



Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission



Merrimack Valley

Comprehensive

Economic

Development

Strategy

2010 Performance Report
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Introduction

The 2010 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Performance Report provides an update on economic development conditions, studies, and initiatives that have occurred in the region since the release of the 2008 Merrimack Valley CEDS and 2009 CEDS Performance Report. The 2008 CEDS was a complete update, featuring a new set of goals, objectives, and action plan for the region.

The CEDS is funded primarily through a planning grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), which is the principal economic development agency of the federal government. According to the March 2010 *EDA Update* newsletter, EDA investment priorities emphasize advancing global competitiveness; creating jobs; leverage public and private resources; can demonstrate readiness and ability to use funds quickly and effectively; and link to specific and measureable outcomes. To facilitate evaluation EDA has established the following investment priorities:

Collaborative Regional Innovation

Initiatives that support the development and growth of innovation clusters based on existing regional competitive strengths. Initiatives must engage stakeholders; facilitate collaboration among urban, suburban and rural areas; provide stability for economic development through long-term intergovernmental and public/private collaboration; and, support the growth of existing and emerging industries.

Public/Private Partnerships

Investments that use both public and private sector resources and leverage complementary investments by other government/public entities and/or non-profits.

National Strategic Priorities

Initiatives that encourage job growth and business expansion in clean energy; green technologies; sustainable manufacturing; information technology (e.g., broadband, smart grid) infrastructure; communities severely impacted by automotive industry restructuring; natural disaster mitigation and resiliency; access to capital for small and medium sized and ethnically diverse enterprises; and, innovations in science, health care and alternative fuel technologies.

Global Competitiveness

Investments that support high-growth businesses and innovation-based entrepreneurs to expand and compete in global markets.

Environmentally-Sustainable Development

Investments that encompass best practices in “environmentally sustainable development,” broadly defined, to include projects that enhance environmental quality and develop and implement green products, processes, and buildings as part of the green economy.

Economically Distressed and Underserved Communities

Investments that strengthen diverse communities that have suffered disproportionate economic and job losses and/or are rebuilding to become more competitive in the global economy.

Using EDA's investment priorities as a guide, The Merrimack Valley CEDS lays out an ambitious agenda for action centered around:

- **infrastructure development and enhanced marketing of priority economic growth centers;**
- **promoting energy efficiency and innovative green development;**
- **strengthening the connection between workforce development and emerging industry needs.**

These focus areas have been tackled by CEDS Committee participants through a number of exciting initiatives. The ***CEDS Implementation*** section beginning on page 13 breaks them down into four parts: infrastructure; green initiatives; marketing; and entrepreneurship support.

Infrastructure

Describes projects that are seeking public works assistance, including priority EDA public works projects.

Green Initiatives

Includes brownfields assistance, regional energy planning, and energy savings coordination.

Marketing

The expansion of the region's award-winning website, *Merrimack Valley Means Business*.

Entrepreneurship Support

MVPC is working with area organizations to help fill the gaps in small business development support.

With the country struggling to emerge from a deep recession and facing serious long-term structural challenges, the need for a strong regional CEDS that promotes the efficient coordination of development is greater than ever. The region has taken great strides to address these challenges over the past three years and will continue to work hard to build on a solid foundation that has formed through the region's CEDS.

Existing Regional Conditions

The following table provides May 2010 labor market information by community (the most recent available as of this writing) and compares it with the previous two years. A general pattern for the region can be seen, with unemployment surging between May 2008 and 2009, followed by a continued uptick over the past year, despite officially being out of recession. This is consistent with national trends. Unemployment in the region has reached levels not seen since the recession of the early 1990s. Lawrence, in particular, has been especially devastated, with unemployment settling above 17% for the past year. While Lawrence's situation is especially fierce, the harsh labor climate has affected every community, even reaching 8.0% unemployment early this year in the Town of Boxford, the wealthiest community in the Valley and one of the wealthiest in the Commonwealth.

