

Dealing with Growth in Southern New Hampshire

The southern region of New Hampshire has seen considerable population growth over the past forty years. This is the result of several factors that include improved transportation infrastructure linking communities in the region to larger commercial centers in the Merrimack Valley in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The construction of the Interstate Highway system beginning in the mid-

1950's eventually brought I-93 to New Hampshire. The NHDOT recently received the "Record of Decision," or the approval to proceed, for the Salem-Manchester I-93 highway upgrade project.



Photo by Steve Hooper

A scene from Southern New Hampshire

Today, a NH Department of Transportation study indicates that the region influenced by I-93 may grow in population by nearly 25% by the year 2020, regardless of whether or not I-93 is widened. Widening of this highway may result in additional growth of 7% during the same timeframe.

Where and what form the growth takes within the I-93 region is largely a function of local land use policy and practice, as well as other factors in addition to transportation infrastructure.

Land use policy is the responsibility of local communities. To assist local community leaders to understand the scope and scale of development pressures affecting their towns, the NHDOT has

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Examples of Potential CTAP Technical Assistance: Resources and Tools for Communities in the I-93 Region

Training

- Training on the "basics" for Planning Boards, Zoning Boards of Adjustment, Selectmen and Council members, Conservation Commissions, and other community members.
- Advanced training for Planning Boards, Zoning Boards of Adjustment, Selectmen and Council members, and Conservation Commissions.

Technical Assistance

- Assistance to communities to assess and revise local zoning and land use regulations to achieve balanced community objectives.
- Assistance to better understand what information and resources are available, and examples of how this material can be used to improve the Master Plan, other planning efforts, zoning ordinances, local regulations, and the capital improvement plan.
- Specific technical assistance with planning

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I-93 Community Technical Assistance Program

CTAP



New Hampshire Communities Planning Together

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proposed a Community Technical Assistance Program – CTAP – to assist communities in the I-93 region with planning for growth.

The goal of the CTAP initiative is to develop a broad and comprehensive program to meet the wide range of growth challenges that face the 26 communities in this region. In order to achieve this challenge, it is hoped that a broad-based process can be created that involves representatives of local government, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and state and regional agencies. The initial step is to determine what and how resources and technical assistance will be provided to communities in the I-93 region. The process is expected to go from Fall of 2005 to Spring 2006. (See sidebar for details.)

“There is a close relationship between land use and transportation, and unplanned growth poses significant adverse effects on both.”

A variety of groups organized into three advisory committees will be participating in this planning process. The Corridor Community Committee will be made up of representatives from each of the communities in the I-93 region. The Agency Committee will be made up of representatives from

various state, federal and regional agencies that have jurisdiction over the region. Finally the Non-Governmental Advisory Committee will be made up of various nonprofits, businesses, and groups that are interested in the project.

It is envisioned that a Steering Committee made up of representatives from each of the three advisory committees will guide the overall process. Decisions made about the allocation of technical assistance and other resources to communities will be guided by the various committees and decided by the Steering Committee

with oversight by the NHDOT, which has overall responsibility for the project.

This project will last at least five years with \$3.5 million of financial support. ❖

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efforts (e.g. master planning, conservation planning, development planning, and transportation planning).

Public Information & Education Resources

- Information on the potential effects of growth on economic, social, and environmental resources and ways in which communities can better manage growth.
- Examination of alternative future “build-out” scenarios with estimated economic, social, and environmental consequences and benefits.
- World Wide Web access to Geographic Information System (GIS) data.

Innovative Demonstration Projects

- Resources for innovative projects.
- Coordination of municipal efforts for the purpose of achieving regional or sub-regional planning objectives. ❖

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For more info on the Salem-Manchester I-93 project, visit our web site: www.rebuildingI93.com