



STRAFFORD MPO METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

YEARS
**2026-
2050**

PUBLIC COMMENT DRAFT

Preparation of this report has been financed through funds received from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, and by the dues-paying members of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission.



Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Transportation in the Strafford Region	3
What is an MPO?.....	3
What is the MTP?	4
Regional Overview	7
Data Disclaimer	9
Shaping the MTP	10
MTP Vision, Themes, and Lenses	11
Alternatives to Driving.....	13
Trails.....	21
Commuting Connections	25
Safety	28
State of Good Repair.....	32
Financial Plan and Fiscal Constraint.....	36
Transportation Funding	36
Projected Transit Funding.....	41
Fiscal Constraint Calculations	44
Operations & Maintenance	50
Appendix A – Project lists_2025–2028 Transportation Improvement Program	
Appendix B – Project lists_Ten Year Transportation Plan (2029–2034)	
Appendix C – Project lists_Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2035–2045)	
Appendix D – Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies	
Appendix E – System Performance Report	
Appendix F: Transportation Partners and Initiatives	

Acknowledgements

TO BE ADDED

SRPC Staff

Strafford MPO Technical Advisory Committee

Strafford MPO Policy Committee

DRAFT

Transportation in the Strafford Region

What is an MPO?

In 1973, Congress created Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to promote cooperation among state agencies, organizations, and local cities and towns involved in regional transportation planning. An MPO can be established to represent any urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more (as defined by the decennial census). The MPO is governed by a board of representatives from municipalities and agencies it serves. United States law lays out the process for planning the transportation system ([23 CFR part 450.300-340](#)). The Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Census-designated Dover-Rochester, NH-ME urbanized area. It also serves many other communities outside the urbanized area for a total of 18 municipalities that comprise the Strafford region.

The “three C’s” are a foundational aspect of the regional transportation planning process. As described in federal law, that process should be:

Continuing: The transportation planning process is iterative.

Cooperative: The MPO planning process relies on cooperation and collaboration with many stakeholders.

Comprehensive: The planning process considers the widest reasonable range of factors affecting people and their transportation needs, now and in the future.

Through that process, states and MPOs must address several “planning factors”:

1. Support the **economic vitality** of the United States, the States, metropolitan areas, and nonmetropolitan areas, 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 throughout the State, for people and freight;
7. Promote **efficient** system management and operation;
8. Emphasize the **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; and
10. Enhance **travel** and **tourism**.

What is the MTP?

MPOs must develop long-range, multimodal plans for the development of the regional transportation system. Known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Metro Plan, or MTP), the plan must consider at least 20 years and include specific information about system performance, planned projects, and financial resources. The purpose of the Metro Plan is to guide regional transportation investments and must be updated every five years.

The 2026–2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the comprehensive transportation planning document for SRPC. It integrates perspectives on the environment and natural resources, economics, demographics, land use, infrastructure, housing, and public health. It includes an overall vision for the region’s future, affirms regional planning goals, determines strategies and time-bound targets for reaching those goals, and designates objective measures for tracking progress.

Performance-Based Planning: A Common Approach

Federal law also requires projects and funding to be programmed based on the observed performance of the system. The metro plan tracks several performance measures that inform planning and funding decisions for the region. These measures are included in the indicators section of the Metro Plan. Some of the performance measures are mandated by federal law and require all state Departments of Transportation and MPOs to set targets for each of the measures.

There are seven national performance goals to be tracked by MPOs, which overlap with many of the core themes in the Metro Plan and are reflected in Strafford MPO's project development and selection practices:

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.

In addition to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) performance goal areas are four Federal Transit Administration:

1. **Rolling Stock**—The percentage of revenue vehicles (by type) that exceed the useful life benchmark (ULB).
2. **Equipment**—The percentage of non-revenue service vehicles (by type) that exceed the ULB.
3. **Facilities**—The percentage of facilities (by group) that are rated less than 3.0 on the Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) Scale.
4. **Infrastructure**—The percentage of track segments (by mode) that have performance restrictions. Track segments are measured to the nearest 0.01 of a mile. (This measure does not apply to the Strafford region because it does not contain any rail infrastructure that qualifies under federal regulations.)

SRPC has developed a separate System Performance report as a companion document to the MTP. You can read the most recent system performance report in Appendix E.

DRAFT

Regional Overview

According to the New Hampshire Office of Planning & Development (OPD), the combined population of Strafford Regional Planning Commission's 18 municipalities is projected to increase from 156,145 in 2020 to about 167,784 in 2030. Rising populations will increase the demand for services and impact the transportation system. The cost of living and critical services has risen over the past decades, but incomes have not kept pace. Strafford County's minimum wage is currently three times lower than the living wage, and five times lower than the median household income. There are approximately 3,700 households across the region with incomes below minimum wage (average of 103 households per municipality). Households with low incomes are spread throughout the region, however, people living in rural communities, especially those working in lower wage jobs likely have longer commutes and higher transportation costs. For example, hotel, retail, and restaurant jobs are concentrated in urbanized communities where low-wage earners may be unable to afford housing.

Throughout New Hampshire, the cost and availability of housing have pushed many people farther from employment concentrations in search of affordable housing. The cost of housing is increasing demand on the transportation system. Meanwhile, public transit services like the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) and other demand-response services remain inadequately funded by the state to cover a wide area or increase the number of buses running.

The region's population of people over 65 continues to rise along with the rest of the state. Older adults' daily transportation needs continue, yet their ability to drive independently may decrease. While COAST fixed route ridership returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2026, demand for COAST's transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities increased 122% in that same time. State and federal funding for public transit have not increased at the same rate as demand.

The region hosts passenger rail and inter-city bus services. The Amtrak Downeaster has high ridership but is unable to grow because of current track capacity limitations and shared use with freight trains. Despite having the state's richest mix of public transit services, the region is predominantly rural. Historic development patterns, lack of significant state support for public

transit, and other factors make personal vehicles the dominant form of transportation.

Rising traffic volumes, heavy freight, and construction vehicles, cause significant damage to roadways and contribute to maintenance costs. Infrastructure is also being increasingly impacted by sea level rise and storm surge. Of the region's 262 active dams, 82 dams are structurally deficient and their failure could result in the destruction of houses or roads, ranging from interstates to local or private roads. Despite all these increasing strains on transportation systems, revenues to repair and expand them are flat.



Figure 1 - Removal of the Gonic dam in November 2025 (SRPC)

SRPC must also meet requirements in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As a forum for regional decision-making, SRPC has a responsibility to create opportunities for participation and to reflect the greatest possible range of perspectives of people living in the region. The Metro Plan cannot be an effective document without considering the diverse experiences and transportation needs of the region's residents – especially people who are traditionally underrepresented in decisions affecting their livelihoods.

Two documents define SRPC's responsibilities, process, and goals for public participation and civil rights:

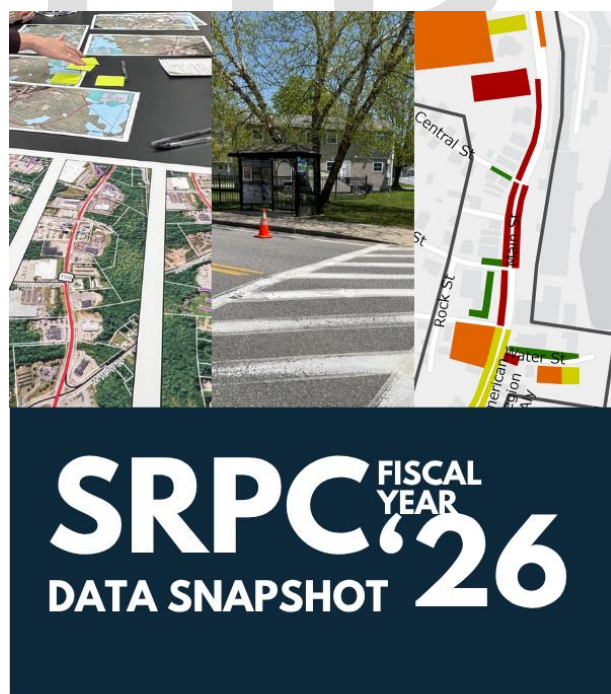
Public Participation Plan (straaffordrpcnh.gov/engage/civil-rights/) and the Nondiscrimination Plan (straaffordrpcnh.gov/docs/nondiscrimination-plan/)

Data Disclaimer

It is important to note that data cannot always be analyzed for the exact Strafford MPO region if the original source data is compiled for different geographies. When data for the Strafford MPO is not available, Strafford County be used as an approximation, but data is also provided for Carroll and Rockingham Counties where possible. When regional sources are limited, state or national data is used as needed.

