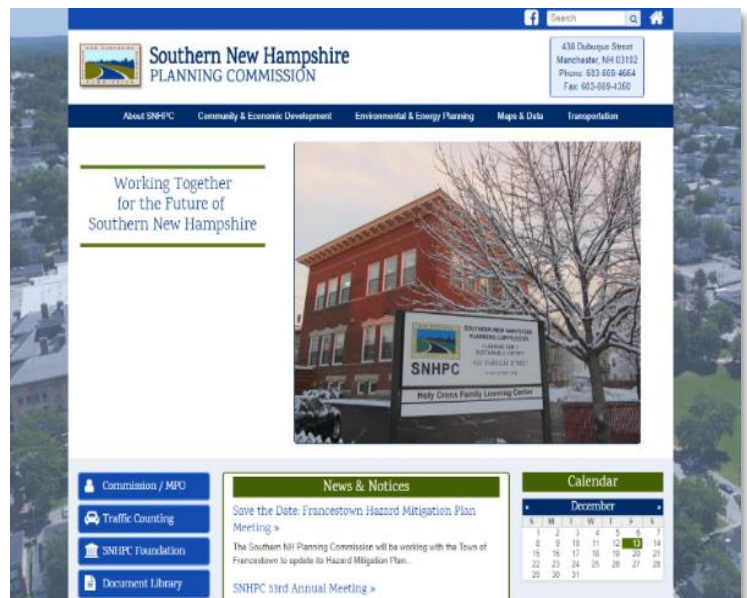


**SNHPC SURVEY RESULTS DETAILING HOW RESIDENTS PREFER TO GET THEIR INFORMATION
(YOUNGER RESPONDENTS IN GREEN, OLDER RESPONDENTS IN PURPLE)**

3.8 SNHPC Website

The SNHPC website, www.SNHPC.org offers the public an overview on all services, projects, and committees that are part of SNHPC's work program. The SNHPC website was redesigned in 2019. Updates to the website are ongoing to keep the public informed about planning activities and to provide a means for public comment.

On the homepage, the SNHPC event calendar is available as well as a "News and Announcements" section, SNHPC social media posts and more. The website hosts a robust document library with studies and plans on a variety of topics. The website also hosts minutes, agendas, and other important project updates. The site also includes several interactive maps that showcase various projects such as the traffic counting program and bicycle/pedestrian counting program.



SNHPC WEBSITE (www.SNHPC.org)

3.9 Newsletters/ Mailing Lists



EXAMPLE OF SNHPC'S MONTHLY ELECTRONIC "MEDIA BLAST"

The SNHPC distributes two electronic publications to keep interested parties up to date. They are a significant part of our public outreach strategy and are an effective way to distribute regional planning information to the public.

The SNHPC newsletter is produced quarterly and the electronic "Media Blast" monthly. Topics include information about the region's meetings and conferences, planning activities conducted by agencies in the region, and information about SNHPC MPO planning activities. They are sent out via email and posted on the SNHPC website and social media platforms, which currently reach more than 550 people.

3.10 Traditional and Social Media

The SNHPC routinely utilizes both traditional and social media to distribute information to the public through a variety of platforms.

Social Media



The SNHPC has a social media presence on Facebook, and Twitter. The SNHPC Facebook page creates the most activity for SNHPC. This platform has the most functionality and is the most widely used social media platform in the region.

The SNHPC routinely shares announcements such as public comment periods, meeting information, and other educational transportation planning content. The SNHPC is also able to create and manage public outreach events, take polls and more. The SNHPC also utilizes the ability to “boost” a post, which consists of paying for the content to reach a certain audience. For example, the SNHPC was able to target older adults within a particular geographic area resulting in greater participation in a transit survey.



