

# PROSPECTUS

## **The Transportation Planning Process of the Rockingham Planning Commission - Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Adopted April 2008

Amended January, 2012

PREPARED BY

ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION  
156 WATER STREET  
EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE



This document was prepared by the Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, under contract to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Adoption Resolution .....	iv
Record of Amendments .....	v
List of Abbreviations used in the Prospectus.....	vi
1.0 Introduction .....	1
2.0 Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization .....	1
2.1 Designation.....	1
2.2 Study Area.....	2
2.3 Representation & Structure.....	2
3.0 Overview of the Transportation Planning Process .....	6
3.1 3Cs Process .....	6
3.2 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) .....	8
3.3 Long Range Transportation Plan .....	8
3.4 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).....	8
3.5 Plan and Program Implementation.....	9
3.6 Transportation Planning and Air Quality Conformity.....	9
4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Involved Agencies.....	10
4.1 Rockingham Planning Commission .....	10
4.2 Local Communities.....	10
4.3 NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT).....	12
4.4 NH Department of Environmental Services - Air Resources Division (NHDES-ARD) .....	12
4.5 Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) .....	12
4.6 Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART) .....	12
4.7 Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study/SMRPC .....	13
4.8 Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC).....	13
4.9 New Hampshire MPOs (NRPC, SNHPC, SRPC) .....	13
4.10 Pease Development Authority/New Hampshire Port Authority.....	14
4.11 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) .....	14
4.12 US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) .....	15
4.13 University of New Hampshire (UNH).....	15
5.0 Development and Amendment of the Transportation Plan .....	15
5.1 Background .....	15
5.2 Development Process for the Transportation Plan.....	16
5.3 Development of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) .....	18
5.4 Plan and TIP Amendments .....	21
5.5 Air Quality Conformity Determinations.....	21

6.0	TIP AMENDMENT PROCEDURES .....	24
6.1	Overview .....	24
6.2	Decision Thresholds .....	25
6.3	Interagency Consultation.....	26
6.4	Amendments .....	28
6.5	Administrative Modifications.....	28
6.6	Information Only .....	29
6.7	Submission of STIP Updates .....	30
6.8	Air Quality Conformity .....	30
7.0	Public Participation Process .....	30
7.1	Overview .....	30
7.2	Public Participation Policy & Goals .....	31
7.3	Planning Process .....	33
7.4	Public Participation Methods.....	38
7.5	Documentation, Distribution & Notification.....	41
8.0	Amendments.....	42
8.1	Review.....	42
8.2	Termination; Amendments .....	43
8.3	Separate Agreements .....	43

**LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES**

Figure 1	MPO Study Area Map .....	4
Figure 2	MPO Organizational Chart .....	5
Figure 3	NH Non-Attainment Areas.....	11
Figure 4	Flow Chart of Transportation Plan & TIP Development Process.....	35
Table 1	MPO Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee Membership.....	7
Table 2	Transportation Plan & TIP Development Process .....	22
Table 3	TIP Amendment Project Cost Thresholds.....	27
Table 4	Key Planning Activities & Public Participation Methods.....	36

## APPENDICES

Appendix A. SAFETEA-LU TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GOALS -- "PLANNING FACTORS" .....	A-1
Appendix B. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AMONG PARTICIPATING AGENGIES .....	B-1
Appendix C. ADMINISTRATIVE RULE FOR AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY DETERMINATION & SIP REVISIONS GOVERNING CONFORMITY DETERMINATIONS OF: TRANSPORTATION PLAN, PROGRAMS & PROJECTS (ENV-A 1500 - Transportation Conformity) .....	C-1
Appendix D. MPO DESIGNATION DOCUMENTATION .....	D-1

**RESOLUTION**

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PROSPECTUS FOR THE ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO).

WHEREAS, the PROSPECTUS has been developed to define and delineate organizational responsibilities, bylaws and operating procedures, and a summary of the planning program; and

WHEREAS, the PROSPECTUS establishes the multi-year framework within which the Unified Planning Work Program for transportation planning in the Rockingham MPO Study Area is accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out the urban transportation planning process are defined in the PROSPECTUS and via executed agreements or memorandum of understanding incorporated into the PROSPECTUS;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Rockingham Planning Commissions adopts the PROSPECTUS dated October 10, 2007; and as amended.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution, adopted at legally convened meeting of the Rockingham Planning Commission held on the following date:

For Rockingham Planning Commission

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Theodore Tocci  
Chair

For New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Jeff Brillhart, P.E.  
Acting Commissioner

**RECORD OF AMENDMENTS**

<b>Section (s)</b>		<b>Date Adopted Amendment</b>
ALL	Initial Adoption	April 9, 2008
<u>ALL</u>	<u>Public Comment Periods, FTA 5307 Requirements</u>	<u>January 15, 2012</u>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
CART	Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program
COAST	Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation
CTPP	Census Transportation Planning Package
DBE/WBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprises/Women's Business Enterprises
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GACIT	Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation
GIS	Geographic Information System
HPMS	Highway Performance Monitoring System
HPR	Highway Planning and Research Funds
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
KACTS	Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study
MVPC	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSA	Metropolitan Statistical Area
MVRTA	Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority
NHDES	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
NHDOT	New Hampshire Department of Transportation
PDA	Pease Development Authority
PL	Planning Funds Administered by FHWA
RPA	Regional Planning Agency
RPC	Rockingham Planning Commission
RTAP	Rural Technical Assistance Program
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – Legacy for Users (2005)
SIP	State Implementation Plan (for Air Quality Conformity)
SMRPC	Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission
SRPC	Strafford Regional Planning Commission
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TEA21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UNH	University of New Hampshire
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
UZA	Urbanized Area
3Cs	Continuing, Comprehensive, and Cooperative Transportation Planning

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Prospectus serves three important functions in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) regional transportation planning process. First, it provides an overview of the Federally mandated "3C" (comprehensive, continuing, cooperative) transportation planning process as defined by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of 1998 (TEA-21), and the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act – Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU). Second, it defines the roles and responsibilities of the various Federal, State and local agencies and entities involved in the MPO transportation planning process. Third, it documents the interagency agreements that have been or will be entered into between the MPO, the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST), the Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART), other MPOs who also provide support to these transit agencies, and the Air Resources Division of NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). These agreements further define the specific responsibilities and obligations of each agency.

The Prospectus is designed to serve as a common reference for all parties interested and involved in the regional transportation planning process in the RPC region of New Hampshire. It spells out how that process will be implemented by the Rockingham MPO.

The remainder of the document is divided into five sections, as follows:

- Designation & Description of the Rockingham MPO;
- Overview of the transportation planning process;
- Description of roles and responsibilities of the involved agencies;
- Summary of the required elements of transportation planning under ISTEA and 23 CFR 450C (the Federal rules for "Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming").
- Process and procedures to be used by the MPO and partner agencies in developing and amending the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program;
- Establishment of the public involvement procedures that will be used throughout the planning and programming process.

In addition, the Appendices to the document contain copies of draft Memoranda of Understanding which define specific agency obligations in carrying out the planning process.

## 2.0 ROCKINGHAM METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

### 2.1 Designation

On July 21, 2007 Governor John Lynch designated the Rockingham Planning Commission as the MPO responsible for implementing the 3C's transportation planning process within the Commission's designated study area. The MPO area includes the communities within the New Hampshire portions of the Portsmouth-Kittery NH-Maine urbanized area (UZA) and New Hampshire portion of the Boston urbanized area<sup>1</sup>. The Rockingham MPO is the result of a realignment and redesignation of the former Seacoast MPO and Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO. This redesignation became permissible under Federal MPO designation rules following the 2000 Census when the former Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester NH-ME urbanized area was split into the Dover-Rochester NH-ME UZA and the Portsmouth-Kittery NH-ME UZA. The subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> The Town of Pelham is within the New Hampshire portion of the Boston urbanized area but is covered by the Nashua MPO



redesignation was carried out in order to establish new MPO boundaries consistent with those of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission and Rockingham Planning Commission respectively, and thereby to consolidate transportation planning with the other regional planning functions of the two Commissions.

While the Rockingham MPO was newly established in 2007, the relevant parts of existing planning and programming documents and studies, including this Prospectus, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the regional travel demand model and air quality conformity analyses from the two predecessor MPOs have been inherited by the new MPO. These documents have served as the starting point for newly adopted versions which are aligned with the new MPO boundaries.

These study area and structure of the Rockingham MPO are further defined below. See Appendix D for further information and documentation pertaining to the MPO designation and the redesignation process.

## 2.2 Study Area

As noted above, the Rockingham MPO study area is the result of the combination of the communities included in the former Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO and the RPC portion of the Seacoast MPO. The two sets together represent the State-defined planning district of the Rockingham Planning Commission as it has existed since 1982. Figure 1 shows the Rockingham Planning Commission/Rockingham MPO Study Area and the associated urbanized and non-urbanized area communities.

Former Seacoast MPO communities (18): Brentwood, East Kingston, Epping, Exeter, Fremont, Greenland, Hampton, Hampton Falls, Kensington, New Castle, Newfields, Newington, North Hampton, Portsmouth, Rye, Seabrook, South Hampton, and Stratham.

Former Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO communities (9): Atkinson, Danville, Hampstead, Kingston, Newton, Plaistow, Salem, Sandown and Windham.

According to the urbanized area boundaries drawn subsequent to the 2000 Census, all of the communities within the former Salem-Plaistow-Windham MPO contain at least some portion of urbanized area. Of the 18 communities formerly in the Seacoast MPO, 10 contain urbanized areas: Portsmouth, New Castle, Newington, Greenland, Rye, North Hampton, Hampton, Hampton Falls, Seabrook and Exeter. The latter three of these are defined as part of the Boston area; the others are within the Portsmouth UZA area.

## 2.3 Representation and Structure

The Rockingham MPO consists of the MPO Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The Policy Committee consists of the regular appointed Commissioners to the RPC, an appointed representative from any non-member community, and representatives for other participating agencies as established in Table 1. The general structure of the MPO is shown in Figure 2. Functional responsibilities of these three committees and the other agencies and participants which play a role in the planning process are discussed below.

### A. MPO Policy Committee

The MPO Policy Committee is charged with providing policy level recommendations, approvals and endorsements of the Rockingham MPO concerning transportation issues that have a bearing on the MPO's continued, comprehensive, and coordinated transportation planning process. This includes but is not limited to activities such as:

1. Establishing the policy direction of the MPO through its adopted plans and policy statements;

2. In cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), establishing procedures and requirements whereby Section 112 (PL) and FTA Section 5303 (Metropolitan Transit Planning) funds will be allocated and made available.
3. Adopting and amending the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
4. Reviewing and commenting on individual projects, programs, plans, and reports relative to the adopted transportation policies and positions;
5. Reviewing and endorsing technical reports and studies prepared by the MPO staff or consultants;
6. Ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990 by making conformity determinations for MPO TIPs and MPO transportation plans, with assistance from NHDOT.
7. Adopting and/or revising plans, policies and findings recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee, including technical reports and memoranda;
8. Providing a mechanism to facilitate and broaden public involvement in transportation planning and decision making processes.

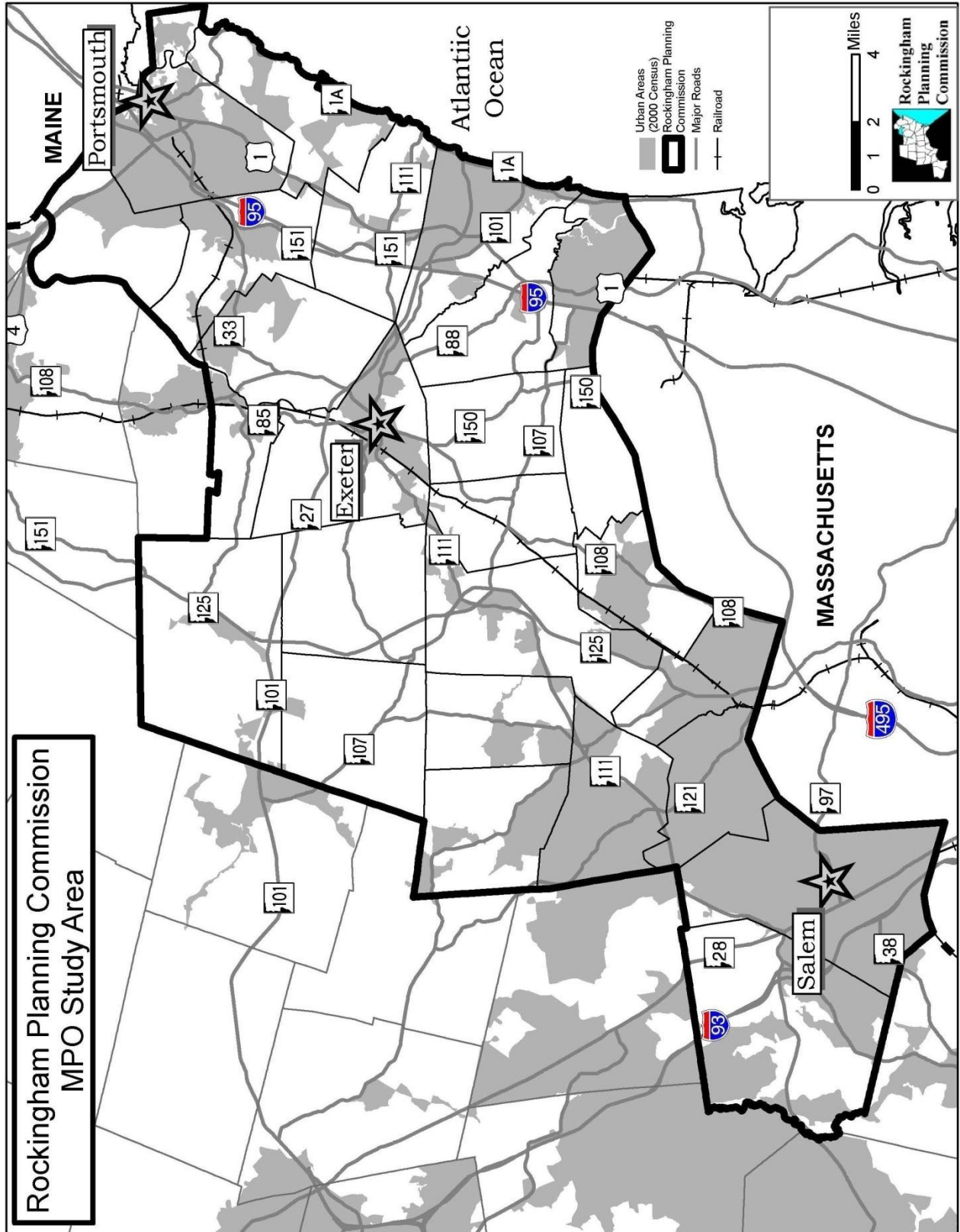
Voting membership on the Policy Committee includes Planning Commission board members (local representatives appointed in accordance with RSA 36:46) plus representatives appointed by the NHDOT, NHDES (Air Resources Division), COAST, CART, [UNH Wildcat Transit](#), the Pease Development Authority, and RPC non-member communities. Non-voting members include federal transportation agency representatives, neighboring MPOs/RPCs, non-public transportation providers, and other state and federal transportation officials and other participants. [Table 1](#) provides a detailed listing of the Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee membership broken down by voting and non-voting status.

