



January 2026 - eBulletin

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

Happy New Year! The UVLSRPC newsletter returns this year after the holiday season. The work never stops here at the RPC -- the eBulletin has everything you need to stay in the loop!

In this issue:

- **UVLSRPCorner** - Learn about an ongoing staff project!
 - **Charlestown Public Opinion Survey**
 - Learn about safety tips for driving in the winter weather
 - Register now for NHDOT's Traffic Fatality Summit in 2026
 - And more!
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UVLSRPCorner

Join us every month in the **UVLSRPCorner** to learn more about our projects and the staff behind them!

This month: Thriving Communities Program

Building Resilient Communities Together

The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with University of New Hampshire – Extension and UVLSRPC, hosts and facilitates a Community Resilience Building (CRB) workshop, bringing local leaders, stakeholders, and residents together to identify extreme weather and longer term risks and strengthen preparedness. This collaborative process helps communities pinpoint strengths and vulnerabilities, prioritize actions, and develop strategies that enhance resilience to flooding, storms, heat waves, wildfires, and other hazards.

Insights from the CRB workshop can directly inform **Master Plans and Hazard Mitigation Plans**, ensuring that community-based resilience measures are integrated into long-term planning. By aligning local priorities with actionable strategies, communities with a plan are better equipped to secure funding, reduce risk, and build a safer, more sustainable futures.

This is a free process available to our towns. Enfield and Lebanon have each held very successful CRB workshops with their final reports available at www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org.

Please reach out to AWWhite@uvlsrpc.org if interested!

More UVLSRP News

UVLSRPC Data Collection

UVLSRPC offers data collection and assessments of various roadway infrastructure for towns. Assessment criteria was created in collaboration with NH Department of Transportation (**NHDOT**), UNH T2, the Regional Planning Commissions, and other State agencies. Data collected can be utilized to create long-term maintenance plans, understand forecasted improvement costs, identify priority vulnerable infrastructure, as well as be used to support grant applications.

UVLSRPC currently offers data collection and assessment for:

- Stream Crossings/Culverts
- Drainage Culverts
- Pedestrian Facilities (e.g. crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes)
- Pavement Road Surface Management and Maintenance Forecasting

UVLSRPC has some funding to provide cost share opportunities for member communities on a first come first served basis. Please reach out to Ian Garland at igarland@uvlsrpc.org for more information!



Check Out the UVLSRPC YouTube Page

Find past webinars, recordings, trainings and more on our YouTube page. There are playlists from our School Chemical Safety series, our Food Scraps and Composting Series, Stormwater Management and Household Hazardous Waste. [Click here](#) to view!

Emergency Preparedness

Charlestown Public Opinion Survey

Attention to all Charlestown residents! Please see the notice below to take a survey regarding the frequency and occurrence of natural hazards in Charlestown and what the town can do to mitigate them!



CHARLESTOWN HAZARD MITIGATION SURVEY

In 2026, the Charlestown Hazard Mitigation Committee will be updating the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan to inventory and evaluate potential hazards such as flooding, severe winter weather, and infectious disease. It will also outline potential projects to reduce the impact of future hazards.

The Committee wants to ensure Charlestown residents are aware of hazard mitigation efforts and resources available to them as individuals.

It is important to hear from you!

How to complete the 5-Minute Survey:

- Use the link or QR Code below to take the survey on your device

Link to Survey: <https://arcg.is/0eXji51>

QR Code to Survey:



Questions or More Information? Contact Committee:

Patricia Chaffee at 603-826-5821 or email her at patricia@charlestown-nh.gov

Be #WinterReady

Being #WinterReady means understanding winter risks you face and taking steps now to prepare.

Why should you be #WinterReady?

- Sixty-three percent of temperature-related deaths are attributed to cold exposure.
- Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires, and winter is when most home fires happen.
- Travel during the winter has unique risks, especially if you travel by car.

How to Protect Yourself from Winter Weather - Know your weather terms

Winter Storm Warning: Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.

Winter Storm Watch: Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Winter Storm.

Winter Weather Advisory: Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

For more information, please visit ready.gov/winter-weather

If you'd like to sign up to receive alerts about hazardous weather in your area, visit **NH Alerts** and enter your email and/or phone number.



Housing

Registration Open for Beyond the Front Door ADU Webinar Series

Unlock the Door to a new unit on your property with **Beyond the Front Door** — a webinar series on how to plan for, build and manage your Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Join North Country Council for three live sessions packed with practical guidance, expert insights, and real-world examples that make designing, financing, and building an ADU approachable for homeowners, developers, and community enthusiasts alike.