SNHPC FACEBOOK POSTING PROMOTING A LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING MEETING

Local Media Outlets



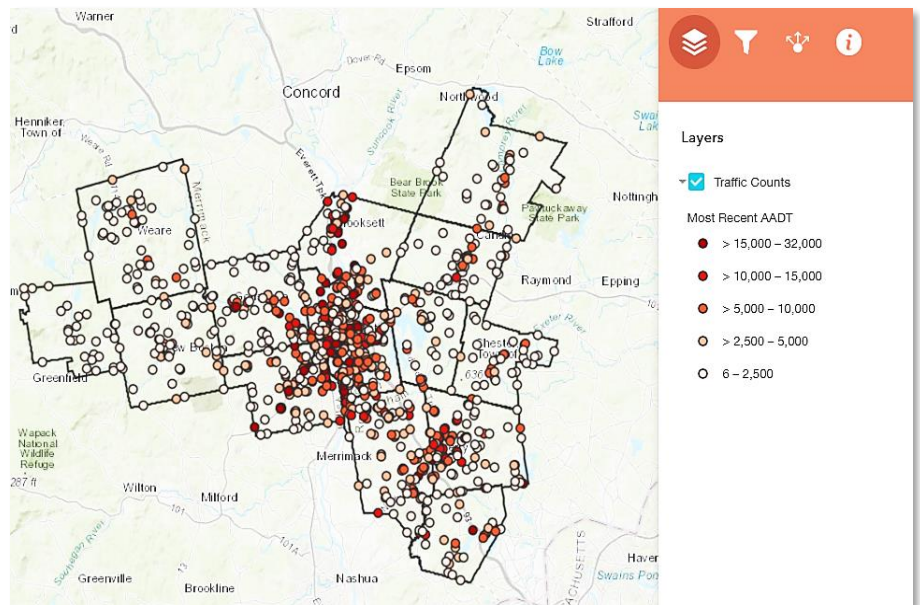
SNHPC STAFF PARTICIPATES IN A RADIO INTERVIEW PROMOTING THE “COMMUTE SMART NEW HAMPSHIRE” INITIATIVE

To appeal to a broad spectrum of individuals across the region, SNHPC has also worked with a variety of local radio stations and local public television programs in Manchester and surrounding communities to talk about upcoming projects and topical transportation planning issues.

The SNHPC will continue to identify and develop relationships with newspapers, radio, and television outlets to promote the region’s metropolitan transportation planning efforts.

3.11 Visualization Techniques

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 do not have technical backgrounds. Visualization techniques may include maps, concept drawings, infographics, and more. The SNHPC has utilized a wide array of visualization techniques to convey information.



SNHPC INTERACTIVE ONLINE TRAFFIC COUNT MAP

One of the SNHPC's key services is providing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyses. These services include mapping, geospatial analysis, and web development. To make spatial transportation planning data more accessible to the public, the SNHPC frequently utilizes interactive online web mapping tools. Examples of online maps include an interactive web map of all the SNHPC's traffic count locations. This map shows the location of each site where a traffic count has occurred in addition to Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) at that site. When a point is selected, a detailed description of the site and historic data is shown.