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate
Amesbury				
May-10	8,803	8,021	782	8.9
May-09	8,694	8,031	663	7.6
May-08	8,620	8,259	361	4.2
Andover				
May-10	16,834	15,680	1,154	6.9
May-09	16,858	15,736	1,122	6.7
May-08	16,845	16,196	649	3.9

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate
Boxford				
May-10	4,150	3,855	295	7.1
May-09	4,117	3,869	248	6.0
May-08	4,134	3,982	152	3.7
Georgetown				
May-10	4,518	4,192	326	7.2
May-09	4,491	4,197	294	6.5
May-08	4,474	4,317	157	3.5
Groveland				
May-10	3,787	3,515	272	7.2
May-09	3,765	3,520	245	6.5
May-08	3,755	3,620	135	3.6
Haverhill				
May-10	31,774	28,625	3,149	9.9
May-09	31,485	28,658	2,827	9.0
May-08	31,017	29,474	1,543	5.0
Lawrence				
May-10	30,644	25,293	5,351	17.5
May-09	30,205	25,325	4,880	16.2
May-08	28,868	26,225	2,643	9.2
Merrimac				
May-10	3,633	3,298	335	9.2
May-09	3,568	3,302	266	7.5
May-08	3,533	3,396	137	3.9
Methuen				
May-10	23,751	21,142	2,609	11.0
May-09	23,471	21,169	2,302	9.8
May-08	23,194	21,921	1,273	5.5
Newbury				
May-10	3,844	3,545	299	7.8
May-09	3,830	3,558	272	7.1
May-08	3,822	3,662	160	4.2

	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate
Newburyport				
May-10	9,988	9,227	761	7.6
May-09	9,903	9,259	644	6.5
May-08	9,906	9,531	375	3.8
N. Andover				
May-10	13,612	12,466	1,146	8.4
May-09	13,521	12,481	1,040	7.7
May-08	13,361	12,836	525	3.9
Rowley				
May-10	3,319	3,064	255	7.7
May-09	3,333	3,075	258	7.7
May-08	3,302	3,165	137	4.1
Salisbury				
May-10	4,558	4,057	501	11.0
May-09	4,420	4,061	359	8.1
May-08	4,403	4,177	226	5.1
W. Newbury				
May-10	2,254	2,103	151	6.7
May-09	2,245	2,105	140	6.2
May-08	2,233	2,165	68	3.0
Region				
May-10	165,469	148,083	17,386	10.5
May-09	163,906	148,346	15,560	9.5
May-08	161,467	152,926	8,541	5.3
State				
May-10	3,486,400	3,165,900	320,400	9.2
May-09	3,475,000	3,189,000	286,100	8.2
May-08	3,459,400	3,291,100	168,300	4.9

Employment and Wages (ES-202) Data:

Merrimack Valley 2009Q3 (most recent available)

Description	No. of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Total, All Industries	8,832	126,654	\$924
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &	25	181	\$395
23 - Construction	828	5,509	\$1,081
31-33 - Manufacturing	484	24,196	\$1,252
DUR - Durable Goods Manufacturing	307	16,332	\$1,418
NONDUR - Non-Durable Goods Manuf.	177	7,864	\$909
22 - Utilities	19	484	\$1,532
42 - Wholesale Trade	496	3,949	\$1,277
44-45 - Retail Trade	853	11,371	\$479
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	173	1,946	\$786
51 - Information	150	2,908	\$1,313
52 - Finance and Insurance	366	3,429	\$1,135
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	264	1,181	\$836
54 - Professional and Technical Services	1,018	9,055	\$1,507
55 - Management of Comp./Enterprises	45	2,336	\$1,623
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	488	7,080	\$674
61 - Educational Services	130	9,515	\$855
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	833	20,515	\$821
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	155	2,537	\$336
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	653	9,341	\$333
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	1,709	5,444	\$429
92 - Public Administration	141	5,672	\$1,020

Employment and Wages (ES-202) Data:

Merrimack Valley 2008Q3

Description	No. of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Total, All Industries	8,763	130,885	\$912
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	23	157	\$384
23 - Construction	860	6,588	\$1,064
31-33 - Manufacturing	493	25,532	\$1,245
DUR - Durable Goods Manufacturing	311	17,254	\$1,398
NONDUR - Non-Durable Goods Manuf.	182	8,278	\$928
22 - Utilities	18	495	\$1,540
42 - Wholesale Trade	506	4,299	\$1,250
44-45 - Retail Trade	878	11,619	\$473
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	168	2,002	\$808
51 - Information	154	3,444	\$1,289
52 - Finance and Insurance	378	3,479	\$1,086
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	268	1,323	\$747
54 - Professional and Technical Services	1,021	9,528	\$1,495
55 - Management of Comp./Enterprises	42	1,970	\$1,569
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	498	8,022	\$679
61 - Educational Services	136	9,511	\$845
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	834	19,926	\$799
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	157	2,635	\$343
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	630	9,389	\$323
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	1,556	5,207	\$437
92 - Public Administration	141	5,755	\$891

Employment and Wages (ES-202) Data:

