

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission - DLTA Funded Programs and Activities  
Quarterly Report - September 20, 2013

MUNICIPALITY	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT TYPE	SHORT PROJECT DESCRIPTION
			<i>MVPC has initiated/continues the following Regional Services activities/projects using 2013 DLTA funds:</i>
Region Wide - one community (Lowell) is out of the region	DPW Services and Supplies Procurement	Regional Services	Thirteen communities meet monthly and discuss best practices and challenges and have joined together for purchase and procurement of DPW services. Services bid to date include pavement marking, crack sealing, catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, and purchase of drainage and sewer pipe. A new Invitation to Bid for 2013 was solicited and bids were opened March 22, 2013.
Region Wide	Regional Energy Action Plan	Regional Services	Last fall MVPC completed the "Merrimack Valley Clean Energy Action Plan" The Plan is an action oriented document which discusses initiatives in place among the region's communities, the resources and tools available, and recommend actions for each city and town in the region to help them reduce energy consumption and realize their energy goals. MVPC was presented a Commonwealth "Leading by Example Award" for the Plan last October at a ceremony at the State House. Additionally, the Plan received a NADO "Inovation Award" on 8/27/2013. Implementation of the Plan is in process.
Region Wide	311 Feasibility Study	Regional Services	MVPC is in the process of completing a feasibilty study to determine the technical, management, and financial requirements of forming a regional 311 non-emergency call center for the Merrimack Valley. Non emergency phone service is a growing trend nationwide, but just catching on in Massachusetts.
Region Wide-Nine communities and two regional school districts participate.	Regional Energy Manager	Regional Services	Several communities have been working together through the Merrimack Valley Regional Energy Management program established by MVPC with 2009 DLTA funds. Ameresco has been hired as the preferred vendor to provide regional ESCO services. Ameresco has met and provided some level of technical assistance with all 15 communities and, to date, six have signed investment grade audit agreements. IGA's are now underway and will continue throughout 2013. \$13 million in improvements are expected to be performed.
Region Wide	Brownfields to Solar Farms and Net Metering	Regional Services	MVPC is providing technical assistance to help several communities consider retrofitting closed landfills into "brightfields." Over 100 acres of brownfields/landfills could be used in this fashion. Meridian Associates completed a "fatal flaw" analysis on eleven sites in nine communities. Their findings became an "action plan" which MVPC is helping the towns to implement. A "Regional Energy Manager", Meister Consultants Group, is currently analyzing sites in N.Andover, Amesbury, and Boxford. Meister has also put together a net metering RFP with six of the regions communites. The RFP was issued in February and proposals received March 8, 2013. A Power Purchase agreement between the participating municipalities and American Capital Energy has been developed but awaits SREC II later this year.
Region Wide	Purchasing	Regional Services	Based on the cost savings analysis completed through DLTA, a regional purchasing agent was hired to assist communities. Several regional bids for various services have already been issued. A road maintenance bid was opened March 22, 2013.
Region Wide	DPW Coalition	Regional Services	The DPW Directors Coalition is working to try and address, through a regional approach, pavement management issues and the new stormwater regulations. In addition, MVPC is assisting in development of "work order software applications". A regional procurement of CMMS software is underway. An application for a challenge grant to assist in this effort was funded for 25% of our request. The remainder is funded with DLTA funds. Also, MVPC managed the joint regional purchase of a retroreflectometer to assist in inventory of sign assets in respective communities in order to meet new sign reflectivity requirements from FHWA. This effort resulted in saving each community several thousand dollars if they were to purchase their own.
Region Wide	Electrical Energy Purchasing	Regional Services	The Mayors/Town Managers Coalition met with Glacial Energy regarding the possibility of aggregate electrical energy purchasing. The coalition requested MVPC explore this idea in greater detail to determine cost savings benefits to the regions cities and towns and to develop an RFP if feasible. An RFP was issued and bids were received in June 17, 2013. The bids have been reviwed over the summer and the coalition will meet in September to select a vendor.