3.12 Translation Services and Accessibility

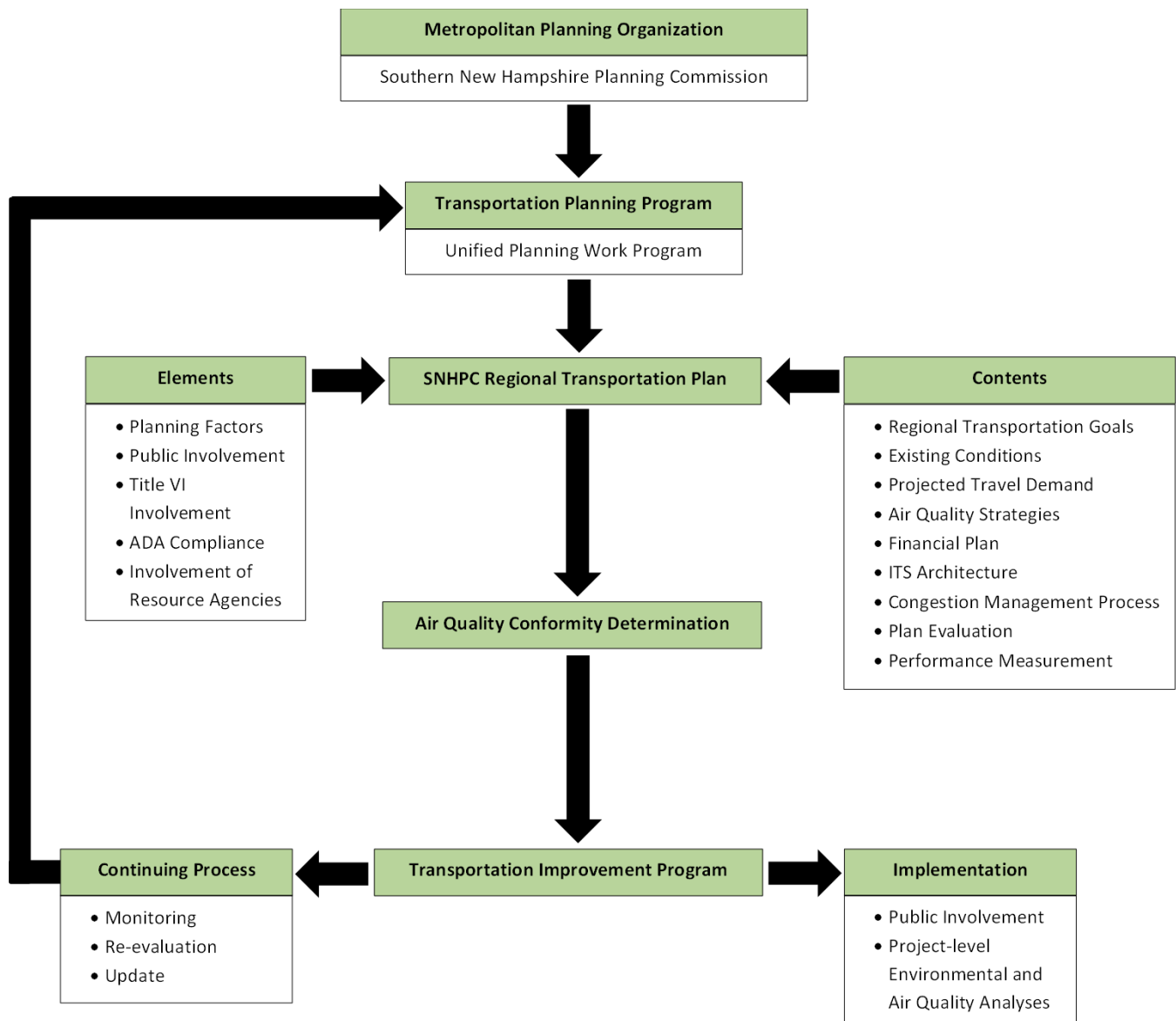
The SNHPC is committed to ensuring that all individuals have meaningful access to the metropolitan transportation planning process. Upon request, the SNHPC will facilitate translation services for persons with Limited English Proficiency, or interpretation services for deaf, hard of hearing, and blind persons by utilizing the following resources:

- **Language Bank** (www.thelanguagebank.org) and **LanguageLine 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 public meetings are held at the SNHPC's office at 438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, NH (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 handicap accessible and the 2nd floor meeting room is accessible by elevator.

4.0 Public Input in the SNHPC MPO Planning Process

The SNHPC maintains various planning documents that guide the future of the region's transportation network. Throughout the process of updating/creating these documents, staff utilize the strategies previously identified in Section 3.0 of this plan to achieve effective public involvement.



SNHPC METROPOLITAN PLANNING PROCESS

The major transportation planning documents and programs that SNHPC maintains all rely on public engagement. Each item varies, and the outreach techniques used to educate the public and solicit comments. Below is a brief description of each of the key documents.

4.1 SNHPC Process for Receiving Public Comments on MPO Planning Documents

When a draft document is developed and released, there is often a defined public comment period ranging from 10 to 45 days depending on the document. The announcement of this 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). Public comments regarding documents are valuable in shaping SNHPC planning activities and work products. 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.

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

- By Regular Mail at 438 Dubuque Street, Manchester, NH 03102
- By Fax at 603-669-4350
- By E-mail at Imoore-o'brien@snhpc.org (or to the specific person identified on the public notice)
- By Attending a Public Hearing and providing comments in person

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 Statute Annotated (RSA) 91-A. Notice for all public meetings and public hearings held by the SNHPC is 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. However, during emergency conditions including pandemics, natural disasters, or other situations which make in person meetings impractical or unsafe, the SNHPC may hold public meetings or hearings exclusively through electronic or telephone-only platforms (e.g. Zoom). In all cases, the SNHPC will follow the prevailing requirements of NH RSA 91-A when holding meetings that are exclusively electronic or telephone-only.

In the spring of 2020, the State of New Hampshire began strategic measures in dealing with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Under these extreme circumstances, SNHPC began exclusively facilitating meetings on a virtual platform (Zoom). The SNHPC will continue exclusively utilizing virtual meeting platforms until State and Federal guidance dictates that the resumption of in-person meetings is safe.

4.2 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) serves as the long-range (20+ year) transportation planning document for the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MTP contains the SNHPC's adopted policies, goals, and project proposals to improve the regional transportation system through the year 2040.