Merrimack Valley 2001Q3

Description	No. of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
Total, All Industries	7,765	135,907	\$764
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	34	263	\$340
21 - Mining	3	13	\$603
23 - Construction	773	6,427	\$910
31-33 - Manufacturing	595	33,895	\$987
DUR - Durable Goods Manufacturing	372	24,406	\$1,082
NONDUR - Non-Durable Goods Manuf.	223	9,489	\$742
22 - Utilities	16	529	\$1,108
42 - Wholesale Trade	498	5,473	\$1,175
44-45 - Retail Trade	872	11,839	\$443
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	174	2,324	\$730
51 - Information	175	5,092	\$1,095
52 - Finance and Insurance	334	2,962	\$838
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	234	1,274	\$580
54 - Professional and Technical Services	965	7,477	\$1,238
55 - Management of Comp./Enterprises	37	3,043	\$838
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	451	8,421	\$503
61 - Educational Services	101	7,915	\$674
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	752	17,734	\$621
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	131	2,141	\$319
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	575	8,662	\$276
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	919	4,121	\$413
92 - Public Administration	126	6,301	\$721

The national housing downturn has been felt in the Valley as well, with declining prices and sales. Unlike the region's labor market though, trends are not quite as uniform in the housing market, although this not overly surprising, given the relatively small number of sales in the area. While the majority of communities have experienced a decline in housing prices and sales, some have been much more dramatic than others. In one instance, housing prices have surprisingly increased, as North Andover saw a rise in both single-family and condo prices from 2007 to 2008, though the total number of sales for both declined.

2007-2008 Regional Housing Prices and Sales

	Median Sales Price			Number of Sales		
	1-Family	Condo	All Sales	1-Family	Condo	All Sales
Amesbury						
2008	265,250	200,000	245,000	90	79	204
2007	358,000	225,000	291,500	127	131	322
Andover						
2008	525,000	225,000	484,900	266	72	367
2007	565,500	271,200	500,000	324	126	487
Boxford						
2008	544,450	0	534,400	76	1	88
2007	607,450	0	607,450	94	2	100
Georgetown						
2008	368,750	470,000	375,000	64	4	86
2007	415,000	435,865	422,500	79	19	104
Groveland						
2008	325,000	275,000	312,450	44	9	58
2007	358,300	268,000	357,650	55	20	94
Haverhill						
2008	260,950	178,000	220,000	324	240	772
2007	299,850	219,450	267,000	322	356	888

	Median Sales Price			Number of Sales		
	1-Family	Condo	All Sales	1-Family	Condo	All Sales
Lawrence						
2008	164,950	90,000	154,500	198	81	818
2007	218,500	150,000	234,950	167	95	546
Merrimac						
2008	375,000	275,400	291,450	25	20	57
2007	376,500	244,625	310,000	34	20	58
Methuen						
2008	255,000	185,000	248,300	307	108	557
2007	287,000	210,000	274,879	339	159	614
Newbury						
2008	430,000	713,978	430,000	66	11	90
2007	462,500	752,523	465,000	66	9	97
Newburyport						
2008	450,000	310,000	370,000	155	129	327
2007	465,000	310,000	380,000	171	171	379
N. Andover						
2008	502,750	208,000	375,000	186	145	367
2007	476,200	185,000	345,000	240	191	490
Rowley						
2008	440,000	203,152	350,000	45	15	73
2007	479,500	221,000	413,500	52	16	82
Salisbury						
2008	290,000	279,900	275,000	41	64	153
2007	310,000	299,000	295,000	50	87	198
W. Newbury						
2008	422,000	589,157	529,900	40	8	55
2007	515,000	0	496,250	46	0	54

Data Source: The Warren Group

Another side effect of the housing downturn has been a spike in foreclosures rates. Foreclosures have been especially problematic in the Merrimack Valley, as compared to the rest of the state, specifically in our larger communities.

Foreclosure figures obtained via The Merrimack Valley Housing Report: http://www.uml.edu/community/MV_Housing/

Lawrence's situation is critical, with the total number of foreclosures in 2008 jumping to 457 from an already elevated 2007 total of 262. Haverhill has been strongly impacted as well, reaching a total number of foreclosures of 201 in 2008, up from 147 in 2007. Methuen is the third hardest hit community in our region, with 97 foreclosures in 2008, up from 52 in 2007.



For additional regional information, including detailed statistics regarding population, industry, land use, and transportation, please refer to the 2008 CEDS.

