



## MINUTES

**Thursday – November 19, 2015**

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
- 2. Roll Call** –Secretary Ramsdell called the roll and declared a quorum present. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

### Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie
Haverhill	April Derboghosian
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell
North Andover	Richard Byers, Chairman
Rowley	Robert Snow
West Newbury	Brian Murphey

### Staff

Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director  
Anthony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager  
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager  
Todd Fontanella, Sr. Transportation Planner  
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator  
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

### **3. Adoption of October Meeting Minutes**

The October minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Weis. The October Minutes were unanimously approved.*

### **4. Warrant for October**

Treasurer Robert Snow reported that the October warrant was reviewed favorably and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Weis and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The October warrant was unanimously approved.*

## 5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Richard Byers reported on the following activities since the last meeting.

You will find in your packet a letter from our Auditor notifying us that he will be beginning the annual audit. As the governing body the Commissioners need to indicate that they are aware the audit is underway and will participate as needed in the process. I will be signing on behalf of the Commission.

Chairman Byers attended the "Rising with the Tides" event on October 16th in Haverhill. Over 100 people attended the event organized by the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce with the support of MVPC. As you know we used this event as this year's "Regional Planning Day". 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 locus 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.

Chairman Byers attended the MARPA sponsored Elevating Municipal Partnerships Conference at Holy Cross College on November 12th. The conference was well attended and was the seventh in a series of statewide conferences convened on shared services, regulations, and specific initiatives.

Lt. Governor Polito offered conference opening remarks, followed by an overview presentation of the Baker/Polito Administration's "New, Better Government Venture" delivered by Sean Cronin, Senior Deputy Commissioner of the MA Division of Local Services. A Community Compact Cabinet Dialogue highlighted resources available to Massachusetts's cities and towns. Participants in the dialogue included:

- Jay Ash, Secretary – MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED)
- Stephanie Pollack, Secretary and CEO – MA Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
- Ann Reale, Undersecretary and COO – MA Department of Education (DOE)
- Kristen Lepore, Secretary – MA Executive Office of Administration and Finance (EOAF)
- Matthew Beaton, Secretary – MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA)

The dialogue was followed by two rounds of concurrent workshops. The conference workshops featured Best Practices presentations focused on Financial Management, Information Technology, Regionalization and Housing and Economic Development. Our own Jerrard Whitten was a presenter in the Information Technology workshop and focused his remarks on our **CMMS initiative**.

## 6. Personnel Committee

**The Personnel Committee met for their annual meeting on November 9. The minutes are as follows.**

Meeting called to order 8:40 am

Members Present: Bob Lavoie, Kevin Hagerty and Chairman Rick Byers

1. Approval of the November 12, 2014 Personnel Committee Minutes

***Vote: Motion made by Commissioner Hagerty, seconded by Commissioner Lavoie to accept the minutes from November 12, 2014 personnel committee meeting, unanimously approved.***

2. Review Policy and Procedures

The Committee reviewed the Personnel Policies and Procedures Handbook and there were 3 recommended changes.

- 1) The 2014 referendum passage of the new sick leave requirement for employers requires MVPC to revise our personnel policies to reflect the new Mass sick time policy. Most of the changes are clarification with one change requiring a change in the number of hours an employee can be absent because of sickness before requiring a doctor's certificate.

***Chapter IV. Fringe Benefits section E item 2 add "(or 1.38 hours per 30 hours worked)" to describe the rate sick leave is accumulated, item 3 remove twenty one (21) and replace it with Twenty four (24), item 4 revise the last sentence to read "Examples of abuse are taking sick leave as vacation time or clear patterns of use (i.e., Mondays and/or Fridays, before or after a vacation or holiday).", item 5 revise to read "Any employee, who finds it necessary to be absent from work because of illness, or any other reason, shall notify the office in advance if possible, preferably within one hour of the beginning of the workday."***

***Vote: A motion was made by Commissioner Hagerty and seconded by Commissioner Lavoie to make the above changes. Motion passed unanimously.***