The MTP is the product of a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) planning process, which considers all surface transportation modes and supports sound community development within the SNHPC's metropolitan

area. The plan reflects the goals and objectives of the SNHPC's member communities as detailed in their own master plans and policies, and integrates key statewide transportation planning products developed by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and other partner agencies.

The MTP was developed to conform with the federal requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. The plan's recommendations are derived from a screening process that uses ten federally-designated transportation planning factors to ensure that impacts associated with health, safety, welfare and the environment are properly weighed in the public interest. In the MTP, the SNHPC also utilizes [Performance-based Planning and Programming \(PBPP\)](#) to evaluate the current performance of the transportation system as necessary to set strategic directions for the future, analyze how funding is programmed, and evaluate investment outcomes.

The SNHPC engages the public and other stakeholders early in the MTP update process. Historically, SNHPC reaches out to and engages with the following stakeholders: key municipal officials, aldermen, boards of selectmen, town councils, planning boards, highway and safety committees, public works officials, and road agents for all municipalities, state and regional coordinating councils, other regional planning commissions, transit operators, demand response operators, volunteer driver programs, Chambers of Commerce, and State and Federal partner agencies.

The SNHPC notifies the public of the beginning of the MTP update process through e-mail, notice in local media outlets, and social media. Periodic updates are also highlighted at SNHPC MPO and TAC meetings. Additionally, the SNHPC provides notices of meetings and articles about projects and programs in SNHPC's monthly media blast and quarterly newsletter.

Moving forward, the SNHPC will continue to establish partnerships with agencies who work directly with transportation disadvantaged populations to engage populations, or work with representatives who can speak to the population's interests. Identified parties include but are not limited to Latinos Unidos de New Hampshire, Caregivers, Alliance for Healthy Aging (AHA), AARP, Planned Parenthood, New Horizons for NH, ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Center, The Way Home, YWCA, and YMCA. Early and frequent engagement of these stakeholders will result in a network of interested parties that SNHPC will build and maintain throughout the update process.

The standard comment period for the MTP is 30 days, and SNHPC reminds engaged stakeholders and interested parties through a contact list created throughout the outreach process for each update. Additionally, online and paper surveys are sometimes circulated during the MTP update process, providing an opportunity to get a glimpse of people's perception of the region's transportation network and inquiring about their transportation needs and preferences. Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the MTP or any amendment thereto.

A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the MTP is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.3 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a vital link between plan development and project implementation where plans are converted into specific improvement projects and then programmed for implementation on the basis of priority and fiscal constraint. The FY 2019 – FY 2022 TIP is a four-year program of regional transportation improvement projects for the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. Based on guidelines contained in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the TIP is updated at least once every four years. The TIP is updated by the SNHPC MPO in accordance with federal metropolitan planning regulations, 23 CFR 450, issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In New Hampshire, the TIP is generally updated every two years by the MPO, concurrently with the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). All transportation projects utilizing Federal transportation funds in the SNHPC MPO region must be included in a conforming approved TIP in order to be incorporated into the STIP and proceed to implementation. Pursuant to the requirements of 23 CFR 450, other requirements pertaining to the development and maintenance of the TIP include:

- The TIP must cover a period of no less than four years, be updated every four years, and be approved by the MPO and the Governor;
- The TIP must be made reasonable available to all interested parties that may wish to provide comment;
- The TIP must include capital and non-capital surface transportation projects, or phases of projects within the metropolitan planning area;
- The TIP must contain all regionally significant projects requiring an action by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA);
- The TIP must be financially constrained.
- The TIP serves as the short-range, project-specific component of the long-range plan for the region, which is called the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission.

The TIP public participation process includes engaging stakeholders early in the process for project solicitation. Meetings are held with the SNHPC TAC and MPO Policy Committee to review prioritization methodology and weighting of projects. The MPO Policy Committee then approves the regional project priorities. A similar process is held at all Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire.

Periodic changes, known as TIP amendments or TIP administrative modifications, occur after the document has been adopted. They are critical to ensuring documents the TIP is kept up-to-date with the latest information regarding scope of work, costs, scheduling or other project changes. Amendments ensure the implementation of transportation planning activities through an accountable process and follow the same public participation procedures as the original documents.

The standard comment period for the TIP is generally 30 days, but the comment period for TIP amendments may be shorter based on the agreement of Interagency Partners pursuant to the prevailing [STIP Revision Procedures](#) (adopted January 9, 2020) agreed upon by the NHDOT and the four MPOs in New Hampshire (including the

SNHPC). Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the TIP or any amendment thereto.