**B. MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

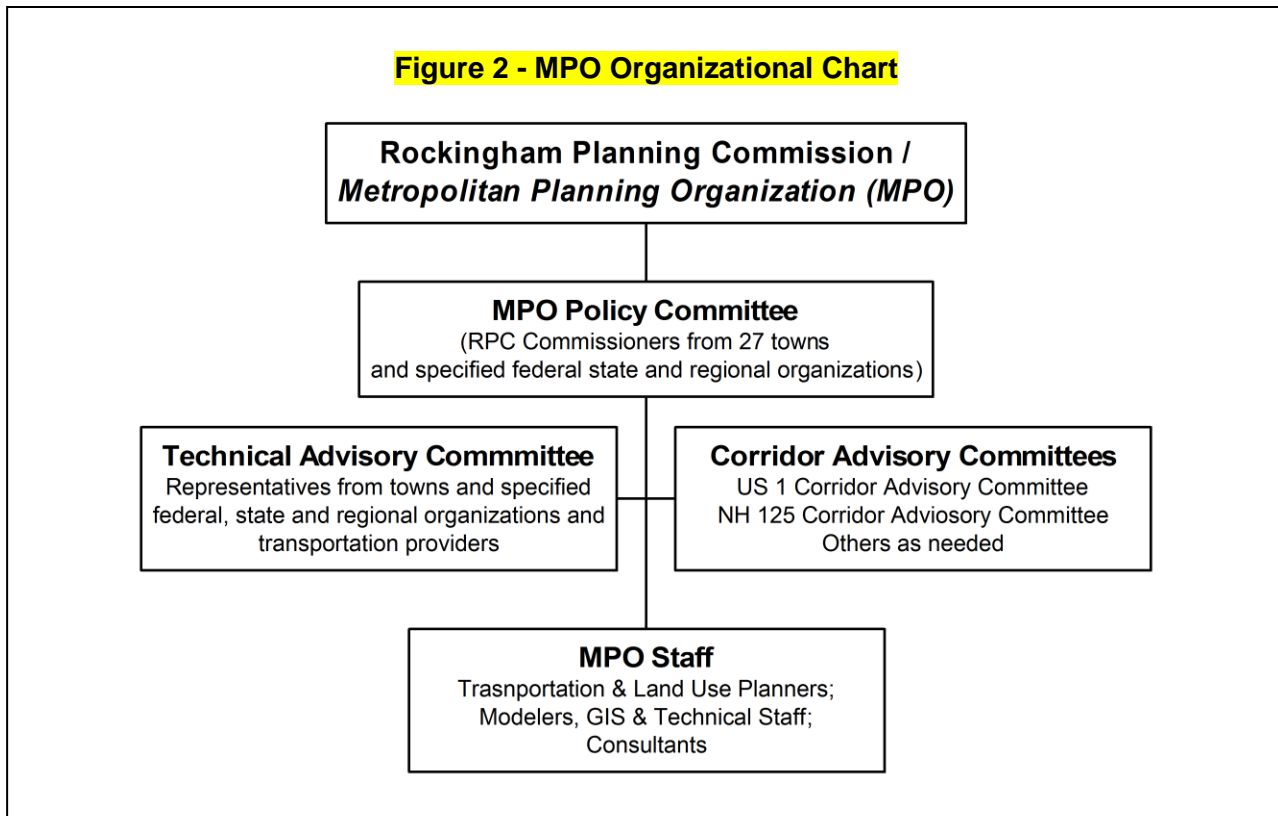
The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is established by the Policy Committee as a standing committee of the MPO. The main purposes of the TAC are (1) to provide technical guidance and recommendations to the RPC staff and the Policy Committee concerning transportation issues that have a bearing on the MPO's 3C's planning process, (2) to review major work products prepared by staff as part of the transportation planning program, (3) to provide a forum for individual members to bring transportation related issues and concerns to the attention of the MPO staff and Policy Committee, (4) to advise the staff and Policy Committee on major transportation issues in the region. The TAC does not establish policies for the MPO, but may make both technical and policy recommendations to the organization.

Membership on the MPO TAC includes representatives from the Study Area member and non-member communities plus RPC, NHDOT, NHDES, COAST, CART, [UNH Wildcat Transit](#), Pease Development Authority, and other state and federal transportation officials and other participants. See Table 1.

Figure 1 - MPO STUDY AREA



O:\4-multiple-year-Transportation\_Plan\4-2007RPC\4-maps



C. MPO Staff

The Rockingham MPO staff consists of the transportation planning and support staff of the Rockingham Planning Commission. The MPO staff has the major responsibility for the preparation and maintenance of the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and supporting documents, studies and other work products as may be defined in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Other agencies in the 3C's process provide input and/or have responsibilities for performing specific tasks as determined by memoranda of understanding (see Appendix B). Other responsibilities of the MPO staff include:

1. To compile a two-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) specifying the work to be accomplished, staff required and estimated costs for each participating agency;
2. To prepare and maintain the Long Range Transportation Plan for the MPO study area with a minimum 20-year planning horizon. Current MPO policy is to use a 25-year horizon;
3. To prepare and maintain the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the MPO study area;
4. To conduct research and prepare various planning studies as necessary to carry out the MPO planning process;
5. With the assistance of NHDOT, NHDES, and the other MPOs, prepare air quality conformity determinations for the Plans and TIPs adopted by the MPO to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990;

6. To provide technical assistance to municipalities in conducting local transportation studies and transportation planning;
7. To provide public information regarding the transportation planning program in the MPO study area; and
8. To ensure coordination of transportation planning with local, state and federal agencies various agencies.

### 3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

#### 3.1 The "3Cs" Process

The "3C" transportation planning process was jointly developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA, now the Federal Transit Administration - [FTA](#)) in the early 1970's to ensure that effective, coordinated multi-modal transportation planning and project implementation would be conducted on a nationwide basis. Large scale highway construction which occurred during the 1950s and 1960s often had serious negative and unanticipated impacts on the communities they were intended to serve, and on the environment. These problems were exacerbated by the fact that citizens were not adequately informed as to the consequences of these projects, nor afforded the ability to provide input into their identification or planning.

In response to these problems, the FHWA and FTA jointly developed the "3C" transportation planning process. It was designed to ensure that the process would be *Continuing*, meaning that both long and short term transportation issues are identified and considered on an ongoing basis; *Cooperative*, meaning that effective coordination among all public officials is maintained and that other public and private parties are included in the process; and *Comprehensive*, meaning that all modes of transportation, as well as non-transportation elements such as land use, economic and environmental issues were considered in the planning process.

To implement this policy, states were empowered to create Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), comprised of both local and state agencies and charged with implementing the 3Cs process and with insuring that a cooperative decision-making process was in place in urban areas.

The importance of MPO's was strengthened by ISTEA, and its successors, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA21) and the current Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Under these laws and their implementing Rules, MPO's have a greater role and responsibility in programming highway and transit projects. They direct MPOs to develop comprehensive, project specific and financially realistic ("constrained") transportation plans with a minimum 20 year horizon which forms the basis or framework for addressing transportation needs in the region.

The planning process involves a coordinated, cooperative and comprehensive effort among local, regional, state, and federal agencies. Section 4 of this document discusses the functional responsibilities of each agency involved in the process.

TABLE 1  
MPO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

<u>TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE</u>	<u>TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE</u>																												
<b>Voting Members</b>	<b>Voting Members</b>																												
NHDOT Planning Bureau or Commissioner designee NHDOT Rail & Transit or Commissioner designee NHDES - Air Resources Division Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART) Pease Development Authority University of New Hampshire – Wildcat Transit Municipalities**: (No. of reps determined by RSA 36:41)	NHDOT – Planning Bureau NHDOT – District VI NHDES - Air Resources Division COAST CART Pease Development Authority Rockingham Planning Commission (staff) Member Municipalities (1 per community) University of New Hampshire – Wildcat Transit																												
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Atkinson (2)</td> <td>Brentwood (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Danville (2)</td> <td>E. Kingston (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Epping (2)</td> <td>Exeter (3)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fremont (2)</td> <td>Greenland (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hampstead (2)</td> <td>Hampton (3)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hampton Falls (2)</td> <td>Kensington (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kingston (2)</td> <td>New Castle (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newfields (2)</td> <td>Newington (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newton (2)</td> <td>No. Hampton (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plaistow (2)</td> <td>Portsmouth (4)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rye (2)</td> <td>Salem (4)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sandown(2)</td> <td>Seabrook (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>So. Hampton (2)</td> <td>Stratham (2)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Windham (3)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Atkinson (2)	Brentwood (2)	Danville (2)	E. Kingston (2)	Epping (2)	Exeter (3)	Fremont (2)	Greenland (2)	Hampstead (2)	Hampton (3)	Hampton Falls (2)	Kensington (2)	Kingston (2)	New Castle (2)	Newfields (2)	Newington (2)	Newton (2)	No. Hampton (2)	Plaistow (2)	Portsmouth (4)	Rye (2)	Salem (4)	Sandown(2)	Seabrook (2)	So. Hampton (2)	Stratham (2)	Windham (3)		<b>Non-Voting Members</b>
Atkinson (2)	Brentwood (2)																												
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So. Hampton (2)	Stratham (2)																												
Windham (3)																													
** non dues paying-members to the RPC are entitled to 1 voting representative	Non-member Municipalities Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) NHDOT - Aeronautics Division NHDOT – Bureau of Rail and Transit New Hampshire Office of Energy & Planning Strafford Regional Planning Commission Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Nashua Regional Planning Commission Southern NH Planning Commission Maine Department of Transportation Massachusetts Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration Federal Railroad Administration Intercity Bus Operator – I-95 Corridor Intercity Bus Operator – I-93 Corridor Pan Am Railways																												
<b>Non-Voting Members</b>																													
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) NHDOT - Aeronautics Division NHDOT - District VI New Hampshire Office of Energy & Planning Strafford Regional Planning Commission Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Nashua Regional Planning Commission Southern NH Planning Commission Maine Department of Transportation Massachusetts Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration Federal Railroad Administration Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority																													

### 3.2 Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) provides detailed descriptions of those planning activities and tasks to be pursued over the course of two fiscal years, along with a budget to fund the work effort. The UPWP identifies for each task, a description of the proposed activities, the actual products which will be prepared, funding sources, functional responsibility of each agency, staffing required, and estimated staff costs. The document also identifies the major planning priorities facing the region and relates those priorities to the work program proposed.

Per the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Rules (23 CFR 450), the UPWP must be developed in cooperation with the State and with COAST and CART, the publicly designated transit operators in the region which are facilitating the development of a multi-modal transportation system for the region.

### 3.3 Long Range Transportation Plan

The Rockingham MPO Long Range Transportation Plan is the basis for identifying and implementing transportation needs and improvements in the region. It is intended to serve both as a policy setting document for transportation planning and the source from which specific transportation projects are identified, prioritized and selected for funding. The format of the Plan was substantially revised in 1994 following the passage of ISTEA to be project specific, to include an analysis of financial constraint, and to incorporate an air quality conformity determination, per requirement of the Metropolitan Planning Rules. TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU further modified the requirements for the Long Range Transportation Plan and adjustments have been made accordingly. SAFETEA-LU requires that the Long Range Plan be updated at least every four years and maintain a minimum 20 year planning horizon and an updated 20-year Long Range Project List. The Plan is subject to an air quality conformity Determination which is made at the time of adoption or amendment.

The RPC MPO Long Range Transportation Plan incorporates the Transportation Improvement Program as the short range project specific element of the Plan. While a part of the Plan, the TIP is amended more frequently and therefore is also maintained as a stand alone document.

The Long Range Plan is separate and distinct from the State 10 Year Plan, which is established and mandated under state law. To the extent possible, the project specific elements of the MPO Long range Plan are made consistent with the currently approved 10 Year Plan.

### 3.4 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a staged multi-year program of regional transportation improvement projects. As noted above, prior to 1995, the MPO maintained the TIP as a separate document. In order to streamline the planning and programming of transportation projects and to ensure consistency between short and long range project elements, the MPO has combined the Plan and TIP into one document, with the TIP becoming the short-range transportation improvement chapter of the Plan. The consolidated document is now referred to as the Long Range Plan and TIP. However, because the TIP is subject to frequent amendments it is maintained as a separate physical document.

The TIP must be updated and readopted at least every four years; however, for the purpose of synchronizing its development with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) the MPO's TIP is normally updated and readopted at least every biannually, in the even numbered years. The TIP portion of the Plan describes those financially-constrained projects which are proposed for implementation. The first two years of the TIP consist of the list of projects which have been selected for funding, as jointly agreed upon by the MPO and the NHDOT. Only those projects that are selected for the first three years are subject to the air quality determination (see Appendix D). In the normal course of events, as the first two years are

implemented, the financially-constrained projects listed in the third year become first year projects during the next biennial update.

