



Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
*plan * develop * promote*

*Serving the
communities of:*

- Amesbury
- Andover
- Boxford
- Georgetown
- Groveland
- Haverhill
- Lawrence
- Merrimac
- Methuen
- Newbury
- Newburyport
- North Andover
- Rowley
- Salisbury
- West Newbury

Annual Report

2010

Planning Region and Commissioners



Commissioners

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AMESBURY | Robert Lavoie, <i>chairman</i> |
| ANDOVER | Paul Salafia |
| BOXFORD | Jean Dewberry |
| GEORGETOWN | Mathilda Evangelista, <i>assistant secretary</i> |
| GROVELAND | Robert O'Hanley |
| HAVERHILL | Joseph Sullivan, <i>vice chairman</i> |
| LAWRENCE | Lesley Melendez |
| MERRIMAC | John Thomas |
| METHUEN | Kevin P. Hagerty |
| NEWBURY | David Powell, <i>assistant treasurer</i> |
| NEWBURYPORT | Ed Ramsdell |
| NORTH ANDOVER | Richard Byers |
| ROWLEY | Robert Snow, <i>treasurer</i> |
| SALISBURY | Lou Masiello |
| WEST NEWBURY | Arthur 'Chip' Wallace/Brian Murphey |
| | Rob Phillips, <i>secretary</i> |
| REP-at-LARGE | Willie J. Smith |
| MVPC | Dennis A. DiZoglio, <i>executive director</i> |



This NewPage paper has been chain-of-custody certified by three independent third-party certification systems.

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission supports responsible forest management worldwide.



Mission Statement

***The mission** of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is to foster cooperation among its communities to resolve shared regional problems, 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. This 2010 Annual Report is organized to demonstrate MVPC's commitment to this mission and to provide the region a vision to ensure that the Merrimack Valley is a great place to live, work and visit.*





CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

- Robert Lavoie, MVPC Chairman

Bob's depth of experience earned him an appointment several years ago by the Mayor of Amesbury to be the Amesbury Commissioner to the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission; Bob has served as chairman since 2006. Bob also served as co-chair to the Amesbury Master Plan Steering Committee. Bob was elected to the Amesbury Municipal Council in 2005 and he currently serves as Council President.

An attorney, Bob represents commercial real estate developers, owners and buyers in land development and land use permitting matters, including Brownfields and M.G.L. Chapter 40B affordable housing, as well as representation in connection with complex real estate title matters. His interest in economic development has earned him board appointments to the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council.

As each new year rolls around, it provides a welcome perspective from which to view the year just ended. 2010 was certainly another banner year for Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and its professionals that make it all possible. Important initiatives previously begun have continued to make excellent progress, and new initiatives are underway. And, as befits a Planning Agency, work continues on tomorrow's new initiatives.

Having celebrated our 50th Anniversary in the prior year, 2010 marked the beginning of our journey in to our next era of service to the Merrimack Valley. Both the Executive Director and I are justifiably proud of the many important accomplishments of the Commission's fantastic staff; they are the true servant leaders of our Region's planning activities and I am certain that their colleagues serving on the Municipal level would agree.

Speaking for the entire Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to once again applaud the tremendous skill and dedication which all of our staff bring to this agency. Having been involved in real estate and economic development for over 30 years, I can honestly say that I have encountered no better group of talented professionals than our Staff and our Executive Director. Even though I have been on the Commission for many years, Dennis and the Staff continue to amaze me with the creativity and effectiveness with which they approach all of the Commission's responsibilities. Speaking again for the entire Commission, I can say that we are justifiably proud of the accomplishments of our professionals. Thank you for all you do.

I would also like to thank all of my fellow Commissioners for their dedication and hard work, which clearly starts in our monthly Commission meetings, but continues day in and day out as our Commissioners communicate all of the various needs and concerns of our Communities and in turn bring back to them new ideas, tools and solutions.

Efforts continue to help out our cities and towns do more with less, since the only really sustainable way forward is to find appropriate ways to work smarter by regionalizing the ways in which essential services get provided to the citizens of the Merrimack Valley. More and more often, many MVPC cities and towns are frequently banding together in mutually beneficial combinations and collaborations in order to get the peoples' work done in a manner that provides excellent services at a cost that the taxpayers can reasonably afford.

The Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition staffed by Dennis and the Commission has continued to provide an essential forum for the municipal leaders of the Merrimack Valley to explore new, regional ways of doing business, especially along the lines of energy use, alternative energy sources, and even DPW services.

As we look forward to 2011, on behalf of the entire Commission I would like to confirm the Commission's commitment to the citizens, leaders and planning officials of all 15 cities and towns of our Region that the Commission will continue the good fight and provide our tradition of excellent services to our Region.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

- Dennis A. DiZoglio



2011 Goals

As we began our fifty-first year as a regional planning agency we decided to reinforce MVPC's role in planning, developing and promoting the Merrimack Valley Region. We developed a new logo and branded ourselves as a leader in providing the region with a vision for it to flourish and prosper. Our new logo is a compilation of images that attempts to reflect MVPC's role as a leader in comprehensive planning, strategic planning that creates a balance between growth, sustainability and preserving the natural resources, a leader in planning for a livable region, connected and innovative in its approach.

In 2009 we adopted a vision for the region. The Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy is the first comprehensive plan for the region in over thirty years. Based on the priorities identified in the Strategy we spent 2010 putting in place efforts to implement pieces of the Strategy. With an upgraded and expanded "Merrimack Valley Means Business" interactive website we began to identify business development opportunities in Concentrated Development Centers (CDC) in all fifteen communities in the region. MVPC also worked with our communities to plan for development in the CDCs that have been designated economic development Priority Development Sites (PDS) as part of the Chapter 43D program.

To ensure that the transportation system supports the strategy MVPC worked on the I-93 Lowell Junction Interchange DEIS/R, the Route 110/113 & I-93 Rotary DEIS/R and Whittier Bridge environmental review process. We also helped our communities prioritize their transportation projects along with the regional and Commonwealth priorities. Our Priority Growth Strategy planning effort was recognized by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) in 2009 as a "Best Practice" in the Nation for connecting economic development efforts to transportation planning and in 2010 MVPC was asked to share this approach with regional planning agencies across the country.

This year additional communities decided to participate in MVPC's Municipal Information Mapping Access Program (MIMAP). This GIS initiative is a web base browser, which allows communities to layer a multitude of data on assessors' maps and provides a method for communities to share and analyze information that impacts the use and development on every parcel of a community. Every community that has seen this planning tool demonstrated has decided to participate in the program.

In 2010 MVPC continued its role as a community organizer. Working with the Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition and the Town Administrators in the region, MVPC helped these alliances identify ways to work together. We hope that this regional approach will help the communities deal effectively with their fiscal challenges and become more efficient.

As we close our look on the MVPC accomplishments of 2010 we hope to be as successful in accomplishing our goals for 2011.

1. Develop a Regional Energy Plan.
2. Expand the use of MVPC GIS Technology throughout the Region.
3. Continue to support Priority Development Site (PDS) designations and provide development implementation assistance throughout the region.
4. Unify the Transportation Priority Projects for the Region through the development of the New Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and assist Communities advance their Prioritized List of Transportation Projects for Programming Purposes.
5. Implement the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Articulate and expand MVPC's role in promoting the region's economic development.
6. Provide "Smart Growth" technical assistance to member communities.
7. Provide information and training to the Region's Professional and Volunteer Planners.
8. Identify administrative and programmatic measures that MVPC can take to increase its efficiency and effectiveness.
9. Continue to elevate the profile of the Commission throughout the Commonwealth and the Region.
10. Promote regional cooperation and collaboration to resolve our communities' common challenges.