A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the TIP is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.4 Congestion Management Process (CMP)

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) is *“a systematic and regionally-accepted approach for managing congestion that provides accurate, up-to-date information on transportation system performance and assesses alternative strategies for congestion management that meet state and local needs.”* The SNHPC maintains a CMP for the region, which uses travel time reliability data to identify congested intersections, roadway segments, and corridors. The CMP identifies strategies (including infrastructure improvements, transportation demand management, and other technology projects and programs) to manage the region’s congestion. The CMP also outlines multimodal performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies over time.

The standard comment period for the CMP is 30 days, and SNHPC reminds engaged stakeholders and interested parties through a contact list created throughout the outreach process for each update. Additionally, visualization techniques are utilized to present congestion data in an engaging and understandable way. Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the CMP.

A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the CMP is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.5 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies the specific planning priorities and work tasks that the SNHPC MPO will address during a two-year program period. The UPWP is a consolidated planning work program supported by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5303 Metropolitan Planning funds, and FHWA State Planning and Research (SPR) funds. The planning activities outlined in the UPWP have been designed to meet the requirements of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST) Act, fulfill the local needs of the SNHPC region’s municipalities, and ensure consistency with the ten federally-designated metropolitan planning factors as well as Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) defined by the FHWA New Hampshire Division and FTA Region 1.

Updates to the UPWP’s scope of work and budget are presented at meetings of the SNHPC TAC and MPO Policy Committee, and formal authorization of the document is granted by the SNHPC Executive Committee. The document is also posted on the SNHPC website for public review.

A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the UPWP is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.6 Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Architecture

The Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture for the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) Region is a roadmap for the integration of technology into the SNHPC transportation system during the next 10 years. The Architecture is a framework for the SNHPC region, rather than a system design or a plan for deployment, within which electronic information is organized. Based on the National ITS Architecture, which provides a framework for ITS planning and integration, SNHPC has developed the Architecture to cover all modes in the region. The Architecture exhibits a shared vision of how the systems will work together in the future, sharing information and resources to provide a safer, more efficient transportation system for travelers in the region.

The public participation process for updating the ITS Architecture includes the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of public works departments, emergency management centers, traffic departments, and affected partner agencies to guide the development of the document.

The standard comment period for the ITS Architecture is 30 days, and SNHPC reminds engaged stakeholders and interested parties through a contact list created throughout the outreach process for each update. Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the ITS Architecture.

A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the ITS Architecture is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.7 Title VI and Environmental Justice Program

The SNHPC maintains a Title VI and Environmental Justice program to effectuate the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations in all Federal programs and activities. Pursuant to this obligation, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, or income status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity carried out by the SNHPC.

The objectives of the SNHPC's Title VI Program are as follows:

- To ensure the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin;
- To identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations;
- To promote the full and fair participation of all affected populations in transportation decision-making;
- To prevent the denial, reduction or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations; and
- To ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

The standard comment period for the Title VI and Environmental Justice Program is 30 days. Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the document. A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the Title VI and Environmental Justice Program is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.8 MPO Prospectus

The SNHPC MPO Prospectus provides an introduction to, and a framework for, transportation planning in the SNHPC region pursuant to Federal regulations. The Prospectus is intended to provide direction for and maintain the continuity of the transportation planning and programming process. The Prospectus document defines the roles of various federal, state, and local agencies and entities involved in the SNHPC's metropolitan transportation planning process, and it documents the interagency agreements that have been or will be entered between the SNHPC MPO and partner organizations.

The standard comment period for the SNHPC MPO Prospectus is 30 days. Following the public comment period, the SNHPC MPO Policy Committee holds a public hearing to consider adoption of the document. A complete summary of public involvement techniques utilized in the development of the SNHPC MPO Prospectus is detailed in Section 4.9 of this document.