No transportation project utilizing Federal transportation funds (Title 23 or FTA funds) may be implemented in the Rockingham MPO region unless it is part of an approved, conforming TIP.

### 3.5 Plan and Program Implementation

Implementation of the Transportation Plan occurs primarily through the construction, organization or other realization of the projects included in the short-range chapter of the Plan/TIP. It also occurs in other forms, including the adoption of policies by the municipalities and the regional planning commissions through the actions of cooperating agencies and organizations such as COAST, CART, PDA and the NHDOT. It is in the implementation process that the TIP links the plans of the MPO with changes in the transportation system. Simply put, the TIP is the short-range chapter of the Plan, and is the major implementing mechanism for the Plan. Other mechanisms include implementation of local plans, projects and land use regulation consistent with the plan, as well as implementation of regional and state level plans and projects recommended the plan.

### 3.6 Transportation Planning and Air Quality Conformity

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 placed requirements on the transportation planning process designed to ensure that transportation plans and programs developed by MPO's contribute to, and not detract from, the goal of reaching national ambient air quality standards. The law's key mechanism in this regard is to require that all Plans and TIPs adopted by the MPO be found, through a quantitative analysis of the specific projects proposed, to contribute to a reduction in mobile source emissions. All of the RPC communities are included within the Boston-Manchester-Portsmouth (Southeast) New Hampshire moderate ozone nonattainment area under the 8-hour ozone standard (see **Figure 3**). The NHDES, NHDOT and MPOs within the non-attainment area are working cooperatively to demonstrate attainment with the 8-hour Ozone standard by June of 2010 as required by the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality Attainment (SIP). This demonstration must be inclusive of growth in development and automobile VMT occurring in the region. Since mobile source (motor vehicles) accounts for between 55% and 60% of ozone related emissions in New Hampshire, it is expected that mobile source emissions reduction will carry a major portion of the burden in reaching attainment. For this reason, the impact of proposed short and long-term changes to the transportation system (as expressed in the Plan and TIP) must be carefully reviewed to ensure they will contribute to emissions reductions. Since the attainment area is shared across four MPOs, air quality conformity review process requires extensive coordination. This review and coordination between agencies occurs via the interagency consultation process which involves periodic meetings of representatives from FHWA, FTA, EPA, NHDOT, NHDES, MPOs and the RPCs to review and discuss projects to help determine air quality impacts, regional significance, and amendment type and status for the TIP.

Any changes that will potentially trigger conformity are discussed and explored by the participating agencies through the interagency consultation process allowing potential impacts to be identified early in the revision process.

If a proposed revision to the Long Range Plan or TIP will impact the existing air quality analysis, it is considered an amendment to the Plan or TIP and will require a new or amended air quality conformity determination. The amended TIP, Plan and affirmative conformity finding must be submitted to FHWA/FTA for approval. If the proposed revision to the STIP does not affect the existing air quality analysis, but triggers



a determination of conformity for other reasons, it must be explicitly reflected in the amendment with a statement that the finding of conformity is being based on the existing air quality analysis. The process and agency responsibilities to be adhered to in conformity determinations are specifically defined in the New Hampshire Transportation Conformity administrative rules (PART Env-A 1501 TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY).

#### **4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INVOLVED AGENCIES**

##### **4.1 Rockingham Planning Commission**

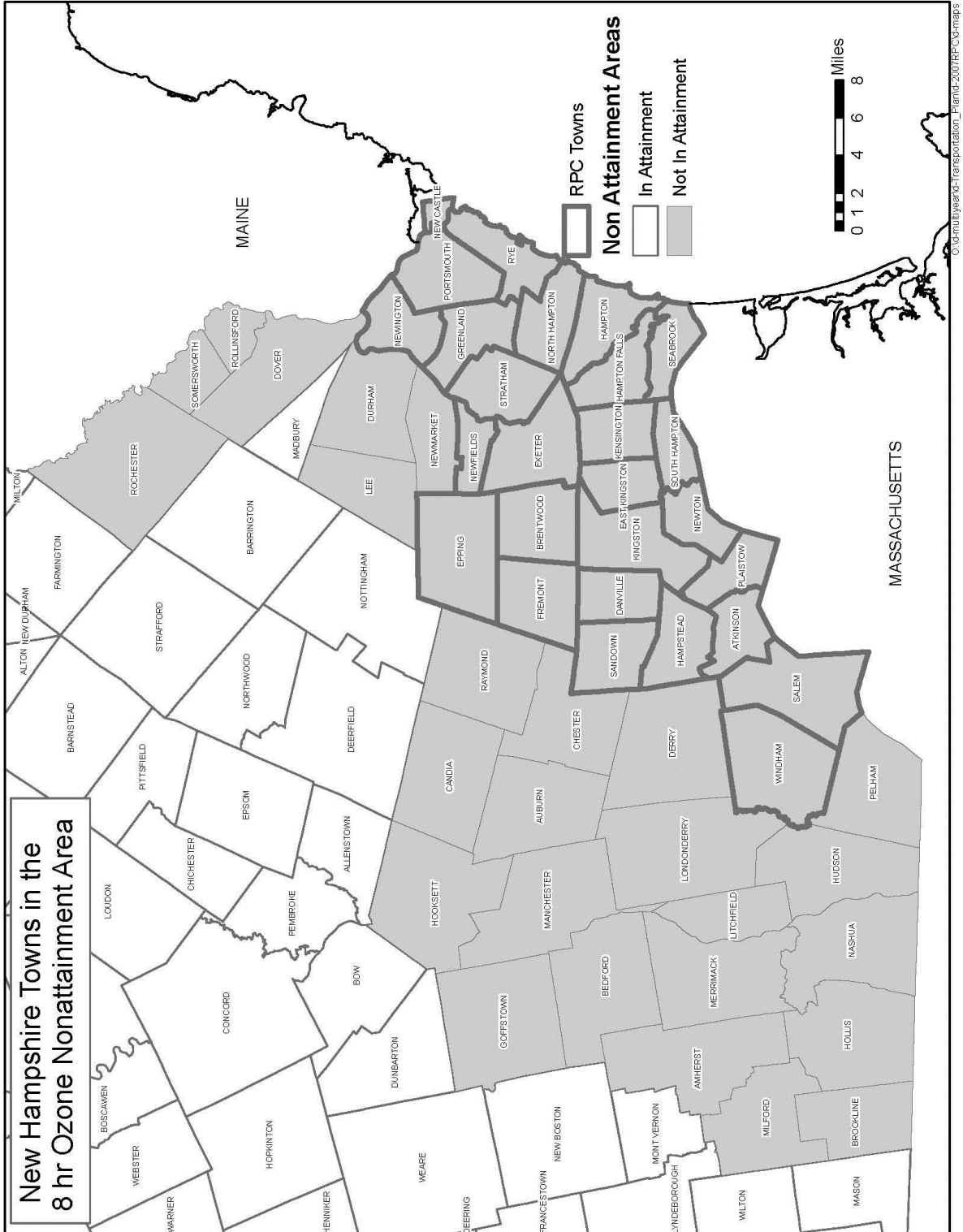
The Rockingham Planning Commission has been designated by the Governor as the MPO for its planning region and as such is responsible for carrying out the 3Cs metropolitan transportation planning process as described in Section 3 of this document. When acting as the MPO the Rockingham Planning Commission meets as the MPO Policy Committee and expands its membership to include additional members as described in Section 2 and listed in Table 1. The MPO Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving all MPO transportation related documents including the UPWP, this Prospectus, Long Range Transportation Plan and TIP, and special studies including corridor plans, transit plans and others.

In addition, the RPC acts a “host” to the MPO by providing organizational, administrative and professional planning staff to carryout. The Commission is reimbursed for 80% to 90% of these services from federal and state funds as determined by formula agreed to under the biennial UPWP agreement with the NHDOT. From 10% to 20% of the cost of these services are paid from local sources as raised through the Commission’s annual dues assessment to its member communities. Depending on size of community, between 35% and 65% of local dues assessed to each community is used for MPO support on a per capita basis.

##### **4.2 Local Communities**

Each of the communities within the Rockingham Planning Commission region are provided the opportunity to participate in the MPO transportation planning process through direct representation on the TAC and Policy Committees. The communities’ role on the TAC is to represent and bring forward local project level transportation needs and priorities and to provide technical guidance to the MPO staff. Their role on the Policy Committee is to review, evaluate and approve or disapprove the major MPO policy documents, principally the Prospectus, Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Plan and TIP, and Transportation Studies, and in so doing, represent the short and long-range needs of both their community and the region overall. Both TAC and Policy Committee members have the critical responsibility to ensure ongoing communication between the MPO and the local officials in the community. In exchange for these services and benefits, communities are assessed and expected to provide a share of the local match (from 10% to 20%) of the cost of carrying out the UPWP, including maintaining the MPO process. Communities which do not contribute their share of local match are afforded non-voting membership status on the TAC and a single voting representative on the Policy Committee.

### FIGURE 3 NH NON-ATTAINMENT AREAS



#### **4.3 NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)**

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) has statutory authority under New Hampshire law to plan, design, build, and maintain state highways and public transportation facilities of the state. The NHDOT maintains administrative oversight and funding of the responsibilities for MPO planning process, and the authority in regions outside of federally designated Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) to select eligible transportation projects for implementation through the STIP. In addition, the NHDOT is represented on the MPO Policy Committee and TAC and has a wide range of responsibilities with respect to the MPO transportation planning program including: infrastructure construction; data collection; air quality analysis support; preparation of special studies and providing advice and technical assistance to the MPO. The NHDOT also has specific responsibilities with respect to the MPO transportation planning process. These responsibilities are defined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Seacoast MPO and the NHDOT (See Appendix B).

#### **4.4 NHDES - Air Resources Division**

Through its representative on the Technical Advisory and Policy Committees, the Air Resources Division will apprise the MPO of the status of the State Implementation Plan and State regulations pertaining to air quality conformity. Additional responsibilities of the Air Resources Division include reviewing air quality conformity determinations prior to FHWA approval and providing comments on Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) projects and such other responsibilities as defined in the New Hampshire Transportation Conformity administrative rules (PART Env-A 1501 TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY – See **Appendix C**). In part to fulfill the intent of these rules the Division actively participates in the Interagency Consultation Group with regards to conformity issues. In addition, the Air Resources Division will work cooperatively with the MPO in identifying and developing transportation projects which improve air quality, including Transportation Control Measure (TCM) projects which may be considered in future revisions to the SIP. TCM projects that are incorporated in the SIP will be given a high priority for implementation by the MPO.

#### **4.5 Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST)**

COAST is the regional public transit operator in the eastern portion of the MPO region, as established under special purpose legislation which provides both fixed route and demand responsive transit service in the Seacoast area. The COAST service area consists of the urbanized areas of Stafford County as well as Portsmouth Urbanized area in Rockingham County. COAST is represented on the Rockingham MPO via both the TAC and the MPO Policy Committees. In addition, the RPC has a designated seat on the COAST Board of Directors. COAST is responsible for providing input, including the identification of transit needs and objectives, into the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan including its Transit Plan component and other relevant documents, as well as identification of shorter term project need for inclusion in the TIP. COAST is also responsible for providing operational and financial data for the MPO to use in developing its required certifications. With the passage of SAFETEA-LU, COAST is also responsible, in consultation with the MPO, for the development of a Human Services Transportation Plan for its service area. The MPO provides COAST with planning services as requested as identified and funded through the UPWP. The MPO is required to certify each year that COAST has the financial capacity to continue to operate at its planned level of service and that it is planning for capital replacement needs. The MPO must also annually certify that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Plan adopted by COAST is consistent with the MPO Transportation Plan. (See **Appendix B**)

#### **4.6 Cooperative Alliance for Regional Transportation (CART)**

CART is presently in the process of becoming designated regional public transit operator in the western portion of the MPO region. CART was established by special purpose legislation in 2005 and is expected to receive FTA certification as a designated recipient of FTA grant funds in 2008. CART operates as a

transportation brokerage agency for human services agencies in its service area as well as provider of demand-response transit services. Implementation of limited fixed route transit services is expected to begin in 2009. CART is represented on the MPO via both the TAC and the MPO Policy Committees. The RPC is also represented on the CART Board of Directors. Once CART is certified as a designated recipient, the roles and responsibilities of CART with respect to the MPO will in all other respects be the same as described for COAST and will be the subject of a memorandum of understanding between the MPO and CART.

#### **4.7 Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study/So. Maine Regional Planning Commission**

In 1982, the Governor of the State of Maine designated the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation Study (KACTS) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to be responsible together with the State for transportation planning in the Maine portion of the Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester urbanized area. KACTS is comprised of the following municipalities and agencies: Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick, Berwick, Lebanon, Southern Maine RPC (SMRPC), and Maine DOT. SMRPC staffs the MPO.

The SMRPC serves as a non-voting member of the MPO Policy Committee and TAC. Similarly, the RPC is included as non-voting members of the KACTS Policy and TAC committees in order to facilitate coordination across state boundaries in both highway and transit planning. In addition, Maine municipalities served by COAST are represented on the COAST board of directors to ensure good communications across state boundaries.

#### **4.8 Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)**

South of the MPO in the Merrimack Valley region in Massachusetts, the MPO consists of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA), the Mass. Department of Public Works (MDPW), and the Mass. Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC). This partnership is designed to ensure participation of communities, public transit providers and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the planning process.

As with SMRPC, the MVPC serves as a non-voting member of the Rockingham MPO Policy Committee and TAC, and has the responsibility to represent their MPO's transportation needs and priorities and to provide overall technical and policy level guidance to the MPO staff. It is the intent of both MPO's to coordinate their transportation planning activities on an ongoing basis.

