

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

Public Involvement Plan

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Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission
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1.0 Introduction

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) establishes guidance by which the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) ensures effective public involvement as a democratic process that increases public awareness, contributes to information gathering on local needs and concerns, identifies leaders, increases transparency and benefits decision-making.

UVLSRPC receives federal funding to support several planning functions, including transportation policy, plans and studies, project development, and municipal programs. UVLSRPC is required to abide by federal non-discrimination laws as a condition to receiving federal funding. This Plan reflects the best practices and assures the Commission's due diligence toward meeting the statutory requirements as set forth in the latest federal and state legislation.

In the context of this Plan, the Public is defined as all residents, property owners, business owners and representative organizations in the 27 municipalities that comprise the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee (UVLS) Region of New Hampshire. It includes:

- All residents regardless of their race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability level, creed, or income;
- All owners of property or business interests; and
- All organizations representing the above mentioned, not to exclude elected representatives or agents thereof.

Statutes

As a recipient of federal funding assistance, the following rules and regulations apply to the activities of this organization:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (42 U.S.C. 2000d)

Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987: Restored original intent and scope of Title VI to include all programs and activities of Federal-aid recipients and contractors whether federally funded or not.

Executive Order 12250: DOJ Leadership and Coordination of Nondiscrimination Laws: The U.S. Attorney General shall coordinate the implementation and enforcement by Executive agencies of various nondiscrimination provisions of (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.) ; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.); (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794); (d) Any other provision of Federal statutory law which provides, in whole or in part, that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, handicap, religion, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations: Each Federal agency shall conduct its programs, policies, and activities do not have the effect of excluding persons (including populations) from participation in, denying persons (including populations) the benefits of, or subjecting

person (including populations) to discrimination under, such, programs, policies, and activities, because of their race, color, or national origin.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Presidential directive to federal agencies to ensure meaningful access to services for LEP people. An LEP person does not speak English as primary language and has limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. Failure to provide LEP person services or meaningful access to services [may] constitute nation origin discrimination.

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act (29 USC 790) Handicap/Disability: No QUALIFIED HANDICAPPED PERSON shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance under this title or carried on under this title.

1973 Federal-aid Highway Act (23 USC 324) Sex: No person shall on the grounds of SEX be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receiving Federal financial assistance under this title or carried on under this title.

1975 Age Discrimination Act (42USC 6101) Age: No person shall on the basis of AGE, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance.

49 CFR Part 21: Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance for the Department of Transportation.

23 CFR Part 200: Title VI Program and Related Statutes: To provide guidelines for: (a) Implementing the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Title VI compliance program under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related civil rights laws and regulations, and (b) Conducting Title VI program compliance reviews relative to the Federal aid highway program.

1970 Uniform Act (42 USC 4601): Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970: The Uniform Act provides important protections and assistance for people affected by federally funded projects. This law was enacted by Congress to ensure that people whose real property is acquired, or who move as a result of projects receiving Federal funds, will be treated fairly and equitably and will receive assistance in moving from the property they occupy.

State of New Hampshire Right-to-Know Law (RSA 91-a): The State of New Hampshire dictates that public records must be made available for inspection by the public. These records include the minutes, agendas, documents, and records used in the decision-making process and those describing the expenditure of public funds.

2.0 Policy, Goals, and Principles of the Public Involvement Plan

UVLSRPC Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of UVLSRPC to provide all interested and potentially affected individuals, businesses and community representatives the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning decision-making process. It is the policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related federal and state statutes and regulations that prohibit discrimination in federally assisted programs and require that “no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, income, or mental or physical disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.” The public should have the ability to provide comments, insight, and information pertinent to the subject on draft documents, policies, and programs prior to their adoption.

UVLSRPC Equity Statement

As professional planners, our main objective is to serve the overall public interest. This necessitates engaging all peoples and expanding choice and opportunity for all members of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region. We recognize our responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged, overburdened, underrepresented, and underserved communities and individuals in our communities and to promote racial and ethnic integration. Toward that end, we use the “equity in all policies” approach as established by the American Planning Association in the *Planning for Equity Policy Guide* in all UVLSRPC planning efforts. We employ an “equity lens” in our planning process to review and analyze the impacts of our planning policies and decisions on disadvantaged, overburdened, underrepresented, and underserved communities and individuals and guarantee that any proposed policies or regulations will serve and benefit every member of a community in ways that work towards either reducing or eliminating inequity. This approach includes addressing systemic inequity and updating past policies and regulations that may have been created or implemented without equity for all in mind.

Goals of the Plan

The purpose of this document is to serve as a system of procedures and mechanisms to assure nondiscrimination in all UVLSRPC programs, activities, and services, whether federally funded or not, and integrate equity as a part of every workplan.

The goals of this Plan are to proactively seek public involvement to ensure that the outcomes of regional planning activities accurately reflect the needs and concerns of all residents of the UVLS region. The main goals of this process are:

- To establish and communicate public involvement and relevant information early and consistently thereafter;
- To encourage and ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected persons in the transportation decision-making process;
- To partner with community-based organizations and other stakeholders attuned to the specific needs and concerns of historically and currently underrepresented and overburdened populations;

- To reduce barriers of full and fair participation through incentives and/or other mechanisms;
- To be accessible and responsive to people with a variety of schedules, physical and mental abilities, learning and communication styles, and English proficiencies in both the planning process and resulting documentation;
- To incorporate the needs and concerns of the public (residents and non-residents) into the transportation planning process while acknowledging the privilege of participation;
- To identify and address disproportionately high and adverse health, environmental, social, and economic effects of transportation programs, policies, and activities on minority and/or low-income populations;
- To prevent the denial of, reduction of, or significant delay in the receipt of transportation benefits by minority and low-income populations;
- To enable the continuation of important public processes during emergency- or disaster-type situations that inhibit typical public meeting and Right-To-Know procedures; and
- To receive, consider and respond appropriately and transparently to comments and concerns on the involvement process.

