



Region Matters

mvpc.org

Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
plan • develop • promote

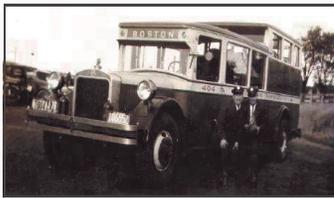


SPRING

Highlights: *Mayors and Managers Receive Regionalization Funds* *Communities to Save Money on Energy Bills* *Transportation TIP & UPWP Updates*

MVPC/EOHED Showcase Region to Developers

MVPC and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development teamed together to present multi-family housing development opportunities to many of the most prominent Boston area development and real estate investment companies.



The April 2nd bus tour departed downtown Boston with forty representatives from companies such as Cabot, Cabot and Forbes, RCG LLC, The Gatehouse Group and John M Corcoran & Co. to look at housing development opportunities in Andover, North Andover, Lawrence, and Haverhill. The tour was arranged in response to the Governors recent challenge

to the Commonwealths' cities and towns to build state-wide 10,000 multi-family housing units a year.

To help accomplish this goal, EOHED, working with Regional Planning Agencies, is identifying "Priority Development Areas" (PDA's) and incorporating these areas into a statewide master plan called "Planning Ahead for Growth." PDA's are areas that communities have earmarked for development areas where the necessary zoning and infrastructure is already in place to allow development and redevelopment to occur in an orderly and respectable manner. The sites visited on the bus tour are all PDA's that have been identified jointly by MVPC and EOHED.

*Written by: Mike Parquette,
MVPC Comprehensive Program Manager*

June 20th is Regional Planning Day Here in the Valley

A regional approach to sharing municipal service is the theme for this year's Regional Planning Day. This annually MVPC sponsors event will take place Thursday, June 20th this year and will be held at the Tech Center at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill. This morning event will help municipal officials, businesses and citizens better understand how regionalization efforts can be initiated and how initiatives can be implemented, managed and sustained. The day will start with a panel discussion from the Mayors and Managers in the region about their experiences as part of the Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition and their thoughts about what should be regionalized and the benefits.

The agenda will also include a discussion about the recently developed and published Massachusetts Shared Services Manual – "A toolkit of Regionalization Best Practices for City and Town Officials" and the complementary website "Regionalization - A Guide to Sharing Municipal Services in Massachusetts" regionalbestpractices.org. Attendees will also receive a copy of the toolkit guide. There will also be a session on regionalization case studies currently occurring in the Merrimack Valley. For more information or to register for the day please contact Nancy Lavalley at MVPC 978-374-0519 or register online at mvpc.org.

Mayors and Managers Receive Regionalization Funds

Applying under the banner of the Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC) the Mayors and Managers in the region have been awarded an \$80,000 Commonwealth Community Innovation Challenge Grant (CICG) to develop a regional 311 call-in-center and improve DPW service delivery. The grant will help pay for a computerized work order management system that would give citizens direct access by dialing 311 as well as via the Web to obtain information and request DPW services. The software will also improve certain DPW administrative functions such as workload management and strategic asset management. The Essex County Sheriff Frank Cousins is working with the Coalition to determine the feasibility of providing the 311 call-in-center in conjunction with the Regional Emergency Communications opening this year.

“Municipalities in the region will realize immediate benefits from the call-in-center and this software tool” stated Mayor Fiorentini from Haverhill. “We will gain improved internal and external customer communication by using this tool to receive, organize, prioritize and track work orders while monitor-

ing service delivery costs.” He also recognized the help of Representative Brian Dempsey, Chairman of the House committee on ways and means for securing this grant for the Coalition.

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) provides administrative support for the Coalition and will implement the grant on their behalf. “This gives the region an opportunity to use Technology as a platform to promote regional cooperation and coordination” added Mayor Kezer from Amesbury.



The Coalition has been successful since its inception in finding regional solutions to common challenges communities face. Any questions regarding the grant or this release can be addressed to Dennis DiZoglio ddizoglio@mvpc.org or call 978-374-0519.

*written by: Dennis DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director*

Communities to Save Money on Energy Bills



With the passage of the Green Communities Act in 2008, Massachusetts adopted a new net metering policy that made all municipalities with access to wind or solar PV eligible for net metering credits. Communities can purchase these credits and offset their monthly energy bill from the local utility. The use of this program was recommended in the Merrimack Valley Clean Energy Action Plan adopted by the Commission in 2012. Under the guidance of the Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition

and using the Regional Renewable Energy Manager hired by MVPC a regional Request for Proposals (RFP) from solar developers was issued in March of this year. Four communities: Amesbury, Haverhill, North Andover and Newburyport are negotiating with a preferred solar developer to buy 15M KWH of electricity. Preliminary estimates are that the four communities will save over \$600,000 in the first year alone.

“This collective RFP gave the City of Amesbury an opportunity to save on its utility costs over the next 20 years.” said Mayor Kezer. “In today’s economy communities need to identify good business practices to save taxpayer monies and this effort is a prime example”. For more information and how your community can participate please contact Dennis DiZoglio ddizoglio@mvpc.org or call 978-374-0519.