#### **4.9 New Hampshire MPOs (NRPC, SNHPC, SRPC/SMPO)**

In addition to the adjoining MPOs in Massachusetts and Maine, the Rockingham MPO is bounded by three MPOs in New Hampshire: the Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization (SMPO) to the north, the Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC) to west and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) to the southwest. Together the four agencies constitute all of the MPOs in the state; and in addition they encompass the entire New Hampshire non-attainment area. As with SMRPC and MVPC, the NRPC, SNHPC and SMPO each have non-voting representation on the Rockingham MPO Policy Committee and TAC and in those venues each has the opportunity to apprise the MPO, and vice versa, of transportation priorities in their respective regions and to coordinate inter-regional transportation projects. It is the intent of the New Hampshire MPOs to coordinate their transportation planning activities on an ongoing basis. To encourage this coordination, the staffs of the MPOs meet from time to time to share information and coordinate their activities in such areas as modeling, financial constraint, long range plan and TIP development, corridor planning and other matters.

#### 4.10 Pease Development Authority (Including former NH Port authority)

The Pease Development Authority (PDA) was created by an act of the state legislature in June of 1990 to "...implement the Pease Comprehensive Redevelopment Plan." State and local interests are represented on the authority's board of directors, a policy-making body which consists of seven members.

The PDA is responsible for enhancing the economic viability of the New Hampshire's seacoast region by bringing industry and jobs to the former Pease Air Force Base, now called the Pease International Trade Port. This area is generally bound by the New Hampshire and Maine state border to the east, Exit 6 of the Spaulding Turnpike and the Scammell Bridge on Route 4 to the north, the easterly shore of the Great Bay to the west and Interstate 95 and the U.S. 1 Bypass to the south. The Tradeport is a major intermodal hub in the metropolitan area, having access to I-95, a major airport facility, a rail line (inactive) and a seaport. The PDA is guided by an overall mission, which is "...To capitalize on the unique opportunities the Pease facility affords for economic benefit, while preserving New Hampshire's quality of life and environment."

Because of the Tradeport's significance as both a provider and consumer of transportation facilities, the Pease Development Authority has been included in the MPO process since the early 1990s. Throughout 1992-93, MPO staff worked closely with a consultant on the development of a Pease Surface Transportation Master Plan and travel demand model. The Study provided transportation planning and preliminary engineering recommendations to support the development of the Pease International Trade Port. It has been update twice since that time and the MPO has been invited to provide input in each case.

The Pease Development Authority has voting representation on both the Rockingham MPO Policy and Technical Advisory Committees.

The Port of New Hampshire is located on the Piscataqua River along the Maine state border. It is the only deep water, year-round, ice free port in the United States north of Boston, and has served as a gateway for marine transportation and shipping for over 300 years. The Port extends from the mouth of the Portsmouth Harbor to Newington Point at the General Sullivan Bridge. With close proximity to Interstate 95 and direct service from rail lines and the Pease International Tradeport, it has large potential as an intermodal link for shipping and receiving international cargo. The former New Hampshire State Port Authority was administratively merged into the Pease Development Authority in 2001. It presently operates as a Division of Ports and Harbors within the PDA. The Port Authority has a broad mission related to the development and management of the state's tidal waters including: Harbor Management; Port Development; Port Marketing and Trade Development; and Foreign Trade Zone Operation. The Division has representation on the MPO Policy and Technical Advisory Committees through the Pease Development Authority.

Representation on the MPO enables the PDA to represent the transportation and intermodal facility needs and priorities of both the Tradeport and the Port and to provide guidance to the MPO in the development of the Long Range Plan and TIP.

#### 4.11 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have non-voting representation on the Technical Advisory and Policy Committees. Their responsibilities include: (1) providing funds (FHWA PL and FTA Section 5303 planning funds), through the NHDOT, to support of the 3Cs transportation planning process; (2) to provide input and advice to the MPO staff, TAC and Policy Committees through attendance at MPO meeting and through the review and comment on work products; (3) providing guidance regarding interpretation and fulfillment of federal metropolitan transportation planning rules and requirements; and (4) to make the joint air quality conformity findings of the Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. The FHWA actively participates and takes the lead in coordinating meetings of the Interagency Consultation Group.

#### **4.12 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the responsibility to comment on the technical merits of the air quality conformity determination made for the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program and to review the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects recommended for implementation in the region. The EPA actively participates in coordinating meetings of the NH Interagency Consultation Group.

#### **4.13 University of New Hampshire - Durham**

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) is a significant provider of public transportation services in the Seacoast region through the UNH Wildcat Transit service and because of this was an active participant in the former Seacoast MPO process, with representation on the Policy and TAC committees. While Wildcat has a much smaller service base in the Rockingham MPO area (Portsmouth and Newington), because UNH also manages the Durham rail station on Amtrak's Portland-Boston Downeaster service and has considered possible future transit connections in the NH 125 corridor, the new MPO Policy and TAC structure maintains voting membership for UNH. This will be reevaluated from time to time based on the University's continued interest in participating. As a non-municipality, UNH plays a role similar to other agencies listed in this section. Representation on the MPO acknowledges the University's effect on land use and travel demand of the region, and well as its role as an existing transit provider.

### **5.0 DEVELOPMENT AND AMENDMENT OF THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

#### **5.1 Background**

The MPO transportation planning process consists of a number of interrelated elements and actions. The purpose of this section is to describe these and explain how the MPO will develop and amend the Transportation Plan and TIP.

The core elements of the planning process are as they have been in the past: development and update of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and a short range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region. Integral to both of these are three other key elements: (1) the determination of conformity for both the Plan and the TIP to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Air Quality; (2) the consideration of financial constraints in the development of the Plan and TIP, and (3) the use of an effective public involvement process throughout the development stages of the Plan and TIP.

The requirements for developing Plans and TIPs are defined by SAFETEA-LU and its implementing rules (Metropolitan Planning Rules - 23 CFR 450; Statewide Planning Rules - 23 CFR 500, and EPA Conformity Rules - 40 CFR 51). In particular, key changes have been made regarding the content and interrelationship of the Transportation Plan and TIP such that the Transportation Plan is now intrinsic to the MPO's planning efforts and the resulting TIP. SAFETEA-LU has also brought about significant changes in terms of timelines for Plan and TIP development, public involvement requirements, and coordination and consultation requirements with other regional and state agencies in the development MPO planning documents.

The MPO implements and maintains a transportation planning process based on the provisions of 23 CFR Part 450 and related requirements. This process addresses the overall transportation planning goals established in ISTEA and TEA21 (The "7 Factors") and further revised under SAFETEA-LU, and includes a public involvement component consistent and includes full documentation of the region's Transportation Plan, TIP and related elements.

## 5.2 Development of the Long Range Transportation Plan

### 5.2.1 Plan Requirements

The requirements for the development of a Transportation Plan are spelled out in section 450.306 of the Metropolitan Planning Rules (23 CFR 450). Some of the key requirements for the Transportation Plan that have evolved with the passage of ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU, as well as the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1991 are the following:

- the Plan must have a horizon **year of not less than 20 years** from the date of adoption;
- the Plan must be **project specific and financially constrained**, not merely a goal oriented plan, however it may also include a vision element and;
- the Plan must include a **financial plan** component which identifies the amount of funding reasonably expected to be available to implement the projects identified;
- the Plan must **conform** to the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality (SIP), based on a **quantitative analysis** of the combined affect of implementing the projects in the Plan;
- the Plan must address each of the applicable **SAFETEA-LU Required Elements ("8 Factors")** (See listing in Appendix A);
- the Plan must include the projected demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area for the period of the transportation plan;
- the Plan must show existing and proposed transportation facilities that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system; it must be **consistent with ITS architectures** defined for the state or region;
- the Plan must be developed in **consultation with state and local agencies** for environmental protection, wildlife management, land management, and historic preservation as well as Tribal governments, as applicable;
- the Plan should refer directly to the goals and objectives of the **Strategic Highway Safety Plan**;
- the Plan must be coordinated with and consistent with the **Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan** for the region;
- the Plan must include a discussion of the types and location of potential **environmental mitigation activities**;
- the Plan must address operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities, relieve congestion, and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods;
- the Plan must include both **long-range and short-range strategies** and actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system;
- the Plan must be **reviewed and updated at least every four years** (in non-attainment and maintained areas); and

- the Plan must be developed with early and effective opportunities for **public participation** (See Section 7.0).

Other requirements call for the Plan to: include projections of transportation demand for various modes over the period of the Plan using up-to-date land use and population forecasts and travel demand modeling systems; identify adopted (and planned) congestion management strategies; identify (and plan for) pedestrian and bicycle facilities; incorporate relevant information from the State's six transportation management systems if developed by the NHDOT (congestion, pavement, bridge, safety, public transportation and intermodal facilities); assess capital investment and operational needs to preserve and make optimum use of existing transportation facilities; include a multimodal evaluation of the affect of the overall Plan, especially regarding proposed major transportation investments; include consideration of the region's long-range land use, economic development and other related plans.

In order to accommodate the broad requirements of the Plan in relation to staffing and resources of the MPO, the Plan was developed and maintained in several components so as to allow the phasing of its development. The major components of the Plan include, but are not limited to:

- goals and policies;
- demographics and forecasts;
- highways and bridges
- public transportation
- bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- travel demand management
- freight transportation
- land use and transportation,
- long and short range project priorities.

The required financial and conformity analyses are integral to the plan as well.

### 5.2.2 Transportation Plan and MPO Study Area

The Transportation Plan is required to cover the defined study area of the MPO. The study area ordinarily covers the "metropolitan area" or urbanized area. However, it must also cover the non-attainment area within the MPO. Since all communities in the RPC are classified within the Southern New Hampshire 8 hour non-attainment area, the 27 town RPC region and the MPO study area are one in the same. See Figure 1.

### 5.2.3 Financial Plan

The financial plan component of the overall Plan must demonstrate that proposed transportation improvements are consistent with available and projected sources of revenue over the 20 year planning period. The Plan therefore includes an analysis which compares existing and projected revenue sources which are reasonably expected, with the estimated costs of constructing, acquiring, and operating the total transportation system over the period of the plan (20 years). Where shortfalls are projected to exist, proposed new sources are identified or the Plan was modified to eliminate expenditures.

Because New Hampshire does not at this time provide fixed or formula based sub-state allocations for any portion of STP funds (with the exception of PL funds for planning), the MPO is not in the position to make an independent determination of fiscal constraint. Instead, the MPO relies on information of expected project expenditures from the 10 year Plan and supplements this information with internally generated estimates based upon historical share of expenditures in the region. In order to fulfill the requirements of SAFETEA-LU (23 CFR 450 324(g)(10) for the development of financial plans, we anticipate working more closely with



the NHDOT, COAST, CART and other NH MPOs to develop common methods and procedures for preparing the assumptions necessary for the financial plan.

Because the MPO is a non-attainment area, the financial plan carries an additional requirement to address specific financial strategies that may be required to ensure the implementation of projects and programs necessary to reach air quality attainment.

#### 5.2.4 Project-Specific Requirements

Regarding the requirement that Transportation Plans be "project specific," the metropolitan planning rules specify that the Plan must include sufficient detail regarding the design concept and scope of on projects to permit conformity determination under the EPA conformity regulations (40 CFR 51). In general, this means that a design concept must be identified for each project. Also, in order to fulfill the financial planning requirements, the concept must be identified in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates.

#### 5.2.5 Plan Development Schedule

In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, the MPO must review and update the transportation plan at least every four (4) years in air quality non-attainment (and maintenance) areas. Updates must, at a minimum confirm the validity and consistency of the Plan's major assumptions regarding forecasted land use and transportation assumptions for the region. To maintain consistency with the State's two year update cycle of the 10 Year Plan, it is anticipated that the MPO will as needed update the project-specific aspects of the Plan every two years. Such shorter term updates will be timed so as to occur concurrently with the biennial TIP development process (See Section 5.3).

### 5.3 **Development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

#### 5.3.1 TIP Requirements

As previously noted, the Transportation Improvement Program is closely integrated with the Long Range Transportation Plan, and serves as the short range "capital improvements plan" for the Long range Plan. The content of the TIP is drawn from the specific recommendations of the Plan.

The requirements of TIP development are spelled out in [23 CFR](#) Sections 450.324-330 of the Metropolitan Planning Rules. The key requirements for both the development process and content are summarized as follows:

- TIP development must occur as part of the 3Cs process, and in cooperation with the State and public transit operators.
- The TIP must be updated at least every two years and approved by the MPO Policy Committee and the Governor; the update schedule must be compatible with the STIP development/approval process.
- The TIP must be developed with early and effective opportunities for public involvement, and must include at least one formal public meeting (See Section 6.0 for specific requirements);
- The TIP must cover a period of not less than three years; additional years may be included, but only if they include information about cost, funding sources and priority. Within the first three years, the TIP must prioritize projects at least by year;
- If Transportation Control Measure (TCM) projects become part of the NH SIP in the future, the

TIP must give priority to these projects to ensure their timely implementation;

- The TIP must be financially constrained and include a financial plan component which identifies which projects can be implemented with existing sources and which will utilize proposed sources, if any;
- The TIP may only include projects that are consistent with the transportation plan; and
- The TIP must include all transportation projects to be implemented within the MPO study area that are proposed for funding under title 23 USC and the Federal Transit Act.

### 5.3.2 TIP Content (23 CFR 450.324)

The TIP must include the following project types:

- All capital and non-capital transportation projects within the MPO study area proposed for federal funding on Title 23 or the Federal Transit Act, including TE, CMAQ, safety, trails, and bicycle and pedestrian projects;
- Only projects that are consistent with (interpreted to mean contained within) the project-specific recommendations of the transportation plan; and
- All *regionally significant* transportation projects for which:
  - FHWA or FTA approval is required, regardless of funding source;
  - For informational purposes and air quality analysis, any project proposed to be funded with federal funds; and
  - For informational purposes and for air quality analysis, any project to be funded with non-federal funds.

For projects included in the TIP, descriptive information is included which identifies: project cost; federal funding to be used in each programmed year, source of funding, both federal and other; the funding recipient and agency responsible for implementation; whether or not the project is a TCM identified in the NHSIP; a project which implements ADA Paratransit plans. The information presented will be of sufficient detail, in terms of project design, scope and timing to conduct quantitative air quality analysis in accordance with EPA conformity requirements (40 CFR 51).

