

Appendix C

Plan Guidelines & Frameworks

For the 2025-2028 State Transportation Improvement Program and 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan

PLAN GUIDELINES AND FRAMEWORKS

The planning framework establishes the foundation of the planning process in the Regional Master Plan for the Rockingham Planning Commission region and guides the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan around the principles, vision, goals and recommendations of that document. In addition, the planning framework incorporates the federal planning factors and performance based (3Cs) transportation planning process and the project selection criteria that are utilized to prioritize projects for funding.

New Hampshire Livability Principles

Working with the other New Hampshire Planning Commissions as part of a Sustainable Communities Initiative grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the RPC developed a Regional Master Plan in 2015 constructed around a common set of livability principles. These values are grounded in the New Hampshire Smart Growth Principles found in NH RSA 9-A, the Federal Partnership Livability Principles that guide the HUD-EPA-DOT Sustainable Communities Program, as well as the visions, goals, and objectives in local master plans and other documents concerned with the future. While only one of these principles directly addresses transportation issues, all impact, or are related to, the transportation system in some manner.

- **1. Traditional Settlement Patterns & Development Design:** Keep the traditional New Hampshire landscape intact by focusing development in town centers and village areas, while leaving open and rural areas for agriculture, recreation, and other suitable uses.
- **2. Housing Choices:** Ensure that everyone, regardless of income level, has convenient and affordable choices in where they live. This includes a variety of housing options and ownership types that appeal to people at any stage of life and is convenient to where they work, shop, and play.
- **3. Transportation Choices:** Provide a number of options that help people safely and efficiently get where they need to go, whether it is by walking, driving, biking, public transportation, carpooling, or taking a train or plane. Transportation networks should make it easy to get from one place to another, and should also allow the efficient movement of goods to support the economy (commercial freight, rail, and air transport).
- **4. Natural Resource Functions and Quality:** Make sure that we protect New Hampshire's beautiful natural landscape, which is home to all of us as well as a wide range of wildlife species. This includes protecting and improving the water we drink, the air we breathe, the forests we love, and the farmland that sustains us.

- **5. Community and Economic Vitality:** Continue to make New Hampshire a great place in which to do business, raise a family, recreate, visit, and retire. Our neighborhoods and communities offer opportunities for an excellent education, good health, cultural happenings, and social connections.

- **6. Climate Change and Energy Efficiency:** Identify opportunities to save energy and costs and reduce risks to our communities, businesses and citizens. In recent decades, New Hampshire has seen an increase in extreme storms and flooding coupled with steadily rising fuel and energy prices. How can we reduce dependence on outside sources of energy, construct homes and buildings that are more efficient, and reduce impacts to our communities and infrastructure from extreme storms and flooding?

Vision for 2050

This Vision is crafted around ideals espoused in local master plans, past regional master plans, and through input from RPC Commissioners and the general public during the plan development process and represents a compelling picture for the RPC region of the future that balances local and regional needs. This vision remains valid for 2050:

“The southeastern New Hampshire region enjoys a high quality of life represented by a strong regional economy, distinct community character, and outstanding natural and recreational resources. This has been achieved through careful planning, wise stewardship of natural resources, infrastructure investment, and increasing regional cooperation on shared issues.”

This vision is supported when:

- Communities are working together to ensure that long-term economic, social and environmental factors are balanced in the planning and decision-making process.
- Development and redevelopment are enhancing and strengthening community centers, preserving rural character, and maintaining traditional landscapes. This provides open space for agriculture, recreation and wildlife areas, and protection of natural resources, while providing residents with a variety of choices for places to live, work, and play.
- Communities are allowing a variety of housing choices for residents of all income levels to strengthen our communities and economic vitality.
- We are investing in the infrastructure systems that support our communities and businesses.
- The region is promoting economic opportunities that result in more high quality jobs, stable property tax rates, enhanced educational opportunities, and improved services for residents and businesses.
- We are striving to protect our natural environment so residents can benefit from its resources without diminishing its quality for other living creatures and future generations.
- Our sense of community is being preserved by protecting and actively using the region’s historical resources and cultural heritage.
- Communities are acknowledging and planning for the effects of a changing climate. Anticipated changes include sea-level rise, increasing flood events, more erosion, periods of drought and other natural hazards.
- Residents, businesses, and communities are adapting to the high cost of energy by implementing efficiency measures for building, increasing public transit options, and developing local renewable energy resources.
- Communities are respectful of property rights in their efforts to manage growth and development.

Regional Goal

To support the Regional Vision and the New Hampshire Livability Principles, a regional goal was developed to better describe the desired end state:

Promote efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure in southeastern New Hampshire that:

- Creates a high quality built environment while protecting important natural and cultural resources.
- Promotes positive effects of development and minimizes adverse impacts.
- Promotes economic opportunities and community vitality.
- Enhances the coordination of planning between land use, transportation, housing and natural resources.
- Considers and incorporates climate change into local and regional planning efforts.

Federal Planning Factors

When developing the Long Range Transportation Plan and other transportation planning documents, the ten planning factors identified in 23 U.S. Code § 134 (23 C.F.R. Part 450.306 of the Planning Regulations) must be considered. Like the New Hampshire Livability Principles these provide broad-based guidance and apply to multiple aspects of the planning process. These planning factors were most recently updated in 2016 and are still current in 2025.