***Vote as presented to the Commission: A motion was made by Commissioner Lavoie and seconded by Commissioner Weis to make the above changes. Motion passed unanimously.***

- 2) Second recommended change is to eliminate the accumulated sick leave credit as a retirement benefit. Prior to MVPC joining the GIC, employees did not have retirement health care benefits unless they had 20 years of service and retired directly from MVPC. So in order to help

employees with future retirement health benefits MVPC offered long serving employees who used very little of their accumulated sick leave to create a retiree health savings account to cover future health insurance costs. This particularly helped employees that do not contribute to Medicare since they were hired prior to 1986. Those employees would not have Medicare insurance in their retirement unless they sought to earn their Medicare quarters in other employment. Since all employees are now eligible for retiree health insurance (if vested) through the GIC the need to help retired employees obtain health insurance is gone.

**The Sick Time >840 Hour policy (Personnel Policy 1V, E, 3) reads as follows:**

*Each eligible employeemayaccumulateup to 840 hours of sick leave to safeguard against catastrophicillness. Thereafter, the value of any additional accumulated sick leave credits shall beset aside and useableupon retirement or termination in lump sum or terms agreeableto both parties, said valueto be earnedat the rateof fivehours per month up to age40, sixhours permonth from age40 to age50, and seven hours per month thereafterup to amaximum of another840hours.*

Over the years several employees have participated on and off in this benefit, mainly the non-Medicare contributing long-tenured employees for which the policy was intended. However, due to the continued longevity of our staff and personnel policies that support a flexible work schedule and require fewer sick days to be taken (flex time, vacation and personal time, and working from home), many employees will meet the threshold to participate in the policy in the coming years. This increased use of the policy would cost MVPC significant administrative expense, causing the indirect rate to rise. Controlling the indirect rate is a management tool imperative to ensuring the budget is sufficient to meet salaries, and something we have been focusing on over the past few years.

Since the above policy was adopted, we have greatly enriched the employee benefits here at MVPC by joining the GIC which added a variety of health & dental insurance plans with managed reasonable premiums, LTD, Optional Life Insurance, flexible spending accounts, reduced employee contributions, as well as, retiree health insurance for all Medicare and non-Medicare eligible employees, alike.

***Vote: Motion made by Commissioner Hagerty, seconded by Commissioner Lavoie to accept the recommendation to eliminate the above policy that has become obsolete in its purpose. Motion was approved unanimously.***

***Vote as presented to the Commission: A motion was made by Commissioner Hagerty and seconded by Commissioner Weis to make the above changes. Motion passed unanimously.***

- 3) The third recommendation was to allow the Executive Director to extend the Probationary Period for new employees to up to 6 months.

**Change the first sentence Chapter I. Section D. Employment Status item 2 to read as follows:**

***"Prior to the end of the probationary period, the employee will be advised, in writing, whether he/she will be continued as a permanent employee in that position or extend the probationary period for up to 6 months."***

***Vote: Motion made by Commissioner Hagerty, seconded by Commissioner Lavoie Motion passed unanimously.***

***Vote as presented to the Commission: A motion was made by Commissioner Snow and seconded by Commissioner Weis to make the above changes. Motion passed unanimously.***

### 3. Job Descriptions

There were no recommended changes to the Job Descriptions.

### 4. Staff Evaluations

The Executive Director reviewed staff evaluations with the Committee. The Commission had authorized up to 3.5% for salary adjustments in FY 2016 Budget. After discussion with the Executive Director and listening to his recommendations the Committee recommended a series of salary adjustments based on the staff evaluations:

- 8 – Very Good 3.0%
- 6 – Good 2.0%
- 1 – no change

Commissioner Hagerty expressed that Executive Director DiZoglio has been doing an exemplary job in his position and the agency continues to demonstrate its importance in the region. Chairman Byers recommended a salary increase for Executive Director DiZoglio of 3%. It was pointed out that all the recommended raises would increase the annual salary account by 2.58%. Since the Commission budgeted 3.5% in the 2016 budget there are sufficient funds to pay the raises.

