



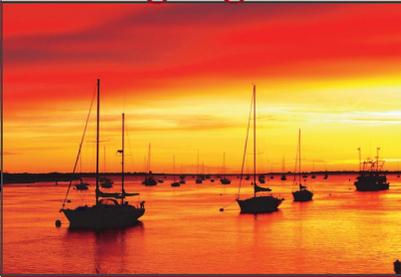
# Region Matters

*mvpc.org*

Merrimack Valley  
Planning Commission  
*plan • develop • promote*

**FALL 2014**

## *Highlights*



*October Sunset  
Merrimack River  
- Newburyport*

*Photo by: Suzanne DeGeorge*

**Contact**  
Essex National Heritage Area  
For details of this year's  
2014 Photo Contest

[www.essexheritage.org/photocontest](http://www.essexheritage.org/photocontest)

***MVPC Awarded EPA Funding  
For Regional Brownfields  
Cleanup***

***Marsh Attacks  
Invasive Phragmites***

***Merrimack Valley Region  
Stormwater Collaborative  
Meeting***

***Green Infrastructure Workshop***

***Regional Coordinating  
Councils (RCCs)***

***Project Selection Advisory  
Council (PSAC)***

***Fall Workshops***

## **MVPC Awarded EPA Funding for Regional Brownfields Cleanup**

Cleanup and re-use efforts for so-called "Brownfields" contaminated sites in the Merrimack Valley are getting a financial boost from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA has announced the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission will receive \$375,000 in grant funding to support the MVPC Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund.

The Fund provides low-interest loans and grants for distressed properties cleanup and redevelopment by Cities, Towns and non-profit entities in the 15-community Merrimack Valley region.

This latest grant supplements a prior \$1 million EPA grant used to establish the Loan Fund which to date has helped finance brownfields cleanup activities in **Lawrence, Methuen, Amesbury** and **Salisbury**.

"These additional EPA Brownfield grants are going to communities with proven track records in successfully cleaning up and redeveloping brownfield sites," said Curt Spalding, regional administrator for EPA's New England office. "EPA's Brownfields program has a long history of helping to boost local economies, creating skilled well-paying local jobs, all while protecting people's health and our communities.

"With this influx of new funding from EPA, we are able to offer more resources and flexible financing options for redevelopment of long-neglected properties and transform them into catalysts for area revitalization," said Dennis A. DiZoglio, Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission.

Anyone interested in the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund should contact Joseph Cosgrove, MVPC Environmental Program Manager at 978-374-0519 Extension 16 or [jcosgrove@mvpc.org](mailto:jcosgrove@mvpc.org).

*Written by Joseph Cosgrove  
MVPC Environmental Program Manager*

## Marsh Attacks Invasive Phragmites



In September, Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Committee of MVPC successfully managed the invasive non-native Phragmites australis plant spreading throughout the southeast **Salisbury** marsh. Through grant funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a Partnership Matching grant through the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation more than 85 acres of the invasive plant was treated. The goal is to remove the invasive



plant, daylight the native seed, and permits the native marsh plants to recover and restore the resiliency and habitat of the marsh. The late season treatment of the Phragmites allows the treatment material to be absorbed into the plant and translocate into its roots. This process enables a systemic, effective destruction of this habitat vapid plant. Working with our partners at Mass Audubon and the Parker River Wildlife Refuge, invasive perennial pepperweed was also treated, prior to the plant going to seed, in the Salisbury and Newbury marshes earlier in the summer.



Restoration of eelgrass in the Great Marsh was continued by the ETGM Committee and Province Town Center for Coastal Studies with a grant through the MassBay Estuary Program. Eelgrass varieties from several sources, including Manchester, MA several sources on Cape Cod, Scituate MA, and Great Bay NH, were planted in the Great Marsh and monitored for viability. Eelgrass not only provides habitat and stabilizes the subsurface sediments,



but also offers protection against the impacts of storm surge. A full eelgrass planting effort in the marsh with the most resilient eelgrass species will be begin in earnest beginning next spring.