Principle Methods of Involvement

Education and Outreach

The planning process should be inclusive, accessible, and understandable to the general public. Information should be presented in a manner that informs and engages the public in a clear, concise, and legible fashion. Integrating accessible visualization strategies where possible will help to reach neurodivergent community members and those with varying degrees of intellectual capabilities. When applicable in instances of participation by individuals who do not speak English, UVLSRPC will identify resources for translation and facilitate mechanisms to mitigate language barriers. Documents should be made available electronically and in hard copy at a public place, such as the UVLSRPC office and/or municipal public libraries to assure access to the Public, especially underrepresented populations.

Engagement with the Public

The Public should have the opportunity to participate and be engaged in the decision-making process. Meetings should be held in conveniently accessible locations at opportune times of the day. The Public should receive adequate notice of meetings, availability of information, and opportunity to comment on all material for at least 30 days from the posting of the notice. Public testimony and input should be recorded and filed alongside documentation used in the production of transportation planning documents. Virtual public involvement tools may be incorporated into the decision-making process to supplement in-person public input opportunity but should not supplant in-person public input unless an obvious risk or danger to the public exists. Recordings of all meetings should be available and occur virtually and physically when possible.

Consideration by Decision Makers

Public comments and concerns should be adequately considered by UVLSRPC staff, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Commission. UVLSRPC staff should present information collected through the PIP to the TAC and Commission. All written and oral comments should be incorporated as an appendix to the Plan. All comments and suggestions as to the context of the Plan will be reviewed by staff and advisory committees and incorporated as appropriate. Commission staff will attempt to respond to all comments received via writing, including e-mails, acknowledging receipt, and providing a brief summary of its incorporation into the respective planning product.

3.0 Requirements

As part of this Title VI Program, UVLSRPC maintains certain reporting requirements and provides the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), or other applicable State or Federal agencies the following information regarding these reporting requirements.

Provide Title VI Assurances

According to Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, “an assurance ensures that applicants and recipients of federal financial assistance (FFA) are aware of their obligations to operate all of their programs or activities in compliance with the nondiscrimination mandates of Title IX [and title VI].” UVLSRPC will submit its Title VI Assurance as part of its Certifications and Assurances submission to all applicable state and federal agencies. UVLSRPC will collect Title VI Assurances from sub-recipients prior to passing through federal funds.

Prepare and Submit Title VI Plan

This document constitutes the Title VI Program Plan for UVLSRPC.

Notify Beneficiaries of Protection Under Title VI

To notify the public regarding its Title VI obligations, UVLSRPC has developed this Plan and shared it on the organization’s website and other appropriate social media outlets. More information is included in the Appendix of this Plan, including how to receive more information on non-discrimination obligations and procedures for filing discrimination complaints against UVLSRPC.

Complaint and Public Review Process

Title VI Complaint Process

Any member of the public will be allowed to file a complaint against UVLSRPC if they believe that it has violated Title VI obligations. All complaints will be forwarded to the Executive Director upon receipt, and a copy shall be forwarded to the NH DOT Bureau of Human Resources - Office of Civil Rights and Labor Compliance. The complaint will then be discussed by UVLSRPC Commissioners with assistance from NH DOT or other personnel to determine its merits. In the case that funding assistance is provided from another Federal or State agency, Title VI discrimination complaints may be filed with the proper offices at that agency, such as the US EPA’s Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (OECRC). The complaint procedure and complaint form will be easily accessible on the UVLSRPC website.

Upon completion of these initial steps, a response to the originator of the complaint shall be sent from the Executive Director of UVLSRPC informing them if a violation has in fact taken place. UVLSRPC will work with NH DOT (or another Federal or State agency, if relevant) to remedy all violations as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. In cases where the procedures outlined in the Public Involvement Plan are flawed and lead to a violation, the Plan should be reviewed and updated to address these issues as soon as possible. All complaints and associated documentation shall be kept on file for a period of 5 years regardless of its outcome.

Periodic Review

The Public Involvement Plan should be reviewed periodically by UVLSRPC staff, the TAC, and the Commissioners no less frequently than every 5 years and revised as necessary. The effectiveness of the procedures set herein should be reviewed and updated to meet best practices and evolving transportation planning requirements.

A public review and comment period should run for a period of no less than 45 days for all changes made to the PIP. Public participation is encouraged in this periodic review process.

Promote Inclusive Public Participation

Public participation is vital to UVLSRPC. It helps provide UVLSRPC with the broadest spectrum of relevant information available prior to its decision-making and offers the public an opportunity to raise concerns that can be considered along with discussion of technical, political, and economic merit.

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

Through the regional planning process, UVLSRPC and partner agencies will thoroughly analyze the three Federally established fundamental environmental justice principles:

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

UVLSRPC actively seeks to solicit comments and engage the interests of the public through the participation process. It is then the responsibility of the Commission to balance the public's needs and desires with resources available to address those needs and desires. Commission Staff is directed to incorporate appropriate activities to make public communications and outreach a part of the agency's overall planning activities. These additional activities may include, but are not limited to: task forces, advisory committees, public meetings and workshops, presentations and forums, meetings with special interest groups, social media and flyers, and public opinion gathering methods such as surveys, focus groups, polls, and outreach interviews.

Under US EPA's Title VI implementing regulation, "EPA-funded agencies are prohibited from taking actions, including permitting actions, that are intentionally discriminatory or have a discriminatory effect based on race, color, or national origin." UVLSRPC is committed to upholding the standards of our funding Federal and State agencies and complete compliance with all regulations. These includes, but are not limited to: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Act Amendments of 1972, 40 C.F.R. Part 5 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972.

Identify Demographic Barriers to Public Involvement

To comply with public involvement statutes, Commission staff will attempt to identify and mitigate the barriers which might currently prevent segments of the UVLS region's population from participating in the transportation decision-making process.

Minorities, low-income individuals, the elderly, those with disabilities, those with low-literacy or English proficiency, and other underrepresented populations, such as the population under the age of 18, are less likely to participate in the public process due to physical and socioeconomic accessibility barriers. These populations are also more likely to be disproportionately affected by transportation decisions due to their dependence on social services. The following methods will be used to locate these populations and identify barriers which prevent their effective involvement in the decision-making process:

Demographic Profile

Through GIS analysis of 2020 Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates data, UVLSRPC identified areas with concentrations of racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and elderly (65+) populations (see Figures 1-6 in Appendix). We can use this data to determine general location, populations, and characteristics of our Region's residents, but acknowledge that simple quantity/concentration-based data is limited in its ability to provide meaningful or properly represented information on groups of people individuals and should not be used alone. Therefore, when able, UVLSRPC will attempt to connect with community-based organizations and partners to further reach these populations. These maps will be used as a municipality-based resource to public involvement.

Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations

To comply with Title VI (Civil Rights Act) requirements, UVLSRPC will attempt to identify and pro-actively seek input from racial/ethnic minority individuals in the Region. According to the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 12.16% of the region's population do not describe themselves as being of 'One Race - White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino.' This percentage is far below the national average of 42.16% (2020 Decennial Census). Please refer to Figures 1 and 2 for locations of concentrated racial/ethnic minority and non-white population by municipality.

Low-Income Households and Individuals

To comply with Environmental Justice provisions, UVLSRPC will attempt to identify and pro-actively engage input from low-income individuals. An individual or household is classified as low-income if their income, adjusted for family size, is at or lower than 150% of the federal poverty line. Approximately 15% of the region's population is considered low-income. Please refer to Figure 3 for locations of concentrated low-income populations by municipality.

Low-income individuals may have difficulty in attending meetings due to night-time, extended, inconsistent, or otherwise non-traditional work schedules and obtaining transportation or child-care. Attempts should be made to provide meeting opportunities that mitigate these barriers. The provision of free food or direct compensation during a meeting could also alleviate the financial burden of finding food or planning meals, thereby providing additional incentive for involvement from low-income households and individuals.

Elderly and Disabled Individuals

To comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, UVLSRPC will attempt to solicit and accommodate input from individuals with physical and/or mental impairments, including those brought about by advanced age. While data on aging and general ability level information is easily available through the Census, personal disability data is more difficult to obtain due to medical privacy issues. However, the Commission is aware of the

importance of transportation to this group of individuals through work with non-profits such as Advance Transit. Please refer to Figure 4 for locations of concentrated aging populations by town and Figure 5 for concentrations of people with one or more disabilities.

Barriers to participation for this group are typically related to physical mobility. Sensory impairments such as hearing and vision loss should also be addressed through alternative modes of communications by utilizing CC features and/or audio recordings of videos.

Low-Literacy and Limited English Proficiency Populations

In addition to the barriers to effective public participation mentioned above, language is perhaps the biggest impediment to communication between the public and the decision-makers. Language barriers include low literacy levels and limited English proficiency, especially those of racial/ethnic minority and immigrant populations.

Low literacy is defined as less than a 5th grade reading and comprehension level. Data regarding low literacy is not available for the Region, however, Census data shows that 7.2% of the Region's residents 25 and older have an educational attainment level below a high-school diploma and an additional 27.98% of residents have a highest educational attainment level of a high school diploma or equivalent (ACS 2020 5-Year Estimates). An individual's reading level is usually 3-5 grades lower than their highest educational attainment. With this knowledge, we can determine that approximately 35.18% of the Region has around an 8th grade reading level.

Approximately 1.21% of the Region's residents have some difficulty with English (ACS 2020 5-Year Estimates) and are described by the ACS as "speaks English less than very well." See Figure 6 for concentrations of these populations in the UVLS region.

UVLSRPC attempts to accommodate those with low literacy and/or low English proficiency on an as-needed basis. RPC staff will strive to communicate transportation plans, notices, and policies to anything who initiates contact. If communication due to a language barrier arises, the RPC will make efforts to work with local non-profits and human service providers to find suitable resources and communication methods. There will also be the option of internet-based translation services if necessary.

Other Underrepresented Populations

In addition to the barriers to effective public participation mentioned above, there are other underrepresented populations, such as people under the age of 18. This population is often underrepresented because of age but is an important population to consider during the public involvement process. People under the age of 18 in the Region make up approximately 17% of the population (ACS 2020 5-Year Estimates).

UVLSRPC will attempt to accommodate those underrepresented populations.

4.0 Strategies to Reach Underrepresented Populations

The following methods and procedures will be used to mitigate barriers to effective public involvement in the decision-making process.

Notification

Public notice should be distributed via the UVLSRPC website and monthly newsletter when appropriate. Notifications should be posted at least 7 days prior to the meeting, and should

include the date, time, and place of the meeting. Additional methods of public notice such as press releases, pamphlets, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) will be used on an as-needed basis.

Public notifications and notices should include directions to the venue and contact information to request assistance regarding special accommodation due to a disability or language barrier.

Meeting Etiquette

At the beginning of any public meeting or hearing, UVLSRPC will remind participants about the rules of procedure. These include:

1. Be respectful of the views of others
2. Ensure that only one person talks at a time. Raising your hand to be recognized by the chair or facilitator is good practice.
3. Do not interrupt others or start talking before someone finishes.
4. Avoid individual conversations in small groups during the meeting. When one person speaks, others should listen.
5. For public meetings, guests are welcome to observe, but should follow proper meeting etiquette allowing the meeting to proceed uninterrupted.

Meeting Venues, Times and Facilitation

UVLSRPC will attempt to hold public meetings in centrally located venues easily found and accessed by residents throughout the region at opportune times of the day and with appropriate services offered (e.g., food, childcare). Meeting rooms should be ADA accessible when possible and offer plenty of public parking and accessible, ADA compliant bathrooms. For challenges not listed, UVLSRPC will provide all means of flexibility for public participation in every engagement.

UVLSRPC routinely hosts public meetings at the Commission Office. This site is accessible in the evenings and offers ADA compliance and ample public parking. This location is well-advertised and accessible to most residents in the Region.

In situations where meetings are sub-regional or local in scope, the Commission has several identified meeting locations (such as public libraries) throughout the Region to provide easier access to the local population. As a municipal organization, the Commission can work with the municipalities to meet at town-owned facilities or other local community institutions.

Facilitation and activity will reflect the goals and audience of the meeting. These may include different communication styles (visual, verbal, and interactive), virtual engagement, group activities (e.g., discussions, presentations, movement, sticker voting, charettes), and provision of relevant information (from UVLSRPC, partners, and attendees).