Recent Economic Development Reports

U.S. Economic Development Administration, Know Your Region Webinar Series: Regional Economic Development Strategies for the 21st Century, April 2010

Trainer Brian Kelsey of the Capital Area Council of Governments outlined a series of ideas and suggestions for regional planners and economic development practitioners. It was an important seminar that highlighted opportunities for economic development district organizations to provide greater leadership.

EDD Regional Strategies:

- Partnerships—bridging federal, state, and local ED efforts
- Information—becoming an indispensable resource
- Capacity—building regional innovation clusters

Webinar Slides:

<http://blog.knowyourregion.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/kyrapril30.pdf>

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA): 2008 National Summit on American Competitiveness: Summit Synopsis, December 2008

EDA is the principal economic development agency of the federal government. Its mission is "to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy."

Report Summary:

This report highlights some of the key ideas and best practices revealed during panel discussions involving key business, government, and academic leaders from across the country at an event in Chicago, Illinois. The summit tackled themes such as maintaining America's global leadership in the 21st century and public policies needed to help the private sector to be more dynamic, efficient, and competitive.

"We can't be afraid or fearful. We have to be open to competition rather than close ourselves off from it...We really have to confront competitiveness strategically."

— Michael Porter, Professor, Harvard Business School

Report Access:

http://www.eda.gov/PDF/SummitSynopsis_LO_RES.pdf

The Pioneer Institute: Playing the Lottery: The Impact of Interstate Relocation on Massachusetts Jobs, June 2010

The Pioneer Institute, a leading Massachusetts public policy research organization, produces a steady stream of reports aiming to stimulate dialogue on important challenges facing the Massachusetts economy. MVPC staff regularly attend Pioneer Institute forums in order to better understand the problems and challenges facing not only the Merrimack Valley economy, but that of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a whole.

Report Summary:

(from the Pioneer Institute website: www.pioneerinstitute.org)

“Enticing companies to move to Massachusetts and providing special deals to keep companies from moving out of state has been a staple of economic development at the municipal and state levels. These efforts, however, are similar to playing the lottery: we all hear about people who win big prizes; but the odds of doing so are very long, and other than the occasional winner, everybody else loses. This study analyzes the relocation of establishments into and out of Massachusetts for the eighteen-year period before the current recession (1990-2007).”

Report Access:

http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/100616_playing_the_lottery.pdf

MassINC: Going for Growth: Promoting Residential Investment in Massachusetts Gateway Cities, November 2009

MassINC is a public policy research organization that brings together diverse perspectives to “focus on the challenge of achieving the American Dream in Massachusetts.” MVPC staff regularly attend MassINC forums.

Report Summary:

(from the MassINC website: www.massinc.org)

Following up on MassINC’s 2008 report [Going for Growth: Promoting Business Investment in Massachusetts Gateway Cities](#), “this paper examines state housing spending over the last 15 years and finds that programs designed primarily to increase affordability in strong markets have not been able to meet the needs of Gateway Cities, where the challenge is lack of demand, not lack of supply.”

“This policy brief argues that Massachusetts needs new approaches to promote residential reinvestment in Gateway Cities by describing in more detail the unique challenges of weak housing markets and the need to address them; building a framework for a comprehensive weak market housing strategy; outlining the state’s current housing resources, and their utilization in weak markets over the last 15 years; and concluding finally with an action plan for a new comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy.”

Report Access:

http://www.massinc.org/~media/Files/Mass%20Inc/Research/Full%20Report%20PDF%20files/housing_policy_brief.ashx

**Lowell Center for Sustainable Production: Clean Tech:
An Agenda for a Healthy Economy, December 2007**

Established at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in 1995, the Lowell Center develops practical solutions to environmental and health problems, helping to advance changes that lead to a safer, more secure, and sustainable planet.

Report Summary:

(from the Center's website: www.sustainableproduction.org)

"The purpose of the Clean Tech project is to identify specific opportunities and benefits of making Massachusetts a leader in a range of clean technologies in order to create an identity for the state that makes it an international magnet for the innovation and adoption of technologies that minimize harms and help restore our health and environment."

"Massachusetts can be a leader in the global shift to a clean tech economy," an emerging marketplace full of potential. In fact, Germany has "developed a plan to reorient its economy and economic competitiveness towards clean technologies." "No U.S. state to date has developed a similar plan. But Massachusetts has the ability to be the first in the nation, based on findings from this report, which identify five areas where the state has significant strengths and leadership potential."

Safer Alternatives

The design of products and processes that use or create less toxic substances

Green Buildings

Products/services that reduce the health/environmental impacts of constructing, renovating, and operating building structures.

