



Region Matters

mvpc.org

Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
plan • develop • promote

Winter



Phillips Academy, Andover
2015 Essex Heritage Photo Contest

2018

MVPC is looking forward to another successful year in Planning

The mission of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is to foster a cooperative effort among its communities in resolving common, regional problems, to allow its communities to plan jointly, and to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated and orderly development of the region and the general welfare of its residents.

Economic Development
Environmental
GIS
Transportation
Workshops and Meetings

A Fond Farewell to MVPC Commissioner Bob Lavoie

As 2017 drew to a close, the Commission recognized outgoing Amesbury Commissioner Robert Lavoie for his 16 years of service. At our regular December Commission meeting, staff and fellow Commissioners offered their words of gratitude, anecdotal remarks and sent Bob off into retirement from the Commission with a gift to acknowledge his long-standing commitment, the majority of which he served as Chairman or Vice Chairman. During his tenure, Bob served with three different Executive Directors and led in the search process for the most recent two. We are deeply appreciative of and better for the time and attention that Bob gave to the Commission, and we wish him nothing but the best in the future. Even though Bob will continue to practice real estate law, we will be interested to see what he does with all his new-found free time!



Chairwoman Theresa Park, Bob Lavoie, Executive Director Karen Conard

MVPC Awarded Efficiency & Regionalization Community Compact Cabinet Grant to Continue Branding Effort



L to R - Methuen Mayor Jim Jajuga, Allison Heartquist, Chief of Staff to Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini, North Andover Town Manager Andrew Maylor, Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera, MVPC Exec Director Karen Conard, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday, Andover Town Manager Andrew Flanagan, Amesbury Mayor Ken Gray, MV Chamber President Joe Bevilacqua, Sal Lupoli - Lupoli Companies

At the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce Annual Mayors and Managers Breakfast, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito announced that MVPC is a recipient of the latest round of funding through the Baker-Polito Administration's Community Compact Cabinet Program. MVPC was awarded \$50,000 to continue the branding and marketing efforts initiated by a 2015 grant from the same program to the Town of North Andover. With this funding, we will work to rebrand the Merrimack Valley communities along with our Merrimack Valley Means Business website. To quote from our award letter signed by Governor Baker and Lieutenant Governor Polito, "the shared effort among the region's cities and towns will provide tools and resources that otherwise would be difficult to undertake individually."

2018 - Year of the CEDS

- by Angela Cleveland, AICP, Senior Economic Development Planner

To some, it might seem like just yesterday that MVPC was developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Believe it or not, our current five-year plan is about to expire. But we are ready! Over the past year, MVPC has been setting the stage for developing a new, five-year CEDS Plan through a number of visioning sessions around four emerging issues in the region: Manufacturing, Natural Resources, Town Centers and Transportation. Each of the 2017 CEDS Committee meetings included experts in these areas that talked about the status of these issues and concluded with group break outs to talk about barriers and opportunities in the coming years. In 2018, we are getting to work! Each of these emerging issues will have a Working Group assigned to review trends, identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and risks, and develop strategies and an implementation plan for the next five years. These Working Groups will be comprised of two co-chairs, CEDS Committee members, and some unusual suspects. These unusual suspects will represent organizations and entities from around the region and state that have a stake in these issues, but may not have been at the table previously to help address them on a regional scale. The Working Groups will begin meeting in March and finish their work in mid-April. We will also hold monthly CEDS Committee meetings to continue addressing important economic development issues throughout the region. Our work never stops!

What is a CEDS?

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- An economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies
- Developed by a Planning Organization
- 5-year timeframe
- Includes Goals, Objectives and Actions

We want to thank the following people for volunteering to serve as a Working Group Co-Chair. Their time and expertise will ensure that we conduct an inclusive and meaningful process that will result in implementable strategies to boost the economy in the Merrimack Valley over the next five years.

1. Natural and Cultural Resources: Vanessa Johnson-Hall (Essex County Greenbelt) and Lesly Melendez (Groundwork Lawrence)
2. Transportation: Lou Rabito (Howard Stein Hudson) and Andrew Herlihy (City of Haverhill)
3. Manufacturing: Brian Norris (NE Advanced Manufacturers Alliance) and George Moriarty (Northern Essex Community College)
4. Town Centers: Paul Materazzo (Town of Andover) and Tania Hartford (RCG Inc.)

If you are interested in serving on one of these Working Groups, please contact Angela Cleveland at acleveland@mvpc.org.



News Brief

"Great Marsh Coastal Adaptation Plan"

- by Joseph Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager

The Great Marsh Coalition, which includes members MVPC and coastal communities Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury and Rowley, has released the "Great Marsh Coastal Adaptation Plan". The plan is available for download at www.nwf.org/greatmarshadaptation. Thanks to the Ipswich River Watershed Association and National Wildlife Federation for their two years of work in the planning process.

Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack Addresses Regional Transportation

- by Betsy Goodrich, Senior Transportation Planner

At MVPC's November 30th Community Economic Development Study meeting, Transportation Secretary Stephanie Pollack delivered a rousing speech chock-full of progress MassDOT has made toward delivering transportation service that as she stated is important for what it does – making life better for people.

She broke down MassDOT's work into 5 priorities:

- Performance – Nothing else matters if you can't deliver service and improve your performance.
- State of Good Repair – Get the transportation system back into shape. Asset management is paramount.
- Invest Wisely – Of the \$2 billion/year, 60% will fund maintenance and improving reliability of the existing system. 20% will fund modernization, including safety and accessibility. Adding a bit of humor to the proceedings, she pointed out that you shouldn't have 100-year birthday parties for rail switches. The remaining funds will be used for expansion projects.
- Innovation –Employ innovations that will help accomplish other goals and priorities.
- Partnership – Because MassDOT does not own the majority of the transportation infrastructure, communities and Regional Transit Authorities are important partners.

