

**NORTH COUNTRY  
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Bethlehem, NH 03574

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!  
UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS...**

September 22, 2009, **Scenic Byways Meeting**, 2-4 p.m., NCC Offices.

September 30, 2009, **Forest Resource Meeting**, 6:30 p.m., DRED Building, Lancaster.

October 7, 2009, **Ammonoosuc Local Advisory Committee**, 4:30 p.m., NCC Offices.

October 7, 2009, **Governor & Council Meeting**, 10:00 a.m., Mountain View Grand, Whitefield.

October 8, 2009, **NCC Annual Meeting**, 4:30 p.m., Attitash Grand Summit Hotel, Bartlett.

October 14, 2009, **CEDS Meeting**, 2-4 p.m., NCC Offices.

October 17, 2009, **2009 OEP Fall Planning & Zoning Conference**, Mtn. Club on Loon, NH.

October 21, 2009, **Transportation Advisory Committee**, 3-5:30 p.m., NCC Offices.

November 4, 2009, **Ammonoosuc Local Advisory Committee**, 4:30 p.m., NCC Offices.

November 18, 2009, **NCC Board Meeting**, 3-5 p.m., NCC Offices.

November 20-21, 2009, **NH Joint Water and Watershed Conference**, Grappone Conf. Center, Concord.

December 2, 2009, **CEDS Meeting**, 2-4 p.m., NCC Offices.

December 2, 2009, **Ammonoosuc Local Advisory Committee**, 4:30 p.m., NCC Offices.

December 16, 2009, **Transportation Advisory Committee**, 3-5:30 p.m., NCC Offices.



North Country Council  
Regional Planning Commission

# POINTS NORTH

A Regional Report From The North Country Council

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September 2009

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## New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority Logo Contest

Article By: *Christine Walker*  
NH Rail Transit Authority

In 2007, Governor John Lynch signed legislation creating the New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority, which is overseeing the development of commuter rail in New Hampshire.

The Authority is directed under its enabling legislation (Senate Bill 75, now as RSA 238-A) to work toward the return of commuter rail service and related public rail transportation. For many years there has been growing interest within the greater Gate City area for bringing back trains --last seen in 1960 --to help alleviate commuter-hour congestion which can result in delays of up to 60-minutes for trips into and out of Boston.

Currently, there is passenger rail service to the state along both its east and western borders, with stops at Dover, Durham/UNH and Exeter via Amtrak's five round trips-a-day Down-easter, and at Claremont along the Connecticut River Valley route of Amtrak's Vermonter with its daily St. Albans, VT to New York City service in either direction. In the view of Authority legislative sponsors, it is now time to look at the State's once heavily traveled Capital Rail Corridor.

To reconnect Nashua

with Lowell, Mass, the nearest point reached by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, requires upgrading the 18-miles of track between these two cities and establishing a Nashua station site plus finding a location for the overnight layover of locomotives and coaches.

In order to begin to develop an identity for the NH Rail Transit Authority, a logo contest has been created in hopes of initiating public awareness for the project. The competition is open to anyone with artistic ability. More in-depth information can be found at <http://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/nhrta/index.htm> or by contacting Christine Walker at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission at 603-448-1680 or [cwalker@uvlsrc.org](mailto:cwalker@uvlsrc.org).

The Rail Transit Authority meets regularly on the second and fourth Friday of each month, times and locations can be found at <http://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/nhrta/index.htm>. All Rail Authority meetings are open to the public. For more information on the Rail Authority, contact Michael Izbicki [msizbic@comcast.net](mailto:msizbic@comcast.net).

## Used Electronics Collection

Article By: *James Steele*

North Country Council (NCC) partnered with the Northeast Resource Recovery Association to hold a one-day electronics collection at the Haverhill Town Offices parking lot on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The recycling contractor was CRT Recycling. CRT Recycling was contracted by Samsung America to collect electronics on their behalf as part of Samsung's "Voluntarily Producer Responsibility Program". This special program allowed NCC to take advantage of a temporary recycling charge of \$.01 per pound. Typically, the recycling rate charged can range between \$.12 and \$.15 per pound, depending on the vendor and current metal pricing. Participants were assessed a \$1.00 per "unit" fee to cover the recycling charges and advertising costs. Over 150 cars came to the event disposing of 35,000 pounds of electronic material. The collection event was praised by participants who often commented that they had been "waiting for years" for such an event to properly dispose of their broken, outdated, or unwanted electronics.