Sign up for one or all of the webinars:

-  February 12, 6-8pm: Planning and Permitting
-  March 5, 6-8pm: Budgeting and Financing
-  March 26, 6-8pm: Constructing and Maintaining

Reserve your spot today and start turning your ADU vision into a tangible, well-planned reality. Space is limited, so don't miss out! <https://www.nccouncil.org/community-planning/beyond-the-front-door-webinar-series/>

BEYOND THE FRONT DOOR

*How to Finance, Permit & Build an
Accessory Dwelling Unit on Your Property*

Join our webinars to find out more about how to finance, design, permit, and construct an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on your property. The webinars are free and open to the public. RSVP is required.

**FEB
12TH**

Planning and Permitting
6-8pm



**MARCH
5TH**

**Financing Your ADU: Budgeting,
Development Models & Financing**
6-8pm



**MARCH
26TH**

**Building and Maintaining:
Managing Your Project and How
to be a Landlord**
6-8pm



To Register:

1. Scan or click the QR Codes above
2. Email Taylor Roy at troy@nccouncil.org
3. Call: 603-444-6303, x2028



Transportation

2026 NHDOT Traffic Fatality Summit

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Highway Safety has announced that their 2026 Traffic Fatality Summit will take place on **Monday, February 9th from 9AM-2PM at the NH National Guard Training Facility in Pembroke.**

This summit is for NH First Responders to meet, discuss what they are facing when responding to MVA's involving serious injuries & fatalities. This is a great opportunity for Fire/PD/EMS to share concerns, needs, observations and help develop a plan to reduce traffic fatalities.

Click this link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-nh-dot-fatality-summit-tickets-1437769119139?aff=oddtcreator>



2nd Annual NH DOT Traffic Fatality Summit

February 9th, 9a-12p
NH DOT 7 Hazen Dr, Concord, NH

To attend, please sign up through Eventbrite link below

www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-nh-dot-fatality-summit-tickets-1437769119139?aff=oddtcreator

Any questions, please contact Mark Munroe at Mark.T.Munroe@dot.nh.gov



Rural Road Safety Center Training

Are you concerned with traffic safety in our area? Wondering what you can do? Consider becoming a Road Safety Champion! The National Center for Rural Road Safety offers free webinars on road safety where you can learn all aspects about how to keep our roads safe. The Road Safety Champion Program (RSCP) is a nationally-recognized "Roadway Safety 101" training series. It is made for staff in transportation, public health, and first responder agencies who have an interest in roadway safety but are not safety experts.

The RSCP includes seven core modules plus career-focused pathways. Once participants complete the seven core modules and one pathway, they are awarded a Road Safety Champion Program Certificate!

Find out more at <https://ruralsafetycenter.org/road-safety-champion-program> and register for modules here: <https://ruralsafetycenter.org/safety-center-registration/>

Advance Transit Announces Appointment of New Director

Advance Transit (AT), the nonprofit fare-free public transit provider serving communities in Vermont and New Hampshire, is excited to announce the appointment of Teri Palmer as its new Executive Director. Palmer will begin her role on January 19, 2026.

The current Executive Director, Adams Carroll, will remain with Advance Transit through the end of February to ensure a smooth and thoughtful leadership transition.

Palmer joins Advance Transit following a comprehensive search led by the Advance Transit Board of Directors, with professional support from Mark Heyman, Founder and Consultant at HR Happens, and Paula Cope, President & CEO of Cope & Associates, Inc. The Board sought a dynamic, experienced leader with a strong commitment to public service and a forward-looking vision for accessibility and sustainability in transportation.

"We are thrilled to welcome Teri to Advance Transit," said Rebecca Owens, President of Advance Transit's Board of Directors. "Her adaptability, record of successful collaborations, and experience in transportation and mobility management—combined with her passion for community-centered service—makes her exceptionally suited to lead Advance Transit. She joins an all-star team, and the Board is excited for this next chapter."

Reflecting on her new role, Palmer shared, "I'm honored to join Advance Transit at such an exciting moment. AT plays a crucial role in keeping our communities connected, and I'm eager to build on that strong foundation by strengthening partnerships, expanding access, and ensuring our services continue to meet the evolving needs of riders, especially for 'last mile' connectivity. My goal is to support a system that is welcoming, efficient, and responsive."

As Executive Director, Palmer will lead Advance Transit's mission to provide fare-free, accessible, and sustainable transportation that strengthens communities and expands opportunity throughout the Upper Valley.

To read the full article, click [here](#).