Haverhill	Reverse Auction	Regional Services	Through MVPC's Mayor's/Manager's Coalition, a list of proposed changes to state law to improve municipal management, was packaged into a "Municipal Relief Proposal". One suggestion was to allow for "reverse auctions", and this idea was approved by the State Legislature. A Boston Globe article highlights how this one tool saved Haverhill thousands of dollars. MVPC is working to use this tool in other communities in the region.
Region Wide	Best Practices Guide	Regional Services	DLTA funds have been used to inventory, categorize, describe, and disseminate relevant and useful information about regionalization best practices. MVPC completed their work with a website designer and the "best practices" website is up and running.
Region Wide	Health Care	Regional Services	Work has been underway towards the development of a "regional healthcare provider network" using a consortium of local hospitals in the MVPC region. The intent is to encourage municipal employees to use the health services of regional hospitals (which are the largest employers in their host communities) through the use of discounted fees for service thus saving cities and towns health care benefit costs. This can be an alternative to communities unable to join GIC. This activity has been very slow to take hold, but discussions continue among the Mayors/Managers and local hospitals and we hope for action in early 2014.
Region Wide	Inspectional Services	Regional Services	Bids to procure the services of certified inspectors (bld., plumbing, gas, health, etc.) to help member communities achieve cost savings by utilizing an "inspectional pool" as needed was opened last spring. Pool to be used to fill various levels of need from backfilling vacation and sick leave to augmenting existing staff to meet uneven demand for inspections. Four health inspectors and three electrical inspectors are available for member cities and towns. This service is now up and running and being used by a few municipalities. MVPC is working to increase the effectiveness of the program by trying to add building inspectors to the pool.
Region Wide	Facilitation	Regional Services	MVPC convenes meetings with the region's decision makers on a regular basis and facilitates strategy sessions where regional solutions to municipal management problems are discussed in hopes of turning these ideas into "actions". Meeting are held monthly with the region's Mayor's and City/Town Managers; monthly with the region's DPW/Public Work's Directors; quarterly with the region's Planning/Economic Development Directors; quarterly with Town Administrators and Finance Directors; and an annual meeting is held with the state senators and state representatives from the region. Many timely topics are discussed such as recent presentations in August and September, 2013 on medical marijuna laws and stormwater regulations.

Municipality	Project Name	Project Type	Short Project Description			
			Planning Ahead for Housing/Planning Ahead for Growth activities initiated and continuing using 2013 DLTA funds are as follows:			
Region Wide	Master Planning/Growth Strategy	Planning Ahead for Growth	In 2009, MVPC completed the first master plan for the region in over 30 years. It was well received by all the communities as well as state and local officials. The Plan also received a "best practice" recognition by the NADO Research Foundation in 2009. It also received a 2011- Innovation Award from NADO. Many communities have requested MVPC assist them with plan implementation to include technical assistance to properly develop their "growth districts", as well as assisting them in the preservation and protection of open space. That work is underway and will continue through 2013 and beyond. In addition, the Plan formed the basis for completion of a EOHEd funded Regional Strategic Framework Plan which was submitted May, 2011. MVPC met with the EOHEd Secretary to discuss the use of the Plan with the "Planning Ahead for Growth" initiative by the Commonwealth. This was followed by EOHEd staff working with MVPC for several months which has culminated with our regions section of Planning Ahead for Growth being formally announced on June 20, 2013 at MVPC's annual Regional Planning Day. We now have "PDA's" of statewide, regional, and local significance in the MVPC region			
Andover, Haverhill, Lawrence, North Andover	Development Workshops	Planning Ahead for Housing	On April 2, 2013 MVPC and EOHEd held for a bus tour of the Merrimack Valley for developers and lenders to showcase "housing opportunities" in the regions "Priority Development Areas." Six sites in four communities were shown and highlighted in hopes of helping to "jumpstart" the development of these areas as we work to meet the Governors housing goals. Additionally, MVPC put together a workshop and training on "compact neighborhoods", 40R districts, 43D for housing, and the pre-permitting of development areas. EOHEd and DHCD development experts spoke along with MVPC's Executive Director. This was held on May 2, 2013. A new 40R district will be voted on in Amesbury in October, 2013.			