4.9 Summary of SNHPC Public Involvement Strategies

SNHPC MPO Planning Product	Public Comment Period	Public Participation Strategies Employed											
		Newspaper Notice	Public Hearing	MPO Meetings	TAC Meetings	Ad Hoc Committees	Public Forums/ Workshops	Public Outreach Events	Surveys	Website Postings	Newsletter/ Media Blast	Social Media	Visualization Techniques
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	30 Days	A	A	A	A	S	S	S	S	A	A	A	A
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	10-30 Days	A	A	A	A		S	S		A	A	A	S
Congestion Management Process (CMP)	30 Days	A	A	A	A	S	S	S		A	S	S	A
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	N/A			A	A				S	A	S		
Intelligent Transportation System Architecture (ITS)	30 Days	A	A	A	A	A				A	A	S	S
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	45 Days	A	A	A	A					A	S	A	S
Title VI and Environmental Justice Program	30 Days	A	A	A	A				S	A	S	S	A
MPO Prospectus	30 Days	A	A	A						A			

A	Strategy should always be employed.
S	Strategy should sometimes be employed.

5.0 Evaluation of the Public Participation Process



The SNHPC will utilize performance measures to improve public participation and general outreach across all metropolitan transportation planning efforts. Beginning in FY 2021, the SNHPC will gather baseline data for the specific performance measures as detailed in Section 5.1 of this document.

Baseline information collected will be compiled into a biennial report to track and improve SNHPC practices. Two accompanying surveys will be conducted. This first will be an educational survey geared toward the public, which will gauge awareness and knowledge of transportation planning and opportunities to get involved. A second survey will be geared toward stakeholders and their satisfaction of SNHPC's outreach and engagement practices.

5.1 Public Participation Performance Measures

The following table summarizes the ways that the SNHPC MPO will track and assess the organizational success in public participation. The SNHPC periodically monitors many of the techniques and indicators of success, to ensure the organization is moving towards its goals.

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
Public Hearings/Forums	Commissioner, stakeholder, and public attendance at MPO public hearings, focus groups, and other meetings or forums.	Increase in attendance at public hearings, meetings, focus sessions, and forums.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide options for virtual connections.• Provide allowances for reasonable meeting times.• Review stakeholder and Commissioner lists to verify community/agency representation.• Consider location and accessibility of meeting room.• Review announcements of meetings for timeliness, clarity, and distribution.• Consider redesign of announcements.

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
Surveys or Comment Forms	Number of participants/responses on surveys and comments from public notices.	Increase in the number of participants in surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with communities and agencies to ensure survey distribution. • Provide surveys forms on the Commission's and partnering entity website. • Promote surveys on social media where appropriate. • Keep survey forms simple and quick to complete.
Effective Customer Service	Satisfied stakeholders.	Zero Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to follow up with inquiries via email or phone.
Outreach Events	Number of outreach events.	Increase public engagement through increase in the number of outreach events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen relationships with Community and agency partners. • Develop and strategize outreach events that encourage public participation.
Participation from Diverse Community Groups	Attendees of MPO meetings or events who were invited from diverse community groups.	Increase in representation from diverse community groups to reflect composition of the planning area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new relationships focused on equity. • Attend meetings of community groups and solicit participation in the transportation planning process. • Ensure agendas are of interest to a wide audience of people, agencies, and partners.
Public Feedback on Plans, Projects, and Programs	Comments received regarding the plans or summaries.	Increase number of comments received regarding projects, plans or other products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop interactive plans/maps online to get information from a broad spectrum of people and to provide accessible input formats. • Try to get "early and often" public review plans, programs, and other products. • Provide comment form for public input. • Consider comments for development of future plans.

Public Participation Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
SNHPC Website	Number of visitors.	Create a successful web presence and increase the number of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all sections of the website are current, effective, and informational. • Add narrated presentations, interactive maps, and other visually stimulating elements.
Social Media Presence	Number of posts about transportation on all social media platforms.	Increase number of social media posts and gauge engagement level of posts with the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post more often and establish frequency goals.

APPENDIX A – Federal Requirements: Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation

- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing 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 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 participation plan shall be developed by the MPO 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 but not limited to 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 which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public participation efforts;
 - (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public participation 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), 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, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed 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. 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 Requirements: Defined "Interested Parties" By Plan Type

Federal Requirements

Federal surface transportation legislation, known as the FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) and signed into law in December 2015, underscores the need for public participation. The law requires metropolitan planning organizations such as SNHPC to "provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 transportation plans and programs.

The FAST Act also requires SNHPC when developing the Plan 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, this Public Participation Plan outlines key decision points for consulting with affected 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 SNHPC from discriminating on the basis of race, color or national origin in carrying out its transportation planning and programming activities, which receive federal funding. Title VI was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of federal statutes enacted in the 1990s.

An Executive Order is an order given by the President to federal agencies. As a recipient of federal revenues, SNHPC assists federal transportation agencies in 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

This table shows 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)