



# Region Matters

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

Merrimack Valley  
Planning Commission  
*plan • develop • promote*

Winter



## ***Rising With the Tide Meeting Update***



*Threadneedle Alley  
- Newburyport  
Photo by Jay McCarthy*

**Essex National Heritage  
Area**

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

[Winners of 2015 Photo  
Contest](#)

### **Highlights**

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Haverhill—On October 16th over 100 people attended the "Rising with the Tides" event organized by the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce with the support of MVPC. This event was organized as a unique opportunity to showcase the Merrimack River's symbolic and functional importance. Speakers highlighted the River's evolution as a natural resource, a focus of employment, and how specific revitalization and transportation projects along the river are creating new living, working and recreating opportunities for future generations.

Stacey Bruzzese and Tom Mortimer of the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce provided opening remarks, followed by a welcome from Mayor Fiorentini. Congresswoman Nikki Tsongas cited the importance of a shared vision for the region and the need to sustain existing revitalization efforts in her keynote address. Participants then focused upon the moderators and speakers in the following panel discussions:

### **Bill Pillsbury, City of Haverhill Planner, moderated the Development Panel**

Ron Trombley and Sally Cerasuolo-O'Rorke of the Greater Haverhill Foundation highlighted Haverhill's progress in revising its regulations and permitting procedures to stimulate construction of housing, mixed-use development, and transportation amenities in its Downtown;

Noah Koretz provided an overview of MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative for Downtown Haverhill, and Dave Traggorth of Traggorth Companies added his expertise in site selection for mixed-use development projects.

### **Scott Cole, from the Pentucket Bank, was the Moderator for the Live and Work Panel**

Lane Glenn of Northern Essex Community College and Steven Tello of UMass-Lowell each talked about their institution's unique and shared roles in preparing the region's students for tomorrow's economy;

MVPC's Dennis DiZoglio showed how important the river has been in shaping the Valley's civic and economic life, and offered the MVPC staff's planning and programming assistance.

### **Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives moderated the Recreation Panel**

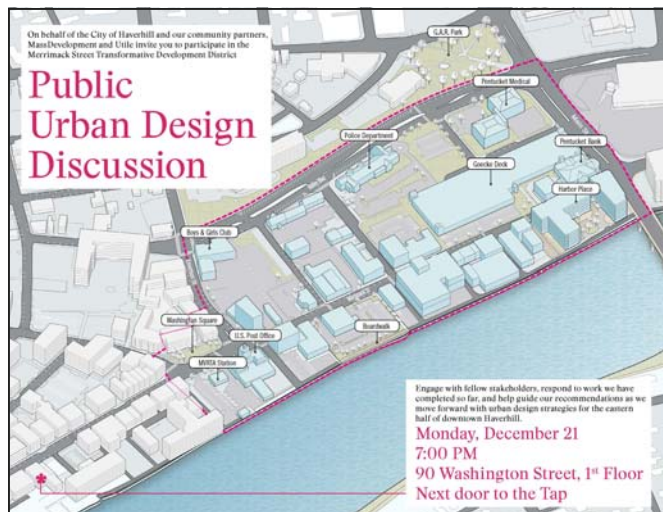
Panelist Dave Goodwin of the Greater Haverhill Foundation described the recently completed Merrimack River access study and its importance to transportation and recreation; Mark Cutter of the U.S. Coast Guard discussed river navigation issues and opportunities; Mike Vets, Groveland and Haverhill Harbormaster spoke about increased marine activity on the river;

and Ann Marie Casey of the North of Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau underscored tourism's importance to the region's economy.

*Written by Dennis A. DiZoglio  
MVPC Executive Director*



## MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Hosts Second Community Meeting in Downtown Haverhill



About 50 people attended the second community meeting of the MassDevelopment Haverhill Transformative Development Initiative (TDI), which was held on December 21 at 7:00 p.m. The Haverhill TDI is a multi-year planning, development and marketing effort focused on revitalizing the eastern portion of Haverhill's downtown Merrimack Street, Bailey Boulevard, Washington Square, and access to the Merrimack River. Its sponsors are the City, the Greater Haverhill Foundation, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs and MassDevelopment. Various organizations and officials participated including MVPC, MVRTA, the Greater Haverhill and Merrimack Valley Chambers of Commerce, and members of the Haverhill City Council.

Mayor Fiorentini welcomed attendees to space donated by the Tap at 90 Washington St. for this event, and facilitated a discussion among attendees following presentations by members of the TDI team including Noah Koretz of MassDevelopment. Meeting presenters began with a summary of public engagement activities to date, including comments received from participants in the first meeting/site walkaround on September 22, 2015. Presenters then gave an overview of existing property uses; locations of existing parking and streetscape amenities, and introduction of a placemaking strategy, a 'base layer' of civic improvements, and concepts for a revised street grid, mixed use residential and commercial developments, and parking options. Upcoming Initiative sessions will focus upon transportation, economic development, and marketing tasks.

Information on this exciting project, including presentation materials and opportunities to get involved, are posted at <http://courbanize.com/haverhill-tdi/>.