The TIP may only include a project, or phase of a project, if full funding of that project or phase is reasonably anticipated to be available within the time period contemplated for completion of the project or phase.

### 5.3.3 Financial Plan

The financial plan component of the TIP must demonstrate that the TIP is **financially constrained**, by year. The financial plan for the TIP is based on information provided by the NHDOT (and by COAST and CART for transit components of the TIP) indicating funds, by funding source and category, that are reasonably expected to be available and committed for the projects in the TIP for each year of the four year program.

Based on the results of the financial analysis, projects for which operating and construction funds cannot be reasonably expected to be available must be omitted. Funding sources to be considered include Title 23, FTA, Transportation Enhancement (TE) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), STP Flexible Funds,

local and State sources, and private sector sources. Proposed new funding sources are not considered unless there is a reasonable expectation that the funds will be available to implement the projects.

#### 5.3.4 Project Selection Criteria

Prior to the first full TIP update cycle following the release of the final Metropolitan Planning Rules, the MPO developed and adopted explicit TIP selection criteria. The criteria identify the rational basis by which the MPO prioritizes projects for Plan/TIP selection. The adoption or amendment to the selection criteria will be made subject to a public involvement process as identified in Section 6.4.2 of this document.

#### 5.3.5 Relationship to STIP

The Metropolitan Planning Rules require that the TIP, if adopted by the MPO and approved by the Governor, be included without modification in the State TIP (STIP). Prior to inclusion in the STIP, the FTA and FHWA must find that TIP conforms to the NH State Implementation Plan (SIP) for Air Quality. Under the State's proposed TIP/STIP development process, the NHDOT receives an adopted draft TIP which becomes subject to revision by the NHDOT, the Governor, Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), and the State Legislature. Subsequent to final action by the Legislature, the MPO will be asked to adopt a final TIP which may include changes to the adopted draft not considered or approved by the MPO. The MPO will review the final draft for such changes and adopt it, if the determination is made that:

1. The TIP continues to conform with NH SIP;
2. The TIP remains financially constrained;
3. The projects selected are consistent with and supported by the MPO project selection criteria; and
4. The TIP reflects the project specific content of the adopted MPO Transportation Plan and the region's transportation improvement priorities. (See also 5.2.8 - TIP Development Schedule and Process)

#### 5.3.6 FHWA and FTA Required Actions on the TIP

The MPO, independently of the State, will forward copies of the TIP following their adoption or amendment by the Policy Committee and approval by the Governor. Final approval of the TIP will be contingent on joint FHWA/FTA findings which affirm that:

1. The TIP is based on the 3Cs transportation process carried out jointly by the MPO, State and transit operators; and
2. The TIP conforms with the adopted NH SIP, and that project priority has been given to the timely implementation of TCMs which may be incorporated in the SIP in the future.

### 5.3.7 Monitoring Progress in Implementation; Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

The TIP document prepared by the MPO will identify major projects that have been significantly delayed and reasons for those delays to the extent that they can be determined. In addition, on an annual basis the MPO will develop a listing of projects for which FHWA and FTA funds (Title 23 and 49) were obligated in the preceding program year. This listing will be based on information supplied by the NHDOT, contain similar project information as found in the TIP, and will be published on the MPO website, with public notice provided in accordance with the MPO public participation process (See Section 7).

### 5.3.8 TIP Development Schedule and Process

TIP development happens on a two year cycle, though changes may be made to the TIP outside of the regular development/adoption cycle, and are referred to as **TIP Amendments**. As previously noted, because TIP projects shown for the first three years must be drawn from the project specific recommendations of the Plan, the Plan and TIP were developed concurrently, with the TIP being the short-range recommendations chapter of the Plan.

Table 2 below outlines the sequence of events that are expected to occur during the development of the biennial TIP. The dates shown are contingent and dependent on the required information and precedents being in-place in the expected timeframe. (See also Figure 4)

## 5.4 **Plan and TIP Amendments**

The adopted Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program may be modified during the interim period between biennial updates, provided that the modifications are consistent with applicable Metropolitan Planning and SIP Conformity rules. Interim period modifications to the Plan or TIP shall be termed **amendments**. Since the TIP contains projects that are drawn from the Plan and must remain fully consistent with the Plan, amendments to the TIP may also incorporate a parallel amendment to the project specific elements of the Plan.

In December 2007, the NHDOT, MPOs NHDES, FHWA and FTA jointly developed new guidelines and procedures for processing TIP amendments entitled Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): Revision Procedures (dated February, 22, 2008). The relevant sections of these procedures are incorporated in **Section 6** of this Prospectus and supersede the previous amendment procedures used by the MPO.

## 5.5 **Air Quality Conformity Determinations**

As previously described in Section 3.6, the MPO may not adopt or amend a Plan or TIP that does not conform with the State's adopted plan for reaching air quality attainment -- the State Implementation Plan (SIP). In general, to be conforming, the Plan and TIP must not cause new air quality violations or worsen existing violations, and must not exceed the non-attainment area budget for mobile source emissions (for VOCs or NOx) established in the approved State Implementation Plan for Air Quality Attainment (SIP).

All amendments to the Plan and TIP that involve changes to "non-exempt" surface transportation projects are subject to quantitative conformity determinations using project level information. Conformity emissions analysis must be made for the entire non-attainment area and include all mobile source emissions, not limited to the emissions for individual projects. Because the New Hampshire non-attainment area covers parts or all of four MPOs, conformity determinations are not determined individually by MPO but through a coordinated process involving all MPOs, the NHDOT and NHDES -- Air Resources Division. As previously described, the process and agency responsibilities to be adhered to in conformity determinations are specifically defined in the New Hampshire Transportation Conformity administrative rules (PART Env-A

1501 TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY).

**TABLE 2  
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

**YEAR ONE** *(even-numbered years)*

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Event/Action</b>
September	MPO publishes public notice of intent to update the Plan and TIP. MPO requests financial planning information from NHDOT (See Section 7.4.7 regarding notice).
September-October	MPO distributes current project selection criteria and procedures and solicits projects for the TIP from participating agencies and MPO communities regarding transportation needs in the region. MPO solicits interested parties to participate in public advisory committee if one is to be established (See Section 7.4.13).
October-January	MPO staff prepares Draft Plan and TIP, based on agency advisory committee and public input and on results from travel demand model analyses, air quality analyses, management system inputs, and financial assumptions. Includes draft air quality conformity determination. Public informational meetings held during draft development - per Section 7.4.8.
January	MPO Distributes Draft Plan and TIP Update to TAC for review and endorsement at February meeting.
February	MPO publishes/posts notice of availability of draft document and public hearing for 30-day public comment period; distributes copies of draft widely in the region (See Section 7.5.1); and prepares and distributes summary materials to interested parties.  TAC reviews/endorsees Draft or recommends revisions. (Additional TAC meetings if required).
March	Policy Committee holds public hearing on Draft Plan and TIP to present the document(s) and take public input. At close of public comment period, MPO staff review public input and prepare summary of comments and Final TIP.  Policy Committee holds meeting at end of month to adopt revised Plan and TIP. If further revisions are required, Policy Committee schedules subsequent meeting at which TIP can be adopted.

**TABLE 2 - continued**  
**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

**YEAR TWO** (*odd-numbered years*)

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Event/Action</b>
April 1 - 15	Adopted TIP is submitted to NHDOT for draft STIP development.
April – July	NHDOT develops updated State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) from MPO/RPA draft TIPs; submission to GACIT.
July - December	GACIT holds hearings on STIP and submits final version to Governor.
January 15	Governor submits STIP, with amendments if any, to Legislature.
June 1	Legislature passes and submits version of STIP to NHDOT.
June - Weeks 1&2	NHDOT divides STIP by MPO or region and submits to MPO for final TIP endorsement.
	MPO analyzes Rockingham MPO component of STIP against MPO approved Draft Plan and TIP, and reviews it to determine consistency with the Plan and conformity with the SIP.
June - Weeks 3&4	MPO distributes STIP-derived MPO TIP to TAC and publishes/posts notice of availability of revised plan(s); start of public comment period.
July	TAC meets to endorse revised TIP.
July	Comment period closes
August	MPO Policy Committee meets to adopt revised Final TIP and if adopted submits to NHDOT and to FHWA/FTA.

## 6.0 TIP AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

### 6.1 Overview

The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), through cooperation and coordination with the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and the rural Regional Planning Commissions (RPC), maintains the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). To comply with Federal rules the MPO area Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) and the NHDOT STIP must be consistent with one another. The approved STIP is frequently revised to reflect changes in project status; therefore, before the STIP is revised to reflect a project change in an MPO area, the MPO TIP must first be revised. Changes in project schedules, funding needs, and project scopes require revising the approved STIP.

These changes may be initiated by the NHDOT, MPO, or public transit agency in the region. Depending upon their significance and complexity, the completion of the revision will require coordination from several agencies and Federal approval. To assist with coordinating the process of TIP and STIP revisions and amendments, an interagency consultation process has been established which includes the NHDOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), MPOs and RPCs. The process is intended to address and coordinate issues relating to MPO public comments and participation periods, statewide comment periods, financial constraint and air quality conformity determinations.

The procedure for formally amending the MPO TIP and the New Hampshire STIP differs depending on the nature of the proposed amendment. Through Interagency Consultation, criteria have been developed describing the thresholds and triggers that will define what type of action is required to make a revision to the TIP or STIP **as well as the length of any public comment period required**. As described in 23 CFR 450 there are two types of revisions to an approved TIP: an **Amendment** and an **Administrative Modification**. Following are the thresholds or events that trigger the necessity for an amendment and the provisions that would allow for an administrative modification. A third category of change, **Information Only**, has been included in this process to facilitate the exchange of information and an expedited process when specific minor changes are made to projects within the STIP. To help ensure that the STIP remains financially constrained as revisions are made, the NHDOT will be responsible for balancing the net effect of project changes and provide supporting financial constraint documentation.

#### 6.1.1 Definitions

*Administrative Modification:* The middle tier of a revision requiring interagency consultation, approval by NHDOT and/or by a designee of the MPO, and notification of FHWA/FTA. Consistent with the definitions included in 23 CFR 450.104, administrative modifications are classified as minor revisions.

*Air Quality Analysis:* The process to identify and document the anticipated effects of a project on air quality. An analysis is conducted for projects in non-attainment or maintenance areas. Project changes that could affect an analysis include, but are not limited to, any that impact capacity, congestion, travel speeds, project areas or the exempt status of a project. Any change to an analysis requires an Amendment and a new Conformity Determination.

*Air Quality Conformity Determination:* Required under federal rules for areas that are classified as non-attainment or in maintenance of national ambient air quality standards. The Determination certifies that the area meets criteria pollution limits defined in the NH Statewide Implementation Plan.

*Amendment:* The highest tier of a revision requiring a **10 to 30 day** public comment period, interagency consultation, adoption by NHDOT and/or approval by the MPO, approval by FHWA/FTA, and in non-attainment or maintenance areas, a finding of conformity. Consistent with the definitions

included in 23 CFR 450.104, amendments are classified as major revisions.

*Exempt Status:* A classification, Exempt or Not Exempt, given to all projects within non-attainment or maintenance areas. Project classifications are determined through Interagency Consultation. The project status is reported in the STIP under the heading CAA Code. For Exempt projects, a numeric code is included which is associated with the federal list of exempt activities.

*Expedited Project Selection Procedures:* A process outlined in federal rules that permits a change in the years of implementation of a project, or phase of a project, provided that the original date(s) and revised date(s) were contained in an approved STIP. For the urban areas of a state, each MPO, if they wish to utilize these expedited procedures, must adopt them as part of their prospectus. Under these procedures, this type of change falls into the Information Only tier of revision.

*Illustrative Projects:* These are projects that are unofficially included in the STIP in anticipation of the receipt of federal funds. Until the projects are officially added, either through an Amendment or an Administrative Modification, they are not included in financial constraint information. For several federal programs, including earmarks and other special categories, funds are often not obligated until near the end of the fiscal year creating situations where, if a traditional amendment was needed, the funds could not be spent until the next fiscal year and would likely require an additional amendment.

*Information Only:* The lowest tier of a revision requiring interagency consultation and approval by NHDOT and/or by a designee of the MPO. Consistent with the definitions included in 23 CFR 450.104, information only revisions are classified as minor revisions.

*Phase:* A component of a project defined as Preliminary Engineering (P), Right of Way (R), or Construction (C) programmed with a dollar amount and a fiscal year.

*Revision:* Any change to a project within the STIP.

*Regionally Significant:* A determination discussed through interagency consultation, made by the MPO or the State, and documented in a TIP, Conformity Document, and/or other Plan. Federal rules generally define regionally significant projects to include those that serve regional transportation needs, specifically identifying principal arterials. Most revisions made to a designated Regionally Significant project will qualify as Amendments. Work completed on the Interstate, Turnpike, or NHS would typically qualify as regionally significant.

*STIP Update:* A process undertaken on a biennial basis in NH to publish a new STIP that includes all relevant project information for a period of 4 years.

## 6.2 Decision Thresholds

The following thresholds were established by NHDOT in consultation with the MPO and rural RPCs, FHWA, FTA, EPA, and NHDES. The intent of setting these thresholds is to establish a transparent and consistent decision making process for how changes to projects within the STIP will be managed.

For changes to the cost of projects, a sliding scale is outlined in **Table 3** to determine which category of revision is required. All measurements for these cost changes will be made from the last approved STIP to account for incremental changes.

### 6.2.1 Amendment

- Any change to a project that impacts the Air Quality Analysis used for the current Conformity Determination. Primarily affects Not Exempt projects or phase of a project;



- Adding or removing a regionally significant or Not Exempt project or phase of a project;
- Adding or removing a federally funded project or phase of a project;
- Making a change in the scope of work of a project that uses state or federal funds or of any regionally significant projects regardless of the funding source;
- A significant change in the total cost of a project (Table 3);
- A change in the fiscal year of any phase of a project in areas where expedited project selection procedures have not been adopted.