1. Support the economic viability of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation;
8. Emphasize preservation of the existing transportation system;
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation;
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

Performance-Based Approach

Performance-based planning methods are a Federal Requirement designed to help transform long-term, broad visions of the future into measurable goals and objectives, which can be used to guide decisions and measure success. There are a number of benefits to this approach:

- Improved decision-making regarding infrastructure investments
- Improved return on investments and resource allocation
- Improved system performance
- Increased accountability and transparency
- Demonstrates link between funding and system performance

This update to the Long Range Transportation Plan is the second attempt by the MPO to implement performance-based planning as required by the FAST Act of 2015. This work is completed in conjunction with a cooperative effort of the four New Hampshire MPOs to implement the 21 currently known and required federal performance measures, and to develop a common set of vetted supplemental performance measures, that can be utilized by MPOs as needed.

National Performance Goals

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and the subsequent Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, extended these planning factors by establishing seven National Goals for the Federal Aid Highway System. These national goals constitute a set of broad, overarching requirements that must be incorporated into planning documents and processes as a basis from which progress can be measured on solving the problems of the current transportation system.

1. Safety – To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
2. Infrastructure Condition – To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
3. Congestion Reduction – To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
4. System Reliability – To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
5. Freight Movement and Economic Vitality – To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
6. Environmental Sustainability – To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

7. Reduced Project Delivery Delays – To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies’ work practices.

National Performance Measures

Performance measures are utilized to assess progress towards meeting broad goals and objectives and define precisely how that progress will be measured. Within a performance based planning process, performance measures serve to clarify the definition of goals, monitor performance over time, are used as a reference point for target setting, form the basis of policy and investment decisions, and allow planners and the public to assess the effectiveness of projects and strategies in achieving goals and objectives.

The Federal Highway administration (17) and Federal Transit Administration (4) have established 21 required metrics (so far) that each MPO must utilize as part of the transportation planning process. These metrics focus on aspects of the National Performance Goals and covering the following areas:

- Pavement condition on the Interstate System and on remainder of the National Highway System (NHS)
- Performance of the Interstate System and the remainder of the NHS
- Bridge condition on the NHS
- Fatalities and serious injuries—both number and rate per vehicle mile traveled--on all public roads
- Traffic congestion
- On-road mobile source emissions
- Freight movement on the Interstate System
- Transit Asset Management
- Transit Safety

As required under the FAST Act, NHDOT has established performance targets for these measures for urbanized and rural areas in coordination with MPOs and public transportation providers. Subsequently the MPO has set targets within 180 days of the State, again in coordination with the State and public transportation providers.

MPO Goals & Performance Measures

The MPO has developed a set of goals based on the New Hampshire Livability Principles, the Regional Master Plan Vision and Goal, and the Federal Planning Factors and the National Goals for the Federal Aid Highway System as well as past iterations of the Long Range Transportation Plan. These goals are intended to aid in directing transportation funding and prioritizing regional transportation projects and for that reason have been coordinated with a set of performance measures for the transportation system.

The MPO goals were updated during the creation of the 2050 LRTP update in 2024. The intention of updating the goals was to reduce repetition and recognize the co-benefits and overlaps in goal performance areas. For example, former goal 9. Public Health was integrated throughout all the former goals since the outcomes of each goal area either directly or indirectly impact public health.

A Thriving Region: Goals that make our region a great place to live, work, and play.

Goal 1: Housing & Community Connection: The region's transportation system connects housing and opportunities for employment, education, healthcare, groceries, social interaction and other basic needs within walking, biking, and transit distances.

Goal 2: Access & Choice: The region's transportation system provides an efficient, reliable, convenient multimodal safe, accessible, network transportation options for all road users.

Goal 3: Energy & Environment: The region's transportation system respects, conserves, and preserves land, water, wildlife, energy, and other natural resources.

Quality Transportation System: Goals that ensure reliable system performance.

Goal 4: Safety & Security: The region's transportation system ensures safe travel for all road users during daily life & emergency scenarios.

Goal 5: Economic Vitality: The region's transportation system connects the workforce, enhances local business access, and supports an efficient, safe, reliable supply chain.

Goal 6: Well-Maintained & Resilient: The region's transportation system is planned, operated, and maintained to withstand emergency scenarios, wear and tear, and changing climate conditions.

Performance Measures and Targets

Performance measures and targets provide a direct and measurable connection between the regional goals as established in the Long Range Transportation Plan and specific desired outcomes. Federal regulations require that the MPO set targets in relation to the national performance measures described earlier in this chapter, and that those targets be included in any MPO Long Range Transportation Plan updates after May 1, 2018.

US DOT also encourages the inclusion of other metrics that reflect regional goals and priorities not covered under the national performance goals. In addition to the Federally mandated measures described in the previous section, the MPO maintains a set of supplemental measures that ensures that each of the MPO Transportation Goals has at least one metric to gauge progress against.

Figure 2-1 indicates which goals have Federal Performance Metrics as well as those for which supplemental measures are being developed in conjunction with the other New Hampshire MPOs. The supplemental measures adopted jointly by the four New Hampshire MPOs include the following:

1. Motorcycle Fatalities
2. Transportation Related GHG Emissions Per Capita
3. Remaining Useful Life for Transit Fleet Vehicles
4. Major Employers Served by Transit
5. Fixed Route Transit Ridership
6. Fixed Route Transit Ridership
7. Transit Fleet Using Alternative Fuels
8. General Public and Low Income Population Served by Transit

An additional measure of multi-modal network connectivity focused on low stress bicycle & pedestrian access is also in development following FHWA-sponsored research on Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress and Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress undertaken by the four New Hampshire MPOs in 2019-2020, and RPC and SRPC in 2024, respectively.

Methodologies for measuring and tracking these metrics have been developed, along with baseline data and trends. The most recently adopted targets & performance are available in **Appendix B: System Performance Report** available at www.theRPC.org/LRTP. Performance measures are still to be re-defined for several of the updated MPO Goals. The list of supplemental measures will be further refined with the MPO TAC throughout 2025.