



Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
plan • develop • promote

2018-2023 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Embracing Resilience & Equity for a
Prosperous Region



**Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
June 21, 2018**

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On behalf of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), I would like to recognize the public and private partners that dedicated their time to craft the 2018 MV Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (MV CEDS). From the beginning of the planning process in 2017, development of the MV CEDS plan was a collaborative effort that strengthened existing partnerships while developing new relationships that will help drive implementation. We are proud to say that over 100 stakeholders from around the Merrimack Valley and State of Massachusetts participated in the creation of this plan and because of that, the MV CEDS is truly *YOUR PLAN*.

MVPC would like to express our gratitude to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), for their ongoing support and funding. Specifically, we would like to thank the Philadelphia Regional EDA office and Debra Beavin, Economic Development Representative, for their invaluable guidance and counsel.

MVPC staff owes a great deal of thanks to the MV CEDS Committee, particularly our Chair, Lane Glenn, President of Northern Essex Community College. Through Lane's leadership and the contributions of the CEDS Committee members, we have an implementable strategy for economic development in the Merrimack Valley that will help us be resilient and diverse into the 21st Century.

Lastly, we want to recognize the Working Group Co-Chairs who embarked on an expeditious mission to create realistic strategies for each emerging theme in this plan. Thank you for dedicating your time and inspiration!

City and Town Centers: Paul Materazzo (Town of Andover) and Tania Hartford (RCG LLC)

Manufacturing: Brian Norris (Northeast Advanced Manufacturers Consortium) and George Moriarty (Northern Essex Community College)

Natural and Cultural Resources: Vanessa Johnson-Hall (Essex County Greenbelt), Lesly Melendez (Groundwork Lawrence) and Karen Ristuben (Essex County Community Foundation)

Transportation: Lou Rabito (Howard Stein Hudson) and Andrew Herlihy (City of Haverhill)

Although MVPC, as the Economic Development District, is publishing this plan, we consider this a living, collaborative, ongoing effort that "takes a region" to implement. We look forward to working with you to embrace resilience and equity for a more prosperous Merrimack Valley.

Gratefully,

Karen Sawyer Conard
Executive Director, MVPC

Message from MV CEDS Chair

Greetings, and welcome to the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission's 2018-2023 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: Embracing Resilience and Equity for a More Prosperous Merrimack Valley*.

By most standards, the Merrimack Valley is indeed a prosperous part of the world, and an ideal place to live, work, and raise a family. Wages, employment, and levels of education are generally high; and we enjoy a rich history and culture, beautiful landscapes, abundant natural resources, and unique, thriving cities and towns.

Yet, as we have experienced in recent years, this prosperity can be quickly endangered by sudden changes in the economy, natural disasters, and other unexpected events; and not everyone enjoys the same access to opportunity and resources. Within our communities, there are many still struggling with poverty, homelessness, hunger, inadequate education, and access to good jobs.



This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) aims to build on the Merrimack Valley's tremendous assets in order to make us even stronger, more resilient in the face of challenges, and more equitable, offering the opportunity for *everyone* to enjoy the quality of life our region is known for.

Developed through a year-long process engaging business and community leaders in all fifteen cities and towns the MVPC serves, this CEDS features emergency and environmental recovery plans; support for area manufacturing; protection strategies for natural resources; a strong focus on improving regional transportation; a more active role in workforce development; goals for strengthening city and town centers, still the heart of our New England communities; and more.

It is an ambitious roadmap for the future designed by and for ambitious, hard-working, proud residents of this remarkable corner of the world.