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Promoting Redevelopment and Growth

MVPC adopted a strategy that will drive the orderly development of the region for years to come. The Priority Growth Strategy (PGS) is the cornerstone of MVPC's long-term efforts, and was approved by the Commission in September of 2009. The PGS identifies communities' targeted areas for growth, for preservation and protection of land and other natural resources, and required transportation network upgrades and improvements that will provide for growth while preserving and protecting community development patterns.

To complement and begin the implementation of the Strategy MVPC focuss its activities on "promoting redevelopment and growth", "protecting the region's environment" and "prioritizing transportation investments" during 2010.

Economic Development Master Plan: The 2010 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Performance Report was submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) on June 30. The Report provides an update on economic development conditions, studies, and initiatives in the region since the release of the 2008 Merrimack Valley CEDS. The 2008 CEDS was a complete update of the regional master plan, featuring a new set of goals, objectives, and action plan. MVPC has worked closely with the private, public, and nonprofit sectors on numerous initiatives reflected in the CEDS, centered on the themes of infrastructure, marketing, green initiatives, and entrepreneurship support.

Merrimack Valley Means Business: The Merrimack Valley Means Business (MVMB) website, officially launched on October 15, 2009, has now been successfully running for just over a year. MVMB is a pioneering concept for new and existing businesses in the Merrimack Valley. Developed by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), in partnership with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council (MVEDC), regional Chambers of Commerce, and community development departments, MVMB offers a unique and technologically advanced service for prospective and existing businesses looking to market or expand in the region. The only comprehensive, field-based inventory of properties in Massachusetts, the website offers valuable information on over 11,500 businesses and 500 locations for sale or lease in the Valley and employs the latest mapping and imaging technologies.

After just one year of operation, MVMB has received more than 5,000 unique visitors to the site and over 425 registered users actively access listings. Log on to mvmb.biz and find your business or available property today!

Regions Collaborate in National Grant Submittal: MVPC, in collaboration with the Rockingham and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commissions, submitted a federal grant application in August to the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development to help improve mobility and direct development in all three regions to sites most suited for development. Targeting development to sites that have existing infrastructure, transportation access, suitable zoning and limited environmental impacts has been the strategy around Smart Growth. This approach is consistent with the **Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy**,

"MVPC is to be praised for its use of technical assistance in helping communities with regional approaches to health services and energy conservation, thus solving problems that can't be faced by one alone."

- Governor Deval Patrick

"The Project is significant not only for its comprehensive, place-based approach to addressing the regions' shared issues and goals, but particularly for the partnership between MVPC and its New Hampshire counterparts in recognition of the need for strong, creative approaches that match available funding and technical expertise to address our common challenges."

- Dennis A DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director

"We are pleased to participate in this innovative multi-state corridor based approach which will tie transit supportive landuse planning with transit service expansion in the three strategic transportation corridors that link our regions."

- David J. Preece, AICP
Executive Director and CEO
Southern New Hampshire
Planning Commission

Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

MVPC's regional comprehensive plan, approved by the Commission in 2009. Encouraging communities to grow where it makes the most sense is the cornerstone of Smart Growth and will help advance the implementation of the Priority Growth Strategy.

MVPC and its co-applicants applied for the planning funds for three corridors: 1) Interstate 93 "Bus on Shoulder" service to provide better connections from the three regions to Boston and to plan for future development around potential stations; 2) MBTA Haverhill Line Service upgrades to take advantage of the double track restoration project currently underway with stimulus funds; planning for development around existing stations and feasibility analysis for adding new stations and; 3) Potential MVRTA Coastal Communities Network bus service with new and improved transportation connections in the Coastal sub-region, and analysis of the service's potential for generating development.

Regional Planning Framework Strategic Plan: MVPC, utilizing funding provided by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), prepared this Plan as a logical 'next step' or implementation guide for the MVPC 2009 Priority Growth Strategy. During 2010, MVPC reviewed its communities' land use, zoning and other planning policies; conducted outreach and interviews with community officials, and drafted its findings and recommended actions. The Plan is scheduled for completion during the first quarter of 2011.

Merrimac Adopts Housing Production Plan: The Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen for the Town of **Merrimac** are to be commended for recently adopting a new Housing Production Plan which was developed on behalf of the town by the MVPC Comprehensive Planning Department and the Merrimac Affordable Housing Board of Trustees. The Housing Production Plan is an update of **Merrimac's** 2005 Housing Plan which expired in 2010. A Housing Production Plan is a proactive strategy for planning and developing affordable housing in a way consistent with the Town's goals and objectives by placing affordable housing where the Town determines it most appropriate. By taking a proactive approach in the adoption of a Housing Production Plan, **Merrimac** is much more likely to achieve both their housing and community planning goals. Housing Production Plans give communities that are under the 10% "affordable housing" threshold of Chapter 40B, but are making steady progress in producing affordable housing, more control over comprehensive permit applications for specific periods of time as outlined in their Plans.

Georgetown Permit Process Analysis: MVPC conducted an audit of **Georgetown's** local permitting process by examining the permit process followed by all the development review boards, and examining the various permits needed through these boards and commissions. Local officials involved with development review were interviewed, and with the Town Planner, a questionnaire was developed and given to all the land development review boards. A Development Guidebook was completed which outlines the process for obtaining the necessary permits needed for development. In addition, MVPC developed permitting recommendations to improve the flow and help to streamline the development review process as required by Chapter 43D, the State streamline permitting act.



Amesbury Town Hall

"The MVPC region's Priority Growth Strategy initiative is changing the way communities and transportation partners view growth."

- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation, Washington, DC



"I love this (MVPC) organization. Taxpayers seeking better ways to deliver services have found those ways in regional planning."

- Susan Tucker
State Senator
Andover

"We look forward to participating in the planning partnership you have envisioned and to help implement changes in land use policy that will both support expanded transit services and create more livable and sustainable communities in our wider region."

- Cliff Sinnott
Executive Director
Rockingham
Planning Commission

Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

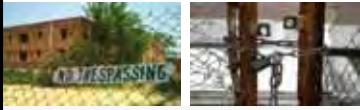


Andover Town Hall

“Thank you so very much for expediting this matter [cleanup of Appleyard contamination site]. The City is so very appreciative of the assistance provided by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. The project has begun and things seem to be falling into place.... Thank you again.”

- Patricia Antoon
Assistant Community
Development Director
City of Methuen

Merrimack Valley Brownfields Assessment Program



“MVPC has been very successful with this grant and has been performing a great service to the communities within its jurisdiction... MVPC is very responsive to any questions or concerns... and is constantly striving to better its programs.”

- Christine Lombard
Project Officer
EPA-New England
Brownfields Program
MVPC Programmatic Review
December 2010

Revolving Loan Fund: Merrimack Valley Economic Development (MVED) made a loan in the amount of \$100,000 to Jessica’s Brick Oven, Inc., a company that produces artisan breads that are sold to bakery shops, restaurants, and other small resellers.

In addition, MVPC submitted to EDA the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation Revolving Loan Fund Plan, the first such plan to be submitted since the RLF was first formed in 1997. The Plan details MVED’s loan processing guidelines, underwriting standards, accounting principles, monitoring, and other operational and administrative procedures.

Haverhill Water/Wastewater Department Permit Process Analysis: As a follow-up to a city-wide permit streamlining analysis completed in 2009, MVPC worked with the water/wastewater department to improve the permitting workflow and correct any cumbersome elements existing in their current system. The recommendations made by MVPC were incorporated into the new ViewPoint electronic permitting system.

