

## MEMORANDUM

To: RPC Commissioners  
From: Scott Bogle, Senior Transportation Planner  
Date: March 7, 2018  
RE: RPC Member Services Survey Raw Results

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Last summer RPC staff developed a survey for distribution to RPC member communities asking a range of questions about RPC services. Questions addressed use and evaluation of current services; and levels of interest in potential new services RPC is considering offering on a supplemental fee basis.

An invitation to take the web-based survey was sent in late May to the following lists maintained by RPC:

- Municipal Managers & Administrators
- Professional Planners
- DPW Directors & Road Agents
- Chairs of Municipal Boards & Committees:
  - Select Board Chairs
  - Planning Board Chairs
  - Conservation Commission Chairs
  - Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairs
  - Conservation Commission Chairs
  - Energy Committee Chairs
  - Economic Development Committee Chairs

In all RPC received 61 responses to the survey from 25 communities in the region. No responses were received from the towns of Epping or Newfields. Summary results from the survey are attached for review in advance of Wednesday's meeting.

## RPC Member Services Survey - Key Findings

- **Q1 Responses** - Fifty-nine (61) responses from 25 of the 27 communities in the RPC region. Number of responses varied by community, with a high of five (5) individual responses each from Seabrook and Stratham, four communities with four responses each, five with three (3) responses, two communities with two and a single response from eleven communities.
  - **Q2 & Q3 Municipal Staff Role** - Most common municipal roles were Resident (28), Planning Board (27) and Municipal Staff (21). Eleven (12) RPC Commissioners completed the survey. Most frequent municipal staff roles self-identified were Town Administrators/Managers (8) and Planning Department Staff (5)
  - **Q4 Current Services** - Current RPC services most commonly cited included: Master Plan Updates (36), Zoning Ordinance Updates (33), Updates to Other Regulations (25), Mapping & Data Analysis (24), Circuit Riders (21), Community Surveys (21), Technical Training for Staff & Boards (18) and Hazard Mitigation planning (18).
  - **Q5 Current Services/Open Ended** (29 Responses) - Open-ended responses on current services found to be 'particularly useful' highlighted Circuit Riding (10), Master Plan updates (7), Coastal Adaptation (3), Zoning Ordinance Updates (3), Transportation Services (4) and Housing (3).
  - **Q6 - How to Improve/Open Ended** (22 Responses) – The most common response here was essentially “keep doing what you’re doing”. Three points came up more than once: improving communication to let communities and the public know about services we offer and current work (cited 3x); providing assistance to Heritage Commissions with historic/cultural preservation work (2x); serving as a liaison with NHDOT (2x). Other points requested once included assistance with identifying grant funding for local planning efforts, mapping of archaeological sites, refining build-out analyses to show impact on emergency services and school, and increased focus on project implementation beyond initial planning.
  - **Q7 New/Expanded Services (40 Responses)** – Several potential new or expanded services stood out in respondent interest. These included:
    - Expanded Mapping/GIS Services (54% Very Useful/Weighted Avg. 2.1 out of 3.0);
    - Community Needs Assessment/Master Plan Surveys (70% Very Useful/WA 2.45);
    - Expanded Land Use Board Trainings (49% Very Useful/WA 2.21);
    - Part-Time TA for Conservation Commissions (50% Very Useful/WA 2.10),
    - MS4 Permit Development/Implementation (51% Very Useful/WA 1.97)
    - Other included TA for ZBAs (WA 1.84) and Review of Traffic Impact Analyses (WA1.91)
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- **Q8 Services for which Towns might consider supplemental contracts (31 Responses)**

*Respondents requesting further information on behalf of their town*

- Expanded Mapping/GIS Services (15) - (Danville, East Kingston (2), Exeter (2), Fremont, Hampstead, Hampton Falls, Newington, North Hampton (2), Plaistow, Rye, Sandown, Stratham)
- MS4 Permit Development/Implementation (12) – (Atkinson (2), Fremont, Greenland, Hampstead, Hampton Falls, North Hampton, Rye, Salem, Sandown, Stratham)
- Needs Assessment/Master Plan Surveys (10) – (Atkinson, East Kingston (2), Greenland, Hampstead, Newington, Newton, North Hampton, Salem, Stratham)
- Part-Time TA for ZBA (9)
- Part-Time TA for Economic Development Committee (9)
- Traffic Impact Analysis Review (8)

- **Q9A Pressing Issues – Land Use (27 Responses)**

- Promoting desired commercial growth (4+)
- Growth management to protect resources (open space, ag land, historic resources (3)
- Adaptation and sea level rise (2)
- General reference to plan or zoning ordinance updates
- Process issues - board training, coordination (2)
- Housing/Buildout Analysis needed (2)

- **Q9B Pressing Issues – Transportation (22 Responses)**

- Congestion and traffic flow (6)
- Transit need, particularly elderly and disabled (6)
- Safety (incl intersections, speed, traffic calming, parking conflicts) (4)
- Pedestrian accommodations and trails (2)
- Evacuation routes (1)

- **Q9C Pressing Issues – Environment/Natural Resources (20 Responses)**

- Land conservation and open space planning (4)
- Water quality (10)
  - General reference to water quality or groundwater protection
  - MS4 compliance (4)
  - Sea level rise impacts on water quality (2)

- **Q9D Pressing Issues – Economic Development (22 Responses)**

- General reference to attracting business
  - Developing/reinvigorating town or village center (3)
  - No issues/further local development not desired (3)
  - Workforce housing (2)
  - Climate change impacts on coastal economic (tourism, fisheries) (1)
  - Seaport/waterfront development (1)
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- Balancing commercial/residential interests (1)
- Extending water service (1)
  
- **Q9E Pressing Issues – Climate Change (16 Responses)**
  - Updating zoning regulations (2)
  - Not a local priority (2)
  - Weather extremes (1)
  - Regional impact of coastline vulnerability (3)
  
- **Q11 Areas for Regional Collaboration (20 Responses)**
  - MS4/Stormwater management (3)
  - Watershed management (2)
  - Emergency services (2)
  - Transportation/traffic studies (2)
  - Bicycle routes (2)
  - Evacuation routes
  - Water service extension (1)
  - Cross-border zoning consistency (1)
  
- **Q12 Other Suggestions to Improve/Expand Services & Help Members (10 Responses)**
  - Improve communication
  - Assist with emerging issues – particularly for smaller communities (2)
  - Region power purchase agreements
  - Water issues (drinking water, stormwater, watershed/groundwater/aquifer mgt. (1)
  
- **Next Steps**
  - Make contacts to ensure response from all member communities
  - Review findings with staff and assess capacity
  - Follow-up with individuals who provided contact information (9 in 7 towns – East Kingston, Exeter, Hampstead, Rye, Seabrook, South Hampton, Stratham)
  - Follow up with commissioners for communities where respondents indicated interest in supplemental services.