Transportation for Non-Drivers

UVLSRPC will attempt to hold public meetings in venues along public transportation routes such as Southwestern Community Services Transportation and Advance Transit. However, not everyone in the Region can easily access public transportation. For this population, the Commission will utilize other resources to connect the interested residents with limited mobility to community transportation services including taxis, ridesharing services, volunteer driver services, and other available transportation. UVLSRPC will work with the regional mobility

manager to connect residents to these services. UVLSRPC will also provide a virtual meeting option to allow for telecommuting to public meetings.

Surveys and Focus Groups

UVLSRPC can conduct surveys or focus group meetings with health and human service agencies that work with underrepresented populations. These agencies can assist in helping the Commission understand the needs of the underrepresented population. UVLSRPC also acknowledges that community-based organizations, like Vital Communities, can serve as a crucial partner for engagement with underrepresented populations.

UVLSRPC can also conduct surveys of riders of Advance Transit and Southwestern Community Services Transportation (SCST).

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The UVLSRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings represent a key decision-making point in the planning process. As such, public awareness and inclusion of these meetings is an essential part of the Public Involvement Plan. TAC meetings are regularly scheduled meetings that are advertised by the Commission.

Project Specific Advisory Committees

Occasionally, UVLSRPC forms Advisory Committees to gain public input for the purposes of aiding in the development of specific transportation planning projects. These committees are made up of stakeholders identified for the project. All meetings should be open to the public and held in locations close to the communities they affect.

Advisory Committee membership should also reflect the demographic make-up of the community in which the project is located or of the community the project is to serve. Project specific public participation should be designed and documented as appropriate.

Non-UVLSRPC Public Meetings related to Projects

UVLSRPC on occasion aids the NH DOT or other entities in hosting public meetings for our region. In these cases, the Commission will aid in advertising these meetings and abide by the Public Involvement Plan principles.

Public Records

In order to comply with the State of New Hampshire Right-To-Know statutes (RSA 91-A), UVLSRPC will make public records available for inspection by the public during regular business hours. These records include minutes, agendas, and associated documents from public meetings, and those records describing the expenditure of public funds. All these materials are to be filed in the UVLSRPC archives and made available upon request for review and reproduction at cost. If the records are unavailable immediately upon request, UVLSRPC has 5 days to make the records available, deny the request, or give written acknowledgement of the request and an estimate of the time needed to grant or deny the request.

5.0 Procedures for Emergency- and Disaster-Type Situations

During emergency- and disaster-type situations, UVLSRPC should make all reasonable attempts to continue decision-making processes using procedures that are consistent with New Hampshire state law, federal regulations, and any pertinent state or federal emergency executive orders.

In situations where the in-person meeting requirements of NH RSA 91-A are suspended by executive order from the Governor of New Hampshire, UVLSRPC will follow all relevant public meeting and Right-To-Know provisions of the executive order when conducting public decision-making processes.

In emergency situations that require the use of virtual public meetings, UVLSRPC will make all reasonable attempts to reduce technological barriers for participation in meetings, including providing both videoconference and telephone access options. Virtual public meetings should be conducted in a way such that all attendees have access to meeting materials and can follow the meeting discussion, including sharing meeting materials prior to meetings, roll call voting, and having participants identify themselves prior to speaking.

6.0 Publications

The outcome of the transportation decision-making process is a published document. These publications should not only reflect the public comments and suggestions gathered through the public involvement process but should also be easily accessible and understood by the lay person.

All publications should be published both in hard copy and electronically and made available on the UVLSRPC website and in its office for public review. Copies should also be distributed in public locations such as the Kilton Public Library in West Lebanon and municipal offices. Electronic versions published on the internet should be easily downloaded and viewed. UVLSRPC will try to make files manageable by limiting their sizes and making them available on widely used and compatible file formats, such as pdf.

All publications should strive to be readable and comprehensible by the public.

7.0 Complaint and Periodic Review Process

The following procedures should be used to inform the public of Title VI obligations:

Notice to the Public of Title VI Procedures

UVLSRPC will provide public notice that it conducts transportation planning under the non-discrimination requirements as outlined in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This notice will also inform the public that more information is available by contacting UVLSRPC, at which time a copy of this document will be provided. (See Attachment A)

Title VI Complaint Process

Any member of the public will be allowed to file a complaint against UVLSRPC if they believe that it has violated Title VI obligations. All complaints will be forwarded to the Executive Director upon receipt, and a copy shall be forwarded to the NH DOT Bureau of Human Resources - Office of Civil Rights and Labor Compliance. The complaint will then be discussed by UVLSRPC Commissioners with assistance from NH DOT or other personnel to determine its merits. (See Attachment B) In the case that funding assistance is provided from another Federal or State agency, Title VI discrimination complaints may be filed with the proper offices at that agency, such as the US EPA's Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (OECRC).

Upon completion of these initial steps, a response to the originator of the complaint shall be sent from the Executive Director of UVLSRPC informing them if a violation has in fact taken place. UVLSRPC will work with NH DOT (or another Federal or State agency, if relevant) to remedy all violations as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. In cases where the procedures outlined in the Public Involvement Plan are flawed and lead to a violation, the Plan should be reviewed and updated to address these issues as soon as possible. All complaints and associated documentation shall be kept on file for a period of 5 years regardless of its outcome.

Periodic Review

The PIP should be reviewed periodically by UVLSRPC staff, TAC, and the Commission no less frequently than every 5 years and revised as necessary. The effectiveness of the procedures set herein should be reviewed and updated to meet best practices and evolving transportation planning requirements.

A public review and comment period should run for a period of no less than 45 days for all changes made to the PIP. Public participation is encouraged in this periodic review process.

Attachment A - Title VI Public Notice

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
Title VI Notice to Public

The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) hereby gives public notice of its policy to uphold and assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and all related statutes. Title VI and related statutes prohibiting discrimination in Federally assisted programs require that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice regarding UVLSRPC's programs has a right to file a formal complaint with UVLSRPC. Any such complaint must be in writing and submitted to the UVLSRPC Executive Director within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence. For more information regarding civil rights complaints, please contact:

UVLSRPC
10 Water Street, Suite 225
Lebanon, NH 03766
(603) 448-1680

Attachment B – NH DOT Title VI Complaint and Investigation Procedure

These procedures cover all complaints filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, for alleged discrimination in any program or activity administered by The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT).