Public Works Assistance: Northern Essex Community College (NECC) has proposed redeveloping the InTown Mall site in **Lawrence** into a new facility



Proposed design

called the *NECC Allied Health and Technology Center*. The InTown Mall is an urban renewal project constructed in the early 1970’s that at one time contained retail businesses and a parking garage, but now stands as a vacant structure. With the assistance of MVPC an EDA grant application to assist with the redevelopment has been submitted and is being reviewed for consideration by that Federal agency. Not only would this new facility help address a serious capacity shortfall for the college, it would also increase total graduates in a number of specialized allied health and nursing fields that are experiencing high demand for employment. In addition, a major brownfield site would be removed from the heart of **Lawrence**.

Regional Data Center: MVPC analyzed and compiled regional economic and demographic data for use by local officials, community-based organizations, businesses, developers, and others. Available on MVPC’s website are complete sets of population, labor, and housing statistics. MVPC has begun gearing up for the two-year release of 2010 Census data, which will initiate in spring 2011 with population and housing counts. In addition, MVPC has begun updating the long range population and employment forecast for the region. This 2035 forecast will be released in 2011.

Brownfield’s Assessment and Cleanup: MVPC continued its Merrimack Valley Brownfields Assessment Program, which began in 2003. The Program has performed environmental assessments on a number of projects in the region, including the site of the proposed Lawrence Allied Health and Technology Center. In 2009, MVPC received two additional grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that will extend regional assistance through 2012. In addition in 2010 MVPC designed and set up program guidelines to begin implementing the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund clean-up grant awarded by EPA in 2009. MVPC also began marketing this new Program in 2010.

Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Protecting the Region's Environment

From the 20,000-acre Great Marsh and sandy beaches stretching along our coast, to the patchwork of forests and farms in our uplands and river corridors, the Merrimack Valley is home to some of the most picturesque and ecologically significant natural resources in the Commonwealth. Together, these resources provide outstanding: habitat and migration corridors for diverse wildlife, birds, fish, and plant species; surface and ground water sources for drinking water supply, irrigation, hydropower generation, wastewater assimilation, and recreation; productive soils for agriculture, horticulture, and tree farming; and natural buffers for protection against flooding, high winds, coastal storm surges, and sea level rise.

During 2010, MVPC environmental planners worked closely with our member communities, state and federal agencies, and environmental organizations to help inventory, map, and protect the Valley region's vital land and water resources.



Stormwater Management: MVPC environmental planners and GIS specialists continued to assist member municipalities in the development and implementation of their federally-mandated local stormwater management programs. Services included field identification and digital mapping of stormwater infrastructure, drafting of stormwater regulations and public education materials, and preparation of Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) annual reports to EPA and MassDEP.



In the fall of 2010, MVPC teamed with Weston & Sampson Engineers and the Eight Towns and the Bay organization to host a regional stormwater management seminar for the benefit of municipal public works and engineering staff, conservation agents, and other local department personnel. Held at Northern Essex Community College (Haverhill) and attended by 100 individuals from across the region, this

training session provided detailed information and expert advice on the forthcoming new federal (EPA) Phase II program requirements (e.g., filing of Notices of Intent, inventorying of stormwater facilities, tracking and eliminating illicit discharges). The workshop also covered local stormwater program financing options such as public stormwater utilities, as well as municipal best management practices and low-impact development techniques. MVPC will offer additional Phase II planning assistance to member communities in 2011 when the next 5-year cycle of the federal Phase II program and the new Massachusetts stormwater regulations are slated to take effect.



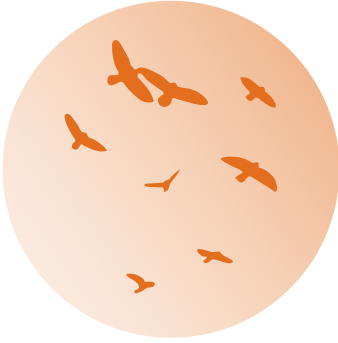
Boxford Town Hall

The Merrimack Valley is home to some of the most picturesque and ecologically-significant natural resources in the Commonwealth.



"Just a note of appreciation to MVPC for developing and hosting the Stormwater Seminar yesterday. The program was excellent! It was very informative, topical, and the format was great. While nobody looks forward to the additional burdens from this [EPA Phase II Program] mandate, at least the Merrimack Valley area is educated on this matter."

- Michael Stankovich
Public Works Director
City of Haverhill



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

| Community | % Open Space |
|---------------|--------------|
| Amesbury | 12.2 |
| Andover | 20.7 |
| Boxford | 16.2 |
| Georgetown | 26.3 |
| Groveland | 31.8 |
| Haverhill | 11.2 |
| Lawrence | 6.1 |
| Merrimac | 13.4 |
| Methuen | 6.6 |
| Newbury | 42.5 |
| Newburyport | 20.1 |
| North Andover | 22.2 |
| Rowley | 25.2 |
| Salisbury | 17.7 |
| West Newbury | 19.6 |
| REGION | 19.8 |



Open Space Planning and Design: Throughout 2010, MVPC continued to advise and assist local conservation commissions and open space committees on the preparation and updating of their Open Space and Recreation Plans, consistent with MA Division of Conservation Services guidelines. An up-to-date and approved OS&R Plan, valid for five years, is a requirement for receiving land acquisition and outdoor recreation facilities grants. MVPC open space planning services included initial community outreach and visioning, inventorying and analysis of environmental assets and threats, mapping of lands of special conservation and recreation interest, setting of community open space goals and objectives, and development of open space action plans.

In a related matter, MVPC, in collaboration with the Green Neighborhoods Alliance, continued to assist communities in the drafting and refinement of Open Space Residential Design bylaws. An alternative to conventional subdivision design, OSRD is a proven technique for building new housing and desirable neighborhoods while maximizing the retention of prime open space, including forests, farmland, wildlife habitat, and off-road trail corridors. The result is a more compact, “people-friendly” subdivision that promotes walking and resident interaction while protecting a site’s most important conservation and historical attributes.



Caldwell Farm in Newbury is a prime example of a successful OSRD project. Over 70 percent (87 acres) of this 66-unit residential development is preserved as open space.

The project’s creative, compact design resulted in far less pavement and utility construction when compared to a conventional subdivision with the same number of housing units.

Massachusetts Bays Program Support: MVPC’s environmental staff continued to provide planning and management support to the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program, one of 28 federally-designated estuary programs in the country. MVPC served on the program’s management and executive committees and assisted on a wide array of coastal education and improvement projects. These included field surveys of invasive plant species in the Great Marsh, as well as seminars on coastal water quality and habitat issues, stormwater management, and low impact development techniques. Sharing a vision of “clear water, clean beaches, and safe shellfish”, MVPC and the Massachusetts Bays Program work cooperatively with coastal municipalities, watershed groups, private citizens to help restore and protect the vulnerable natural resources of the Bays’ ecosystem.