SRPC conducts region-wide analysis of over 160 data metrics each year for a variety of projects and plans, including the MTP. This analysis, called the Regional Data Snapshot, covers demographics, economic vitality, livability and quality of life, mobility and accessibility, and resiliency. It is updated every year, with additional metrics added as they are developed.

The 2026 Data Snapshot contains many of the metrics discussed in this document, will be referenced throughout the MTP, and can be found at <https://straffordrpcnh.gov/measure/data-snapshot/>.



ACCEPTED:

STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

Shaping the MTP

The Metro Plan was prepared in 2026 as part of a parallel update to the Regional Master Plan that is required of Regional Planning Commissions under New Hampshire law ([RSA 36](#)).

The 2026-2050 Metro Plan is shaped through robust engagement and analysis of the region's strengths, opportunities, and challenges. In April 2025, SRPC convened regional partners and stakeholders for a multidisciplinary workshop that covered land use, transportation, and economic development topics. At this workshop, feedback was provided on what the region's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results related to economic development are through an interactive strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) activity. Participants also brainstormed potential strategies and action items and discussed their relative feasibility.

SRPC also conducted a region-wide public survey in 2025 that gathered feedback from 353 people on various topics, including transportation, economic development, and housing. Alongside these survey efforts, SRPC staff conducted seven events around the region and led conversations with eight municipal planning boards from late-2025 through early 2026. These efforts gathered in-person feedback on land use, transportation, and economic development topics.

Multiple central themes were identified in the outreach results and guided development of the Metro Plan. They are described below.



Figure 2 - Outreach in Barrington (SRPC)

MTP Vision, Themes, and Lenses

Vision Statement:

The Strafford region will be defined by a resilient, modern, and well-maintained transportation system that gives people safe options for reaching their destinations and supports local economies.

The Regional Plan Subcommittee, Policy Committee, and SRPC staff identified five themes for the 2026-2050 MTP that collectively support the vision for the region. Along with the identification of these themes, goal statements were developed for each of these themes which support region's transportation vision.

Theme 1: Alternatives to Driving

Goal Statement: An interconnected, multimodal, efficient, safe, and accessible public transportation system that can move high volumes of people to a variety of trip destinations.

Theme 2: Trails

Goal Statement: A connected, safe, and accessible trail network that acts as an economic engine for the region, connects members of the community, and contributes to town identity and culture.

Theme 3: Commuting Connections

Goal Statement: An interconnected community that decreases reliance on personal vehicle travel by decreasing distances between homes and services, employment, and destinations.

Theme 4: Safety

Goal Statement: A safe transportation system that prioritizes hazard mitigation over volume, convenience, or speed and uses infrastructure to promote safer driving, reduces risks, and provides security for all community members.

Theme 5: State of Good Repair

Goal Statement: Upkept, cared for, and maintained infrastructure that supports the regional economy, remains resilient, and uses best practices to increase the safety and lifespan of transportation corridors.

These lenses are **overarching principles** that will impact many, if not all, of the themes above.

Regional Partnerships and Collaboration: Strengthen collaborative, regional decision-making to advance the transportation system.

Resiliency and Future Readiness: Increase the region's ability to anticipate, withstand, adapt to, and recover from impacts to transportation infrastructure.

Quality of Life and Community Identity: Develop a transportation network that connects people to what they need and helps communities thrive.

Age Friendliness: Ensuring that all community members can reach their desired destinations and live a life with dignity.

DRAFT

Alternatives to Driving

Interconnected, multimodal transportation infrastructure is an essential component of prosperous communities. Southeastern New Hampshire has one of the richest multi-modal mixes of transportation options in the state. A personal vehicle is still all-but essential; however, the Strafford Region has still expressed a need for improvement for those who seek a car-free, or even “car-light” lifestyle. As demand rises for passenger rail, bus, and alternatives to driving, regional collaboration, focused development, and funding efforts are more important than ever in ensuring safety and accessibility for all ages.

Fixed Route Bus Service

Fixed-route bus service has the potential to move high volumes of people efficiently and safely. However, fixed-route systems cannot serve a broad rural area and at high frequencies (e.g. every 15 minutes). Diverse local development patterns and gaps in state financial support also constrict public transit throughout New Hampshire.



Figure 3 - COAST bus in Somersworth (SRPC)

The primary providers of fixed-route transit in the region are the Cooperative Alliance for Seacoast Transportation (COAST) and the University of New Hampshire’s Wildcat Transit (Wildcat Transit). COAST serves eight towns with fixed-route and para-transit service: Dover, Farmington, Newington, Portsmouth (and Pease), Rochester, and Somersworth, New Hampshire; Berwick, Kittery, Maine. In FY25, COAST provided 411,467 rides covering 2,708,901 miles. Wildcat Transit is a public service designed to transport

students, faculty, and staff near the Durham campus and from Dover and Portsmouth. Route 3 to Dover had a ridership of 18,353 in 2025, a 7% decrease from 2024. The Campus Connector route had a ridership of 292,608, a 9% increase from 2024. These ridership trends for Wildcat Transit have been consistent for several years and can be explained by a significant increase in student housing around Durham. Wildcat Transit has yet to reach pre-2020 ridership, while COAST nearly met pre-pandemic ridership in 2025.^{1 2}

COAST is a federally funded transit provider and receives matching funds from the state and from the municipalities in its service area. COAST has raised most of the \$19.5 million required for a new administrative, operations, and maintenance facility in Dover. This funding comes from a mix of sources. The State of New Hampshire provided \$1.6 million to support public transit operations in FY2026. Once divided among the state's eleven providers, \$387,271 of this was allotted to COAST.³ New Hampshire provides the least financial support of the northeastern states and remains in the bottom three for the whole country.⁴ Wildcat Transit operations are funded by UNH students and they apply for federal and state grants for bus replacement and capital projects.

Public transportation provides residents of the Strafford region with critical access to jobs, healthcare, education, groceries, and other necessities. COAST's fixed network route has 441 stops, and Wildcat Transit's network has 143 stops. Transit routes are designed to connect populated areas. Some stops are located in accessible and walkable areas, however, sidewalks, crosswalks, street lighting, and pedestrian safety measures are inconsistent along routes. For example, an important bus stop at a healthcare center along NH108 (one of the region's busiest roads) has no pedestrian crossing facilities.

¹ COAST and UNH Wildcat Transit.

² SRPC, 2026 Data Snapshot (2026).

docs.straaffordrpcnh.gov/documents/plans/rpc/datasnapshot_2026.pdf

³ COAST, FY2026 Budget (2025).

⁴ AASHTO, Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation for FY 2023 (2025).



Figure 4 - No pedestrian facilities across NH108 near an important healthcare center

Sidewalks

Much work has been done to improve pedestrian facilities for more users to safely and comfortably access public transportation. SRPC and neighboring Rockingham Planning Commission recently conducted a regional Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) assessment along transit routes to evaluate accessibility.⁵ PLTS analysis includes factors presence and condition of sidewalks, speed and volume of vehicle traffic, and pedestrian crossing conditions to rank roads according to pedestrian comfort and safety. This tool can be used to identify roads and crossings with the greatest need for pedestrian improvements to enable more people to safely access public transit. SRPC reviewed the PLTS analysis with the City of Dover and made recommendations to enhance consideration of sidewalk connectivity and safety when new developments are being considered by the planning board. The region's sidewalk network is extensive, but tends to be concentrated within or near urbanized communities. Sidewalks need to be designed to create pedestrian safety and comfort to the maximum extent possible. This is particularly important at crossings, where elements like curb extensions and flashing beacons increase pedestrian visibility. Extending the sidewalk network is important for increasing people's ability to make more local trips on-foot, including recreational trips. However, the up-front capital and maintenance costs of sidewalks are a significant barrier to small municipalities. SRPC regularly works with municipalities to find ways to improve pedestrian networks on rural roads without building sidewalks.