Photo Credit: Peter Kimball  
The Bridge Weekly

## NH Workforce Housing Law Extended to January 1, 2010

Article By: NCC Planning Staff

### Planner's Corner

The good news is that the effective date of the NH Workforce Housing Law has been extended from July 1, 2009, to January 1, 2010. The more important news is that the law will go into effect before the next annual town meeting in March (or May). To meet the extended deadline, your community should do its workforce housing analysis now and make the necessary changes to your local land use regulations in time to be included on the warrant for your next 2010 town meeting.

#### What Is the NH Workforce Housing Law?

According to NH RSA 674:58-61, all municipalities must provide a reasonable and realistic opportunity for the development of workforce housing, including rental and multi-family housing. To determine whether this opportunity exists, the collective impact of all of your municipality's local land use regulations adopted under RSA 674 will be considered. Workforce housing must be allowed in a majority of land areas where residential uses are permitted, however, not necessarily multi-family housing in a majority of such areas. Existing housing stock will be reviewed to determine if your municipality is providing its "fair share" of current and reasonably foreseeable regional need for workforce housing. Your municipality may impose reasonable restrictions safety reasons, like fire and life safety, and environmental protection reasons, to protect the water supply, traffic safety and sanitary disposal.

#### What Is Workforce Housing?

Workforce housing is housing that is "affordable" for:

- Owner family of 4 making 100% of Area Median Income

- Renter family of 3 making 60% of the Area Median Income

Workforce housing does NOT include:

- Age-restricted housing
- Developments with greater than 50% of the units having less than 2 bedrooms.

**What Is "Affordable"?** Affordable means no more than 30% of income should be spent on housing. For renters this means rent + utilities; for owners this means mortgage principal + interest, taxes and insurance.

#### What Is Our Area Median Income?

**Ownership:** 100% of 2009 HUD Median Area Income for A Family of Four.

#### County Fair Market Rent Areas (Non-Metro)

**Carroll County:**  
Income — \$63,400  
Est. Affordable Purchase  
Price\*— \$211,000

**Coos County:**  
Income — \$54,800  
Est. Affordable Purchase  
Price\*— \$164,000

**Grafton County:**  
Income — \$67,800  
Est. Affordable Purchase  
Price\*— \$209,000

\*Estimated maximum price using 30% of income, 5% down payment, 30 year mortgage at 5.74%, 0.7 points, PMI, and estimated taxes and hazard insurance.

**Renters:** 60% of 2009 HUD Median Area Income Adjusted For a Family of Three.

#### County Fair Market Rent Area (Non-Metro)

**Carroll County:**  
Income — \$34,240  
Est. Affordable Monthly  
Rent\*\*—\$860.

**Coos County:**  
Income — \$29,590  
Est. Affordable Monthly  
Rent\*\*—\$740

**Grafton County:**  
Income — \$36,610  
Est. Affordable Monthly  
Rent\*\*—\$920

\*\*Estimated maximum gross monthly rental cost (rent + utilities), using 30% of income.

#### What are "Reasonable and Realistic Opportunities"?

Looking at the collective impact of your land use ordinances and regulations can your municipality provide its "fair share" of the region's economically viable workforce housing? For some municipalities the natural features and market considerations may be beyond your municipality's control.

#### What Is Considered Multi-Family Housing?

Five or more dwelling units.

#### What is the Land Use Board Process?

A developer, as part of the application, must notify your land use board in writing that a "workforce housing" project is being proposed. The developer must invoke the statute – RSA 674:58-61. The planning board process (or other process) will proceed as it would normally under RSA 674:4, but the planning board will also discuss cost. Under the approval of the application with conditions, the planning board will notify the applicant of the conditions, who then has at least 30 days to identify

the cost impact of the conditions upon the economic viability of the project. The board may then modify its conditions accordingly.

#### Appeals

The developer may appeal the planning board decision to superior court if the application is denied or has conditions that have a substantial adverse effect on the project's economic viability. The burden of proof is on the developer to show how the municipality's actions violated the Workforce Housing Law. There will be a hearing on the merits within 6 months. There is a compulsory appointment of a qualified referee if the court is too busy.