Emerging Materials

Biobased and nanomaterials that have the potential to yield tremendous benefits through energy & materials use reduction.

Clean Energy

The use of cleaner sources and generation methods of energy production that create less pollution.

Material Reuse

Returning products and materials back into the economic mainstream through reuse, remanufacturing, and recycling.

Report Access:

[http://sustainableproduction.org/downloads/
UMLCleanTechDec2007.pdf](http://sustainableproduction.org/downloads/UMLCleanTechDec2007.pdf)

CEDS Implementation

The 2008 Merrimack Valley CEDS is an action-oriented plan developed in concert with regional leaders from a broad group of private, public, and nonprofit organizations. Since its adoption in June 2008, the CEDS Committee has tackled the Strategy's agenda by focusing on four main themes highlighted in the **Looking Forward** chapter: infrastructure; green initiatives; marketing; and entrepreneurship support.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A number of critical public works projects that will lead to the creation of high-skill jobs and private investment are being developed in the region, focused in our priority economic growth centers.

At the June 2, 2009 meeting, The Merrimack Valley CEDS Committee identified two priority projects for immediate consideration for EDA public works assistance, due to high projected levels of job creation and private investment.

Allied Health and Technology Center

Northern Essex Community College has proposed the redevelopment of the InTown Mall site in the City of Lawrence

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

The 2008 Merrimack Valley CEDS has been highlighted as a best practice and case study in a recently released National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) report called *The Role of Transportation Planning in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Process: A Nationwide Scan*, April 2009.

The report states, "the concepts of smart growth, land use, redevelopment, and brownfields are all intertwined and create a unique opportunity for successful transportation planning initiatives to come from the (Merrimack Valley) CEDS."

MVPC Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio explains that "the Commission used the needs assessment conducted in the CEDS planning process and turned it into the driving force to produce our Priority Growth Strategy report." He goes on to say that "the Priority Growth Strategy is the connection between transportation and economic development that is sometimes hard to make. Often transportation projects are hard to identify within a region's CEDS unless they are tied directly to jobs or stimulating economic development. The Priority Growth Strategy allows such projects to be identified and considered in terms of land use and smart growth. They can also be included in the CEDS, thereby making transportation a priority."

The full report can be found at RuralTransportation.org, a program affiliate of NADO and the NADO Research Foundation.
<http://www.ruraltransportation.org/uploads/cedsreport.pdf>

into a new facility for the college. 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, dilapidated structure. It is a major source of blight on the downtown area, with serious vagrancy and drug use problems in the building. In addition, the building itself poses a serious safety risk in its present condition, including documented environmental contamination.

Project officials are seeking EDA assistance for the redevelopment of the site that would allow Northern Essex Community College (NECC) to expand its Lawrence presence through the expansion of course offerings in health and technology-related fields. 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 the City, which is an environmental justice issue for a community that has over a 60% minority population. Finally, the removal of this blighted site, along with the addition of a new high-tech building and more student activity, would greatly assist the wider redevelopment efforts of the surrounding downtown neighborhood.

Union Crossing

The City of Lawrence is seeking infrastructure assistance from EDA for the Union Crossing redevelopment project. The infrastructure improvements at Union Crossing are intended to re-connect this now-isolated and desolate industrial site to the surrounding area and enable the redevelopment of the Southwick mills at 50 Island Street into a new mixed-use neighborhood, including 60 units of affordable housing for Lawrence families, a new day care center for 200 children,

and approximately 100,000 square feet of commercial space generating 200+ new permanent jobs. The proposed infrastructure project includes several components that will transform this emerging district into a walkable, green, and pedestrian-oriented community with improved access to the nearby train station, downtown, and Lawrence General Hospital.

The Merrimack Valley's EDA representative toured both of the redevelopment sites during a trip to Massachusetts in March 2009. MVPC has worked closely with EDA and the project teams for Northern Essex Community College and Union Crossing on the application process for EDA public works assistance.

Specifically, the infrastructure components of the project include the following:

- a new vehicular and pedestrian bridge over the North Canal connecting Canal Street to Island Street;
- reconstruction of the retaining wall and associated drainage sub-structure and sidewalk improvements along Island Street;
- a new entry ramp into the Union Crossing site to align with the new bridge;
- a new pedestrian walkway, accessible to the public, connecting the buildings to the adjacent streets and elevating pedestrian activity above the 100-year flood plain;
- a new half-acre green roof at street grade (over the parking area), accessible to the public, that will include

- a new playground, lawn, and community gardens;
 • and new storm water infrastructure, including Low-Impact Development BMPs to improve water quality in the Merrimack River (features include a bio-retention area, tree box filters, and associated treatment strategies).