***Vote: A motion was made by Commissioner Hagerty and seconded by Commissioner Lavoie to approve the recommended salary and was unanimously approved.***

***Vote as presented to the Commission: A motion was made by Commissioner Weis and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to make the above changes. Motion passed unanimously.***

### 5. Salary Scales

The Executive Director shared the amended Salary Scales guidelines to reflect a MARPA Salary Survey conducted in November of 2014 (attached). The Committee found the revisions acceptable as presented.

### 6. 2016 MVPC Work Program

The Executive Director reviewed the proposed 2016 Work Program he will be evaluated on next year (attached) with the Committee. The Committee found it acceptable as presented.

### 7. Personnel Actions

Executive Director DiZoglio provided a letter (attached) to the Chairman indicating his intent of retiring from his Position next year effective November 13, 2016. The committee thanked him for his service and discussed possible next steps to find a replacement. A number of RPAs have recently gone through the process of finding a new executive director. Some of them have used a recruitment firm to facilitate the process. Chairman Byers indicated he would reach out to his counterparts in the RPAs that have hired a new executive director and bring back a recommendation to the Commission whether using a third party to help in the process was warranted or conducting the process internally. If a third party is used the committee recommended the 2017 budget reflect funding needed to compensate the consultant.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30am

## 7. Director's Report

Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio reported on the following MVPC activities since the last meeting.

### Meetings with Community Leaders

- On October 16th - attended and spoke at the "Rising with the Tides" event sponsored by the Greater Haverhill Chamber Commerce with the assistance of the MVPC.
- On October 20th and November 17th - attended the WIB planning meetings and on October 27 the WIB annual meeting. At the annual meeting Labor Secretary Walker was the keynote speaker. During his comments he advocated that WIB regions undertake planning initiatives to identify opportunities to pursue workforce development. I suggested that the State look to the RPAs to assist in this planning effort.
- On October 20<sup>th</sup> - attended a focus group discussion organized by the Greater Haverhill Foundation. The Foundation in conjunction with the Tech Collaborative developed an action plan to help stimulate the economy of Haverhill. I attempted to bring a regional perspective to the discussion.
- On October 22nd MVPC held our quarterly Regional Planner meeting. Emmy Hahn from DHCD gave a presentation regarding the State effort to streamline their deliverance of technical assistance. The initiative known as the TA Connector will attempt to coordinate technical assistance provided by the State, MassDevelopment and RPAs. Newburyport offered to be a beta site for this new effort. We also discussed our new Community Economic Development Tool Kit, 2015 Brownfields grant application, available 2016 TIP funds and the potential for a 2016 Pictometry flight.
- On October 27th and November 19th - attended the MPO Commission meetings and public hearing.
- On November 4th - met with Senator L 'Italian, Chairwoman of the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government regarding Zoning Reform. The Senator's committee may hold a hearing on the pending bill.
- On November 12th - attended the Elevating Municipal Partnership Conference held in Worcester. Jerrard Whitten from our staff presented the Commission's work on CMMS as a "Best Practice" to be considered under the Community Compact Cabinet initiative from the Baker Administration.
- On November 17th - was invited by the Andover Board of Selectmen to participate in the Town of Andover Town update session held at Andover Town Library. The purpose of the forum is to give Andover Citizens who do not have an opportunity to attend BOS meetings to hear about actions the Town is taking on important issues. The Selectmen asked that I update the community on the priority Growth Strategy and our efforts to update the MVMB website.
- On November 18th - attended the Lawrence Partnership Annual Meeting.
- On November 18th - met with Bailey Hoar to discuss how the Mass Smart Growth Alliance could help regions like the Merrimack Valley.

### Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- The November DPW meeting was cancelled; we hope to hold the December meeting and continue our discussion regarding the Stormwater Collaborative 2016 work program.
- The next Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting will be on December 2nd. The agenda for the meeting includes a discussion on a possible regional opium response, trash and recycling contracts and the potential to collaborate, and the filing of Community Compact applications, which includes a regional project to promote MVMB.biz.
- Ameresco, the region's ESCO provider has completed projects in Merrimack, North Andover and Lawrence. Salisbury is under construction. Methuen and Haverhill are adjusting their programs to deal with the net school spending issues. Methuen has expanded their program to include retrofitting their streetlights. Haverhill project is for the schools only, it will be a \$2.5M project

and the City will save \$270K per year. Lawrence is considering a second phase and the Greater Lawrence Technical High School is negotiating an ESA.