National Passenger Safety Week - January 19th-26th



Roadway deaths in the U.S continue at an alarming rate. Reckless driving, drunk driving, and distracted driving are on the rise. Telling people to drive safer is not enough. Passengers need to play a role in their own safety and that of others.

We Save Lives and the National Road Safety Foundation launched the National Passenger Safety Campaign, bringing together 60+ other organizations that believe that it's time to focus on the passenger, and not just the driver. The goal is to promote safe driving practices and prevent unsafe ones by empowering passengers to SPEAK UP when their lives are in danger due to a reckless driver. Statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) show that 24% of fatalities in 2023 were passengers.

What You Can Do:

- [Take the Passenger Pledge](#)
- Let people know about Passenger Safety Week - and how SPEAKING UP can save lives in unsafe driving conditions
- Download their social media posts from their [Toolkit page](#) and share them with your friends, family, and community

Visit nationalpassengersafety.org to learn more.

Winter Weather Driving Tips

Officials from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) have posted reminders on how to stay safe on the road this winter!

Reduce Speed:

- Slow down for wet, snowy, or icy conditions, when visibility is poor, or when



- conditions are changing or unpredictable.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots, which are candidates for developing ice.
- Allow additional space between vehicles.
- Winter conditions often result in longer stopping distances.
- Before pulling out into traffic, remember that they may not be able to slow down.
- You may not be able to accelerate as quickly as on dry pavement either.
- Avoid using cruise control in winter driving condition.

Driving Maneuvers:

- Stopping on snow and ice requires extra time and distance. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal.
- Brake early, brake slowly, brake correctly, and never slam on the brakes.
- On snow and ice, go slow, no matter what type of vehicle you drive.
- Even if you have four-wheel drive, you may not be able to stop any faster, or maintain control any better, once you lose traction. Four-wheel drive may get you going faster, but it won't help you stop sooner.
- Accelerate gradually and avoid abrupt steering maneuvers.
- Merge slowly, since sudden movements can cause your vehicle to slide.
- Look farther ahead in traffic than you normally do. Actions by other vehicles will alert you to problems more quickly, and give you that split-second of extra time to react safely.
- Avoid distracted driving. This includes texting, eating, handheld devices, etc.

Travel Around Snowplows:

- Don't crowd the plow. The front plow extends several feet in front of the truck and may cross the centerline and shoulders during plowing operations.
- Don't tailgate or stop too close behind snowplows. Snowplows are usually spreading deicing materials from the back of the truck and may need to stop or take evasive action to avoid stranded vehicles. If you find yourself behind a snowplow, stay behind it, leaving a safe distance. The road behind a snowplow will be safer to drive on.
- On multi-lane roads, watch for several snowplows plowing in tandem. This type of plowing clears all the lanes of a multi-lane highway quickly and effectively with one pass.
- Snowplows throw up a cloud of snow that can reduce your visibility to zero in less time than you can react. Never drive into a snow cloud, as it could conceal another snowplow.
- Snowplows travel much slower than posted speeds while removing snow and ice from the roads. When you spot a plow, allow plenty of time to slow down.

Trip Preparedness:

- Before leaving home, find out about the driving conditions.
- Safe drivers know the weather, and they know their limits. If the weather is bad, remember, ice and snow, take it slow, or just don't go.
- Clear all the snow off all of your vehicle including roof, windows, head lights, brake lights, and turn signals.
- Make sure you can see and be seen.
- Always buckle up, and remember, when driving in winter, ice and snow, take it slow.
- Give yourself extra time to reach your destination safely.
- Check your vehicle's tires, brakes, fluids, wiper blades, lights, belts, and hoses to make sure they're in good condition before the start of the winter season.

For more information, please visit <https://www.dot.nh.gov/about-nh-dot/divisions-bureaus-districts/highway-maintenance/winter-maintenance-snow-removal-and>

Funding Opportunity for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant

USDOT recently issued the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (located at [FY 2026 BUILD Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity | US Department of Transportation](#)).

This NOFO announces up to \$1.5 billion in funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for projects that will have a significant local and regional impact and improve transportation infrastructure.

The press release is posted here: <https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants>

Submission and Deadline Requirements:

- **Applications must be submitted online no later than 5:00 pm eastern on February 24, 2026.**
- Complete instructions on how to apply will be posted at [grants.gov](#) and the [BUILD program website](#). Selections are expected to be announced no later than June 28, 2026

Applicants should email questions to: BUILDgrants@dot.gov

Environment and Energy

Funding Available through the Granite State Clean Fleets Grant Program

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Mobile Sources team has released a \$7.5 million request for proposals (RFP) through the Granite State Clean Fleets (GSCF) program.