⁵ SRPC & RPC, Seacoast Transit Stop Accessibility Study (2025). straffordrpcnh.gov/docs/seacoast-transit-stop-accessibility-study/

Passenger Rail

The only passenger rail system in the region is the Amtrak Downeaster. The rail line is owned by CSX and the Downeaster service is operated by the New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA). Funding for the Downeaster is primarily sourced from federal grants, the State of Maine, and fare revenue. Dover and Durham own and operate local Amtrak stations in cooperation with NNEPRA. The Downeaster stops in Durham and Dover are busy with people traveling to Boston and Portland, Maine. The Downeaster provides around 50,000 trips per month.⁶ Despite its popularity, the Downeaster cannot meet its full potential without regional collaboration and state investment. The regional rail network is shared by passenger and freight service but capacity is restricted by infrastructure capacity. For example, a section of track in Dover and Rollinsford has older rails that require trains to reduce speeds by half. Most of the bridges in the region are not tall enough to allow freight train cars to stack more than one container vertically (known as “double stacking”). In 2025, NNEPRA embarked on major capital improvements in neighboring Maine communities to address this, including a renovation of the station in Wells, ME.⁷ CSX, who owns the rail infrastructure, upgraded all rail crossings in the region in 2025. The Town of Newmarket, NH and SRPC have discussed the feasibility of a local Amtrak stop. The town owns an ideal site along the tracks and local outreach shows that support is high. Viability of a passenger rail stop in Newmarket depends on increasing the capacity of the regional rail network and completing track upgrades outside Newmarket.



Figure 5 - Historic UNH passenger rail station

⁶ NNEPRA, Monthly Ridership History (2026). nnepra.com/reports-stats/reports/

⁷ NNEPRA, Wells Area Improvement Project: Project Overview (2025). nnepra.com/project/wells-area-improvement-project-2/

Paratransit and Age Friendliness

Paratransit options provide transportation services for adults over 65 and people with disabilities. Individuals can schedule rides with various providers depending on the purpose of their trip. The region is unique for having a central ride scheduling and call center called [TripLink](#). People seeking transportation can schedule rides through multiple providers, including COAST's paratransit services, Community Action Partnership of Strafford County, Ready Rides, and Meals on Wheels of Rockingham County. Paratransit ridership returned to normal levels much faster than that of the fixed route bus network and has exceeded up to 122% of its pre-pandemic levels.⁸ Paratransit services have higher operational costs than traditional fixed routes. People are more likely to need or seek transportation assistance as they age. The population over 60 is the fastest growing age group. This will continue as the remainder of the Baby Boomers (60+ in 2024) reach 65 over the next 5 years⁹.

Provider	Destination Type	Accessible vehicles/seating?	Reservation required?	Availability	Trip Purpose	Cost (one-way)
COAST paratransit	Door-to-door	Yes	Yes	Monday to Saturday	Any purpose	\$1.50 to \$3.00
Ready Rides	Curb-to-curb	On request	Yes	Weekdays	Medical	Free
Meals on Wheels	Door-to-door	No	Yes	Monday, Friday	Meals, shopping, medical	Free
Future in Sight	Curb-to-curb	No	Yes	7 days per week	Medical, some shopping	Free**
Community Rides	Curb-to-curb	Yes	Yes	Monday; Wednesday to Saturday	Non-emergency medical	Free

*Within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of bus stop on the COAST network.

**Statewide service; for active members only.

⁸ COAST and SRPC.

⁹ SRPC's Regional Data Snapshot

https://docs.straffordrpcnh.gov/documents/plans/rpc/datasnapshot_2026.pdf

Bicycling

Individual municipalities have local roads that include facilities for bicycles, but the region generally lacks bikeable routes that safely connect communities. SRPC works actively with municipalities and agencies to expand and connect local routes for bicycling and walking. See more detail in SRPC's [2024 Active Transportation Plan](#).

SRPC maintains data on the bicycle level of traffic stress (BLTS) for the region's roads¹⁰. The most recent update found that approximately 375 miles of road are moderately or highly stressful for cyclists. This is indicative of road with high vehicle speeds, narrow or no shoulders, and high traffic volumes.

Designation of the official state bicycle routes in 2000 did not consider factors like vehicle speed or shoulders that affect cyclist safety and comfort. Consequently, they were designated on many routes with BLTS scores in these categories of "moderate or high stress." High speed roads, like US Route 202 and NH Route 9 in Northwood and Barrington and US Route 4 in Nottingham and Lee (including the Lee Traffic Circle) are state-designated bicycle routes.

Some communities have installed their own visual cues, signage, or other indications of bicycle activity on these roads, such as the Bay Road/Durham Point Road loop in Newmarket and Durham. The state has also

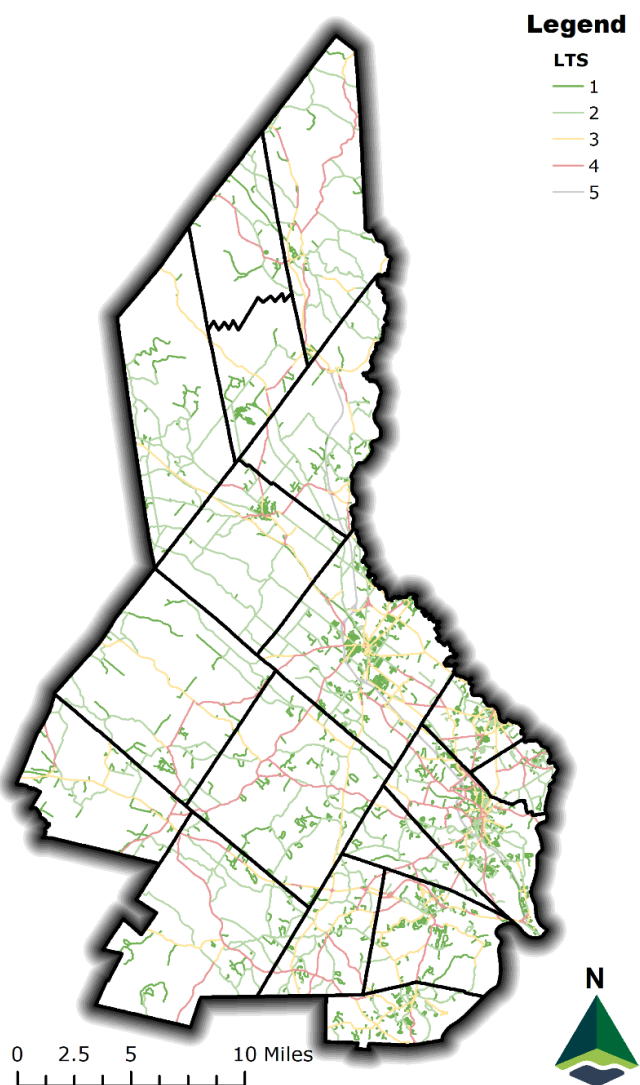


Figure 6 - Bicycle level of traffic stress analysis

¹⁰ SRPC's Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Interactive Map: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9971de5e693c4dc0bc8b025233320689/page/About>

shown interest in improvements, such as the installation of a sidewalk and widened shoulder along Route 108 in Newmarket and south Durham, and a future Complete Streets renovation of Route 108 corridor across Rochester, Somersworth, and Dover, despite both sections of Route 108 not being a designated bike route.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has indicated a commitment to mapping roads according to their BLTS scores and phasing out these routes. For the purposes of multi-municipal bicycle linkages and planning, SRPC welcomes any state- or region-wide discussion of re-designating bicycle routes, with a focus on potential signage and a commitment to public education.

In communities and bicycle settings of all types, community members of all ages and abilities have advocated for bike lanes to be separated from traffic for protection. Electric powered “E-bikes” now allow individuals to take longer trips and are quickly being adopted for recreational and commuting trips. However, the technology has rapidly evolved and more study is needed on the design of roads and rail trails to accommodate these vehicles that are capable of travel at near vehicle speeds but are operated on the edge of a road like a standard bicycle.

Goal Statement

An interconnected, multimodal, efficient, safe, and accessible public transportation system that can move high volumes of people to a variety of trip destinations.

Objectives and Strategic Direction

Expand Local Transit Accessibility

- Address local planning regulation restrictions to transportation access.
- Improve connectivity between modes.
- Improve bus system infrastructure like stop shelters, highway routes, and accessibility.

Facilitate Paratransit and On-Demand Transportation Coordination

- Identify least-served trip type in demand-response services and reduce that deficit.

Enhance Passenger Rail

- Identify steps needed to increase passenger rail frequency through the region.
- Reduce gaps and barriers in pedestrian network.
- Develop a passenger rail stop in Newmarket.

DRAFT

Trails

Trail systems are integrative assets whose benefits are seen throughout the community. A footpath through the woods, multiuse rail trail, or paved pathway can act as an economic engine, offer a safer and less expensive alternative to sidewalks, contribute to regional identity, and connect members of a community. The Strafford Region has trails in all 18 of its municipalities, with great potential for growth and utilization. It was identified as a theme within this iteration of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, as community stakeholders and transportation leaders seek to re-frame trails as a defined mode of transportation just like our highways and public transportation. This is in addition to, rather than in contrast to, trails' known recreational uses and features. Tourism and use of trails by visitors certainly make trails a powerful economic mechanism nonetheless, and their increased use and visibility leads to further advocacy and planning within the greater regional transportation network.