#### Enforcement of the Law

The teeth in the law is a "Buyer's Remedy". The developer shall include affordability restrictions on workforce housing units, as determined by negotiations between the parties, or the court will impose them if the parties cannot come to an agreement.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact Tara Bamford, Planning Director, at [tbamford@nccouncil.org](mailto:tbamford@nccouncil.org).



## Transportation Planning in the North Country

Article by: Mary Deppe

**Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan for New Hampshire's North Country** – A large portion of the residents of New Hampshire's North Country, as well as the rest of the state, does not have access to personal automobiles. Given the rural nature of the region, there is inadequate access to public transportation and transit, making it difficult to access employment, health care, shopping and recreation. North Country Council recently updated the *Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan for New Hampshire's North Country* with the purpose of developing a comprehensive strategy to assist stakeholders like the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT), NH Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS), transportation providers, transportation coordinators, and other community agencies to help North Country residents meet their transportation needs.



Round 4 of the Safe Routes to School Program is tentatively scheduled to open on **September 14, 2009**. The deadline for submitting applications to Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) and NH Dept. of Transportation (NHDOT) is **November 9, 2009**. Be sure to check the website for any recent changes to the program.

The NH SRTS program is a nation-wide effort that is 100% federally funded. This program was created for the purpose of encouraging children in kindergarten through eight grade, who live approximately 2 miles

**North Country Council Regional Transportation Plan** – The Regional Transportation Plan is a policy document that will guide NCC, NHDOT, member communities and partner organizations in making important decisions regarding transportation and other key issues. This plan describes the existing transportation system in the region, including the current trends and patterns and outlines local and regional priorities to help guide future growth of a safe and efficient transportation system while preserving the qualities that make the North Country region unique. North Country Council recently developed this plan with the assistance of the NCC Transportation Advisory Committee.

The *Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan for New Hampshire's North Country* and the *North Country Council Regional Transportation Plan* were adopted by the North

Country Council Transportation Advisory Committee on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and then by the North Country Council Board of Directors on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The North Country Council town representatives will be asked to adopt the plans at the NCC annual meeting on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The final drafts of these plans are available at [www.nccouncil.org](http://www.nccouncil.org). Printed copies will be distributed to NCC towns upon approval of the plans at the annual meeting.

**Plymouth Transport Central** – North Country Council has received funding through the NHDOT to assist Transport Central with a study of the feasibility of a transit system in the Plymouth area. Transport Central is a New Hampshire 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that has been established to develop transportation services for transportation-challenged residents of the 19-town Plymouth catchment area. The goal of Transport Central is to

make sure that three types of transportation services are available for residents in need:

- Scheduled transportation to medical facilities at Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital, Lakes Region Hospital, and Concord Hospital.
- An on-call volunteer system to provide local transportation in the 19-town area as well as to coordinate with fixed-route services.
- Scheduled service with multiple stops within the Plymouth area, including medical services and shopping. (Transportation will be coordinated with the Plymouth Area Senior Center's transportation system as to not duplicate services.)

An RFP to hire a consultant to perform the study has been issued and the Transportation Central Advisory Committee will be reviewing proposals in September.

## Round 4 NH Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)

Article by: Mary Deppe



away from their school, to safely walk or ride bicycles to and from school.

The goal of this program is to improve children's health through increased physical activity while decreasing traffic near schools and enhancing air quality.

The success of SRTS is highly dependent on the state and local partnerships that will be created. The State SRTS coordinator, John Corrigan, will collaborate with local schools, municipal and regional officials, parents, students and

community groups in order to clearly identify the best ways to encourage walking and biking. Working together, they will identify any barriers to safe walking and biking that currently exist and then find solutions to fix the problems.

This program is administered by the New Hampshire Dept. of Transportation (NHDOT) in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Reimbursement funding for local projects is authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A

Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

For more information about the SRTS program, including eligible activities and fund criteria, please visit the following website or contact John Corrigan (Safe Routes to School Coordinator) at the NH Dept. of Transportation (603)271-1980 or [http://www.nh.gov/dot/bureaus/planning/SRTS\\_home.htm](http://www.nh.gov/dot/bureaus/planning/SRTS_home.htm)