- Haverhill has selected a firm for electric aggregation is moving forward, Newburyport and Methuen had their DPU public hearing on November 17th, and North Andover will bring the concept to town meeting. Preliminary meeting have been held in Salisbury, Lawrence, Newbury and Andover.

#### Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System

- MVPC, along with 6 other RPAs received a letter from the Retirement systems stating that after 42 years of being members of the State retirement system MVPC is now required to contribute to the system. A meeting was held with the State retirement Board and MARPA. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help. Representative Dempsey office is recommending that we use the Working Committee established in the budget to work through our issues. Still waiting for the committee to be organized by ANF as per the budget.

#### 8. Contracts

- Salisbury - \$6,800 – parcel update
- Lawrence - \$4,000 – conversion of their Mylar-based zoning map to GIS
- Newbury – \$13,500 – Master Plan Update for Transportation element and mapping services

*Vote: Commissioner Lavoie made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Murphey seconded the motion. The contracts were unanimously approved.*

- MVPC is partnering with Groundworks Lawrence Inc. and Merrimack River Watershed Council, in grant application to EPA for the 2015 Urban Waters Small Grants Program to support “Stormwater Solutions for Lawrence and the Merrimack Valley”.

Funding will be used to support community training and outreach program in water quality and stormwater management best practices, including green infrastructure, for public works managers and land use planners. Total federal funding application is \$60,000, with local in-kind/cash match total from partners of \$6,000. Funding proposed toward MVPC for Stormwater Collaborative activities would be \$10,000. Grant application deadline is Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> and award announcements by EPA are expected Spring 2016.

Authorization by the Commission is requested to participate in the partnership project grant submission for the Stormwater Solutions activity and to expend MVPC portion of Urban Waters Small Grant funds should the grant be awarded by EPA.

*Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Derboghossian seconded the motion. The contract was unanimously approved.*

#### 9. Comprehensive Planning Update Mike Parquette, MVPC's Comprehensive Planning Program Manager reported on the following Comprehensive Planning activities.

##### VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM

**Merrimac:** A draft of Merrimac's Housing Production Plan (HPP) with all new census data and analysis of that data was completed in October and submitted to the Merrimack Affordable Housing Board of Trustees for their review. Mike discussed the HPP at a public forum on Nov. 10th. We await information from the Town's Public Works department regarding water/sewer constraints before the plan is submitted to DHCD for their comments.

**Methuen:** The Urban Land Institute - Technical Assistance panel final report was made available on November 4th. The report addressed the important downtown redevelopment issues of marketing, planning and design, feasibility and financing, and management and implementation. The ULI Report has provided the city with solid information and advice on how best to move forward with their redevelopment/revitalization initiatives. Also, Methuen has decided to pursue a 40R District for the downtown, and MVPC assisted them with an application for funding through the PATH program to secure funds to complete the application and create the zoning for the district. The PATH grant was approved last week. We have also been asked to update the housing section of Methuen's Master Plan and analyze their housing needs and conditions - a requirement for the 40R application.

**Groveland:** The Town of Groveland contracted with MVPC to develop a "Permit Guide". A draft Guide was developed over the summer and submitted to the Town for their review. We met with the Town in October to review their comments and questions on the draft and are in the process of making the necessary revisions based on their comments.

**MASSWORKS REVIEW AND AWARDS:** - Five of our communities applied for MassWorks Street and Roadway improvement funds. As in the past few years, MVPC was asked to review the applications and comment on the proposed use of the MassWorks funds. An award ceremony was held on November 4 and four out of the five communities who applied from our region received funding. Those communities funded were: Newburyport - roadway improvements to support the new 40R District; Amesbury - roadway improvements to support a new housing development in their 40R District; Methuen - roadway improvements to support new industrial development; and Haverhill - Merrimack Street improvements to support Harbor Place and other redevelopment efforts downtown. Merrimac applied but they were not awarded funds.