The Union Crossing project will create over 250 new permanent full-time jobs, with a particular focus on clean technology companies. The commercial developers for the project have committed to providing low-cost incubator space for clean tech companies in order to support the growth of this industry

cluster in Lawrence and the Merrimack Valley. This industry cluster will complement the project's commitment to green building design (Building 9 is currently eligible for a Platinum rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Homes rating system).

Finally, in an effort to support the broader development of the clean energy sector and ensure that Lawrence residents are prepared for jobs in this emerging area, Lawrence CommunityWorks (with several industry and non-profit partners) is pursuing funding from the Pathways Out of Poverty/Green Jobs training grant. If awarded, these funds will allow the project partners to train and employ low-income residents in clean energy jobs, including assembly, distribution, and installation of PV systems. The industry partners involved have pledged to provide jobs for these residents on the Union Crossing job site as part of the program.



UNION CROSSING

LAWRENCE, MA

Economic Target Areas

In May, MVPC provided technical assistance for the Town of Andover's application to become a state-designated [Economic Target Area \(ETA\)](#) community. Companies located in an ETA may receive state and local tax incentives in exchange for job creation and private investment commitments. If successful, Andover would become the ninth ETA community in the Merrimack Valley.

An Exciting Project on the Horizon

Green Chemistry is a term not many people have heard of, but is a discipline that could have a profoundly positive impact on society in more ways than can be imagined. According to [The Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry](#), the field is “dedicated to the development of non toxic, environmentally benign, and sustainable technological solutions applied at the molecular level during the process of design and development of a new material.”

The Institute was founded by Dr. John Warner, considered the father of Green Chemistry who has strong ties to the Merrimack Valley. At a recent breakfast event in Haverhill organized by the developer of [Innovation Valley](#), he challenged the region to take the lead in this burgeoning field by establishing a demonstration center that would perform three roles: validate new products derived from Green Chemistry; test existing products for toxicity; and perform community and regional outreach.

Why is this so important? EPA oversight of materials has exploded in recent years, costing businesses billions of dollars in regulation expenses. And yet, according to Dr. Warner, of the roughly 75,000 chemicals that are in existence, less than one percent have ever been tested for environmental risk! Thus, not only is this a serious environmental and health issue, but there is also a huge untapped market that could position the Merrimack Valley as the hub of an emerging green industry cluster, producing export-oriented jobs and high-tech private investment.

A working group has formed around the idea of establishing a demonstration center. Once plans formulate, this may become another excellent opportunity to pursue EDA public works assistance.

GREEN INITIATIVES

There are a number of “green” aspects to many of our region’s infrastructure projects. Both the InTown Mall and Union Crossing projects are proposing LEED certified buildings. What’s more, Union Crossing will be attracting clean technology companies and project officials are aggressively pursuing funding for green job training opportunities for low-income residents. Certainly, a Merrimack Valley Green Chemistry Demonstration Center would be a wonderful green project. In addition to these green infrastructure projects, the region has pursued a number of other green initiatives.

Merrimack Valley Brownfields Program

MVPC has won three EPA grants totaling \$1.4 million for investigating and cleaning contaminated industrial and commercial sites, expanding the 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.

The Merrimack Valley Brownfields Advisory Committee is a sub-group of the CEDS Committee. The Advisory Committee assists MVPC in selecting suitable projects for assessment assistance. \$400,000 of the new grant funding will go towards continuing environmental assessments, while \$1 million of the funding will be used to establish a revolving loan fund, used for the cleanup and redevelopment of assessed sites.

The new grant programs began in August 2009. The \$400,000 assessment grant is a three-year program, while the revolving loan fund will run for five years.

Merrimack Valley Clean Energy Plan

Last fall, The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission approved a major new master plan for the region, called the “Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy”, a roadmap for the future of the 270 square mile area. This is the first such wide-ranging plan to be developed for the 15-community region in more than 30 years. The plan embraces the principles of smart growth and sustainability, and articulates a regional vision of promoting growth in the right place, those areas best able to accommodate it and at the same time protect the region’s most critical natural resources.

Both the Merrimack Valley CEDS and Priority Growth Strategy highlight the need to develop an energy-focused plan to identify efficiency and job creation opportunities in the region. The proposed Merrimack Valley Clean Energy Plan would be an action-oriented document, focused on opportunities for job creation and conservation.