Various Trail User Counts Around the Region			
Trail Name	Location, Community	Weekday Average Daily Users	Weekend Average Daily Users
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	Pike Brook, Brookfield	140	159
Farmington Rail Trail	Meetinghouse Hill Road, Farmington	27	27
Dover Community Trail	Fisher Street-Silver Street, Dover	438	440
Loiselle Conservation Area	Trail Entrance, Newmarket	15	22
Scoutland	Front Street Entrance, Rollinsford	37 (Winter)	51 (Winter)
		67 (Summer)	83 (Summer)
Somersworth Riverwalk	Main Entrance, Somersworth	17 (Winter)	20 (Winter)
		40 (Summer)	54 (Summer)
Willand Pond	High Street Entrance, Somersworth	180	174
Blue Job State Forest	First Crown Point Road Trailhead, Strafford/Farmington	87	201

Typologies and Differentiations

Communities have expressed caution or outright aversion to adding sidewalks along streets as a result of safety concerns, municipal responsibility, or an existing lack of connectivity, among other reasons. Trails can be a less expensive alternative to sidewalks that contribute to a rural town's character and are more comfortable for a wide range of people. Trails come in many varieties: an unmaintained footpath through the woods, a multiuse rail trail, a paved path parallel to a local road or highway, and many others. They can be multi-use; accommodating combinations of walking, biking, mobility devices, strollers, and horses. Lastly, changes and expansions to trails become quite complex when ownership and maintenance arrangements are considered.

Rail Trails Around the Region			
Trail Name	Former RR Corridor	Owned By	Maintained By
Farmington Rail Trail	Lakeport/ Farmington Branch	State	DNCR
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	Wolfeboro RR	State	DNCR
Rockingham Rail Trail	Portsmouth Branch	State	DNCR
Dover Community Trail	Portsmouth & Dover RR	City of Dover	City of Dover

Trails are Economic Engines

The economic impacts of trails are broadly considered under the umbrella of tourism. Some communities in the Strafford Region self-describe as day-trip destinations in contrast to their overnight, weekend, or weeklong counterparts found in the Lakes Region or White Mountains. The state's 2022 Rail Trail Plan suggested that the state's rail trails could contribute about \$40.71 per out-of-state visitor from spending in transportation, food and drink, overnight accommodation, equipment, and other purchases.

Trails can also be utilized as a means of commuting. Rail trails, such as the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, provide safe and reliable routes for active transportation commuting.



Figure 7 - Cotton Valley Rail Trail

Land Use and Site Planning

Trails can be a powerful mechanism for community connection and identity, but land use and planning processes have barriers. There are opportunities for inter-community trail development, such as between Durham and Newmarket, but the process takes a long time and requires consent from many individual land owners. Sizing sites is important in ensuring that smaller communities maintain their character. Regulations and policies pose many obstacles to establishment as well. Requirements within conservation subdivision regulations and local conservation commission policies may limit multi-use trails. Many policies and conservation easements limit use to walking. In order for trails to be utilized to the full potential, barriers need to be lifted for development.

Safety and Education

Trails should be accessible and enjoyable for all populations. Women, children, and other vulnerable populations must feel safe while using recreational assets. Factors like lighting, emergency services, and proper trail markers can aid in increasing safety. Education is another important factor; exercise stations and books along trails can keep children engaged and knowledgeable about the community's trails. Booklets at trail heads outlining trail etiquette, way finding, and safety precautions can help keep trail users safe and educated as they enjoy trails.

Goal Statement

A connected, safe, and accessible trail network that acts as an economic engine for the region, connects members of the community, and contributes to town identity and culture.

Objectives and Strategic Direction

Connectivity and Accessibility

- Increase trails and connectivity within and between municipalities. Identify corridors and what type of easements are needed, with potential founding of an exploratory committee as a follow-up.
- Promote local and state-maintained trails as modes of transportation by expanding connectivity, access, education, uses, and safety for all populations.
- Increase knowledge of trail usage and etiquette through signage, social media, and seasonal events, such as Bike & Walk to Work Day, the local CommuteSmart challenges, etc.
- Promote multi-use conservation policies that allow recreation and trails.
- Expand community knowledge on trail locations, uses, and etiquette. Increase data collection to publicize use and value of trails.

Upkeep & Safety

- Ensure safety for all populations along trails.
- Support communities developing trail projects.
- Maintain the quality and conditions of new and existing trails.
- Increase data collection to publicize use and value of trails.

Commuting Connections

The proximity of housing to one's job is a primary determining factor in the type of transportation they utilize. The farther this distance, the more people are reliant on a personal vehicle to get to their destination. This puts strain on the transportation system through congestion, parking demand, and maintenance. More people may be looking for housing in rural communities because of higher housing costs near employment concentrations in urban communities, which increases their commuting distance. About 89,000 people in the SRPC region are part of the workforce, but the region has only 55,000 jobs, meaning that a significant proportion of residents are commuting outside of the region for work. SRPC strives to have an interconnected community that decreases reliance on personal vehicle travel by decreasing distances between homes, and services, employment, and other important destinations.

Affordability

Housing is intertwined with several other aspects of community well-being, like economy, healthcare, the environment, and transportation. In a recent survey conducted by SRPC, 67.5% of employers in the region indicated that there are "very limited housing options" in the area around their business. According to 2022 data from the Housing and Transportation Cost Index, transportation and housing costs account for nearly 40% of typical household income in the region¹¹. Many developers feel that they cannot provide affordable housing because of the lack of return on their investment; there is an ongoing initiative to find ways to encourage and incentivize affordable housing options. In order to retain workers and reduce strain on personal vehicle infrastructure, distances between affordable housing, service destinations, and employment have to decrease.

Zoning, Land Use, and Infill Development

There are many opportunities to make these improvements. Developments such as mixed-use, mixed-family housing, sidewalks, crosswalks, and streetlights face regulatory barriers. Resources like Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) analyses, can assist municipalities in targeting pedestrian safety and connectivity improvements. Increased density with mixed-use development and walkable town centers can help municipalities to balance environmental priorities and preserve rural character. Infill and reuse

¹¹ The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) <https://htaindex.cnt.org/>

strategies to achieve this can be held back by local ordinances and zoning. Communities like Dover and Newmarket have developed local street typologies that identify ideal street designs for various contexts (e.g. a neighborhood street vs. a downtown street). Somersworth is updating their zoning ordinance with the goal of increasing infill and redevelopment within the city center.

Denser and mixed-use development patterns allow public transit to serve more people more efficiently by concentrating housing, employment, and other essential destinations in downtowns and along transportation corridors. COAST connects urbanized areas and job centers throughout the region. UNH Wildcat service is designed to bring university staff, faculty, and students from Dover and Portsmouth to the region's largest single employer. On-campus routes are designed to eliminate the need for students to use a personal vehicle for local needs.

Lifestyle and Remote work

In the Strafford region, a personal vehicle is all-but essential. Living "car free" or "car light" is challenging but more people are looking for ways to reduce usage and ownership of personal vehicles. People may use a full range of ride-share services, carpooling, public transportation, and walking and cycling. Seacoast CommuteSMART is an organization that supports and encourages commuting alternatives to driving alone. The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically changed commuting patterns and shifted companies toward telework. However, many have called workers back to the office.

Commute Times

Several counties in the SRPC region have an average commute time of 30-60 minutes, with Lee and Middleton having the highest percentages of commute times above 90 minutes. As the region grows and demand on the transportation system increases, so will air pollution, travel times, safety hazards, and road maintenance costs. Many residents of the region travel over an hour to jobs around Concord and Manchester. US route 4, NH route 202 and US route 101 are the only primary routes to those destinations and east-west public transit services are non-existent except for specific services.

Goal Statement

An interconnected community that decreases reliance on personal vehicle travel by decreasing distances between homes and services, employment, and destinations.

Objectives and Strategic Direction

Decrease Commute Times and Emissions

- Decrease the effective distance between housing and essential services and destinations.
- Improve bike paths and promote their use as a safe and easy alternative mode of transportation.
- Identify and implement methods to decrease commute times and congestion.
- Participate in CommuteSmart Seacoast as a program to incentivize alternatives to driving alone for commutes.

Enhance Community Character and Vibrancy

- Promote mixed use and multi-family development along transit routes and major corridors.
- Improve downtown transportation infrastructure to stimulate economic development.
- Offer more technical assistance for developing local land use regulations that decrease household transportation costs.

Safety

Strafford RPC has established an aspirational but necessary goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries from motor vehicle crashes on public roads in the region. This matches the “vision zero” policy adopted by NHDOT and many other states, MPOs, and municipalities.