**CITIZEN PLANNER TRAINING COLLABORATIVE, 2015** - On October 26 MVPC hosted a CPTC workshop titled - "**Site Plan Review**". This course was well attended and served to explain the difference between site plan approval and special permits; the review process; the types of conditions a board may impose; reasons for disapproval; the appeal process and the types of information a town can require to be shown on a site plan. The course instructor was Attorney Pam Brown.

**"The Next Chapter of 40B - Targeted Training for Board Members"**. On November 16 MVPC hosted this workshop - 40B Issues discussed included: reviewing the initial application for compliance with 40B eligibility and submission requirements; noticing and conducting the required public hearing; scheduling a site visit; retaining Peer Review consultants; securing sufficient project information to make an informed decision; holding deliberation sessions; drafting and issuing the Comprehensive Permit decision; and managing the Comprehensive Permit. The instructors were Attorney Paul Haverty of Blatman, Bobrowski, Mead & Talerman and Phil DeMartino from DHCD.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY MEANS BUSINESS** - We are now working with CoStar Group, commercial real estate information and marketing company and Heidi is busy updating our MVMB website with their property listings for our region. We are also updating the "community profiles" and other aspects of the website. We also continue to seek funds to market the new MVMB website.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT** - Heidi continues to develop an "economic development toolkit" on the MVPC website. The goal is for it to be a resource for not only our member communities, but hopefully for municipalities throughout the commonwealth to utilize. Instead of having to wade through and research numerous state agencies, the goal is to find everything at the MVPC.org website. Heidi is not simply linking to other sites, but will have examples of approved applications and grants or regulations on our website. We urge the Commissioners to visit the website and offer comments and suggestions.

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)**- The annual CEDS update document was approved by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The update

highlights initiatives from the past year to support the Commission-approved five year 2013 CEDS. Major initiatives we are implementing include the industry cluster analysis, Valley Support Team, regional Brownfields assistance, Merrimack Valley Means Business website upgrade and marketing, economic development toolkit, and analysis of the Census data from the latest American Community Survey.

In addition, a CEDS committee meeting/workshop is scheduled for December 3, 2015 at NECC. Topics to be discussed include: MVMB website, workforce training for business clusters, Merrimack valley support team, and hazard mitigation plan update.

#### **MEETINGS -**

- 10/16 - Rising with the Tides conference
- 10/20 - Town of Groveland Permit Guide
- 10/20 - Merrimac - HPP
- 10/22 - Regional Planning Directors meeting
- 10/26 CTPC - Site Plan Review
- 11/4 - MassWorks Award Ceremony, Newburyport
- 11/9 - Merrimac - Coastal Metals cleanup meeting
- 11/10 - Merrimac - HPP public forum
- 11/12 - College of the Holy Cross - CCC Conference
- 11/16 CTPC - 40B Workshop

#### **10. Environmental Program Update**

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on activities since the last meeting.

Massachusetts Bays Program/Great Marsh Partnership:

##### *Invasive Species Management*

- Over one hundred individual stands of Phragmites were treated by backpack treatment in the Newbury, Rowley and Ipswich marshes this Fall. In addition, approximately 90 acres of "new" Phragmites were treated using boat application and marsh master by our contractor.
- Green crab trapping/monitoring in Plum Island Sound and Essex Bay occurred in October. Numbers are back up near last year's levels after having been well below 2014 in spring and summer samplings

##### *Habitat Restoration*

- The final two sets for 2015 Eelgrass Transplanting occurred during September and October, establishing 1.5 acres of eelgrass in the Essex River. In addition a biodiversity assessment of the eelgrass bed is being done in conjunction with the National Park Service
- Data collection for the marsh edge erosion assessment continued in the both the Great Marsh and marshes of Salem Sound. Eleven new sites were added to the network in the Towns of Rowley, Newbury, and Salisbury. This included wave assessments, GPS plotting, green crab impacts, edge measurements, and peat core logs.
- Thin-Layer sediment Deposition experiments were designed and the first stages are being implemented on the marsh at two locations in advance of winter conditions to determine how plots will fare. In addition to control plots, sets of different sediment grain sizes, thicknesses, and vegetation types will be assessed.
- Meeting of the Great Marsh Revitalization Task Force held Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> featured annual updates to project stakeholders. 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Seal Level Rise Symposium held Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> in Essex--- About 125 attended the daylong planning exercise and presentation on climate change and resiliency planning.