#### 6.2.2 Administrative Modification

- A moderate change in the total cost of a project (Table 3);
- Combining or separating two or more projects that are part of an approved TIP;
- Combining or separating phases within a project that are part of an approved TIP;
- Identifying a specific project that was part of a general parent project (statewide projects for example) and adjusting the parent project accordingly;
- Adding or removing a non-regionally significant project that had been included with Unofficial Status (illustrative purposes). Only projects that are not regionally significant and exempt from air quality conformity would be eligible for addition through an administrative modification. If the addition impacts the financial constraint of the TIP an Amendment is required;

#### 6.2.3 Information Only

- A change in the fiscal year of any phase or portion of a phase of a project in areas where expedited project selection procedures have been adopted, provided they are advanced or delayed within the TIP years and do not affect the financial constraint of the TIP;
- Including projects with unofficial status (illustrative purposes) in anticipation of the availability of federal or other funds;
- A minor change in the total cost of a project (Table 3);
- Minor technical corrections, such as typographic errors or missing data.

### 6.3 **Interagency Consultation**

Before a TIP or STIP revision can be adopted by the MPO or NHDOT or recommended for approval by FHWA/FTA, and prior to the start of any public comment period for the amendment, the proposed changes, whether initiated from the MPO or the NHDOT, will be discussed through interagency consultation meetings/phone conferences or correspondence. This review includes all projects eligible for amendments, administrative modifications, and most information only changes. Representatives from FHWA, FTA, EPA, NHDOT, NHDES, MPOs, and RPCs in the attainment area are invited to participate in monthly discussions. Any public input that has been received should be expressed through the planning commission staff in attendance or by the agencies.

**Table 3  
Project Cost Thresholds**

Total Cost of Project within approved STIP Years	Full Amendment	Administrative Modification	Information Only
	<i>Action Needed if the Change in Cost from the amount approved in the most current STIP is:</i>		
< \$1 Million	>75%	50% to 75%	<50%
		(\$750k limit)	(\$500k limit)
\$1 Million to \$5 Million	>30%	10% to 30% (\$750k limit)	<20% (\$350k limit)
> \$5 Million to \$10 Million	>20%	10% to 20% (\$1.5 million limit)	<10% (\$500k limit)
> \$10 Million to \$50 Million	>10%	5% to 10% (\$3.5 million limit)	<5% (\$750k limit)
Over \$50 Million	>5%	1% to 5% (\$5 million limit)	<1% (\$1 million limit)

Through interagency consultation a recommendation will be made regarding each project’s regional significance. At a minimum, that recommendation will meet the standards outlined in 23 CFR 450. Interagency consultation also provides a forum to determine if a proposed revision will impact an associated air quality analysis.

Interagency consultation provides one of the first opportunities for participating agencies, and others involved to view and comment on potential TIP or STIP revisions. Any comments received through the consultation process may affect how the MPO or State elects to categorize the revisions before distributing them for public comment and formal review at the MPO level. In an urbanized area, final categorization is at the discretion of the MPO which may chose to process any lesser revision as a full amendment. Alternatively, if the MPO or State wishes to process a change as a lesser revision than what was agreed to the interagency consultation, (e.g. changing from an Amendment to an Information Only revision) it should be discussed again through the consultation process before proceeding.

6.3.1 Dispute Resolution

When disagreements arise over any aspect of a STIP revision that cannot be satisfactorily and amicably resolved between the immediate parties involved, they will be brought forward for discussion as part of the consultation process. The interagency group may provide guidance to the parties involved in the dispute and to whichever agency(s) have the ultimate approval authority. Any such guidance shall be documented in the meeting minutes. However, while the guidance provided through interagency consultation should weigh heavily on decisions made to resolve the dispute, it is not binding.

## 6.4 Amendments

Amendments are intended to address major changes to projects or changes, either in scope or cost, that affect air quality conformity. The amendment process also provides an opportunity to process all administrative modifications and information only changes that may have been approved since the previous amendment. Amendments require, at a minimum, a **10-day** public comment period, a conformity determination, and subsequent approvals, but may also require a review or update to the air quality analysis. The timeframe to process amendments is likely to be **three (3)** or more months. To the extent possible, amendments to the TIP will be grouped with other amendments to the STIP and processed on a quarterly basis and changes.

Project changes in an MPO area must comply with the provisions of 23 CFR 450.326 pertaining to TIP revisions. Regardless of whether the project change is initiated by the MPO or the NHDOT, the MPO board (Policy Committee) must adopt the amendment to their approved TIP. There must be a public participation process, consistent with the MPO's public participation plan (See Section 7), and a public comment period of at least **10 to 30 days, with duration to be established through interagency consultation including the MPO, NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA, FTA, and EPA.** Upon formal endorsement of the amendment at a public MPO meeting, the MPO shall provide a copy of the amendment to the State, FHWA and FTA. Any amendment to the TIP must be accompanied by a corresponding conformity determination by the MPO. That conformity determination, depending upon the discussions through interagency consultation, may or may not require a new air quality analysis.

The State shall incorporate the amendment into the STIP and submit the amended STIP to FHWA/FTA for approval. The NHDOT must demonstrate that the STIP remains financially constrained. Each amendment shall be dated and sequentially numbered. The FHWA/FTA shall approve or disapprove the STIP amendment. If the amendment consists of only highway projects or only transit projects and no conformity determination is required, the FHWA or FTA may approve the amendment unilaterally. Otherwise, approval will be by joint letter. The state will forward copies of the approval to the affected MPOs. The MPO will, in turn, notify the affected Transit Operator(s), if transit projects are involved.

## 6.5 Administrative Modification

Consistent with the definitions outlined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a) and 49 U.S.C. 5302, the intent of the administrative modification process is to allow, where suitable, relatively small changes to be made to projects in an expedited fashion. Administrative modifications can be made based on the thresholds established in Section 6.2 and in Table 3. The administrative modification option is available for projects at the discretion of the MPO, which may instead opt for the formal amendment process. Unlike in the case of full amendments, the MPO may delegate the approval of modifications to a person or subcommittee.

A list of all the projects that are potentially eligible for administrative modifications will be reviewed through the interagency consultation process. Following that review, each of the affected MPOs and rural planning commissions will receive a list of projects with the proposed changes within their jurisdiction. The NHDOT will certify that the STIP will remain financially constrained after taking into account the proposed project changes and will notify FHWA/FTA of the project changes. Administrative modifications should typically take 1 to 2 months to process.

Accordingly, the Executive Director is hereby given the discretion to approve Administrative Modifications, and to determine when such modification should instead be elevated to full Amendment status. The Executive Director may issue letters to the NHDOT for each Administrative Amendment indicating concurrence or disapproval of the proposed changes. Prior to issuing an administrative modification letter, the Executive Director shall notify TAC and Policy Committee members indicating the request and the intended response. If reasonable objections are raised by any member, the Director will elevate the Administrative Modification to a full Amendment. Copies of all Administrative Modifications letters issued by

the Executive Director shall be provided to members of the TAC and Policy Committees and be reviewed and made part of the record at the subsequent MPO Policy Committee meeting.

The NHDOT will notify the FHWA/FTA of the approval of administrative modifications. The FHWA/FTA shall place these adjustment letters on file with the STIP and the State shall update the STIP to include these modifications periodically as full amendments or STIP updates are processed. If the person or board designated as having approval authority elects not to approve an administrative modification, that change could still be pursued through the full amendment process. FHWA/FTA will review modifications and will accept or not accept them; however, no formal approval will be required.

Changes to projects through this procedure constitute an administrative modification to the STIP and will be processed with future STIP amendments. To ensure consistency with federal regulations regarding air quality conformity, any project that is identified to potentially affect the air quality determination of a non-attainment or maintenance area will be discussed at the interagency consultation.

## 6.6 Information Only

Changes made through expedited project selection procedures as well as minor changes in project cost consistent with the thresholds established in Table 3 would qualify as *Information Only* changes.

These types of changes will be reported in the STIP as future amendments or STIP updates are processed. Information Only changes to projects will be reviewed through the interagency consultation process except in rare circumstances such as the case of emergency revisions to projects due to an unforeseen need and will be limited to revisions eligible for expedited project selection procedures. The intended timeframe to approve project changes in the Information Only category is approximately 1 month. Unlike in the case of full amendments, an MPO may delegate the approval of information only changes to a person or committee, e.g. the Executive Director or Executive Committee. For the rural areas of NH, the Director of Project Development for NHDOT will have approval authority.

Included in Information Only changes, expedited project selection procedures provide flexibility to advance or delay projects within the STIP provided that there are no impacts to air quality conformity and that the STIP remains financially constrained. A list of all the projects that are potentially eligible for expedited project selection procedures will be reviewed through the interagency consultation process. Following that review, the MPOs will receive from the NHDOT a list of projects with the proposed schedule changes within their jurisdiction.

The RPC/MPO Executive Director is hereby given the discretion to approve Information Only changes, and to determine when such modification should instead be elevated to Administrative Amendment or full Amendment status. The Executive Director shall issue letters to the NHDOT for Information Only changes indicating concurrence or disapproval of the proposed changes. Copies of all approvals for Information Only changes by the Executive Director shall be provided to members of the TAC and Policy Committees and be reviewed and made part of the record at the subsequent MPO Policy Committee meeting.

When MPO approval of the change is received by NHDOT, the approval letter will be included with a submittal to FHWA/FTA as part of the next full amendment or update to the STIP. If approval of the change is not provided by the MPO, the project may be considered for a full STIP amendment, including the more rigorous public involvement and approval requirements.

All projects approved through expedited project selection procedures will be included in the financial constraint information issued as part of STIP amendments or STIP updates.

Changes to projects through this expedited project selection procedure will be considered information only changes to the STIP and will be processed with future STIP amendments or updates. To ensure

consistency with federal regulations regarding air quality conformity, any project that is identified to potentially affect the air quality determination of a non-attainment or maintenance area will be discussed at the interagency consultation prior to any changes being made.

## **6.7 Submission of STIP Updates**

STIP amendments for single projects may be accommodated by FHWA/FTA, however, it is strongly suggested that the State bundle projects (including individual TIP amendments) for approval and submit an updated STIP project listing including a group of amendments, administrative modifications, and information only changes on a quarterly basis or less frequently if there have been no changes in the STIP during the previous quarter. This will make for a more rational tracking of the current STIP by the State, the Federal Agencies and the MPOs. Each amendment request shall be dated and sequentially numbered and three copies submitted to FHWA and one copy to FTA.

## **6.8 Air Quality Conformity**

Any changes that will potentially trigger conformity are discussed and explored by the participating agencies through the interagency consultation process allowing potential impacts to be identified early in the revision process.

If the proposed revision to the STIP will impact the existing air quality analysis, a new conformity determination and a full STIP amendment is required. Any revisions to the air quality analysis require an amendment of the MPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The new air quality analysis shall be developed and amended into the RTP (consultation and public notice procedures apply). The amended TIP conformity determination would then be based on the amended RTP air quality analysis. The STIP amendment, the supporting RTP, and a statement of finding of conformity will then be submitted to FHWA/FTA for approval. The FHWA/FTA approval letter will reflect approval of this new conformity determination.

If the proposed revision to the STIP does not affect the existing air quality analysis, but triggers a determination of conformity for other reasons, it shall be explicitly reflected in the amendment with a statement that the finding of conformity is being based on the existing air quality analysis.

## **7.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

### **7.1 Overview**

The following pages document the actions to be carried out by the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) MPO to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities, pursuant to Title 23 CFR 450.316 of Statewide Planning; Metropolitan Planning and 40 CFR 51.402(e) Criteria and Procedures for Determining Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects; and NH Revised Statutes – Article 91-A. This section of the Prospectus also serves as the statement of transportation public participation policies adopted by the Rockingham Planning Commission MPO. Participation of the public in transportation planning activities is vitally important to the MPO.

The emphasis of the adopted policies is on regional system planning documents regularly produced in the transportation planning process. Specific project-level public participation procedures and practices are defined by implementing agencies. Only the relationship of regional participation processes to project planning is included here.

## 7.2 Public Participation Policy and Goals

### 7.2.1 Federal and State Mandates

Federal regulations exist that require a public participation component to the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law in 2005. In addition to the “3C” process described in Section 3.0 above, SAFETEA-LU emphasizes the broadening of public participation to include stakeholders who have not traditionally been involved. Transportation planning under SAFETEA-LU must be performed in conjunction with state and local officials, transit operators and the public. Further, Metropolitan Planning Organizations are responsible for conducting the locally-developed public participation process as required by the Joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/ Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning Rule (23 CFR part 450, 49 CFR part 613). The legislation requires that the metropolitan planning process must “include a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans” and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)].

There are also public participation requirements at the state level. The public records law of New Hampshire states that all public records shall be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times (NH Revised Statutes RSA 91-A). Public records include all writings made, maintained or kept by the state or any agency, institution or political subdivision for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds. The MPO’s procedures for distributing information in accordance with the public records law of New Hampshire are discussed in Section 7.4 *Documentation, Distribution and Notification*.

Though the meaningful engagement of diverse interests may be challenging at times, transportation decisions are ultimately more responsive to local needs as a result of the public participation process.

#### 7.2.1.1 Low-Income Communities and Minority Communities

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, was signed by President Clinton on Feb. 11, 1994 and published in the Feb. 16, 1994 Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 32. The Executive Order (EO) and accompanying memorandum reinforced the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that focus federal attention on the environmental and human health condition in minority and low-income communities. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds 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” [42 USC 2000d]. Together these two laws promote non-discrimination in federal programs affecting human health and the environment, and provide minority and low income communities access to public information and an opportunity to participate in matters relating to transportation and the environment.

The EO is oriented not only toward project level decision-making in the engineering and design phases for projects, but also toward long-range and project programming activities. MPO self certification reviews conducted by the FHWA and FTA in metropolitan areas stress the public participation efforts with potential environmental justice communities.