The Safe System Approach includes six principles and defines the overall strategy for achieving zero fatalities and serious injuries:

Deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable and the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries should be prioritized.

Humans make mistakes and the transportation system should be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.

Humans are vulnerable and the transportation system should be designed and operated in a manner that accommodates physical human vulnerabilities.

Safety is proactive and tools are available to help prevent crashes rather than reacting only when they occur.

Redundancy is crucial and risk can be reduced by strengthening the system so that when one part fails other parts still protect people.

Responsibility is shared and all stakeholders are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries.

Specific safety objectives and strategies are identified in SRPC’s 2025 Regional Safety Action Plan¹² that examined crashes that occurred between 2018 and 2022. Its focus was on crashes that resulted in fatalities and serious injuries. There were 65 fatal crashes in the region between 2018 and 2022. Many crashes have multiple, overlapping factors, which need to be analyzed carefully to design effective countermeasures. Five “Emphasis Areas” in the safety action plan outline primary factors affecting transportation safety in the region:

¹² https://straffordrpcnh.gov/uploads/documents/plans/mpo/sap_2025.pdf

- Roadway departure was a factor in 67% (44) of fatal crashes. Additional analysis is needed to determine how roadway departures occurred and if they were before or after initial crashes.
- People not wearing their seatbelt or wearing it incorrectly (“occupant protection”) was a factor in 48% (31) of fatal crashes.
- Speed and aggressive driving were factors in 34% (22) of fatal crashes.
- Approximately 65% of all crashes involving “vulnerable motorized users” (motorcycles and mopeds) resulted in a fatal, serious, or minor injury.
- Approximately 64% of all crashes involving “vulnerable non-motorized users” (pedestrians and bicyclists) resulted in a fatal, serious, or minor injury.

Federal and state programs exist to fund safety improvement projects where fatal or serious injury crashes have occurred, or a community wants to make a route safer for users. One such program is the Road Safety Audit program through NHDOT. Wherever crashes have caused fatalities or serious injuries on any public road, a municipality can apply for a road safety audit through a simple application to NHDOT. The application requires a detailed diagram of crashes and local police records are critical. For more information of the road safety audit process contact SRPC and visit the [NHDOT Safety Section webpage](#).



Figure 8 - Roundabout design for US4 and Madbury Rd intersection (NHDOT)

Having resources for municipalities to react quickly to a critical road safety hazard is important. However, SRPC is also focused on finding proactive approaches safety improvements. The Safety Action Plan enables SRPC to work with public safety officers and officials to strategically develop safety improvements before crashes occur.

Human behavior is a primary factor in crashes, however, the design of roads and streets plays a significant role in affecting driver behavior. Roads need to be designed based on their context to better manage vehicle speed. Many municipalities are developing or have developed local road guidelines that establish specific designs for specific land use types and conditions. Physical infrastructure such as curbing should be prioritized over paint and signs for managing vehicle speeds. Additionally, increasing public transportation ridership also increases transportation safety but getting more individual drivers off the road.

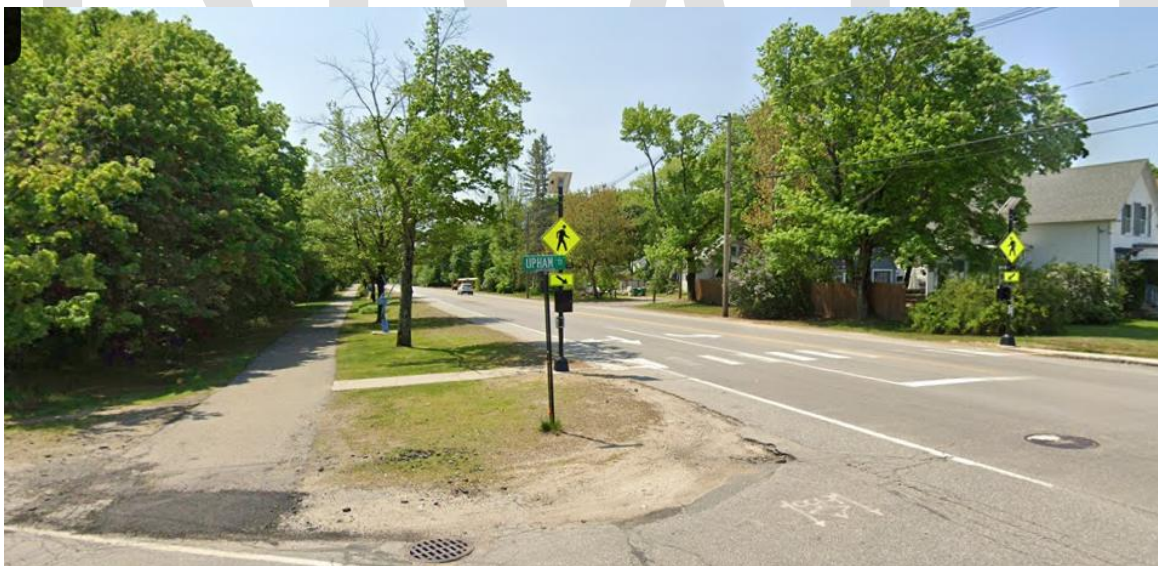


Figure 9 - Rochester recreation trail

Goal Statement

A transportation system that prioritizes safety over volume, convenience, or speed, and uses infrastructure to promote safer driving, reduces risks, and security for all users.

Objectives and Strategic Direction

Adopt a Safe Systems Approach

- Prioritize and implement projects in the regional Safety Action Plan.

- Implement safety demonstration projects.

Reduce Crashes & Serious Injuries

- Achieve zero deaths and serious injuries on public highways.
- Reduce vehicles speeds in commercial centers and neighborhoods.
- Encourage policy decision makers to expand drivers' education to include winter conditions preparation, defense driving, and emergency preparation tactic to keep drivers safe.
- Spread awareness to policy makers of the dangerously high-speed limits in downtown and village centers to encourage legislation change

Ensure Safe & Welcoming Pedestrian & Transit Spaces

- Promote adoption of local street design guides.
- Separate pedestrian traffic from vehicle traffic.
- Improve lighting in areas designed for pedestrian activity.

State of Good Repair

Pavement and Bridge Conditions

At a regional scale, the highway network is in good condition. The National Highway System (NHS) includes 2105 lane miles in the SRPC region. 2024 data show that 87.1% of NHS pavements on the were in fair or good condition, with 11.6% in poor condition (the condition of 1.3% of NHS roads was unknown). This does not include pavement conditions on local roads. SRPC conducts local Road Surface Management System (RSMS) analysis to help communities develop multi-year paving plans. The analysis results in maintenance plans to help communities keep roads in good condition with low-cost treatments that avoid major road rebuilds.