### *Coastal Resilience Planning*

- Workshop on Community Vulnerability Assessment scheduled Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> at Salisbury Public Library providing public update on work of task forces headed up by Ipswich River Watershed Association & National Wildlife Federation.

### Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative:

- Next meeting of the Collaborative is Wed. Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>. On agenda is action plan in preparation of MS4 permit issuance. We have received word that EPA will be issuing final permit by January 2016 with effective date no sooner than July 2016. Communities will have 90 days from permit's effective date to file Notices of Intent and one year to update their municipal stormwater program management plans.
- MVPC is partnering with Groundworks Lawrence and Merrimack River Watershed Council in submission of funding for "Stormwater Stewardship Solutions for Lawrence and the Merrimack Valley" through the EPA Urban Waters Small Grants Program. Total funding requested is \$60,000 of which \$10,000 would go to training, education outreach and water quality testing equipment for the Collaborative.

### Merrimack Valley Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan:

- Plan update was submitted to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency this week. This document includes edits and response to MEMA and FEMA comments received over the summer on plan update draft. Once MEMA and FEMA complete their reviews, FEMA will issue an Approval Pending Adoption notice to participating communities giving clearance for local adoption. The Plan update is an eligibility requirement for municipalities seeking FEMA funding for competitive Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs.

### Brownfields Programs:

- EPA last month released request for funding applications Brownfields Programs. MVPC will be submitting applications to recapitalize the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund as well as seeking grant funding for the Brownfields Assessment Program. Applications are due to EPA by 12/18/2015. MVPC will also be supporting regional cleanup initiatives including Brownfield Cleanup Grant funding for the Coastal Metals site in Merrimac.

## **11. Transportation Report Update**

MVPC's Transportation Program Manager, Tony Komornick, reported on the following transportation activities.

### **Merrimack Valley MPO**

The **City of Amesbury** has provided the information requested by MassDOT in response to its request to delay the advertising of the **Amesbury Riverwalk Project** from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 to FFY 2017. Once we are notified that MassDOT has reviewed and approved this information, a MVMPO meeting will be scheduled where action will be taken to release an amendment to the FFYs 2016-2019 TIP for Public Review and Comment.

MassDOT has notified the MVMPO that it is willing to consider including passage under Route 110 as part of the **Salisbury Rail Trail – Phase II Project**. A meeting to discuss this issue in more detail has been scheduled for November 24<sup>th</sup>.

MVPC's Program Manager Tony Komornick and MVPC's Sr. Transportation Planner Betsy Goodrich attended the October 27<sup>th</sup> '**Community Capital Conversations**' listening session that was held in Lowell as part of the public outreach effort in developing its **FFYs 2017-2021 Capital Investment Plan**.

## Studies

MVPC's Transportation Engineer Jim Terlizzi completed his analysis of crash reports from the Lawrence Police Department and prepared a **draft Road Safety Audit report for the intersection of Route 28 (Broadway) and Route 110 (Haverhill Street)**. At the suggestion of MassDOT, the RSA for this location was expanded to include the adjacent Broadway/Tremont Street intersection. Jim subsequently prepared an analysis of the crash data of this intersection as well. MassDOT will be conducting this RSA.

Ms. Goodrich continued to work on updating the **MVRTA Strategic Plan** and is working with the MVRTA to update its **System Map** to reflect recent fixed bus route changes.

Staff is also assisting the MVRTA in updating its **Title VI Program**, preparing its **FY 2015 ADA Transportation Review**, and preparing materials that the Authority must submit to FTA as part of its upcoming **Triennial Review**.