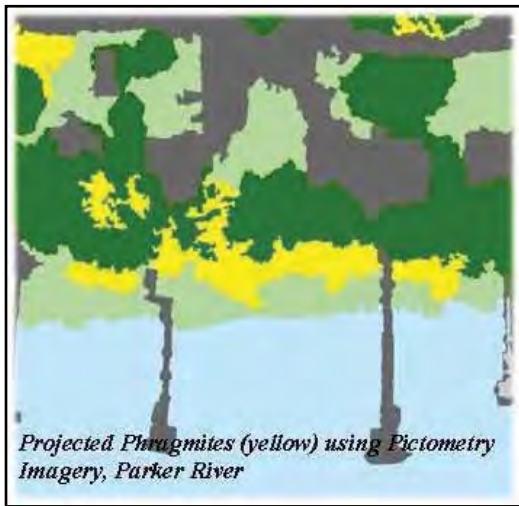


Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Eight Towns and the Bay Committee (8T&B): MVPC's Coastal Program continued to support the initiatives of the Eight Towns and the Bay Committee (8T&B), the upper North Shore regional partner of the Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program. 8T&B meets monthly and is comprised of representatives from **Amesbury, Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley,** Ipswich, Essex, Gloucester, and Rockport as well as two regional educational representatives. MVPC and 8T&B work to enhance public awareness of key coastal issues and to foster broader stewardship of coastal resources. Technical assistance, environmental research, and public education were provided on the following projects:

Upper North Shore Marine Invasive Monitoring: The Eight Towns and the Bay Committee continues its efforts with the MA Office of Coastal Zone Management to monitor marine invasive species sites. The Eight Towns and the Bay coastline includes seven monitoring sites. The data collected ranged from minimal marine invaders present in much of the northern end of the region to abundant quantity and variety of marine invasive species in areas of Gloucester. Invasive species were discovered for the first time this year at both the Rockport and Essex sites. Establishment of marine invaders requires a firm substrate such as rocky shores, dock/floats, tide pools, high salinities, and low energy waters (not exposed to open waves). With the fresh water influence of the Merrimack River and the coastal barrier beaches of Plum Island and Salisbury, it is difficult for marine invaders to become established in the MVPC coastal communities.

Upper Great Marsh Invasive Phragmites Control Project: During the spring, summer, and fall of 2010, Eight Towns and the Bay continued their efforts to inventory and control emergent stands of the highly invasive plant, *Phragmites australis*, in the upper portion of the Great Marsh. Emergent stands have been identified primarily in the **Newbury** portion of the high marsh on lands managed by the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (PRNWR) and Essex County Greenbelt Association (ECGA). Also this fall, the Eight Towns and the Bay Committee worked with the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and Ducks Unlimited to continue the next course of Phragmites control efforts on the marsh. The Committee, along with MVPC GIS staff, was funded in 2010 to develop a pilot mapping project for Phragmites in this section of the Great Marsh. The recently concluded study attempted to use Pictometry imagery to develop a True Color and Infrared



Projected Phragmites (yellow) using Pictometry Imagery, Parker River

signature for the invasive plant using ground-truthed Phragmites stands in the pilot area.

Results of this effort and a related effort to develop a treatment priority matrix for controlling Phragmites were mixed. Funding for a second phase of the pilot is being sought using combined LIDAR and Pictometry data. Other

(continued)



GeorgetownTown Hall

With the fresh water influence of the Merrimack River and the coastal barrier beaches of Plum Island and Salisbury Beach, it is difficult for marine invaders to become established in the MVPC coastal communities.



Eight Towns and the Bay worked with the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and Ducks Unlimited to continue the next course of Phragmites control efforts on the marsh.



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region



Groveland Town Hall

invasive plant mapping and control activities in 2010 included boat and foot mapping for Perennial Pepperweed of the entire coast of Cape Ann as well as unmapped creeks of the Newbury portion of the Great Marsh. This relatively new invasive plant to coastal Massachusetts is found predominantly in **Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley** and Ipswich. In the 8TB region the southern-most extent of Phragmites found was a small patch identified in the Lanesville section of Gloucester.



Perennial Pepperweed (in flower)



Phragmites

Eight Towns and the Bay, as part of its andromous fish monitoring program, installed temperature sensors and water-level dataloggers in six coastal streams in an effort to document trigger parameters for spawning migratory fish.



Real-time data was collected during the migration season (spring/summer) and will be compiled with similar data being collected at other coastal streams in the state. The project will continue into 2011 and will be coupled with the fish count data being collected at these various locations.

Installing andromous fish data-logger in Alewife Brook



Controlling Phragmites

*Newman Road, Newbury
New box culvert installed to
remove a tidal restriction*



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Prioritizing Transportation Investments

MVMPO Transportation Improvement Program: Any transportation project in the region that is to be funded in whole, or in part, with federal transportation dollars must be programmed in the regional TIP.

Several amendments to the FY 2010-2013 TIP were made throughout the year to update the FY 2010 element with additional projects which were anticipated to be ready to advertise by September 30, 2010. In January the construction of the Haverhill Intermodal Center was added. Funding from several Federal funding categories, including HPP, and Transit Sections 5307 and 5309 was necessary for this project, slated to cost more than 8 million dollars. HPP funds to put toward the design of the Border-to- Boston trail project in the communities of **Salisbury**, **Newbury**, **Georgetown**, or **Boxford** were also added in January. The towns provided the twenty percent match and the money provides 100% design funding for the Border-to-Boston trail in those four communities.

The MVMPO chose to use its FY 2010 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) target to design intersection improvements at Chickering Road (Route 125) and Mass Ave. in **North Andover**, a May amendment added this project to the TIP. Replacing the bridge deck of Route 28 over Route 125 in **Andover** was also added in May. Finally, in July, Transit Section 5309 funding was added to FY 2010 to undertake the final design of the Newburyport Intermodal Transportation Center.



Bates Bridge Reconstruction
- photo by Ken Cadman, HNTB

The MVMPO endorsed the FY 2011-2014 TIP in August, it includes Federal funding for the reconstruction of Route 125, South Main Street in **Haverhill**, and the replacement of the Bates Bridge which carries Routes 97 and 113 over the Merrimack River between **Haverhill** and **Groveland**. Both of these projects are currently underway, with the State fronting the money, and the TIP includes funding to reimburse the State with Federal funds. The largest project to ever be programmed in the MVMPO TIP is slated to begin in FY 2012, the \$285 million project to replace the I-95 Whittier Bridge over the Merrimack River between **Newburyport** and **Amesbury**.

The TIP also includes FY 2011 funding to construct a rail-trail connector in **Salisbury** at the Route 1 (Gillis) Bridge. Interstate Maintenance Discretionary earmark funds are programmed in FY 2011 for the design and environmental review of the I-93 interchange construction project between exits 41 and 42.

Additional projects programmed in 2013 and 2014 are the reconstruction of Route 150 in **Amesbury**, reconstruction of Route 110 in Merrimac Square, and construction of the Powow Riverwalk in **Amesbury** from Main Street to Water Street.



Haverhill City Hall

Projects in the 2010-2013 TIP

- Reconstructing South Main Street (Route 125 in Haverhill)
- Replacing the Bates Bridge between Groveland and Haverhill
- Replacing the Canal Street Bridge over the Spicket River in Lawrence
- Completing the Powow Riverwalk in Amesbury
- Continuing operation of MVRTA regional transit services
- Final design and construction of a new bus station in a new location in Haverhill



Whittier Bridge—Newburyport



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Transit projects include funds for constructing a new bus station in Haverhill on a new site adjacent to the commuter rail station, replacing older buses with new vehicles, replacing commuter coaches with new coaches, replacing vehicle security and communication systems, as well as, funding for operating and maintaining MVRTA services.

Unified Planning Work Program: In August 2010, the Merrimack Valley MPO endorsed the region's Federal Fiscal Year 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which outlines the major transportation planning studies and activities that will take place in the Valley in FFY 2011 (October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011). This document is prepared annually by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission on behalf of the MPO.