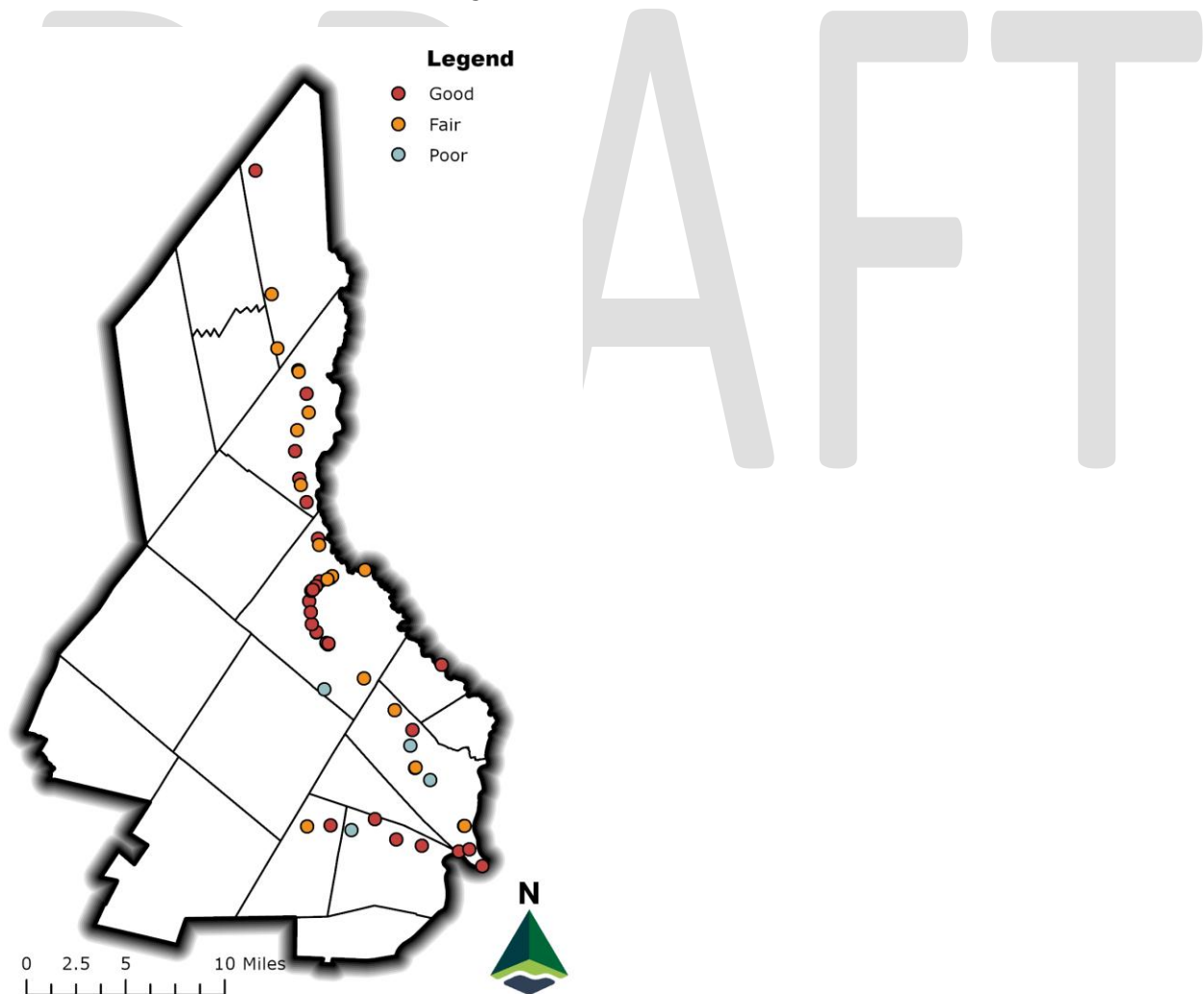


Figure 10 - Bridge conditions on the National Highway System

In 2025, 97% of the 70 bridges on the NHS were in good or fair condition, with only 3% in poor condition. The region has a total of 31 bridges on the “red list” (17 locally-owned and 14 state-owned bridges). Bridges on the red-list are inspected twice annually. It does not mean that a bridge is in critical condition, but is an indication of its overall condition.

At the state and local level, revenues are not matching the rising costs for maintaining critical transportation infrastructure. Because of the cost of construction, municipalities and the state are having to defer larger infrastructure projects to not fall behind on maintenance. Yet, simply maintaining the current highway system is unsustainable given increased demand from daily traffic volumes and freight, and increasing threats from climate change. Sea level rise, extreme heat, and flooding from more frequent violent storms are some of the factors affecting transportation infrastructure. Upgrading the system to meet those challenges will require significant investment.

A more regional approach to maintaining and improving the transportation system is needed as revenues lag behind costs and demands and impacts continue to increase. The cost and responsibility of maintaining individual pieces of infrastructure (such as a bridge) falls to individual municipalities that may not have the resources to maintain or replace the infrastructure. Yet, that infrastructure may be critical for daily, regional travel and commerce. More regional investment in the transportation system will be required to meet the needs of the coming decades.

Large commercial and mixed-use developments increase demand on the transportation system and should play a larger role in funding improvements. This could be done at the corridor level; even small developments could include contributions to a fund that supports maintenance and improvements to the corridor where they’re located.

COAST and UNH Wildcat Transit face similar challenges with the rising cost of maintaining and replacing vehicles in their fleets. Transit fleets are routinely updated, but in 2024, UNH and COAST had combined fleet of 39 large transit buses. Twelve (31%) of those vehicles had surpassed their “useful life benchmark”. That number was expected to reach 16 (41%) by 2026. Useful life benchmark is a measure of average expected number of service years of a vehicle before it reaches a condition rating of 2.5 (out of 5). For a full-sized transit bus, that is 14 years. UNH and COAST regularly maintain their vehicles and get many more miles and years out of them. COAST has transitioned much of its fleet to smaller buses that are more nimble and easier to maintain. They are also raising funds for a new maintenance, administrative, and fleet storage facility. UNH has transitioned most of its fleet to natural gas powered buses and upgraded its natural gas fueling station in 2026.



Figure 11 - COAST facility plans and delivery of CNG fueling equipment to UNH (source: COAST and UNH)

Goal Statement

Cared for and maintained infrastructure that supports the regional economy, remains resilient, and uses best practices to increase the safety and lifespan of transportation corridors.

Objectives and Strategic Direction

Maintain Existing Roads Before Expanding the Network

- Develop a regional corridor improvement funding approach with a consistent source.
- Increase regional collaboration for infrastructure maintenance and improvement.
- Explore road use changes to expand the lifetime of roads.
- Think about the reduction of heavy use for trucks on small roads. Think about how the use changes the lifespan of roads.
- Encourage best practices for road development and investment to decrease maintenance frequency and cost.

Support Local Infrastructure

- Increase engagement and interest in capital improvement planning.
- Conduct local parking studies to support local parking planning.
- Focus on infrastructure improvements that reduce capital and maintenance costs.
- Support maintenance of municipally owned transportation infrastructure.

Promote a Multi municipal Approach to Infrastructure

- Complete a climate resilience infrastructure project funded by multiple municipalities.

Financial Plan and Fiscal Constraint

A critical element of the Metro Plan is that it must be financially constrained. This means that the total costs of projects and services contained in it may not exceed the amount of funding that can reasonably be expected to be available in the MPO area for the period being considered. Projects and programs that are recommended in the Metro Plan must be shown to be realistic given the financial resources that are reasonably expected to be available in the future. The four-year TIP and Ten Year Plan are fiscally constrained by NHDOT through state coordination; they form the basis for estimates of financial resources in the Metro Plan.

Transportation Funding

For purposes of implementing the provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs (IIJA) Act, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issued revised planning regulations governing the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plans (the Plan) and Transportation Improvement Programs for urbanized areas. These regulations are designed to ensure that metropolitan transportation planning and programming are adequate and that the areas are eligible for Federal highway and transit funds. One part of the planning regulations requires that the Plan include a financial plan “that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented” and provides supporting regulations in 23 CFR Part 450.324(g)(11):

Federal Regulation References

Financial Plan: 23 CFR Part 450.324 (g)(11),
Public transit funding: 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53

1. For purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonably expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal-aid highways (as defined by 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(5)) and public transportation (as defined by title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53).
2. For the purpose of developing the metropolitan transportation plan, the MPO, public transportation operator(s), and State shall cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available to support metropolitan transportation plan implementation, as required

under §450.314(a). All necessary financial resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the transportation plan shall be identified.

3. The financial plan shall include recommendations on any additional financing strategies to fund projects and programs included in the metropolitan transportation plan. In the case of new funding sources, strategies for ensuring their availability shall be identified.
4. In developing the financial plan, the MPO shall take into account all projects and strategies proposed for funding under title 23 U.S.C., title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 or with other Federal funds; State assistance; local sources; and private participation. Revenue and cost estimates that support the metropolitan transportation plan must use an inflation rate(s) to reflect "year of expenditure dollars," based on reasonable financial principles and information, developed cooperatively by the MPO, State(s), and public transportation operator(s).
5. For the outer years of the metropolitan transportation plan (i.e., beyond the first 10 years), the financial plan may reflect aggregate cost ranges/cost bands, as long as the future funding source(s) is reasonably expected to be available to support the projected cost ranges/cost bands.
6. For nonattainment and maintenance areas, the financial plan shall address the specific financial strategies to ensure the implementation of Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) in the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP).
7. For illustrative purposes, the financial plan may include additional projects that would be included in the adopted transportation plan if additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were to become available.
8. In cases that the FHWA and the FTA find a metropolitan transportation plan to be fiscally constrained and a revenue source is subsequently removed or substantially reduced (i.e., by legislative or administrative actions), the FHWA and the FTA will not withdraw the original determination of fiscal constraint; however, in such cases, the FHWA and the FTA will not act on an updated or amended metropolitan transportation plan that does not reflect the changed revenue situation.

Anticipated Revenues

Revenues expected to be available for transportation improvement projects were estimated utilizing most recent data from the 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as the financial plan from the 2025-2034 State Ten Year Plan. Those documents provided the total funding estimates for FHWA and FTA apportioned funds, state funding sources, and local (and other) resources for projects in the region. Beyond 2034, funding is projected based on a trend analysis of federal revenues. This fiscal constraint documentation below details the resources expected to be available for the duration of the Plan.