These procedures do not deny the right of the complainant to file formal complaints with other State or Federal agencies or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination. Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of complaints at the lowest level possible. The option of informal mediation meeting(s) between the affected parties and the NH DOT may be utilized for resolution. Any individual, group of individuals or entity that believes they have been subjected to discrimination prohibited under Title VI and related statutes may file a written complaint to the following address:

Title VI Coordinator
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 483, 7 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302-0483
Phone: (603) 271-6070
TTY Access: (800) 735-2964

The following measures will be taken to resolve Title VI complaints:

- 1.) A formal complaint must be filed within 180 days of the alleged occurrence. Complaints shall be in writing and signed by the individual or his/her representative, and will include the complainant's name, address and telephone number; name of alleged discriminating official, basis of complaint (race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age), and the date of alleged act(s). A statement detailing the facts and circumstances of the alleged discrimination must accompany all complaints.
- 2.) In the case where a complainant is unable or incapable of providing a written statement, a verbal complaint of discrimination may be made to the NH DOT Title VI Coordinator. Under these circumstances, the complainant will be interviewed, and the NH DOT Title VI Coordinator will assist the Complainant in converting the verbal allegations to writing.
- 3.) The Department will investigate complaints filed with the Department against contractors, consultants, or other sub-recipients. Complaints filed directly with the Department against the Department shall be forwarded to the appropriate Federal agency for investigation.
- 4.) When a complete complaint is received, the Title VI Coordinator will provide written acknowledgment to the Complainant, within five (5) days by registered mail. At the same time, the complaint will be forwarded to the State of New Hampshire Attorney General's Office and to the appropriate Federal agency.

- 5.) If a complaint is deemed incomplete, additional information will be requested, and the Complainant will be notified within 15 business days from receipt. The Complainant will be provided 60 business days to submit the required information. Failure to do so may be considered good cause for a determination of no investigative merit.
- 6.) Within 15 business days from receipt of a complete complaint, the NH DOT will determine its jurisdiction in pursuing the matter and whether the complaint has sufficient merit to warrant investigation. Within five (5) days of this decision, the Commissioner or his/her authorized designee will notify the Complainant and Respondent, by registered mail, informing them of the disposition.
- a. If the decision is not to investigate the complaint, the notification shall specifically state the reason for the decision.
 - b. If the complaint is to be investigated, the notification shall state the grounds of the NH DOT's jurisdiction, while informing the parties that their full cooperation will be required in gathering additional information and assisting the investigator.
- 7.) When the NH DOT does not have sufficient jurisdiction, the Commissioner or his/her authorized designee will refer the complaint to the appropriate State or Federal agency holding such jurisdiction.
- 8.) If the complaint has investigative merit, the Commissioner or his/her authorized designee will assign an investigator. A complete investigation will be conducted, and an investigative report will be submitted to the Commissioner within 45 days from receipt of the complaint. The report will include a narrative description of the incident, summaries of all persons interviewed, and a finding with recommendations.
- 9.) The Commissioner or his/her authorized designee will issue letters of finding to the Complainant and Respondent. Where appropriate, these letters will include conciliatory measures. A copy of the investigative report shall be forwarded to the respective Federal agency within 60 days from receipt of the complaint. If the investigation is delayed for any reason, the investigator will notify the appropriate authorities, and an extension will be requested.
- 10.) If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the NH DOT's resolution of the complaint, he/she has the right to file a complaint with the:

Departmental Office of Civil Rights U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W., Rm #10215, S-30 Washington D.C. 20590 (202)
366-4648
(202) 366-5992
TTY Access: (202) 366-9696
DC Relay: (202) 855-1000