*Written by Todd Fontanella  
Sr. Transportation Planner*

### On the Move



A Complete Streets Workshop will be held at Northern Essex Community College, Lawrence Campus, Monday, February 1. There is no cost to attend this workshop.

Communities interested in taking advantage of the new Complete Streets grant program **MUST** participate in this or others workshops being offered by Baystate Roads. To Register [Click here](#).

The Merrimack Valley MPO will hold its first meeting of 2016 on Wednesday, January 27 at 12:00 noon at the MVPC office in Haverhill. Discussion topics include proposed Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program and the new Draft Public Participation Plan.

Members of the public are welcome to attend all MVMPO meetings.

*Written by Betsy Goodrich  
Sr. Transportation Planner*

## CEDS Meeting Engages Robust Discussion



On December 3, 2015 the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS) held a meeting at Northern Essex Community College (NECC). A lively discussion ensued among the thirty people in attendance, which included a mix of realtors, community development & planning officials, representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, state representatives, and chamber of commerce

representatives. Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director of MVPC, served as moderator and provided a detailed overview of the 2013 five-year CEDS, specifically the three major "executive action items"; enhanced marketing of the region, local capacity assistance, and the identification of industry clusters and workforce development needs. He then described what MVPC is doing to implement the CEDS to meet these major goals and objectives.



To address marketing of the region, Dennis provided a history of the development of the Merrimack Valley Means Business website (MVMB.biz) and the work completed to enhance it. He stated that the new version includes the transition from LoopNet to CoStar for current listings of commercial property for sale or lease. Heidi Murphy, Economic Development Coordinator followed with graphics of the new changes to MVMB.biz. Specifically, the information center contains new demographics and economic development news, links to grant announcements for communities and businesses, links to economic development studies and initiatives, and updated featured properties for individual communities. It was a very interactive discussion and many suggestions were made by the attendees as to how the MVMB.biz website could be further enhanced.

Mike Parquette, MVPC Comprehensive Planning Manager, then provided an update as to how the "local capacity assistance" goal is being addressed. He described the formation of the "Merrimack Valley Support Team" and how MVPC is assisting communities meet their demands given most towns and cities have reduced staffing levels. This work includes assisting the City of Methuen to write a successful PATH (Planning Towards Housing) grant, a grant that will allow the city to apply for 40R District designation. MVPC is also completing a Housing Production Plan (HPP) for the Town of Merrimac. An HPP is a proactive strategy for planning and developing affordable housing. In addition, the Town of Groveland requested that MVPC assist them in the development of a Permitting Guide. The Guide is an explanation of the development permitting process, a process in Massachusetts communities that can often be cumbersome and confusing.

Also, Andrew Herlihy from the City of Haverhill discussed how the city is working with NECC and the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to provide necessary training for current and future industry workers in Haverhill's business clusters.

Lastly, Joe Cosgrove, MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, updated attendees on the completion of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and also described the Brownfields grant program and notified communities that grants are due on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Joe gave a brief overview of the guidelines to be met for such grant submittals.

*Written by Mike Parquette  
Comprehensive Planning Manager*

# Upcoming Events & Workshops

## MVPC to Host Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Workshop

MVPC will be hosting the Citizen Planning Training – a four session certification program (MIIA approved) in 2016 for municipal officials. Topics will include permitting, interdepartmental cooperation and coordination, and responsibilities of boards and commissions. For more details [Click here](#).

MVPC urges planning, zoning, building officials as well as municipal staff members who serve Planning and Zoning Boards to attend these highly informative workshops. To register contact Nancy Lavallee at 978-374-0519 x10 or email: [nlavallee@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavallee@mvpc.org).



### 2016 Session Dates (Tentative)

Session I	Monday, March 21
Session II	Monday, March 28
Session III	Monday, April 4
Session IV	Fall CPTC Workshop (TBD)

Time: 6:00pm  
Cost: \$100 per person

Location: MVPC Offices, 160 Main Street Haverhill, MA 01830

### MVPC Monthly Commission Meetings

Third Thursday of the month @ 7pm

January (No Meeting)  
February 18  
March 17  
April 21  
May 19  
June 16

MVPC Offices  
160 Main Street Haverhill, MA 01830

Check our website for Commission Meetings Agenda and  
Details on Upcoming Meetings & Workshops [mvpc.org](http://mvpc.org)

### Workshops & Training

Thursday, Jan 21—Community Transit Grant Program  
Application Training.

Location: Merrimack Valley Planning Commission  
160 Main Street  
Haverhill, MA 01830

Time: 10am — Noon

Cost: Free

For more information on this Workshop [click here](#).

Monday, Feb 1—Complete Streets Workshop

Location: Northern Essex Community College  
Lawrence Campus — 414 Common Street

Time: 1:00pm

Cost: Free

For more information on this Workshop [click here](#)

MVPC Commission Office 160 Main Street Haverhill, MA

Contact: Nancy Lavallee [nlavallee@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavallee@mvpc.org)

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