In the SRPC region, section 5307 funding may be used for operating expense at a 50% federal/50% non-federal match split; as well as capital expenses (at an 80% federal/20% non-federal match split. Non-federal funding is typically drawn from municipalities in New Hampshire, but may also include state, private sector, and other sources. COAST receives funding based on apportionments to the Dover-Rochester and Portsmouth Urbanized Areas, which may be used for either capital or operating expenses. Beyond recent apportionments, future allocations are forecast to increase 1.5% annually. The Plan anticipates that the two transit systems will provide service levels that can be supported by this level of funding, including continuation of existing service and proposed service expansions.

Existing Funding Sources

Federal Transit Funding

There are a number of programs that support transit planning and development, which are funded through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). One primary objective of MAP-21 was to reduce the total number of programs into fewer funding categories with more flexibility; many of these programs were continued in the FAST Act. The list below is a sample of transit programs supported by federal law.

FTA: Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307)

The largest of FTA's grant programs, this program provides grants to urbanized areas (populations of 50,000 and more) to support public transportation. This is a formula-based program where funding is distributed based on the level of transit service provision, population, and other factors.

FTA: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)

This program provides formula funding to increase the mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities. Funds are apportioned based on each State's share of the targeted populations and are now apportioned to both States (for all areas under 200,000) and large urbanized areas (over 200,000). New Hampshire uses this program to provide Purchase of Service funding for the purchase of vehicle hours to provide transportation to elderly and disabled members of the public.

FTA: Rural Area Formula Grants (Section 5311)

This program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas, defined as areas with fewer than 50,000 residents. Funding is based on a formula that uses land area, population, and transit service.

FTA: Bus and Bus Facilities Program (Section 5339)

A formula grant program is established under Section 5339, replacing previous discretionary Bus and Bus Facilities programs. This capital program provides funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. Each year, \$65.5 million will be allocated with each State receiving \$1.25 million and each territory (including DC and Puerto Rico) receiving \$500,000. The remaining funding will be distributed by formula based on population, vehicle revenue miles and passenger miles. This program requires a 20 percent local match.

Other Transit Funding Sources

FHWA/FTA CMAQ Funds

Funds are eligible for transportation related projects in ozone and carbon monoxide non-attainment and maintenance areas. Projects must contribute to meeting the attainment of national ambient air quality standards, whether through reductions in vehicle miles traveled, fuel consumption, or through other factors. Funding may be used for transit capital and operating funds.

Municipalities

COAST provides fixed route and paratransit service in Dover, Farmington, Rochester, Somersworth, Newington, and Portsmouth, NH; and Berwick, and Kittery, ME. COAST relies on municipal contributions to match federal funding in its operating budget and has no authority to mandate regional or municipal funding, except to withhold services, or levy rider fines.

Local Option Fee

NHRSA 261:153, VI enables municipalities to adopt an additional motor vehicle registration fee (up to \$5) to fund local transportation improvements. Funds raised can be used as local match for public transit. Three municipalities in the SRPC region have taken advantage of the local option fee: Dover, Durham, and Newmarket.

Private Sources

Private companies can contribute funding for public transportation and have that funding be counted towards the local match. In the past, companies have collaborated with COAST to provide bus service for their organization.

Direct Public Transportation Revenue Sources

The following funding sources benefit public transportation operators directly.

Fare Box

COAST charges fares for passengers riding the bus routes, however, fares cannot be counted towards the local match for federal funds.

Transit Advertising

Transit Advertising includes revenues generated through advertising on COAST vehicle and bus shelters.

Projected Transit Funding

Fiscal Years 2026-2028

Funding for Fiscal Years 2026-2028 comes from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and includes both FTA5307 and 5310 funding. Transit funding through the FTA is assumed to be fiscally constrained per NHDOT fiscal constraint analysis. Table 1 indicates federal funds available to COAST from fiscal years 2025-2028.

Fiscal Years 2026-2032

Funding for Fiscal Years 2029 to 2034 come from the last six years of the current approved Statewide Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan. Table 2 indicates FTA funding for COAST as programmed in the 2025-2034 Ten-Year Plan.

COAST Funding in Fiscal Years 2026-2028	
Year	Funding
2026	\$4,684,975
2027	\$4,962,511
2028	\$5,297,860
Average per Year	\$4,981,782
Total	\$14,945,346

Anticipated Transit Funding Fiscal Years 2029 -2034	
Year	Funding
2029	\$6,623,669
2030	\$6,723,024
2031	\$6,823,869
2032	\$6,926,227
2033	\$7,030,120
2034	\$7,135,572
Average/Year	\$6,877,080
Total	\$41,262,481

Fiscal Years 2035-2050

The projected estimates for COAST are based on the funding levels shown in the final six years of the Ten-Year Plan. Beyond apportionments in the TIP years, future allocations are forecast to increase 2% annually. Fiscal constraint assumes that COAST will provide service levels that can be supported by this level of funding, including continuation of existing service and proposed service expansions.

Anticipated Average Annual Transit Funding Fiscal Years	
Year	Average Funding
2035-2040	\$7,519,697
2041-2045	\$8,160,550
2046-2050	\$8,791,230

Existing Highway Funding Sources

The following funding sources are available for maintenance and improvements to road networks in the SRPC region. Funding is divided into two categories: federal aid and state aid.

National Highway System (NHS)

These funds are specifically for projects on the designated NHS (when approved); the interim NHS includes highways that are on the interstate system and selected principal arterials. Funding for this category is an 80 percent federal match and a 20 percent local match.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

The STP funds projects chosen by states and localities for any road with a higher functional class than local or rural minor collectors. Funding for all STP categories is an 80 percent federal match and a 20 percent local match. There are several subcategories of STP funds applicable for the SRPC, for example, "STP Any Area", "STP Non-Urban", and "STP Hazard Elimination." However, the State can transfer funds within these categories; therefore, for the purposes of general financial forecasting, all but STP Transportation Enhancements have been grouped into a single category.

Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement

There are three subcategories grouped as a single "Bridge" category in the funding forecasts. They are:

1. On-System: Bridges on roads that are functionally classified higher than local. 70 percent of all eligible funding for bridges is in this category.
2. Off-System: Bridges on the Municipal Highway System (municipally owned). Priorities for this category use a first-come-first served system. 30 percent of all eligible bridge funding is in this category.
3. On/Off-System: Bridges either on or off system; funding for this category is an 80 percent federal and a 20 percent local match.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funding through Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

CMAQ funds are eligible for transportation related projects in ozone and carbon monoxide non-attainment areas. Projects must contribute to meeting attainment of national ambient air quality standards, whether through

reductions in vehicle miles traveled, fuel consumption, or through other factors. Projects may also come from the State Implementation Plan (SIP). No funds may be provided under this category that will result in the construction of new capacity available to single occupancy vehicles, unless the project consists of a high occupancy vehicle facility available to single occupant vehicles only at other than peak travel times. Funding for this category is an 80 percent federal and requires a 20 percent local match.

State Planning and Research (SPR)

One component of SPR grants includes funding for MPOs and RPCs to conduct planning related studies. In the past SRPC has received SPR Funding for the Phase I and Phase II of the Route 125 Corridor Study.

MPO Funding

Each MPO receives federal funding to carry out the necessary functions required of an MPO. Each MPO receives a specified amount of the state allocation of funding based on a formula agreed-upon by the state and MPOs. A 20 percent local match to the federal share is required.

Existing State Aid Funding Sources

Betterment Funds

This type of funding is accrued to the state by earmarking a portion of the State gas tax receipts. The NHDOT determines the priority of potential projects around the state for these funds. No federal or local match is required for use of Betterment funds.

Turnpike Funds

Several turnpike projects within the SRPC region are being completed using Turnpike Funds. The final stage of the Newington-Dover Project is to demolish the original General Sullivan bridge while maintaining a dedicated, separate bicycle and pedestrian crossing

Fiscal Constraint Calculations

As mentioned above, fiscal years 2026 to 2035 comprise the four-year TIP and State Ten Year Plan. Those plans are both constrained by the state in collaboration with the Regional Planning Commissions. They form the basis for assumptions used to ensure the long-range phase of the Metro Plan (projects after 2030) are also reasonably constrained. Funding availability and other challenges are difficult to predict beyond ten years in the future, so a conservative approach is used. For instance, if a project has a potential low- and high-cost estimate, it is assumed that the higher cost is most likely. Strafford, Rockingham, Southern, and Nashua Regional Planning Commissions are the four Metropolitan Planning Organizations in New Hampshire. They developed a framework for calculating and displaying fiscal constraint that is consistent between them.