Attachment C – Maps of Communities of Interest

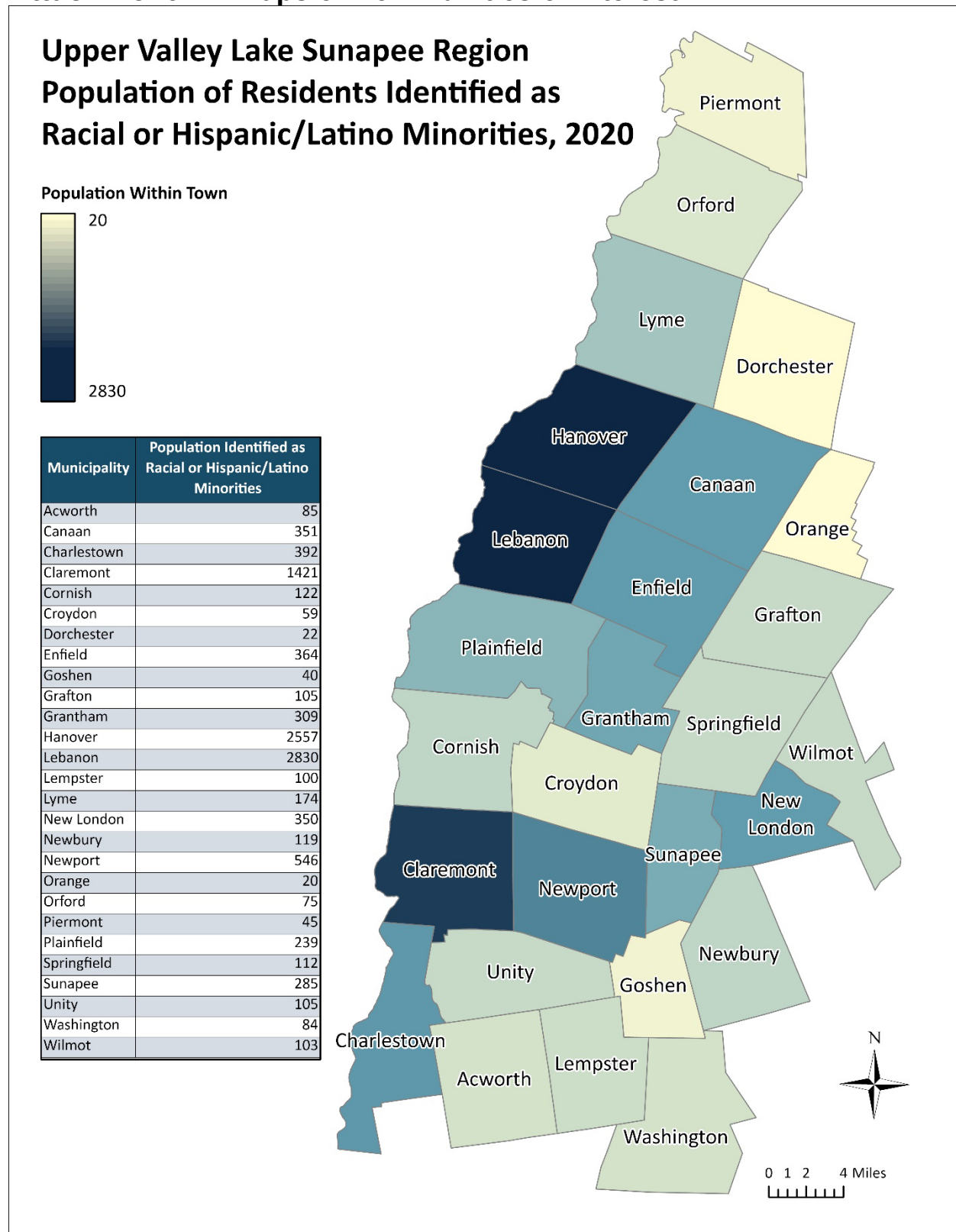


Figure 1 The number of residents in each Upper Valley Lake Sunapee municipality identified as racial and/or ethnic minorities using 2020 U.S. Decennial Census data.

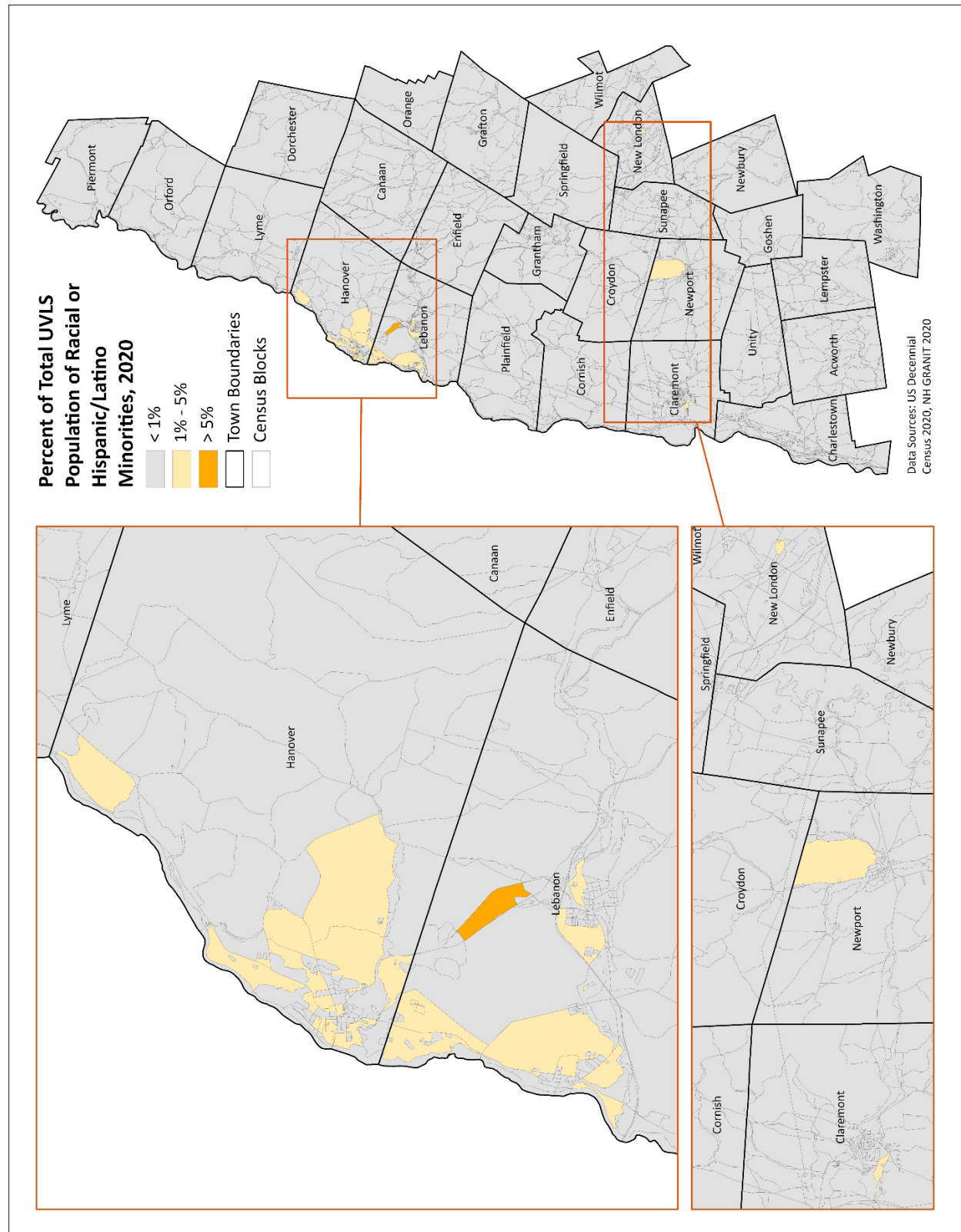


Figure 2 Concentration of Upper Valley Lake Sunapee racial and/or ethnic minority population presented as the percent of total regional racial and/or ethnic minority population found in a particular census block. 2020 U.S. Decennial Census data.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region Population of Low-Income Residents, 2020 (<150% Poverty Line)

Population Within Town



Municipality	Population Identified as Low-Income
Acworth	94
Canaan	457
Charlestown	1048
Claremont	3489
Cornish	169
Croydon	86
Dorchester	122
Enfield	945
Goshen	90
Grafton	163
Grantham	49
Hanover	1128
Lebanon	1908
Lempster	106
Lyme	144
New London	217
Newbury	128
Newport	1542
Orange	25
Orford	314
Piermont	69
Plainfield	267
Springfield	73
Sunapee	722
Unity	133
Washington	145
Wilmot	72