*Written by Peter Phippen*

*MVPC Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Coordinator*

## Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative Meeting

EPA has issued the draft general permit for small "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems" (MS4) in Massachusetts. The proposed draft permit sets updated requirements for federal Clean Water Act compliance with development and implementation of Stormwater Management programs to promote improved water quality in 260 Commonwealth communities, including all 15 municipalities in the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission region.

The draft permit, fact sheet and other information on the Massachusetts MS4 permit are available at

[www.epa.gov/region1/npdes/stormwater/MS4\\_MA.html](http://www.epa.gov/region1/npdes/stormwater/MS4_MA.html)

### MVPC is hosting the Northeast Region information meeting scheduled for:

When: Tuesday, October 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2014

Time: 8 am - Noon

Location: Northern Essex Community College  
Haverhill Campus

Tech Center – Conference Rooms 103A- B

Directions are at [www.necc.mass.edu/directions/haverhill/](http://www.necc.mass.edu/directions/haverhill/)

Municipal officials and public are welcome to attend.

For more information, please contact Joseph Cosgrove, MVPC Environmental Program Manager at [jcosgrove@mvpc.org](mailto:jcosgrove@mvpc.org)



## Using Green Infrastructure to Treat and Control Stormwater in Coastal Communities

**Danvers: Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Location: Peabody Institute Library of Danvers (15 Sylvan Street)**

**Time: 8:45am to 12:30pm.**

A **FREE** workshop presenting a new handbook for departments of public works and planning, conservation commissions and agents, and nonprofits concerned about water quality in coastal ecosystems. Each workshop includes a case study and step-by-step process to install infrastructure that utilizes natural processes to treat and manage runoff.

**To register** for this Free workshop go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/MassBaysworkshops](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MassBaysworkshops)



## Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs)

The Commonwealth has established Regional Coordination Councils (RCCs) across the state for the purpose of promoting increased coordination among planners/providers of human services transportation and public transit. Each RCC is advisory and includes representatives from MassDOT, the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), one or more

Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) serving a particular region; other transportation operators, and human service agencies. The Merrimack Valley RCC (MVRCC) covers the MVPC and Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) regions.

RCC meetings are an opportunity to:

- Identify unmet needs, articulate regional priorities, and build coalitions around new projects in mobility and transportation;
- Coordinate existing services at the local level to serve more people and increase sustainability of services;
- Communicate local unmet needs and mobility priorities to MassDOT, EOHHS, RPAs and RTAs, and
- Participate in a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the important role that community transportation services play for seniors, people with disabilities, and all Massachusetts residents.

MVPC and NMCOG staff have actively participated in the Merrimack Valley RCC. Recently, the MVPC staff held public discussion sessions in **Amesbury**, **Haverhill** and **Lawrence** to advance the above objectives. The MVPC staff will be integrating comments from these sessions with the results of an EOHHS statewide survey on public transportation in its next Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan. A Winter 2014-2015 Plan release is projected.

For more information on the Merrimack Valley RCC's work, contact Todd Fontanella at (978) 374-0519, ext. 29 or email: [tfontanella@mvpc.org](mailto:tfontanella@mvpc.org)

*Written by Todd Fontanella  
MVPC Sr. Transportation Planner*

## Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC)

The Legislature established the Project Selection Advisory Council (PSAC) in 2013 to review existing statewide transportation project evaluation criteria and the project prioritization process. Members include representatives from MassDOT; leadership of the Massachusetts House and Senate; the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), and the Construction Industries of Massachusetts.

PSAC is charged with recommending changes that will increase project uniformity, transparency and use of data to make project selections. To date, PSAC has held three information meetings at various locations statewide to engage the public as it further develops and refines the project selection criteria and prioritization formula. MVPC Executive Director DiZoglio addressed PSAC at their September 24 session in **Haverhill**. During his comments he reminded the Council that "the Merrimack Valley MPO has been using objective criteria to inform the decision making process for over ten years. While it has been a useful tool" he cautioned the Council "strict adherence to the criteria scoring should not be used to make the decision, rather they should be used to provide those making funding decisions a relative comparison to determine priority projects that should be advance."

