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UNH and City of Portsmouth Partner on Resident Survey

By Erika Mantz
UNH News Bureau
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Editors, directors: The following people are available for interview in connection with this story: Portsmouth Community Development Director Cindy Hayden, (603) 431-2006, ext. 218; UNH graduate student survey coordinator David Moore, (603) 828-6370; Annette Arno, UNH Survey Center, (603) 862-2983; and UNH assistant professor of political science Todd Eisenstadt, toddeisenstadt@earthlink.net

DURHAM, N.H. -- The city of Portsmouth, in collaboration with students in the University of New Hampshire's master's program in public administration and the UNH Survey Center, developed a resident opinion survey as part of the city's master planning process. It will be conducted via telephone beginning March 10.

The purpose of the survey is to provide information on the attitudes of Portsmouth residents towards various city services and facilities, including parks and playgrounds, city streets, open space protection, and recycling and library services. A total of 400 randomly selected Portsmouth households will be surveyed.

The UNH Survey Center will conduct the confidential survey, designed by two graduate students in the Political Science Department's Master's Program in Public Administration, during the first two weeks of March. Once the survey is completed, the findings will be shared with city officials and the public and utilized in the development of the city's master plan.

The survey, developed in consultation with political science professor Todd Eisenstadt, Portsmouth city officials, and survey center staff. It represents an
initiative by the graduate program in public administration to improve relations between the university and the state's local governments.

"This has been a great opportunity to apply survey research methodology in service to the residents of Portsmouth," said David Moore, the MPA student who has coordinated survey design, along with fellow MPA student Meredith Birkett. "The experience has been enlightening and the challenge to create questions which yield useful information is a formidable one."

The students initiated the research for the survey -- funded jointly by the UNH Department of Political Science and the City of Portsmouth -- as students in the graduate research methods class taught last fall by Eisenstadt. Eisenstadt was able to obtain funding from the department and generous technical assistance from the Survey Center to allow Moore and Birkett to design the survey in consultation with Portsmouth officials.

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