MVPC continues to support MVRTA planning efforts through monitoring of transit services to disabled customers

Other 2010 data collection projects included a valley-wide Pavement Management Update, Haverhill Street Light Survey, MVRTA NTD Survey and Park & Ride / Commuter Rail Lot Survey



Key analyses to be undertaken by the MVPC for the MPO in Federal Fiscal Year 2011 include traffic and safety studies at two intersections in the City of **Lawrence**, Route 114 (Winthrop Avenue)/Andover Street and at Water/Broadway/Canal Streets. These studies are being undertaken to identify changes/improvements that can be implemented to reduce the number of crashes at these two locations. A similar study will be undertaken in **Methuen** at the intersection of Milk Street/Pleasant Valley Street/Loop Mall Driveway. MVPC will also undertake a study to identify potential solutions for the recurring traffic congestion that takes place on Route 28 in **Methuen** between Route 213 and the New Hampshire state line. This roadway serves commercial land uses in both **Methuen** and in Salem, NH and the congestion often extends south to the Route 213 interchange.

MVPC staff will also undertake a feasibility study for the Georgetown Branch Multiuse Trail, which would connect the proposed Bradford Rail Trail in Haverhill (part of the Merrimack Riverwalk) with the Border to Boston Rail Trail that will extend from **Boxford** north through **Georgetown**, **Newbury**, **Newburyport** and **Salisbury**. This latter trail will soon be under design through the Border to Boston Trail Funding Program.

Staff will also complete work on the Merrimack Valley MPO's 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Any project appearing in the region's Transportation Improvement Program for construction must first appear in the RTP. The MPO's existing RTP, last updated in 2007, serves as the foundation for the transportation planning process in the region. The RTP reviews all the major transportation modes in the region, identifies any safety, capacity and/or structural issues, and recommends a range of actions such as necessary studies or projects that will address these existing issues. In addition, the RTP will forecast future traffic demand in the region to identify possible future areas of traffic and transit service congestion. It is anticipated that this document will be endorsed by the MPO in Spring 2011.

Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Regional Telework Initiative: MVPC initiated research work on this multiyear project in 2009. During 2010, MVPC worked closely with the Merrimack Valley Transportation Management Association (MVTMA) and The Junction Transportation Management Organization (JTMO) to generate employer interest in participating in a telework pilot project. The pilot project's purposes were to: 1) develop regional telework resources; 2) institute formal telework practices within some of the region's employers, and 3) measure telework's success as a business and a transportation demand management 'best practice' within these organizations.

Initiative stakeholders made significant outreach efforts to the MVPC region's business community. Two public information sessions were held, and messaging and correspondence activities were conducted throughout 2010.

Elam Shirazi, a nationally-recognized telework consultant, assisted MVPC, MVTMA and JTMO with this work as planned.

Emerson Street/Winter Street/White Street/How Street Intersection Study in Haverhill: This intersection, located just north of the downtown area, is



Intersections at Emerson, Winter and White Streets

also the intersection of Routes 110 (White Street/Emerson Street) and 97 (Winter Street), which are both principal arterial roadways that serve many communities in the Merrimack Valley. MassDOT data from 2006-2008 showed that there was a high number of crashes at this intersection, which prompted MVPC to undertake a traffic and safety study of this location in an effort to identify improvements that could be made to reduce the crash rate at this location.

Route 1/Route 133 Intersection Study in Rowley: The Merrimack Valley MPO's Congestion Management Process identified this intersection as having traffic congestion problems during peak morning and evening travel periods. Route 1 is a major north/south arterial roadway that links many communities in the eastern Merrimack Valley and provides access to southern New Hampshire and the North Shore while Route 133 is the primary means of access between the Valley and Ipswich and other communities on the northern half of Cape Ann. The Merrimack Valley MPO therefore conducted a traffic and safety study at this location in 2010 to identify measures that could reduce traffic delay and address any safety issues that might exist.

Georgetown Square Intersection Study: The intersection of Routes 97 and 133 in Georgetown is one of the more congested traffic locations in the Merrimack Valley region. Much of the commuter traffic originating in the central portion of the Merrimack Valley region as well as from many communities in southern New Hampshire regularly uses these two roadways to access Route 95 and to travel to Boston, Cape Ann and other employment areas along Route 128.

(continued)



Lawrence City Hall

A review of crash reports for the Haverhill Street/Ames Street intersection location in Lawrence found that the crash rate for the intersection was higher than the average rate found at unsignalized intersections in this section of the state.



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region



Merrimac Town Hall

In recognition of the importance of Georgetown Square and the magnitude of the traffic congestion in this area, MVPC staff conducted a traffic operations analysis to identify changes to the existing signal timing/phasing, lane usage, and other measures that could reduce delay at this intersection as well as at the Library Street/Central Street signalized intersection near



Georgetown Square

Georgetown Town Hall, which is only 600 feet south of the Square. This was done in recognition of the fact that traffic congestion at one of these intersections has a direct impact on traffic flow at the other.

Haverhill & Methuen Streetlight Study: The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission worked with the Cities of **Methuen** and **Haverhill** and their electric utility provider, National Grid, to provide updated inventories of street lights in those two cities. This effort first involved staff visiting all of the lights in the field, locating each one with a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, and ascribing key information to each one, such as pole number, luminaire bulb wattage, and support type. Next, all of these geolocated streetlight assets were represented in database and map form by MVPC's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff. These updated inventories will help these two cities better manage these important infrastructure assets with money saving measures, whether through decisions made on which ones to turn off or which ones to potentially convert to higher efficient bulbs or solar powered bulbs.



MVPC provided support to the I-93 Lowell Junction Interchange Task Force. This group is comprised of officials from the three Lowell Junction area communities of Andover, Tewksbury and Wilmington along with area legislators, landowners and interested citizens.



Lowell Junction Interchange: Work continued with the participation from MVPC on the Draft Environmental Impact Study/Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/EIR) for the project that is being prepared by MassDOT. This document, as well as the ensuing Final EIS/EIR, are prerequisites for obtaining final Federal Highway Administration approval for the project. The Draft EIS/EIR is expected to be completed by MassDOT by the middle of 2011.

One major development that took place in 2010 was that the scope of the project was amended to include the widening of Route 93 through **Andover** and **Methuen** to the New Hampshire state line to provide four travel lanes and a breakdown lane in each direction on the roadway. This cross section will allow the breakdown lane to function as originally intended and

Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

thereby improve safety along this section of the corridor. It is also consistent with the long-term recommendations for the roadway that are contained in the MVPC's I-93 Corridor Transportation Study.

Methuen Rotary Project: During 2010, MVPC staff participated as a member of the Methuen Rotary Project Advisory Committee. This rotary within the interchange of Routes 110 and 113 with Route 93 has long been the location of severe congestion during peak travel periods and has one of the highest crash rates of any location in the Commonwealth.

Comprised of home and business owners in the area as well as state, local and regional officials, the Project Advisory Committee met frequently and played a critical role in defining the scope of the preferred improvement alternative.



The Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) for the preferred alternative was approved by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Unit early in the year and preliminary design work

on the preferred long-term project alternative was completed by the end of the year. In addition, design work was completed for signalization of the Riverside Drive/Route 110 intersection, which is located just west of the existing Rotary. This is an early action item for the long-term improvement project and will address existing safety and congestion issues.