Through the regional planning process, the MPO and partner agencies will thoroughly analyze the three fundamental environmental justice principles. The principles are:

- To avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, of programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations;
- To ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction of, or significant delay in the receipt of transportation benefits by minority and low-income populations.

The MPO's public participation methods to address the full and fair participation of all populations are described in *Section 7.3: Opportunities for Public Participation*.

#### 7.2.1.2 Populations with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires involving persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation services. Planners, engineers, and builders must provide access for the disabled at sidewalks and ramps, street crossings, and in parking or transit access facilities. Persons with disabilities must also be able to access the sites where public participation activities occur as well as the information presented. The MPO's public participation methods to address the Americans with Disabilities Act are described in *Section 7.3: Opportunities for Public Participation*.

#### 7.2.2 Rockingham Planning Commission MPO Public Participation Policy

Public participation is vital to the Rockingham Planning Commission MPO. It helps provide the MPO the broadest spectrum of relevant information available prior to its decision-making and offers the public an opportunity to raise concerns that can be considered along with discussion of technical, political and economic merit. The MPO welcomes the early and continued participation of the public in developing the agency's regional policies and plans. The MPO seeks to establish an attitude and an atmosphere which encourages public reflection, reaction and discussion of the wide-ranging issues with which it is involved.

Of particular importance in the pursuit of public participation is the identification of audiences which would be affected by or have a business or other affinity with the issues under consideration. All views should be heard and their participation likewise encouraged. In this context, minority views include not only ethnic groups but also others whose perspectives may not be fully reflected by larger segments of the public.

It is the intent of the MPO to actively solicit the comments and engage the interests of the public through the participation process. It then is the responsibility of this body to balance the public's needs and desires with the MPO's responsibilities and visions for the future of the region.

In adopting this policy, staff are directed to incorporate appropriate activities to make public communications and outreach a part of the agency's overall planning activities. In addition to required public hearings, such activities might include: representative task forces or advisory committees; public meetings and workshops, presentations and discussions with special interest organizations, forums or conferences that provide information about issues and processes and the opportunity for input from the public; opinion polls, surveys, focus groups and interviews to acquire information; and use of the media and reports to disseminate information.

#### 7.2.3 Public Participation Goals

The fundamental goal of public participation is to assure that the decisions regarding a proposed plan or project are made only after the public is aware of and has the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Transportation planning decision-makers must consider concerns of all the publics who may be affected by a proposed project.

Specific goals of the public participation process are:

*Goal 1: Educate and Present Information*

The MPO is responsible for providing information to the public. MPO staff shall educate and present information about the regional planning process, including the sources of funding, data on transportation system performance, and impacts of regional planning decisions. MPO staff shall inform the public about the transportation planning process, the role of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, as well as the committee structure of MPO. Staff shall explain the specific tasks and goals of the MPO, as well as related tasks that are not in the MPO's authority to perform. This information shall be presented in non-technical terms so the public can readily understand and process this information.

*Goal 2: Solicit Public Input*

The MPO shall actively seek out input and participation from a wide variety of individuals, groups and organizations affected by the transportation system to identify transportation related needs, desires, issues and concerns. Public participation will be sought continuously throughout transportation planning processes, though efforts will be specifically targeted at the beginning of particular planning efforts, at key decision points while there is ample opportunity to affect decisions, and when final product drafts are issued. MPO Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee members also have direct contact with the public via the community that they represent and should reflect their concerns to MPO staff. Staff will also monitor public input received through project development efforts, corridor studies and other planning activities.

*Goal 3: Facilitate Information Flow between the Public and Decision-Makers*

MPO staff are responsible for compiling public issues, comments and concerns into complete and concise documents for presentation to the decision-makers. The MPO staff shall also schedule and organize meetings where the public can present concerns to the staff or Board.

*Goal 4: Consider Public Concerns in Decision-Making*

The MPO shall consider the public concerns that are presented to them by the staff as well as those presented to them by individual persons at public meetings. MPO staff shall consider public concerns as they prepare draft planning documents.

The desired outcome in implementing these goals will be transportation plans, programs and projects which reflect local, regional and state priorities and needs; and which consider a range of transportation options and consider the overall social, economic, energy and environmental effect of transportation decisions.

### **7.3 Opportunities for Public Participation**

#### 7.3.1 Planning Process

The regional transportation planning process involves a number of activities including the preparation of regional plans, transportation improvement programs, corridor studies, and administrative documents. Public interest will vary considerably based on the intensity of the public feeling on the particular issue at hand. This variety suggests that the regional public participation process should recognize the differences and provide opportunities for participation to meet the diverse needs. The MPO typically follows the transportation planning process displayed in *Figure 4*. The process is applied to long-range regional plans, corridor and project studies and short-range transportation improvement programs.

The public is encouraged to attend committee meetings and/or contact their representatives with their comments and concerns. A public comment period is included in all meetings of the TAC and MPO Policy



Committee. The RPC web site ([www.rpc-nh.org](http://www.rpc-nh.org)) contains a calendar of meeting dates.

### Rockingham Planning Commission MPO Transportation Planning Process Meetings - Standing Times and Dates

*Technical Advisory Committee – Bi-monthly, typically 9:00 am the fourth Thursday of the month*  
*MPO Policy Committee – Quarterly, typically 7:00 pm on the second Wednesday of the month*

### 7.3.2 Policy Action Process and Agency Integration

#### 7.3.2.1 Major Policy Action Process

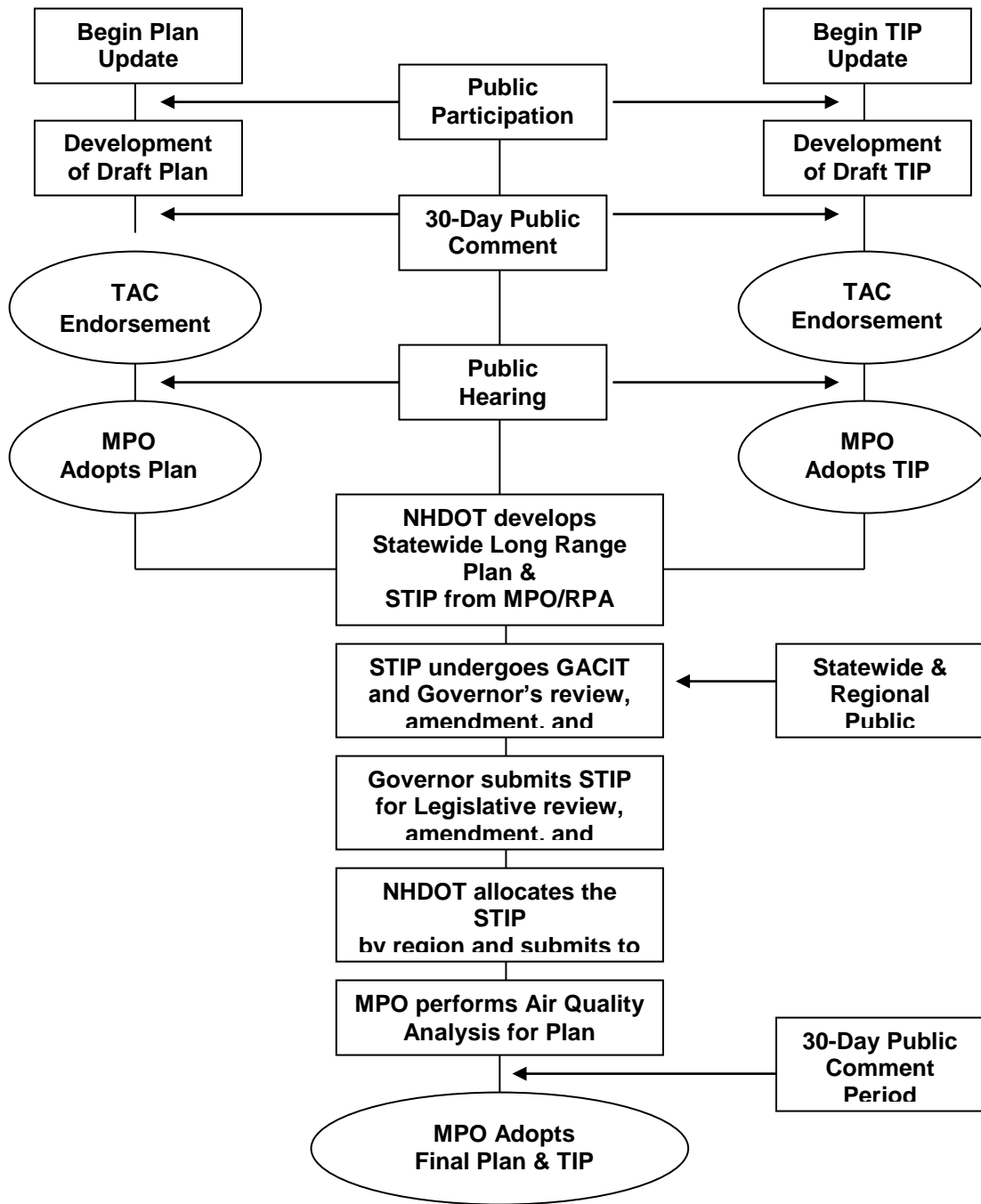
The MPO policy action process has been designed to ensure the Policy Committee has ample opportunity to carefully consider the issue or action in question, and consider the views of the public before taking a major policy action. Such major actions are associated with:

- New or amended Regional Transportation Plans (RTP);
- New Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) or amendments affecting air quality conformity; and
- Air quality conformity findings/documents.

#### Major policy actions include the following steps:

1. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), reviews work of the MPO staff, NHDOT, and other public input, and makes a recommendation to the Policy Committee on planning and implementation procedures.
2. The chair of the Policy Committee sets a public hearing date that allows at least a 10-day period for the public to review documents before the public hearing. The public comment period on documents will remain open for [a period of 10 to 30 days, with duration to be set through interagency consultation including the MPO, NHDOT, NHDES, FHWA, FTA, and EPA.](#)
3. After setting the public hearing date, a notice of the public hearing is published in the major newspapers serving the MPO region – the Lawrence Eagle Tribune [and the Portsmouth Herald](#) - at least 10 days in advance of the public hearing. Notices may also be published in other newspapers. The notice includes the time, date and location of the public hearing as well as how the subject document can be reviewed. The subject document is also made available on the RPC web site ([www.rpc-nh.org](http://www.rpc-nh.org)).
4. A formal public hearing is conducted. The views of the public as well as the recommendations of any applicable MPO ad hoc committees are heard at the hearing.
5. After considering all comments and recommendations in the public hearing, action on the policy is then taken by the Policy Committee at its next scheduled meeting. If hearings are coupled with Policy Committee meetings on the same night, the Committee may take action immediately following the hearing, unless the Committee votes that some aspect of the input received from the public requires further information or analysis to ensure a fully informed decision.
6. A summary of significant public comments and responses is included in the final published policy document or made available as a separate document.

**FIGURE 4  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN &  
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**



Acronym Glossary: MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization;  
 NHDOT = NH Department of Transportation; TAC = Technical Advisory Committee;  
 TIP = Transportation Improvement Program; STIP = State Transportation Improvement Program;  
 GACIT = Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation; RPA = Regional Planning

7.3.2.2 Agency Integration

The regional transportation planning process, and its corresponding public participation process, is a coordinated approach among RPC, COAST, CART, NHDOT NHDES and the communities of the region. **Two Memoranda of Agreement** outlining the roles and responsibilities of these parties and adjacent MPOs also served by the two transit agencies, as well as plans for coordination in transportation processes, are found in Appendix B. **The MPO public participation process is designed to also meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements under 49 USC Section 5307 for public participation in the development of the Annual Program of Projects (POP) for the two transit agencies and the NH Department of Transportation.**

7.3.3 Key Planning Activities

The framework described in *Table 4* identifies types of planning processes or documents, the most appropriate agency responsible for the public participation activity and the usual methods for obtaining public participation.

**Table 4 - Key Planning Activities and Public Participation Methods**

Activity	Responsibility	Methods
Regional Long Range Transportation Plan	MPO/RPC	Public interest forums at key points throughout the development process; MPO committee review and recommendation; <b>A 30 day public comment period</b> and public hearing before adoption. Staff outreach to communities and organizations using workshops, poster sessions, questionnaires, web site announcements, etc.
Specialized Plan Elements <u>(i.e. CMP, Transit Plan)</u>	MPO/RPC	Ad hoc committees or work groups; MPO committee review and recommendation; solicitation of comments and input announced via web site and email notification.
Transportation Improvement Program	MPO/RPC, Local Governments, NHDOT	Project sponsor conducts public outreach in communities regarding specific projects; MPO committee review and recommendation; public hearing before adoption of new TIP or a TIP amendment requiring conformity finding. <b>A 10 to 30 day public comment period with duration established to through interagency consultation.</b>
Corridor/ Sub-area Studies	NHDOT, MPO/RPC	Task forces/committees and/or public meetings in the corridor or sub-area at key decision points. Public advisory committee surveys and questionnaires. Meetings conducted in affected neighborhoods, community study office and community outreach efforts (e.g. newsletter, web site, comment forms).
Project Development	Implementing Jurisdiction	Task forces/committees and/or public meetings in the project locale at key decision points; public hearing. Public advisory committee surveys and questionnaires.
<u>Air Quality</u> Conformity of the LRP and the TIP	MPO/RPC, NHDOT, NHDES	RPC committee review and recommendation; public hearing on draft conformity finding. <b>A 10 to 30 day public comment period with duration established to through interagency consultation.</b>

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	MPO/RPC, NHDOT	Transportation Forum to identify key planning tasks. Review work plans with partner agencies. MPO committee review and recommendation, final review by FHWA/FTA.
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7.3.3.1 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Regional Long Range Transportation Plan is the Federally-mandated, 20 year long-range, transportation plan for the Rockingham Planning Commission MPO region. It represents the vision for a multimodal transportation system that will serve the region through the defined period. It also identifies transportation improvement projects of various travel modes that are financially feasible for at least the next 20 years given expected levels of funding. The LRTP reflects proposals throughout the entire region. SAFETEA-LU requires that the LRTP be updated at least every four years.