Region Wide	43D Technical Assistance	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC provides training and technical assistance on Chapter 43D to our communities. Amesbury, Haverhill, Andover, Georgetown, North Andover, and Lawrence have PDS sites. Andover has 9 PDS sites-one of the most of any community statewide. Under this program MVPC completed the Route 125/Osgood Street Corridor Analysis for the Town of North Andover, and a permit streamlining analysis for the city of Haverhill. A new 43D district is being voted on for Amesbury in October, 2013.			
Georgetown	43D Technical Assistance	Planning Ahead for Growth	Work completed includes an examination of the permit procedures in Georgetown and establishing formal procedures for permitting within their 43D district. This work resulted in the completion of a "Development Guidebook" and permit streamline recommendations. MVPC also assisted Georgetown with an application to become an ETA. The ETA was approved in 2012.			
Haverhill	Permit Streamlining	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC completed an examination of the permitting process in Haverhill's water/wastewater department and recommended ways to improve any confusing and duplicative elements that exist. This follows up on a city-wide Chapter 43D permit streamline initiative previously conducted by MVPC for the City.			
Methuen	Open Space Plans	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC is assisting the City of Methuen in the update of their open space, park and recreation plan. A final draft is complete and has been submitted to the state for review.			
Merrimac	Housing Production Plan	Planning Ahead for Housing	MVPC developed a new Housing Plan for the Town of Merrimac which included a review of the existing plan, developing a comprehensive housing needs assessment, developing affordable housing goals, formulating implementation strategies, and working with DHCD for approval and certification. The Plan was approved by DHCD. Additionally, MVPC will be facilitating a "visioning session" on October 10, 2013 to help Merrimac develop a plan to clean up and build affordable housing on an old brownfields site in the downtown.			
North Andover	Zoning	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC assisted the Town of North Andover with the update of their Zoning Map to include all recent zoning changes approved by town meeting including new mixed-use oriented zones. MVPC worked with the Town and with U-Mass Amherst to examine the Route 125 Corridor and propose better zoning to help spur development from the Haverhill City limits to Route 133. The study will be completed in October, 2013.			
Andover	Streamline Permitting	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC worked with the Town of Andover and ViewPoint, LLC on the development and deployment of ViewPermit Permitting Software application in the Town of Andover.			
Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley, West Newbury	Stormwater Inventory and Mapping	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC provides technical assistance in the inventorying of stormwater choke-points and chronic flooding hotspots in seven of the region's smaller communities. The fieldwork component has been completed, and staff has incorporated this information into a standardized set of digital maps and companion data tables. These products are an important new aid to the communities when developing their local 5 year stormwater management plans, natural hazard mitigation plans, and open space protection plans.			
Region Wide	Stormwater Management/Low Impact Development Training	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC conducted a workshop on stormwater management. The workshop provided both a detailed step by step analysis of the new federal stormwater management requirements for communities which operate 'MS4s' as well as interactive panel discussions on opportunities for inter-municipal sharing of resources, costs, and experience.			
Rowley	Open Space Plans	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC assisted Rowley in the update of their Open Space Park and Recreation Plan by utilizing revised inventory data and preparing a set of maps to reflect open space, water resources, open space action plan, soils, unique/special features, historic resources, and zoning.			
Boxford and Georgetown	Stormwater Technical Assistance	Planning Ahead for Growth	Will prepare the new EPA mandated Notices of Intent and Stormwater Management Programs when the new Phase II General permit is issued.			
Boxford	Solar Energy	Planning Ahead for Growth	Identified parcels with the potential to house large scale solar arrays			
West Newbury	Trails Mapping	Planning Ahead for Growth	Identifying parcels for creation of town wide trails network.			
Region Wide	FIRM mapping	Planning Ahead for Growth	MVPC has mapped out the comparisons of the old FIRM maps with the new FIRM data recently released. We mapped out 100 year floodplain areas new to our communities as well as areas that have been removed.			
			BUDGET:			
				Contract	Expended	Balance
Funds Spent - Regional Services:		\$91,765 (55%)	DHCD Allocated:	\$157,012	\$151,691	\$5,321
			MVPC Cash Match:	7,850.50	6,782.21	1,068.29
Funds Spent - Planning Ahead for Growth		\$74,559 (45%)	MVPC Inkind Match:	7,850.50	7,850.50	0
			TOTAL	\$172,713	\$166,324	\$6,389