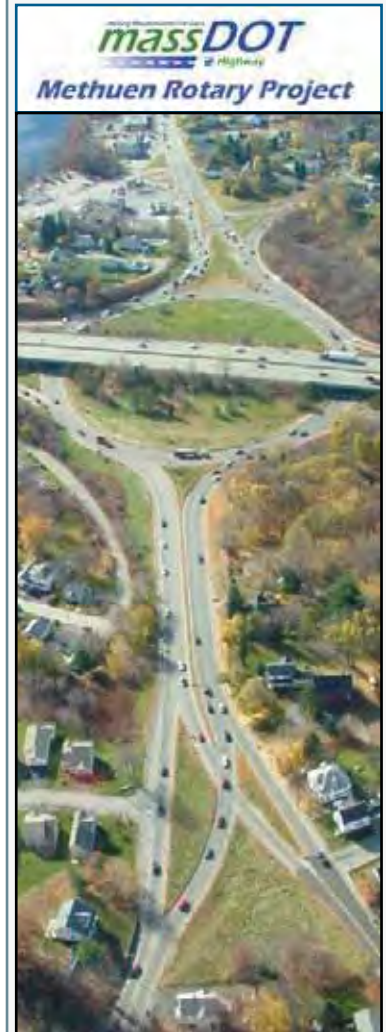
The long term improvement alternative will eliminate the current Rotary and replace it with a Single Point Urban Intersection (SPUI) with new traffic signals, new on and off ramps and the reconstruction of a section of I-93 north of the Merrimack River to accommodate four travel lanes and a breakdown in each direction in the future.

Tentative plans are for the design of the new interchange to be completed early in 2012.



Methuen Town Hall

The rotary at Routes 110 and 113 at I-93 has long been the location of severe congestion and one of the highest crash rates in the state.



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Grand Opening Ceremony of the Clipper City Rail Trail and the Old Eastern Marsh Trail

- photo by Elizabeth Rankin



Newbury Town Hall



Grand Opening Race (start)
Salisbury's Old Eastern
Marsh Trail

- photo by Bob Straubel

[cityofnewburyport.com/
Planning/RailTrail.html](http://cityofnewburyport.com/Planning/RailTrail.html)



*Rep. Mike Costello-Salisbury, Lt. Governor Tim Murray, Geordie Vining, Sr. Project Manager -Salisbury,
Mayor Thatcher Kezer, II-Amesbury, Mayor Donna Holaday -Newburyport, Congressman Tierney*



Boardwalk

- photo by Elizabeth Rankin

*Grand Opening Race (finish)
Salisbury's Old Eastern Marsh Trail
- photo by Bob Straubel*



Promoting the Orderly Development of the Region

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation: By far the largest transportation project in the region, design and environmental work on the replacement of the Whittier Bridge, the I-95 bridge over the Merrimack River continued this year. MVPC participated as a regional advocate in the Whittier Bridge Working Group, which included representatives from the state, the contracted project design firm and from each community (Salisbury, Newburyport and Amesbury). As a result of this cooperative effort, a new multi-use trail will be built on the bridge – the first of its kind in the Commonwealth. The trail will have four access points at the Storey Avenue Park & Ride and at Ferry Road in Newburyport and at the Route 110/Merrill Street intersection and the Rabbit Road entrance to the Ghost Point Trail in Salisbury.

The Border to Boston trail project is moving forward in the Merrimack Valley thanks to a cooperative effort to access federally earmarked funding for the project. MVPC and MassDOT teamed up to create the Border to Boston Funding program, a

unique program for five Merrimack Valley communities to compete for the limited amount of funding. In the end, four of the five communities that still needed design funding joined together to apply for funding of 100% design of the remaining undeveloped corridor. Fay, Spofford and Thorndike will be designing the trail, which should begin in 2011. This Funding Program is unique in that the communities will be providing the local

match for the \$718,000 in available federal funds and MassDOT will be providing the necessary survey work for the project.

In August 2010, MVPC received notice that it was awarded a \$15,000 Recreational Trails Grant to fund the Merrimack River Trail Reconnaissance Planning Project. Through this project, MVPC, in partnership with the Essex National Heritage Commission and Northern Middlesex Council of Governments will engage trail advocates, municipal officials, and community leaders in 15 communities in an early stage strategic planning process focused on developing one of the state's most outstanding recreational assets: a 30-mile long bicycle and pedestrian trail along the Merrimack River. Much of the work for the project will be focused on mapping the existing and proposed alignment and providing report outlining the existing conditions, needs, proposed routes and planning recommendations.



*Clipper City Rail Trail, Newburyport
- photo by Geordie Vining*



Newburyport City Hall

A new challenge grant program has been proposed, managed by MVPC, to provide access to a \$718,000 transportation earmark for the five MVPC communities – Salisbury, Newburyport, Newbury, Georgetown and Boxford, where the trail would be located.



*Undeveloped section of the Border to Boston Trail in Boxford
- photo by Essex National
Heritage Commission*



Coordinating Activities in the Region

MVPC has extensive experience in helping its member communities plan for their future. Clearly well planned communities produce a well-planned region so MVPC has used its technology and expertise to help communities coordinate their planning actions and MVPC has undertaken the following activities:

Municipal Information Mapping Access Program (MIMAP): During 2010 MVPC's GIS Program continued to expand the functionality of its Municipal Information Mapping Access Program (MIMAP) for communities in the region. Nine of the 15 municipalities in the region are using MIMAP to access the wealth of GIS data archived at MVPC – the Town of Georgetown being the latest addition. By accessing the system, specific addresses can be located and information such as assessor records, building permits, board of health records and orders of conditions from conservation commissions can be quickly queried. Each deployment of MIMAP is customized for the individual municipality, which enables other datasets and maps, including oblique images from Pictometry, to be readily displayed. The program is easy to use and employs innovative internet development techniques that eliminate the need for software installation.

“They have also brought this office forward into the 21st Century by creating and maintaining a database known as MIMAP which is extremely helpful to all departments that use it.”

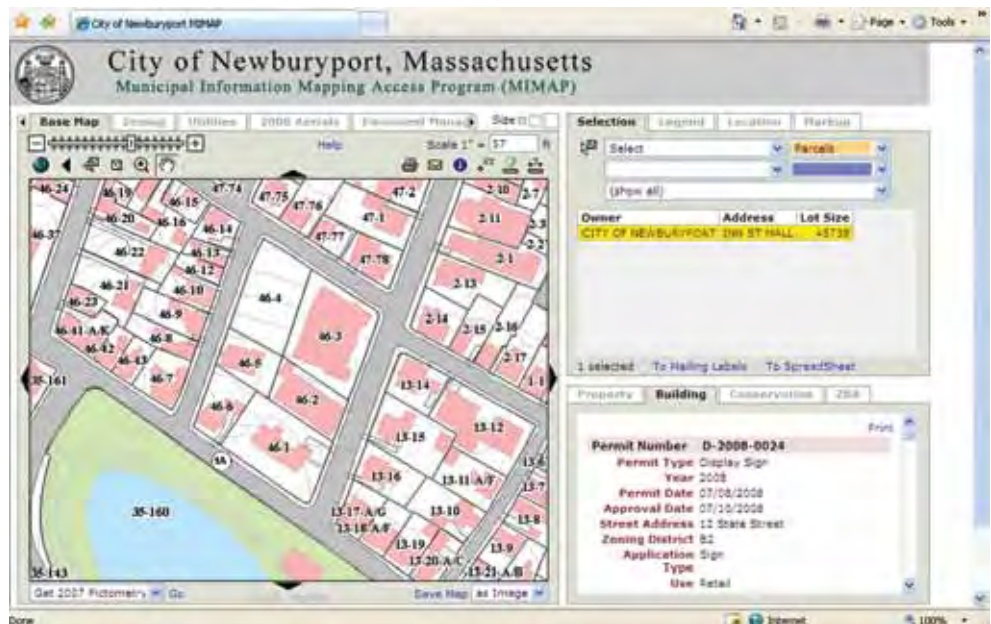
- Mary Marino, MAA
Chief Assessor
Amesbury

“The Commission is responsive, technically sound, provides excellent service and demonstrates thorough understanding and expertise of GIS and information technology through their hands-on assistance and frequent training sessions.”