MVPC has already moved ahead to develop the necessary infrastructure needed to support a robust **regional energy management program** through the newly formed Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition, which is committed to offering technical assistance to communities to assist with the development of energy management strategies and conservation programs. One effort being considered is the use of an Energy Services Company (ESCO) to implement energy conservation improvements on public buildings such as replacing boilers, chillers, lighting, windows, etc., and using the cost savings from these improvements to pay for the upgrades. Another effort being considered is developing solar energy farms on closed landfills in the region. This concept was recently successful in Brockton, MA and has been coined

turning ‘Brownfields’ into ‘Brightfields’. There are more than 160 acres of closed landfills in the region and already five communities have expressed interest in collaborating on the idea. While these and many other wonderful ideas have been brought forth, a guiding document is needed in order to ensure the best use of regional resources.

MARKETING

[MVMB.biz](#) 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, using the latest mapping and imaging technologies.

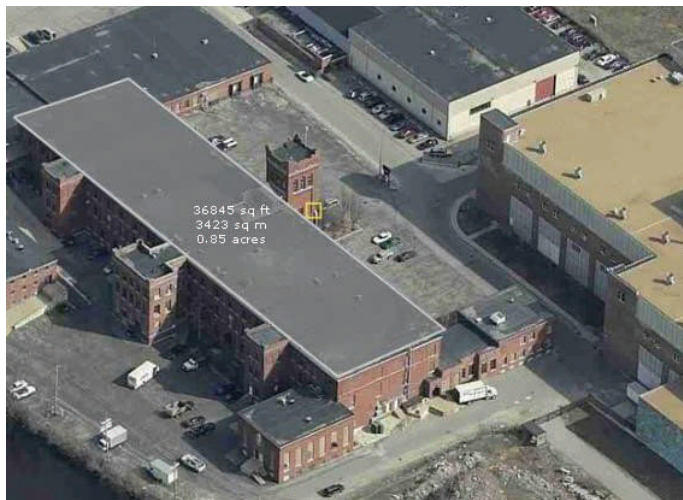
The interactive website allows users to conduct qualitative online geographic research on key location factors, including:

- Quality of workforce;
- Consumer buying habits;
- Tax incentives and enterprise zoning;



- Transportation access; and
- Detailed property attributes on space available for sale or lease.

Additionally, high resolution, oblique aerial images using the Planning Commission’s Pictometry Image Warehouse System is available for each business and property location. This interactive imaging system is a first-of-its-kind tool offered on a business and property information website.



MISSION

MVMB fosters community growth and economic development by supporting the relocation of new and expansion of existing businesses in the Merrimack Valley region, utilizing pioneering technology that provides businesses invaluable information.

Helpful data layers such as economic incentives zones, public transportation systems, zoning, and Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites are included with the website application.

Chapter 43D is a tool municipalities can use to encourage economic development and job creation by streamlining the local permitting process on priority commercial or industrial development sites in the community.

MVMB supports the statewide “[Massachusetts: It’s All Here](#)” marketing initiative, which promotes business development through the streamlining of key location information. MVPC updates the database on a regular basis, including annual field surveys. The Planning Commission is eager to form additional partnerships to expand the capabilities of the website.

**When you think of setting up shop...
look no further than Merrimack Valley!**

Welcome to the Valley

We invite you to use the only comprehensive Massachusetts business database, an exclusive resource designed to provide business owners access to key information – free consumer spending reports, available tax incentives, and workforce information – to name a few.

Take a look around...

Did you know you’re listed with MVMB? Log on today, find your business listing, and update your profile at www.mvmb.biz, your one stop shop for mapping out your next business location.



Helping business owners succeed in the Valley for over five years.

MVMB.biz was launched on October 15, 2009 at a well-attended event at Northern Essex Community College featuring keynote speaker David I. Begelfer, Chief Executive Officer of NAIOP Massachusetts. Mr. Begelfer provided an overview of economic trends and explained why efforts such as MVMB are critical for business development. Following a presentation of the website by MVPC staff, the event closed with a panel discussion on partnership building through MVMB.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT


Small Business Mentorship Program

MVPC is teaming up with Northern Essex Community College and the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce to promote a unique nine-month training program called the 'StreetWise MBA'™, offered through [Interise](http://Interise.com), a Boston-based non-profit organization. Interise offers its award-winning program in Boston, Worcester, Lowell and 22 major US cities through a contract with the Small Business Administration.

The benefits of the program include access to new markets, capital, and knowledge through management training, peer-to-peer learning, and networking opportunities. Unlike most other small business development programs, the 'StreetWise MBA'™ is designed specifically for existing urban small businesses— not start-ups.