*written by: Dennis DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director*

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

The Merrimack Valley MPO met at the MVPC offices on April 17 and a series of amendments to the region's FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) were released for public review and comment. One calls for the reprogramming of federal transportation funds in federal fiscal years 2013, 2014 and 2015 that will provide more money for the Merrimack Square Reconstruction project and the Methuen Interchange Reconstruction project. In addition, a project has been proposed to be added to the FFY 2013 element of the TIP to fund the design of pedestrian improvements along Union Street in Lawrence between Essex Street and the Duck Bridge. Two new transit projects were proposed for FY 2013; one is for the purchase of two new over the road coaches that will be used on the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority's (MVRTA) Boston Commuter Service while the second will fund various improve-

ments to the MVRTA's Maintenance and Operations facility in Bradford.

The public review and comment period for these proposed amendments will end on May 22. Public Hearings on these proposed changes will be held at the MVPC Offices on May 15 with the first taking place at 1:00 pm. and the second at 6:00 pm. Copies of proposed amendments to the TIP are available for viewing at local libraries and on the MVPC website www.mvpc.org. Comments may be submitted to Anthony Komornick AKomornick@mvpc.org or call 978-372-0519.

*written by: Anthony Komornick
MVPC Transportation Program Manager*

FFY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and FFY 2014 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

In addition to amending the region's FFY 2013-2016 TIP, the Merrimack Valley MPO is in the process of preparing the Draft FFY 2014-2017 TIP and the Draft FFY 2014 UPWP.

The UPWP identifies transportation planning activities that will be carried out by the MPO in the upcoming federal fiscal year. These include the undertaking of important traffic and safety studies, provision of services to support the transportation planning process in the region including the preparation of federally-mandated MPO documents, and offering technical assistance to member communities to address their transportation issues/concerns.

The TIP contains a listing of the key roadway, bridge and transit projects and programs that will be undertaken in the region over the next four federal fiscal years. Any project or program that is to

be implemented using federal transportation funds must first appear in the TIP.

It is anticipated that the Merrimack Valley MPO will release the draft versions of both the TIP and the UPWP for public review and comment later in May and take action on these documents in late June/early July. Persons interested in learning more about the FFY 2014-2017 TIP or the FFY 2014 UPWP or who want to suggest projects or studies that might be included in these documents can contact Anthony Komornick AKomornick@mvpc.org or call 978-374-0519.



*written by: Anthony Komornick
MVPC Transportation Program Manager*



MVPC Upcoming Events

Notice of Public Hearings/Availability or Review and Comment

Date: Wednesday, May 15
Time: 1:00pm and 6:00pm
Location: MVPC Offices, 160 Main Street, Haverhill
Contact: Tony Komornick AKomonick@mvpc.org

Gillis Bridge/Salisbury Rail Trail Ribbon Cutting

Date: Friday, May 17
Time: 2:00pm

Bikeable Communities Training

Date: Thursday, May 30
Time: 9:00am—noon
Location: North Andover
Town Hall, 120 Main Street, North Andover
To Register [Click Here](#) or www.mvpc.org
Contact: Betsy Goodrich egoodrich@mvpc.org

MVPC's Annual Regional Planning Day

Date: Thursday, June 20
Time: 8:00am — 8:30am Registration
8:30am — noon Program
Location: Northern Essex Community College
100 Elliott Street, Haverhill
Technology Center, Rooms A-B

Cost: *FREE* Continental Breakfast will be served

To Register [Click Here](#) or www.mvpc.org
Contact: Nancy Lavallee nlavallee@mvpc.org

MVPC Monthly Meetings

Third Thursday of the Month at the MVPC offices —7pm

Check our website for details on upcoming events and the
MVPC 2012 Annual Report. www.mvpc.org

 www.facebook.com/mvpc.org



Photographers get Snapping!

2013 Essex National Heritage Area Annual Photo Contest

All photographers are welcome to submit images to the Essex National Heritage Area Photo Contest that capture the essence of the Essex National Heritage Area (ENHA) or speak to Essex Heritage's role in preserving the historic, cultural and natural treasures of Essex County! Photographs must be taken within the ENHA and represent one of the three Contest Categories. Read the complete Rules & Requirements then send in an entry form to win!

Deadline for submission: October 1, 2013

Check out the contest categories (and prizes!) and read the complete rules & requirements at the Essex Heritage website: www.essexheritage.org



Obituary—Luther McIlwain

Luther was Chairman for the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission in Haverhill for 3 years and Vice Chairman for 4 years. Luther was a fine chairman to work with and really attentive to all activities of the commission and made sure things ran smoothly at the commission meetings and attended other functions on behalf of the region and his community. He was a strong supporter and advocate of local and regional community issues. He was selfless in his time and energies in counseling individuals and addressing various issues. Luther was well known in his role as a Tuskegee Airman and throughout the state of Massachusetts for his services and many causes. He is definitely Mr. Merrimack Valley and will be surely missed.