Federal Funding Assumptions & Calculation Standards

1. Distribution of revenues to MPOs is based on 50% population and 50% Federal-Aid Eligible Lane Miles. Turnpike Revenues will be based on share of Turnpike Lane Miles.
2. Transit Funds are distributed based on current allocations to each transit agency.
3. Population data will be from the most recent decennial Census or the NH Office of Planning and Development population estimates.
4. Lane mile data will be from NHDOT Roads dataset.
5. Discretionary grants and Congressionally Designated Spending "Earmarks" will be listed as a single line item in the tables with notes indicating project/source details.
6. Discretionary grants and CDS will not include inflation factors.
7. Current inflation rate is 3.7% per year.
8. The most recent STIP Fiscal Constraint document will be the source of the financial data for the TIP years.
9. The most recent approved Ten Year Plan "Rainbow Chart" will be the source of data for years 6-10.
10. Years 11+ will be based on the most recent approved Ten Year Plan "Rainbow Chart" plus an inflation of 2% per year in revenues.

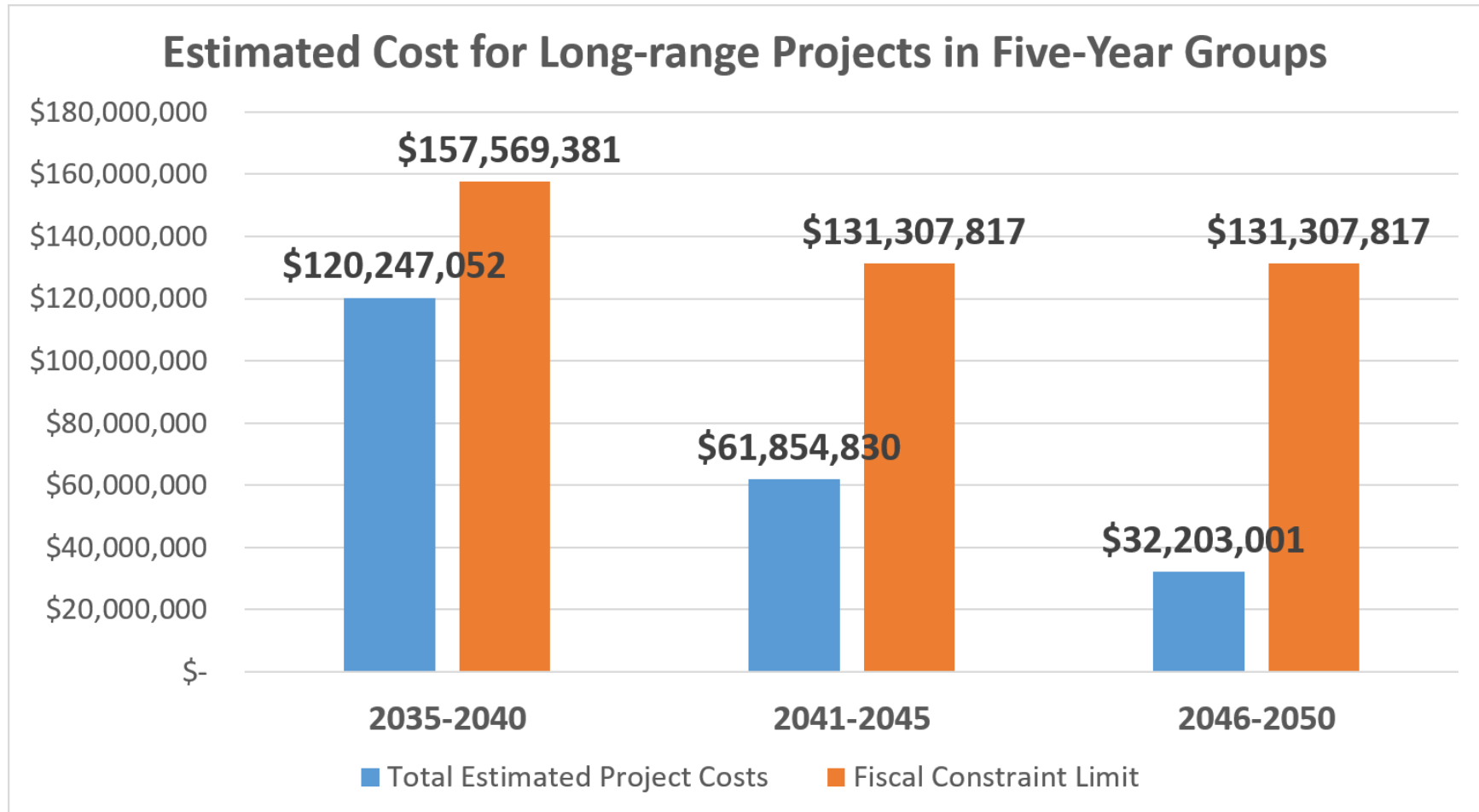
11. I-93 Debt service concludes in 2034. Revenues from SB367 will end at that time.
12. Operations and Maintenance is calculated using Turnpike R&R funds, Betterment Funds, and Transit O&M.
13. Highway O&M values derived from NHDOT FY23 Annual Report page F5 Total Budgeted Roads and Bridges Operations and Maintenance and inflated by 2% per year from 2023.
(<https://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/annual-reports/transportation/documents/fy23.pdf>).
14. Due to transit systems overlapping regions, the distribution of funding may show greater than 100% when all MPO values are added together.
15. Other State Funds includes SAB and TIFIA as well as any other State funding programs not explicitly listed elsewhere.
16. For years 2035-2050, total project costs are shown, and it is assumed that a 20% match will be raised from non-federal funds. Most federal transportation projects and programs are funded with 80% federal dollars and 20% (non-federal) matching funds.
17. The Strafford region's composite share of federal-aid highway funding is 9.93%. This share is used to illustrate an estimated proportional amount of federal-aid highway funds distributed among the four MPOs in New Hampshire.
18. Programmed local or state match amounts will be made available in a timely manner for any projects that require them.
19. NHDOT has determined that appropriate funds will be available for all projects that include federal funds and are programmed by NHDOT.
20. Because NHDOT is required to demonstrate that programmed federal transportation funds are constrained statewide, SRPC can be confident that the regional portion of the STIP is also constrained.

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

The figure below compares programmed costs for projects in the long-range plan to a regional fiscal constraint limit in 5-year groups. Projects are front-loaded in years 2035-2045 Review details for individual projects programmed in the Long-Range Plan years in Appendix C.



Operations & Maintenance

23 CFR Part 450.324(f)(11) requires that “for purposes of transportation system operations and maintenance, the financial plan shall contain system-level estimates of costs and revenue sources that are reasonable expected to be available to adequately operate and maintain Federal- aid highways...”. Statewide costs for operations and maintenance are estimated by NHDOT based on anticipated needs for the regular maintenance and operation of the federal aid highway system in New Hampshire.

Operations and Maintenance Funding

NHDOT manages the maintenance and operations of the state-owned highway system and MPOs are not directly involved. Since NHDOT must manage the entire state, the amount of funding directly invested in each region will vary from year to year. General estimates of highway and bridge operations and maintenance funding needs are included for planning purposes. New Hampshire’s turnpike system is self-funded; by state law, toll revenues must go directly back into the operations and maintenance of the turnpike.

DRAFT

Appendix A – Project lists

2025 – 2028 Transportation Improvement Program,

DRAFT

Appendix B – Project lists

Ten Year Transportation Plan (years 2029 – 2034)

DRAFT

Appendix C – Project lists

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (years 2035 – 2045)

DRAFT

Appendix D – Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Strategies

DRAFT

Appendix E – System Performance Report

DRAFT

Appendix F: Transportation Partners and Initiatives

New Hampshire Department of Transportation Long-Range Plan Goal Areas

- Land Use-Transportation Integration
- Mobility & Modal Choice
- Safety
- Security
- Environment & Health
- System Preservation & Maintenance
- Coordination & Collaboration
- Stewardship

New Hampshire Department of Transportation Strategic Plans

- Freight Plan (2025)
- Transportation Asset Management Plan (2024)
- Bicycle-Pedestrian (Active Transportation) Plan (2023)
- Carbon Reduction Strategy (2023)
- Transportation Systems Management & Operations Strategic Plan (2023)
- Rail Trails Plan (2022)
- Strategic Statewide Transit Assessment (2020)
- Stormwater Plan (2019)
- Airport System Plan (2014)
- Rail Plan (2012)

COAST & UNH Wildcat Transit Planning

- Seacoast Transit Stop Accessibility Study (with Rockingham Planning Commission)
- Economic Benefits of COAST (with Rockingham Planning Commission)

Regional Planning Commission Efforts

- Southern New Hampshire Freight Truck Parking Inventory
- Regional Housing Needs Assessments
- Safety Action Plans