- Jacki Byerley
Planner
Andover

“Since acquiring MVPC's services, the city of Newburyport has become more efficient in running program services for the taxpayers of the city while also increasing productivity and communication between city departments.”

- Jill Brennan
Assistant Assessor
Newburyport



Parcel Mapping Initiative: MVPC's GIS Program continued to provide property parcel update and mapping services to member communities during 2010. Working with local assessor offices, MVPC's GIS Program updates the property parcel datasets and produces the official assessor maps for 10 of its 15 communities. During the property parcel update, any new lot splits, lot combinations and/or subdivisions are incorporated into one community-wide property parcel dataset from which individual assessor maps are prepared. The property parcel data is produced electronically (using GIS) and, once finalized, provided back to the community for use within their respective information systems. For communities participating in MIMAP, the updated parcel data is uploaded to the application and made available to all users. Most recent efforts include the development of a building footprint data layer for the Town of **West Newbury**. The building footprint data layer shows an accurate outline of each structure in the Town and appears on the newest set

Coordinating Activities in the Region

of assessor maps and is available through MIMAP. The addition of the building footprint data helps municipal staff and the public when it comes to planning efforts related to property boundaries, setbacks and zoning.

MVPC Transportation Viewer: MVPC's GIS Program maintains a vast array of transportation data, including road centerlines, pavement condition, intersections, traffic count locations and vehicle crash data. Traditional access to this GIS data requires specialized GIS software, not readily available to the public. With advancements in GIS technology, and an increased public availability and familiarity with the internet, GIS data distribution has become more efficient and effective. Building on these technological advancements, MVPC GIS staff created a web-based transportation viewer during 2010 with the goal of facilitating access to the wealth of GIS data archived at MVPC. The transportation viewer integrates the Google Maps Application Program Interface (API) along with the ArcGIS JavaScript Extension for Google Maps. This integration provides access to MVPC's GIS data layers in a familiar environment for the user, the Google Maps framework. In the coming years, MVPC anticipates expanding the data and functionality accessible through the Transportation Viewer – a service that is free to the public.

Local Technical Assistance/Information Technology: A series of smaller mapping and data analysis projects for member communities were also completed during 2010 using Local Technical Assistance (LTA) time and through direct contract. Working with a Boy Scout representative seeking his Eagle Scout designation, MVPC GIS Staff mapped the water sources for the Town of Boxford. For the Town of Georgetown, an updated version of the Official Town Map was prepared and on behalf of the Town's Finance Director, a map and inventory of all town-owned properties was prepared for the Town of West Newbury.

Another significant component of the GIS Program work during 2010 was in support of the Commission's Priority Growth Strategy (PGS). GIS staff worked with Dreamlight Interactive to create a web-based interactive version of the PGS. By visiting <http://maps.mvpc.org/pgs/mvpc/index.html>, users can participate in an interactive review of the Commission's future development plan for the region.

The GIS Program continued to manage the agency computer network in 2010 and assists in the management of the commission's internet website. The commission's website can be accessed by visiting mvpc.org.



North Andover City Hall

“MVPC's GIS staff has been instrumental in developing the Town of Newbury's GIS capabilities and providing GIS related services for many of our departments, boards and committees.”

- Kathleen Pearson, Chair
Planning Board
Newbury

“The Town of Rowley's mapping and GIS database in a period of 8 years has been transformed from paper maps and an unused GIS file to a database used with ease by multiple Town departments.”

- Sean McFadden, MAA
Principle Assessor
Rowley

“MVPC was the catalyst for implementing GIS and Pictometry in West Newbury.”

- Karen Rassias
Chief Assessor
West Newbury

Coordinating Activities in the Region



Rowley Town Hall

"I love it when a plan comes together"

- Dennis A. DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director

"Thanks to MVPC for the fine Citizens Planning course. I did the Subdivision Reading project at NECCO in November. and learned a good deal that is already very useful in my duties as a Conservation Commissioner in Andover."

- Alix Driscoll,
Conservation Commission
Andover

Traffic Volume Counts: The MVPC traffic counting program for 2010 once again proved to be successful. A total of 118 counts were conducted throughout the Merrimack Valley region. There were 14 locations selected by Mass DOT with the remaining counts taken from the annual, two, and four year cycles determined by MVPC. Additional Turning Movement counts were taken in the towns of **Georgetown and Boxford**.



These counts are used by MVPC for a number of purposes including the regional traffic model and the measurement of traffic growth in the region. This information is also requested on a regular basis from developers and other private sector interests for use in decisions on business locations and development. An updated history of all traffic counting data will be available online in early 2011. Follow the "Transportation" and "Traffic Count" links on our website mvpc.org.

Going Green Regionally: MVPC participated in the Statewide Regionalization Conference held in September of 2010 at Holy Cross. At this State and MARPA sponsored conference Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio was asked to participate in one of the workshops entitled "Going Green Regionally". He provided an overview of the Merrimack Valley's Energy Manager Program and how it has resulted in the collective procurement of an ESCO provider and the exploration of turning landfills into solar farms.

Citizen Planner Training: MVPC's Citizen Planner Training Program enjoyed another successful year in 2010. The program allows officials and volunteers on Planning Boards, Conservation Commissions, Zoning Boards of Appeal, Historic District Commissions and Boards of Health to be more familiar with legal and permitting requirements.



The training program covers the open meeting law, conflict of interest, public record keeping, statutory responsibilities, cooperation and coordination of public entities and bodies and streamlines permitting.

Cooperating to Address Common Challenges

MVPC has always encouraged member communities to cooperate and work together, but it has invested additional staff time and resources to make cooperation and collaboration happen in these trying fiscal times. Member communities, impacted by the economic downturn and shrinking financial resources, are increasingly interested in forming alliances to deliver basic services and to improve service delivery. MVPC has been at the forefront of this trend by supplying the administrative and technical support needed to identify and analyze potential collaborations. The Commonwealth has recognized this new priority and resources have been provided to MVPC to support this effort. With the support of the regional legislative delegation, District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds have been provided to do the preliminary planning necessary to understand and implement these activities.

Cooperating Through Regional Collaboration

The Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition was formed in 2007 by the communities of **Amesbury, Andover, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover** and **Salisbury**. Its charge is to promote collaboration and joint problem solving. MVPC provides administrative support and a forum for the Coalition. The Coalition has been particularly active in implementing two initiatives, namely in joint purchasing and regional energy development.

The Coalition in 2010 continued its work in supporting joint purchasing and other initiatives among member Departments of Public Works. Workshops were held on DEP spoils disposal regulations for street sweepings and catch basin cleaning. In particular, MVPC on behalf of the Coalition procured services for Emergency Vehicle Certified Maintenance and a region-wide purchasing agent.

The Coalition in 2010 continued its work on the Merrimack Valley Energy Management Program. The program is administered by the MVPC and provides communities with technical assistance to develop energy management strategies and energy conservation programs. A significant 2010 innovation is the Coalition's use of an Energy Services Company ("ESCO") to implement energy conservation improvements in public buildings. ESCOs design and install key building energy conservation improvements such as replacing boilers, chillers, lighting, windows etc. and use the cost savings from these improvements to pay for the upgrades. Eleven MVPC communities - **Amesbury, Lawrence, Georgetown, Haverhill, Methuen, Merrimac, Newburyport, North Andover, Salisbury, West Newbury** and **Boxford** - participated in a joint procurement of ESCO services along with the Pentucket Regional School District and the Greater Lawrence Technical High School. Eight proposals were received and reviewed by a committee comprised of representatives from **Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, Newburyport** and the Pentucket Regional School District short-listed down to three firms. The committee then conducted interviews, checked references and unanimously selected Ameresco, Inc. of Framingham. Ameresco is the largest independent comprehensive energy solutions provider in North America. Ameresco utilizes innovative strategies, systems, and technologies for renewable and sustainable energy generation and infrastructure renewal, thereby reducing operating expenses, increasing energy reliability and enhancing the environment.