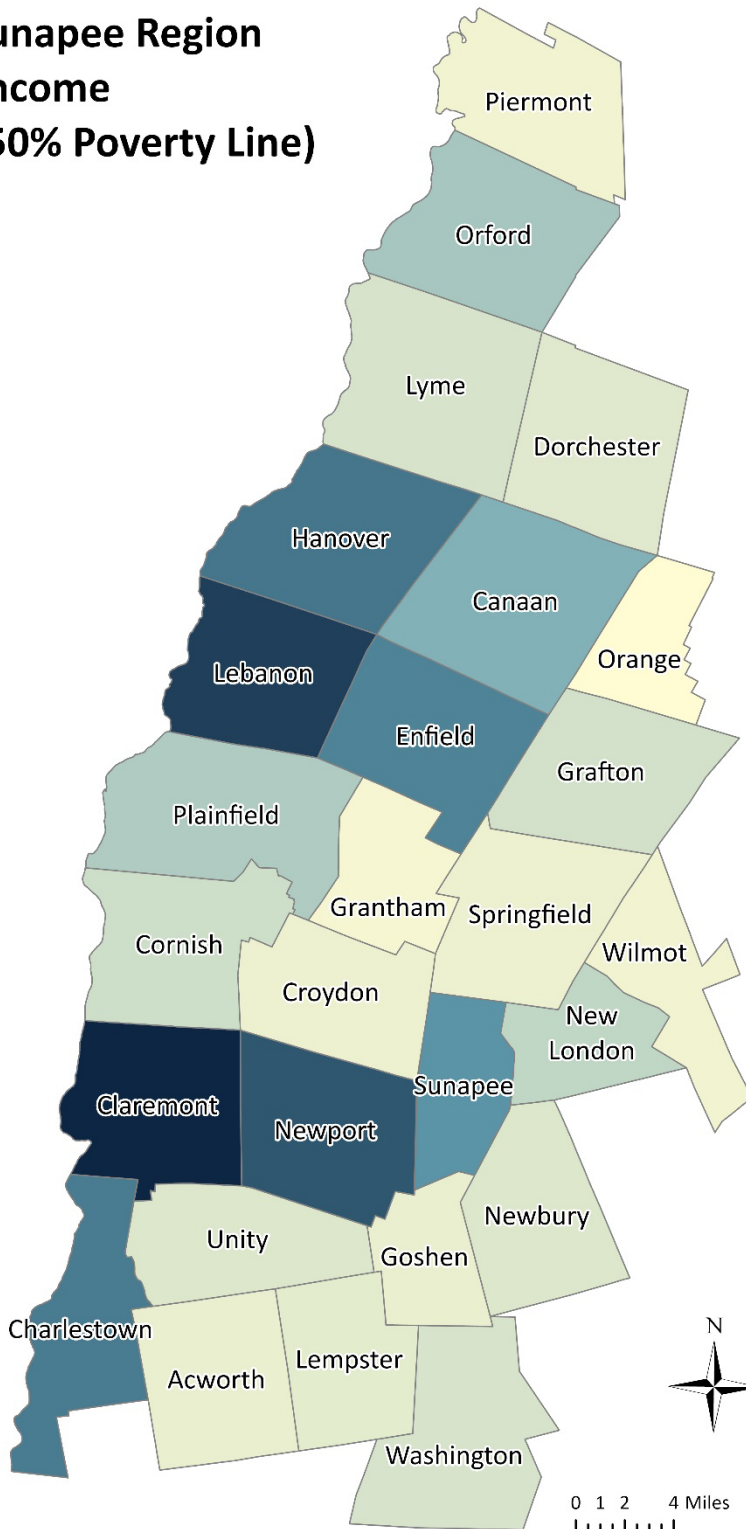
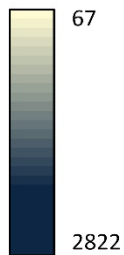


Figure 3 The concentration of low-income residents (<150% Poverty Line) in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region using 2020 CHAS 5-Year Estimates.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region Population of Residents Ages 65 and Older, 2020

Population Within Town



Municipality	Population Ages 65 and Older
Acworth	255
Canaan	611
Charlestown	1080
Claremont	2563
Cornish	528
Croydon	125
Dorchester	172
Enfield	1279
Goshen	279
Grafton	254
Grantham	677
Hanover	1807
Lebanon	2822
Lempster	164
Lyme	446
New London	1396
Newbury	491
Newport	946
Orange	67
Orford	291
Piermont	148
Plainfield	526
Springfield	236
Sunapee	968
Unity	511
Washington	298
Wilmot	323