PSAC will hold additional information meetings in Hyannis and Worcester during Fall 2014. For additional information on meeting locations, dates and times, please contact Scott Hamwey, Manager of Long-Range Planning at MassDOT at (857) 368-8857 or email [scott.hamwey@state.ma.us](mailto:scott.hamwey@state.ma.us).

*Written by Todd Fontanella  
MVPC Sr. Transportation Planner*



# Don't Miss our Upcoming Workshops



## MVPC to Host Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Workshops

MVPC will once again host two Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) workshops this fall. On **October 27, 2014 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm** at the MVPC offices located at 160 Main Street, Haverhill, we will hold a workshop on **"Roles and Responsibilities of Planning and Zoning Boards, Part 1"**. Please join us if you are a new board member or building inspector. This workshop will launch you into your role as a local official, introduce you to the functions of the two boards and the main tools of planning and zoning. The workshop will be instructed by Pam Brown, Esq., FAICP. An attorney at Brown and Brown, P.C., Pam is an expert in zoning, land-use, planning and permitting issues.

The second workshop titled **"Special Permits and Variances"** will be held on **November 17, 2014 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm** at the MVPC offices. Participants at this workshop will hear the difference between special permits and variances; the issues and criteria for decision-making; timeliness; and procedural requirements. The instructor of this workshop will be Pam Brown, Esq., FAICP.

CPTC is a collaboration of: University of Massachusetts Extension, Department of Housing and Community Development, Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors, Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association. CPTC provides local Massachusetts planning and zoning officials with tools to make effective decisions regarding their community's current and future land use.

MVPC urges planning, zoning, building officials as well as municipal staff members who serve Planning and Zoning Boards to attend these highly informative workshops. For further information please contact the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Nancy Lavalley [nlavalley@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavalley@mvpc.org). Register online with CPTC at: [www.masscptc.org/workshops/cptc-workshops.html](http://www.masscptc.org/workshops/cptc-workshops.html)

Also keep in mind that MVPC will be hosting the Citizen Planning Training – a three session program early 2015 for municipal officials. Topics will include permitting, interdepartmental cooperation and coordination, and responsibilities of boards and commissions. Please check MVPC's website in the coming months for more information and for the dates of these workshops. [www.mvpc.org](http://www.mvpc.org)

### **MVPC Monthly Commission Meetings**

MVPC Commission Office  
160 Main Street Haverhill, MA

Third Thursday of the month @ 7pm

2014	2015
October 16	January 15
November 20	February 19
December 18	March 19

Check our website for details on upcoming events

[www.mvpc.org](http://www.mvpc.org)

Contact: Nancy Lavalley  
[nlavalley@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavalley@mvpc.org)

Tel: 978-374-0519 ext. 10

### **Fall Workshops**

#### Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund

October 16—West Newbury @ 7:30pm  
Location: Town Office Bldg Annex  
Contact: Jean Nelson [jnelson@wnewbury.org](mailto:jnelson@wnewbury.org)

#### "Have your say about food in MA !"

October 22—Lawrence 9:00am to noon  
Contact: Emily Torres [etorres@mapc.org](mailto:etorres@mapc.org)

#### Pictometry Training (online)

October 23—10am to noon  
Contact MVPC: Nancy Lavalley [nlavalley@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavalley@mvpc.org)  
or Jerrard Whitten [jjwhitten@mvpc.org](mailto:jjwhitten@mvpc.org)

#### Stormwater Collaborative Meeting

October 28—Haverhill - Northern Essex Community College—Technology Center 8:00am to noon  
Contact: Joseph Cosgrove [jcosgrove@mvpc.org](mailto:jcosgrove@mvpc.org)

#### 2014 Moving Together Conference

October 30—Boston 7:45am to 4:30pm