Salisbury Town Hall

“Cooperating Through Regional Collaboration and Planning”

“Working together regionally makes a lot of sense” ... “we all benefit if we can attract a large experienced energy services contractor like Ameresco”

- Mayor James Fiorentini
Haverhill

“Creating an opportunity for the smaller communities to work with the larger communities allows a small community to think big”

- Mayor Thatcher Kezer
Amesbury

“Our legislative briefings with MVPC gives us an opportunity to discuss common challenges we face throughout the region and provides an opportunity to share information and ideas to address these regional challenges through legislative action.”

- Steven A. Baddour
Methuen
State Senator



West Newbury Town Office

Cooperating to Address Common Challenges



Haverhill Solar Panels

The Coalition is also pursuing the development of solar energy farms on closed landfills, a practice that is termed “Brightfields.” There are over 160 acres of landfills in the MVPC region and currently nine communities—**Amesbury, Andover, Boxford, Haverhill, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury**—are considering

working together to explore the feasibility of such projects. Notably, a similar solar energy farm was developed and is operating successfully in Brockton. On behalf of the Coalition, MVPC engaged Meridian Associates to conduct a fatal flaw analysis on the above communities’ various landfills to determine if they are suitable candidates for renewable energy. In 2011, if the analyzed sites are deemed suitable, communities can consider issuing a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify solar energy developers interested in working with them to bring the “Brownfields to Brightfields” program to the MVPC region.

The Coalition is also considering collective energy purchasing to save money.

This year, as an extension of this alliance, MVPC reached out to the smaller communities in the region: **Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac, Newbury, Rowley and West Newbury** and invited the Town Administrators and Finance Directors to consider participating in some of the regional solution ideas being put forth by the Coalition.

We also continued to hold quarterly meetings with the community planning directors from the region. Collaborating the directors have discussed common planning issues and have shared experiences in an effort to provide “peer” assistance.

“This “Brightfields” idea generates renewable energy, reduces our reliance on fossil fuel technology and reduces energy costs for the communities that participate”

- Mayor William Manzi
Methuen



Brockton Brightfield consists of 1,395 SCHOTT Solar modules manufactured in Billerica

Administration and Finance

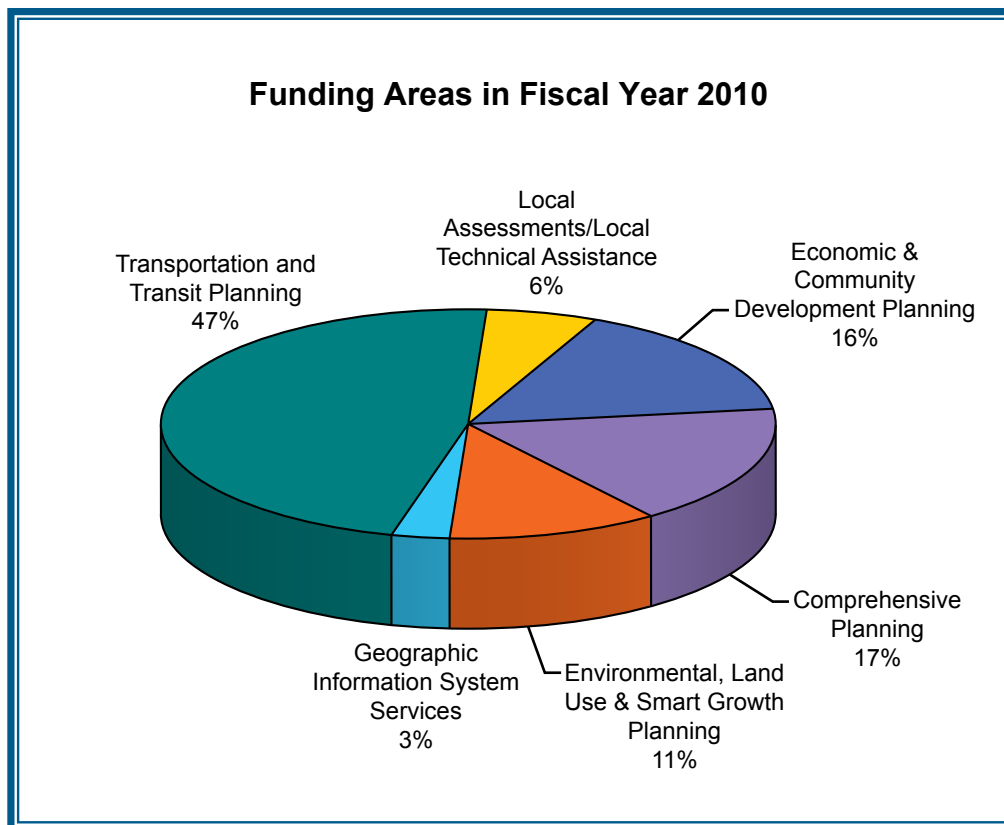
Distribution of Fiscal Year 2010 Funds: MVPC's operating funds for FY2010 supported a broad range of planning and technical services in the following six major functional areas:

- Transportation & Transit Planning (47%)
- Local Assessments & Local Technical Assistance (6%)
- Economic & Community Development Planning (16%)
- Comprehensive Planning (17%)
- Environmental, Land use & Smart Growth Planning (11%)
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Services (3%)

Five of these six service areas accounted for 9% of the agency budget, and were derived from a variety of largely *non-local* sources, including state and federal grants, as well as contracts with selected non-profit organizations and businesses that support MVPC's mission.

Only 6% of the budget was derived from local assessments to our member communities. These local funds were used by MVPC as match to leverage the 94% of outside funding brought into the region by the commission staff.

Independent Audit: The independent audit is in progress. Unaudited statements show MVPC expenditures to be within the budget and the fund balance remains positive.



MVPC Professional Staff

Administration

Dennis A. DiZoglio, executive director
Jenifer Dunlap, accountant
Nancy Lavallee, office administrator
Jim Simmons, communications specialist

Environmental

Alan Macintosh, assistant director/environmental program manager
Peter Phippen, environmental planner/coastal resources coordinator (8T&B)

Transportation

Anthony Komornick, transportation program manager
Mary Kay Beninati, senior transportation planner
George Burnham, senior transportation engineer
Jim Terlizzi, transportation planner
Daniel Ovalle, field services specialist
Elizabeth Goodrich, transportation planner
Todd Fontanella, senior transportation planner

GIS

Jerrard Whitten, GIS/IT manager
Steve Lopez, GIS specialist

Community and Economic Development

Mike Parquette, comprehensive planning manager
Ted Semesnyei, economic development coordinator
Eugene R. Amiss, revolving loan fund manager



MVPC's Role as a

- Navigator** - Serve as the “Maker” and “Keeper” of the Region’s Strategic Plans
- Collaborator** - Provide a Regional Concourse on Which to Convene the Region’s Public, Business & Civic Sectors to Convert Regional “Talk” to Regional “Action”
- Innovator** - Convert Reams of Raw Data into Information for Informed Regional Decision Making
- Reporter** - Provide Indicators Focused on Trends and Opportunities
- Advocate** - Work with Numerous Partner Advocates for the Collective Interests of the Region and its Member Local Governments
- Advisor** - One of the Core Functions of MVPC is to Provide Technical Assistance to its Member Communities



Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
*plan * develop * promote*

160 Main Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
phone 978.374.0519
fax 978.372.4890
mvpc.org



www.facebook.com/mvpc.org