Taught by business experts who have started and run their own successful businesses, the curriculum is divided into five modules: Business and Leadership Assessment; Financial Analysis; Marketing and Sales; Financing and Operations; and Strategic Growth Action Plan. Throughout the program, each entrepreneur designs a three-year growth plan outlining business goals and specific action steps necessary to achieve them. Each section of the curriculum focuses on issues commonly faced by established small businesses located in urban communities.

The inaugural Merrimack Valley program will begin with evening classes starting in September 2010 at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill. Sessions are held every other Tuesday evening from 6-9 pm.



Merrimack Valley Venture Forum
Connecting People, Ideas, and Resources

Merrimack Valley Means Business



How Economic Development Strategy and Government Resources Can Help Your Business.

As the region continues to transform itself, many government and quasi-government organizations are positioned to provide the crucial planning, financial, and strategic resources vital to the growth of all sizes and types of business.

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WEDNESDAY January 21, 2009

5:00 - 6:00	Networking
6:00 - 6:30	Opening Remarks
6:30 - 6:45	Keynote Speaker
6:45 - 7:00	Demo Presentation
7:00 - 7:15	Panelist Introduction
7:15 - 8:00	Panelist Discussion
8:00	BeerWorks Networking

Design and production: Patrick Crowley, www.crowleydesign.com

Clean Tech Center and Green Housing

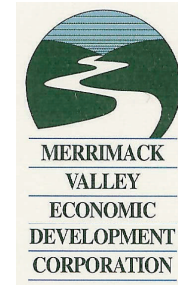
The most recent Merrimack Valley CEDS Committee meeting held on June 10 had a strong green and entrepreneurial focus. In addition to discussions on the proposed regional clean energy plan and a new small business mentorship program, representatives for a proposed clean-tech incubator facility in Newburyport provided an overview of the project. Formed to facilitate the commercialization of sustainable products and services in the rapidly growing clean-tech marketplace, the Newburyport Clean-Tech Center (NCTC) will provide critical resources to assist start-up businesses with early stage challenges. The NCTC will coach and support the advancement of start-ups that are considered to have innovative and marketable approaches to solve any of the numerous environmental issues we face today. The Center's first client is expected to be formally announced by the end of the summer.

The CEDS meeting also featured a presentation by a new business partnership aimed at building and rehabilitating eco-friendly low-income homes. The company's first project was recently announced in the Lower Acre neighborhood of Haverhill. The group's presentation sparked a lively discussion around the opportunities in the Valley through energy retrofits and job training.

MVPC is eager to expand its presence in the critical areas of business incubation and green housing and has committed to providing support where needed for both of these recently announced initiatives.

Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation

MVPC, through its subsidiary Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation (MVED), administers a business loan program offering gap financing for small businesses, industrial, and commercial projects. In 2008, working with local banks and the Mass Community Development Finance Corp., MVED assisted with the financing for the expansion of two businesses in the region, Old Time Sports in Salisbury and MVA Net in Haverhill. This business expansion represents more than \$900,000 in private investment. Since the loan program's inception, \$1.9 million has been loaned leveraging nearly \$9 million in private investment and creating and/or retaining 169 jobs in the Merrimack Valley.



Performance Measures

MVPC recently engaged in a self-assessment exercise—development by a CEDS Committee participant—in order to measure the success of the regional CEDS and to establish overall goals for the program. In addition, the exercise was used to develop strategies for increasing the participation of attendees at CEDS Committee meetings and generate better focused meeting agendas.

Four broad goals were identified:

- Expand CEDS Committee participation and encourage individuals to look beyond community borders.
- Increase regional awareness of EDA assistance to the Merrimack Valley.
- Increase the use of the 2008 Merrimack Valley CEDS as a guide to regional development.
- Integrate more people into the CEDS planning process.

The results have been very encouraging. Meeting attendance has steadily increased, involving a broader group of individuals and organizations, while discussions have become better focused, with wider input.

This exercise will be revisited on a regular basis to ensure maximum effectiveness of CEDS Committee meetings and initiatives.

On the data side, MVPC utilizes *Policy Insight*, a model developed by Regional Economic Models, Inc. (REMI), to produce economic forecasts and run simulations. The model is an important tool for measuring the economic impacts of shifts in public policy, demographics, or economic performance.

MVPC will use the model in 2010 to update the Valley's long-term population forecast out to 2035 at the regional and town levels. This data will greatly assist not only economic development planning for the region, but also transportation, environmental, and land use planning as well.