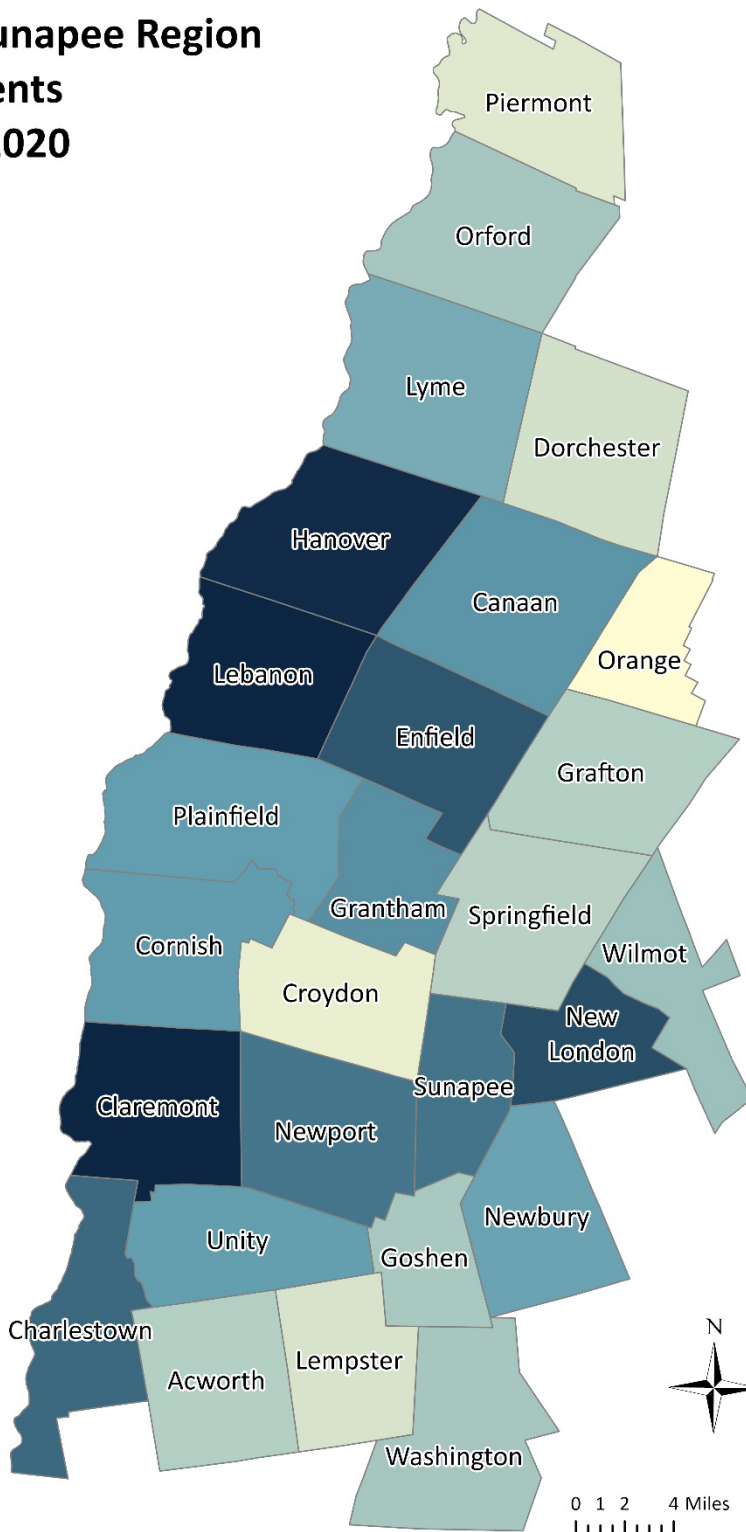


Figure 4 The concentration of residents aged 65 and older in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region from 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data.

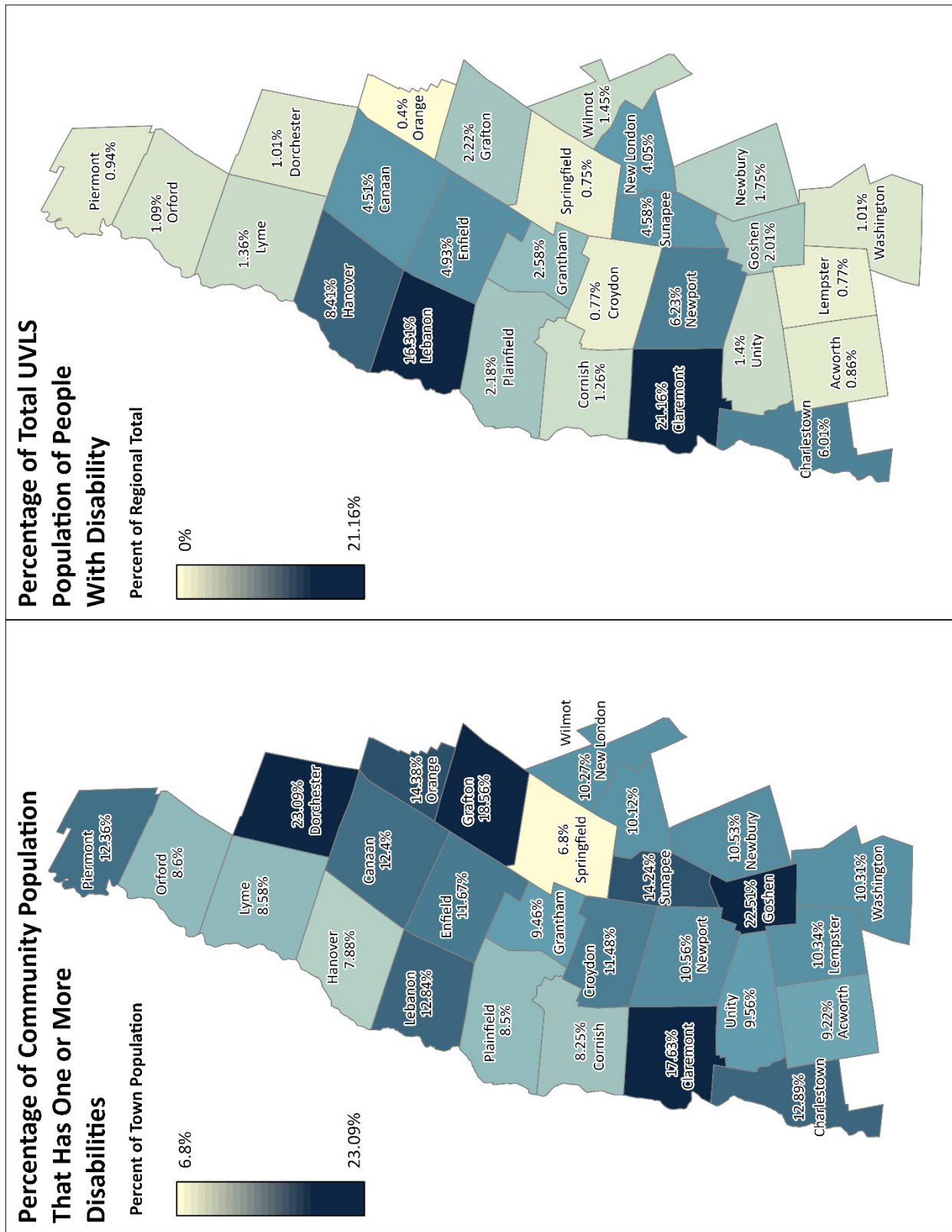


Figure 5 The concentration of residents with one or more disabilities in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region from 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data.



Figure 6 The concentration of residents with limited English proficiency in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee region from 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates data.