Opportunities for public and resource agency participation are provided around key decision points in the planning process. The 2002 update to the plan included a regional survey as well as a series of regional visioning sessions, plus public hearings on the draft and final plan. These results are summarized in the Long Range Plan’s appendix.

7.3.3.2 Specialized Plan Elements

Occasionally, specialized plan elements are prepared to further define the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Such examples include [the federally mandated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan, or the Congestion Management Process](#). Upon adoption, specialized plan elements become part of the overall LRTP. Opportunities for public participation are provided through ad hoc committees or work groups, and comment periods during TAC and Policy Committee meetings. Additional public meetings may be held if further public input is desired prior to Policy Committee action.

7.3.3.3 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a document that programs transportation improvements to be funded in the region over a four-year period. Local governments, NHDOT, the MPO, and other regional stakeholders propose projects to be included in the TIP. The MPO is in the process of shifting to a policy under which project priorities considered for the TIP must be identified in the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan. Early public input should be obtained by sponsor agencies before submitting projects to be included in the TIP. The draft TIP document is the subject of a public hearing.

Amendments to the TIP are divided into two types based on scope, with varying levels of public participating applying to each. These two types of amendments include: 1) Full Amendments; and 2) Minor or Expedited Amendments. Full amendments are subject to a full 30-day public comment period and approval by the MPO Policy Committee. Expedited amendments may be adopted with the consent of the Executive Director of the Rockingham Planning Commission.

7.3.3.4 Corridor / Sub-Area Studies

Corridor and sub-area studies are local in concern yet often have impacts on larger areas. Corridor studies may at times serve as Environmental Assessments (EAs) to lead toward environmental clearance actions. More commonly, though, corridor studies focus at a broad level, and are precursors to more specific project-based Environmental Impact Statements (such as the NH Route 125 Corridor Study). Such studies normally have very extensive public outreach and input efforts that attract a significant number of participants. The agency charged with conducting the specific

study is responsible for conducting public participation activities. MPO staff are actively involved and monitor the public participation activities in these studies to help identify broad issues, concerns, desires, etc. that may be relevant to regional planning. Opportunities to integrate MPO public outreach efforts with corridor studies are also pursued.

#### 7.3.3.5 Projects

The project sponsor is responsible for involving the public in efforts during environmental planning and design phases for specific local transportation projects. MPO staff monitor studies for major projects.

#### 7.3.3.6 Conformity

The MPO must find conformity with the State Air Quality Implementation Plan (SIP) before it can adopt or amend the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Program. Public participation is crucial to the conformity process, since this determination affects what types of projects can be included in the LRTP and TIP.

#### 7.3.3.7 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related land use and air quality planning activities (regardless of funding source) addressing the planning priorities facing the MPO region for a two year planning period. The UPWP identifies tasks that will be accomplished using federal transportation planning funds. RPC and NHDOT participate in the activities of the biennial UPWP, which includes descriptions of planning tasks to be performed and identifies funding sources and descriptions of other major transportation planning activities by partner agencies and local governments.

### **7.4 Public Participation Methods**

Various techniques will selectively be used to provide information and solicit public comment. Some examples of public participation activities are briefly described below.

#### 7.4.1 Informational Brochures or Newsletters

Informational brochures and newsletters are at times developed by the MPO to encourage communication between the regional community and the program staff. This helps to ensure that information regarding current activities and news about the region is shared throughout the region. Brochures and newsletters are prepared for major plan updates and provide an overview and basic information to the public pointing them toward additional resources, including the RPC web site ([www.rpc-nh.org](http://www.rpc-nh.org)).

#### 7.4.2 Mailing Lists

Mailing list databases help an agency organize and update its public communications. Lists may include telephone numbers, fax numbers and/or email addresses to help contact the public. Using mailing lists, the MPO reaches target audiences with announcements of upcoming events, meeting invitations, newsletters, summary reports and other information about its activities. The MPO updates its mailing list at the start of a major planning process. The MPO may also create a targeted mailing list for a survey. The MPO master mailing list includes nearly 300 members of the public and organizations.

#### 7.4.3 Media Strategies

Media strategies inform the public about projects and programs through newspapers, radio, television and videos, posters and variable message signs, mass mailings of brochures or newsletters, and distribution of fliers. Promotional brochures or fliers can be used in direct mail campaigns or [distributed in newspapers](#). Briefing reporters with background on a project or program prepares them to cover the topic in an objective and fair manner.

The MPO may prepare press releases and media packets at the 'kick off' of the planning process of such major endeavors as the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan or other planning processes.

#### 7.4.4 Strategies to Reach Underrepresented Populations

MPO staff are proactive regarding public outreach to underrepresented populations, including minority and low-income residents and transit-dependent individuals. Methods used to date to obtain input include:

- speaking requests to organizations and interest groups;
- recruiting advocates to participate in planning processes;
- participation on corridor studies and compilation of local comments;
- contact with local government planners, staff and elected officials; and
- targeted mailings and questionnaire distribution;

#### 7.4.5 Piggybacking on Other Efforts

MPO staff from time to time set up public outreach displays and materials on specific planning projects at public meetings or other community events such as the Senior Health Fairs or regional Realtors' round-table events.

#### 7.4.6 Public Guide to Planning and Public Participation

In 2002 the NHDOT produced a series of guides to public participation in the regional transportation planning process. While printed copies are limited, the MPO will make them available on the web.

#### 7.4.7 Public Hearings

Public hearings are more formal events than a public meeting and are based on legal requirements. Held prior to a decision point, a public hearing gathers community comments and positions from all interested parties for public record and input into decisions. Public hearings are required by the federal government for many transportation documents and projects. Additional hearings may be held during the transportation planning process at the discretion of the sponsoring organization. Public notices in a general circulation newspaper cite the time, date and place of a hearing. **The MPO will determine the length of the public comment period through an interagency consultation process. For each amendment the MPO will recommend a length for the public comment period between 10 and 30 days.** During this period, the agency accepts questions and provides clarification. Subject documents will be available to the public when notice of a hearing is given.

The MPO hosts public hearings before the adoption of the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and their corresponding conformity statements, and other key planning documents. All MPO-hosted public hearings are wheelchair accessible. Also, the MPO will accommodate and provide services for persons with other disabilities when provided notice before the forum or meeting.

#### 7.4.8 Public Interest Forums / Meetings / Workshops

Public forums and meetings disseminate information, provide a setting for public discussion, and gather feedback from the community. They are often hosted at more than one key point in the process to develop specific planning documents. They are often tailored to specific issues or community groups and may be informal or formal.

Such forums may include the following:

- poster sessions;
- open houses / interactions periods;
- formal presentations;
- question and answer periods;
- brainstorming sessions; and
- small break-out groups
- [design](#) charrettes

All RPC-hosted public hearings are wheelchair accessible. Also, RPC will accommodate and provide services for persons with other disabilities when provided notice before the hearing.

#### 7.4.9 Speakers Bureau

MPO staff routinely accept invitations from local organizations and municipal boards to come and speak on regional planning issues or specific planning projects.

#### 7.4.10 Surveys and Questionnaires

The MPO uses surveys to gather information for major updates to the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, rider input for CART, and from time to time for other planning projects, such as master plan updates for member communities, transit coordination planning, bicycle route designation, etc. The method of data collection varies by project, but included in-person interviews, paper survey mail-outs, and web-based questionnaires.

#### 7.4.11 Visualization Techniques

This is a new requirement of SAFETEA-LU designed to better convey to the public, through visual media, information important in the transportation planning process. This might include regional maps showing modeled projections of how alternative land use policies scenarios will impact development and the transportation system in twenty years. It could also include simpler techniques such as renderings or photo simulations to show a widened roadway or bridge in context; flow charts to clearly depict the transportation planning process; or graphs related to distribution of project funding.

#### 7.4.12 Web Site

Improvements will be made continually to the RPC web site ([www.rpc-nh.org](http://www.rpc-nh.org)) to keep the public informed about planning activities and to offer another way to provide comments. The RPC/MPO website will be restructured in the coming months to make it a comprehensive source including a calendar of meetings, agendas and meeting minutes; links to regional demographic, economic, and traffic data; downloadable versions of planning documents, and extensive GIS/mapping content.

#### 7.4.13 Ad Hoc Committees and Work Groups

These groups are assigned a specific task, with a time limit for reaching a conclusion or producing a draft document, subject to ratification by official decision-makers. The membership of these groups often includes

local people or representatives from interest groups, appointed by elected officials or agency executives.

## **7.5. Documentation, Distribution and Notification**

All documentation pertaining to transportation plans and programs is available for public review and comment. This chapter describes the types of documents available and how they are distributed. It also identifies procedures the MPO follows to notify the public of the documents, meetings and other information.

### 7.5.1 Documentation

The MPO produces policy documents via adopting resolutions, technical reports, white papers, consultant reports and popular reports. These provide written documentation of the policies, plans, programs and planning activities of the transportation planning process.

Policy documents are prepared first in draft form and then published in final form after adoption by the MPO Policy Committee. The MPO will make drafts of policy documents available for public review at least 10 days prior to public hearings on the subject, and for a minimum public comment period of 30 days. Drafts of the Public Participation Plan will be available at least 45 days prior to a public hearing. Public comments received on updates to the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan will be summarized and included with the policy document along with responses and the disposition of the comments. MPO plans, reports, meetings, agendas and meeting summaries are available on the Rockingham Planning Commission web site at [www.rpc-nh.org](http://www.rpc-nh.org).

The MPO may publish technical and other reports after acceptance by the TAC or other committees, as appropriate. These reports will be available upon their completion. In addition to published reports, the MPO maintains unpublished technical information in support of its planning efforts.

Minutes are prepared for all meetings of the TAC and Policy Committee. These are available upon request from the planning commission. The MPO will also provide documentation of key decision points in a planning process through the public outreach of that process.

For major updates to the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, a separate summary document of public participation activities and input received is produced. It is available to decision-makers and the general public through the planning commission offices.

### 7.5.2 Distribution and Notification

The public may request to own or view all reports developed and compiled by MPO. MPO publications may be free of charge or cost a nominal fee. Most publications can also be downloaded and printed from the RPC web site. The public may also view unpublished technical information at the RPC offices.

Draft policy documents are available at RPC offices and on the RPC web site. Libraries in the region have access to the RPC web site for viewing or downloading documents. [Public hearings and comment periods](#) are advertised in [the two](#) major daily newspapers serving the region – the Lawrence Eagle-Tribune [and the Portsmouth Herald](#). Where possible notices are also posted in widely read regional weeklies such as the Carriage Town News.

The MPO will maintain a comprehensive mailing list of elected officials, public officials, special interest groups and others to ensure the widest possible distribution of documents. This list is used for newsletter mailings, and to inform interested parties of upcoming meetings and other events pertaining to the



transportation planning process and products. Various planning commission and stakeholder email lists will be consolidated and expanded.

The MPO's list of interested parties will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- *Boards of selectmen and city councils from study area communities;*
- *Planning boards, traffic safety committees, public works officials/road agents;*
- *Public and private transit and taxi operators, including demand responsive operators;*
- *Human service agencies with low income, elderly and disabled clients;*
- *Representatives from adjoining MPOs;*
- *Traffic safety and enforcement agencies;*
- *Chambers of commerce; economic development organizations;*
- *Members of the state legislature representing study area communities;*
- *Appropriate state and federal agencies, including the NHDOT, NHDES-Air Resources, DRED, FHWA, FTA, FAA, EPA;*
- *Individuals and groups with a demonstrated interest in transportation issues;*
- *Major businesses and business and industry associations;*
- *Schools and colleges;*
- *Transportation user groups;*
- *Those underserved by the transportation system; and*
- *Print and broadcast media contacts.*

The MPO will also prepare a listing of public meetings scheduled under its auspices. This listing is posted at the RPC offices and on the RPC web site. These meetings are all open to the public. Public comment periods are provided for during meetings of MPO committees.

## **7.6. Review of Public Participation Process**

MPOs serving Census-defined Urbanized Areas with populations over 200,000 are required to undergo review and certification every four years by FHWA/ FTA to ensure compliance with Federal requirements. To date the Rockingham Planning Commission MPO has not been subject to this scheduled review given its population. However, the MPO does undertake a biennial self-certification review. The public participation processes of MPO are an important part of this review. As part of the self-certification, the MPO will biennially review the public participation process, considering the following items:

- What was the success of specific strategies in attracting public comments?
- What level of public input was received for various planning products?
- Was public input considered by decision-makers?
- Should any new strategies or adjustments be considered in the following year?
- Are any changes or amendments necessary to the Public Participation in Regional Transportation Planning document?

## **8.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE PROSPECTUS**

### **8.1 Review**

The signatories to this Prospectus shall, at least on a biennial basis review the contents of the document to identify changes that should be made to reflect current circumstances. Following review and the preparation

of proposed changes, the Prospectus shall be readopted by the signatories.

8.2 Termination; Amendments

In addition, during the interim period between formal review, any signatory may, with 60 days advanced notice provided to the other signatories, terminate the agreement embodied in Sections 1-7 of the Prospectus and request, for cause, that amendment to the Prospectus be made. Following the preparation of the proposed amendments, the Prospectus may be readopted by the signatories.

8.3 Separate Agreements

The interagency agreements contained in Appendix B and Appendix C are considered as separate agreements and are not subject to the termination and amendment provisions specified in this section.

**APPENDIX A**

**Federally Defined Goals for Metropolitan Transportation Planning:  
The 8 Planning Factors SAFETEA-LU**

**APPENDIX B-1**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BETWEEN  
THE RPC, SRPC, NHDOT AND COAST**

**APPENDIX B-2**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR CONTINUING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BETWEEN  
THE RPC, SRPC, NHDOT AND CART**

**APPENDIX C**

**ADMINISTRATIVE RULE FOR AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY DETERMINATION AND SIP REVISIONS  
GOVERNING CONFORMITY DETERMINATIONS OF:  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

**ENV-A 1500 - TRANSPORTATION CONFORMITY**