## Other

Staff continued to provide traffic and transit data to the consultant working with MassDevelopment and the City of Haverhill in creating its **Merrimack Street Transformative District**.

Ms. Goodrich attended the first public meeting for the development of **Lawrence TBD**, an urban renewal plan for the downtown area, which took place on November 18th.

Mr. Komornick attended the November 16<sup>th</sup> 25% Design Hearing for the replacement of the I-495 Bridges over the Merrimack River between Exit 48 and Exit 49 in Haverhill.

MVPC's Sr. Transportation Planner Todd Fontanella attended the November 18<sup>th</sup> 25% Design Hearing for the Main Street Corridor Reconstruction Project.

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager Joe Cosgrove, Ms. Goodrich and Mr. Komornick have been working with Haverhill City officials and MassDOT in resolving issues related to the presence of contaminated soils in the former B&MRR Right of Way where the **Bradford Rail Trail** project will soon begin construction.

Mr. Komornick, Ms. Goodrich, Mr. Fontanella and Mr. Cosgrove attended the MassDOT **Title VI Workshop** that was held in Lawrence on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Komornick is continuing to work with the MVRTA and Newburyport officials in investigating the feasibility of using available MPO Target funds to construct roadway improvements identified in the preliminary design for the **Newburyport Intermodal Parking Facility** that will be located at the corner of Merrimac and Titcomb streets.

Mr. Komornick and Ms. Goodrich attended the **Coastal Trails Coalition Celebration** that was held in Newburyport on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Komornick met with the City of Lawrence Community Development Director, Theresa Park, City DPW Director John Isensee and Mikel Myers of TEC on October 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss how the City could develop a TIP project to **replace aging signal equipment at several intersections**. This project would make use of available MVMPO FFY 2016 Target Funding. Additional proposals for the use of these funds have come from the Town of North Andover, City of Haverhill, and Town of Merrimac.

Mr. Fontanella participated in the "Gray Matters" program featuring a talk about **transportation in and around Amesbury**. The program appeared on the Amesbury Public Access channel and is now posted on the Amesbury Council on Aging website.

Ms. Goodrich and Mr. Cosgrove attended the November 4<sup>th</sup> **Moving Together Conference** that was held in Boston.

## Technical Assistance

Mr. Terlizzi and Mr. Komornick met with Haverhill DPW Director Mike Stankovich and a staff member from the City Engineering Department to support their efforts for developing a methodology for **prioritizing sidewalk improvement projects** in the City. Much of the data that will be used in this

analysis was collected by MVPC staff through the recently completed Haverhill Asset Management contract.

MVPC's Field Services Specialist Danny Ovalle and Mr. Terlizzi collected traffic data (i.e. volumes, vehicle speeds, vehicle classification, and peak period vehicle turning movements) on Route 114 near Harold Parker Road as part of an effort to provide a safe pedestrian crossing of the roadway for users of the **Bay Circuit Trail**.

Staff has completed a draft report containing MVPC findings and recommendations of the Town of Georgetown's proposal for instituting **Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusions** along roadways in the Searle Street area.

Mr. Komornick and MVPC's GIS Program Manager Jerrard Whitten have finalized the scope of services that will allow MVPC to provide mapping services and complete the Transportation Element of the **NewburyMaster Plan** that is now in development.

Ms. Goodrich and Lance Powell, Traffic and Safety Officer for the Haverhill Police Department, made a presentation to the Health Partnership at the YWCA in Haverhill on **the Haverhill Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program**.

Ms. Goodrich attended the **Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force, Healthy Active Living Working Group** meeting that was held on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### Upcoming Meetings

- Regional Health Directors Meeting at MVPC (November 20<sup>th</sup>);
- Site Visit for Salisbury Rail Trail – Phase II Project (November 24<sup>th</sup>);
- MVMPO Meeting (mid December - TBD)

## **12. Local and Regional Issues**

Mr. Komornick reported that the Whittier Bridge is open to northbound traffic. Southbound is expected to be ready in December.

## **13. Other – None**

## **14. Adjourn**

**There was a motion and a second to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.**

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on November 19, 2015.

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Ed Ramsdell, Secretary