GSCF is a competitive reimbursement program funded by the [Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust](#) (VW Trust) focused on reducing diesel emissions by replacing Class 4-8 diesel vehicles, engines and equipment, or installing marine shore power systems. This new round of funding provides up to a 95% reimbursement for eligible projects from state and municipally run entities such as school districts, public community colleges/universities and transit agencies.

NHDES anticipates this will be the final funding round for diesel vehicles, engine and equipment replacements under the VW Trust, so applicants are encouraged to take full advantage of this unique opportunity.

Applications are accepted on a rolling monthly basis until March 30, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET or earlier if all funds are obligated.

More information on eligibility, funding limits, and grant requirements can be found in the GSCF RFP, which is located on the [GSCF webpage](#). Terms and conditions of the GSCF program are subject to change. Prior applicants are encouraged to thoroughly review the RFP for updated guidance.

Questions may also be forwarded to the Grants Program Coordinator, Mac Bevier, via email to ms-grants@des.nh.gov or by phone at **(603) 271-8330**.

NHDES Announces Emergency Drought Assistance Program

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) announces it will reopen a program to help low-income homeowners experiencing water supply issues resulting from the ongoing drought. During this historic drought, nearly 250 residents have reported drywells causing insufficient drinking water in their homes. In response to these widespread reports of dry wells, the Drinking Water and Groundwater Advisory Commission voted in November to approve a \$1,500,000 grant from the Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund (DWGTF) to re-establish the Emergency Drought Assistance Program (EDAP).

To qualify for the program, applicants must provide income information, and verification by a licensed New Hampshire well driller or pump installer that the well has experienced irreversible water supply issues due to drought.

More information can be found on the [EDAP website](#). Private well-owners are encouraged to self-screen eligibility using the income limits provided in the application.

For more information, email edap@des.nh.gov or call Marysa Boire at (603) 271-1355.

New Hampshire Looking for New Ways to Address Road Salt in Freshwater

A recent article published in the New Hampshire Bulletin details the recurring issue of road salt seeping off roads and into New Hampshire's waterways, overall posing a mounting threat to drinking water and wildlife.

To learn more, [click here](#).

Municipal Support & Economic Development

NHMA Guidance on Changes to Laws Governing Elections, Town Meetings, & More

The New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) has posted updates to their guidance on elections, town meetings, zoning, land-use, and more.

To view the new guidance documents, click [here](#).

Community Happenings

Northern Borders Regional Commission - Fall 2025 Catalyst Awards

Northern Borders Regional Commission announced their Fall 2025 Catalyst Awards with multiple projects selected in the UVLSRPC region!

- Sullivan County Conservation District was awarded \$250,000 to establish a shared-use food processing hub in Unity with a commercial kitchen, training programs, and equipment for farmers and food entrepreneurs
- The Well Collaborative in Claremont was awarded \$821,353.60 to repurpose a historic church in Claremont into a community hub with childcare, a commercial kitchen, and meeting space

- The City of Claremont was awarded \$430,000 to advance the Sugar River Revitalization and Brownfields Redevelopment Project by improving pedestrian access and preparing sites for community and commercial use. The project will transform a remediated brownfield into a riverwalk and public gathering space.
- The Acworth Historical Society has been awarded \$268,311.00 to modernize and expand the Acworth Village Store, a historic general store and community hub. The project will improve flood resilience, energy efficiency, and ADA accessibility, supporting local farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs. It aims to preserve a vital economic and social institution in rural New Hampshire.
- Mascoma Valley Preservation has been awarded \$400,000.00 to complete rehabilitation of two historic properties in Grafton, NH, for small business incubation and outdoor recreation. The project includes a general store, community center, and trail access improvements to support tourism and economic activity.

Congratulations to these municipalities and organizations for the exciting projects in our communities. Spring 2026 NBRC funding is just around the corner — visit nbrc.gov for more information or email Tim Josephson at tjosephson@uvlsrpc.org



Borrow an E-Bike!

The Upper Valley E-Bike Lending Library is a free selection of four e-bikes of assorted styles and retail costs that has one- and two-week residencies in towns and workplaces throughout the Upper Valley. While the e-bike library is stationed at a particular lending location, people can try multiple bikes at “Demo Days” or sign up to borrow a single bike overnight to see how an e-bike might fit into your lifestyle. Book a bike [here!](#)

Full Commission Meeting Dates FY 2026

- **February 11, 2026**
- **April 8, 2026**



If you have any questions or concerns, please call Chris at 603-448-1680.

**Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission**
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