Secretary Pollack talked about a few programs that impact the Merrimack Valley specifically. She noted that the Haverhill Commuter Rail line is underperforming due in part to construction, but also to operations.

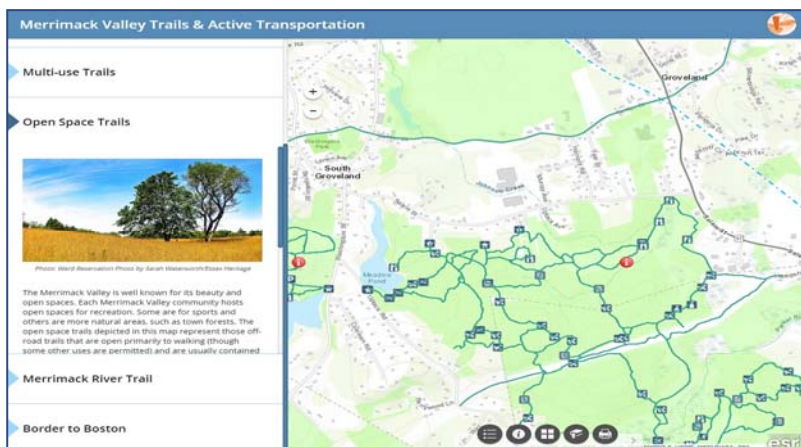
A new seamless and user-friendly fee collection system will be instituted across all public transportation modes so that it will finally be easy to transfer between fixed route bus, commuter rail and subway. To view Secretary Pollack's PowerPoint Presentation go to: <http://mvpc.org/programs/economic-development-planning/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/>



Andover Comm. Lisa Schwarz, MVPC Exec. Director Karen Conard, Lawrence Comm. Chairwoman Theresa Park, N. Andover Comm. Richard Byers, Trans Sec'y Stephanie Pollack, Newbury Comm. John Weis and Rowley Alternate Comm. Joe Perry

“Storymap” a GIS Application

- by Jerrard Whitten, GIS Program Manager



MVPC's GIS Program unveiled its latest storymap creation at the December 2017 Commission meeting. A storymap is a GIS application that combines interactive web maps with text, high resolution photos and videos to tell a narrative. Developed jointly by the Transportation Program and GIS staff, the Trails and Active Transportation storymap includes four primary interactive maps, the Active Transportation Network, Open Space trails, the Merrimack River Trail, and the Border to Boston trail along with a chapter

defining Multi-use trails. These maps are based on trail data that MVPC's GIS Program has been compiling for more than 10 years. The storymap has its own URL; you can think of it like any web page and it can be viewed in any browser, on a desktop, laptop, phone, or tablet. All you need is the web address and an internet connection: <http://mvpc.org/storymaps/trails/index.html>. Please take a moment to check it out and let us know what you think.

Lawrence Awarded Green Community Status

- by Joseph Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager



The City of Lawrence had cause for celebration at the close of 2017 with the announcement of its designation as a Green Community by the MA Department of Energy Resources.

With the designation, Lawrence receives an initial grant of \$594,140 to make investments in municipal facility energy improvements and renewable energy projects. The grant award to Lawrence is the largest among the 25 new Green Community designation grants made by DOER.

Lawrence is now one of 210 Green Communities throughout the Commonwealth and the seventh municipality designated in the Merrimack Valley as it joins Amesbury, Andover, Newburyport, North Andover, Salisbury and West Newbury in participating in the program. Cities and towns can become Green Communities and gain eligibility to apply for the \$20 million made available annually through DOER by committing to a 20% municipal energy use energy reduction goal over five years, enacting energy performance standards for new construction, setting energy efficient vehicle policies and streamlining permitting for clean energy projects.

With a Municipal Energy Technical Assistance Grant through MVPC, Lawrence was able to complete the required 5-year Energy Reduction Plan and apply for the Green Community designation. In 2018, MVPC will be working with other Merrimack Valley communities including Haverhill, Merrimac, Methuen and Newbury, as they begin energy reduction planning and consider future applications for Green Community designation.



Chemical Safety and Community Resiliency - Workshop 2

Tuesday, March 27th, 2018--8am to Noon

Northern Essex Community College, Technology Center - Room TC 103B - Haverhill

MVPC in partnership with the Northern Essex and Northeast Regional Emergency Planning Committees is sponsoring the second workshop for businesses and municipal emergency managers in the "Chemical Safety and Community Resiliency" series. Come find out how you can work with municipal emergency responders and reduce risk of commercial/industrial accidents. Register Online: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chemical-safety-and-community-resiliency-workshop-2-tickets-42058035717>

This workshop series is supported by funding through the MA Office of Technical Assistance and Technology. Take the series survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HJCNBC5>.

Contact Joseph Cosgrove at jcosgrove@mvpc.org for more information.

Monthly Meetings

MVPC Commission Meetings

Third Thursday of the month @ 7pm

MVMPO Meetings

Fourth Wednesday of the month @ noon

Check our website www.mvpc.org for Meeting Agendas & Details on Upcoming Meetings & Workshops

Upcoming Meetings and Events

March 21 Introduction to Historic Preservation Planning

Location: MVPC Offices

Time: 10am - Noon

Cost: Free

Presented by the Massachusetts Historical Commission\

RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/introduction-to-historic-preservation-planning-tickets-41009827498>

Questions, please contact Christopher.Skelly@state.ma.us

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