Lane Glenn

Chair, MVPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee & President, Northern Essex Community College

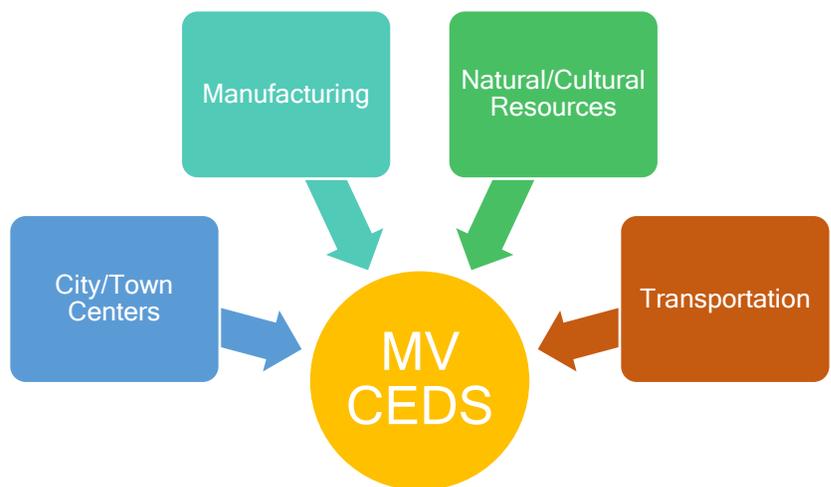
Introduction

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) serves 15 communities in the northeastern corner of Massachusetts along the Merrimack River. MVPC’s mission is “*to foster community and collaboration in addressing common, regional concerns to improve the general welfare of all our residents, with the greatest efficiency, economy and coordination possible.*” Since the 1970s, MVPC has served as the designated liaison for the Merrimack Valley Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the Department of Commerce. EDA is the primary economic development agency for the federal government, and works with EDDs throughout the country to promote regional cooperation and economic prosperity.

In keeping with the EDD designation, MVPC prepares a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a blueprint for growing a regional, collaborative economy. It is meant to be a living document, updated annually and fully revisited every five years. The CEDS features a description of regional economic conditions, presents key demographics and sets forth an action plan for the future. EDA looks to the CEDS when deciding on strategic investments to fund. MVPC uses the CEDS process to identify and prioritize issues and opportunities that can be addressed with the appropriate technical assistance and resources, and which partners we can engage to accomplish this.

We are proud to report that the 2018 MV CEDS brought together more than 80 diverse stakeholders, from the public and private sectors to develop an action plan around four emerging themes: City/Town Centers, Manufacturing, Natural/Cultural Resources and Transportation.

This process created and strengthened partnerships, enhanced cooperation, and fostered both public and private “buy-in” and enthusiasm. Our stakeholders are already serving as ambassadors in advancing the strategies put forth in this plan, which were carefully developed through numerous working sessions held over a 12-month period.



The MVPC region is home to public and private sector leaders, institutions of higher learning, solopreneurs, small start-ups and thriving, large business alike - all working to enhance our economic prosperity through innovative practices in workforce development, housing, green and clean technologies, adaptive reuse, marketing and community engagement. MVPC will continue to promote these efforts and provide an ongoing forum for individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds to collaborate on shared goals for the region. We welcome and appreciate the insight, expertise and assistance of all those who helped in the crafting of this document, and look forward to working collaboratively on the key projects and actions to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth herein to create a more resilient, equitable Merrimack Valley.

MV CEDS Accomplishments Since 2013

The *2013 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (MV CEDS) set three primary goals for moving the region forward: 1) Develop and Promote a Strong, Diversified and Sustained Regional Economy; 2) Identify and Support the Region's Priority Development Areas and Priority Preservation Areas; and 3) Strengthen the Connection Between Relevant Workforce Development and Industry Needs. The MV CEDS also presented clear tactical objectives addressing those goals and created a precise action plan on which to move forward. The following are the key objectives of the 2013 CEDS, followed by the actions that were taken to meet the specific objective.

Support New and Expanding Firms

- Collaborated with UMass Lowell iHub and the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce to organize the first Mass Innovation Night in the Merrimack Valley, showcasing innovative, new start-ups from around the region.
- Created a Valley Support Team program to assist communities with their economic and community development needs.
- Created a Priority Development (PDA) Task Force to market key PDAs in the region.
- Assisted communities with expedited, pre-permitting of sites to remove barriers to development and redevelopment projects.

Encourage Innovation and Cluster Development

- Increased awareness of established and emerging industry clusters in the *2014 Merrimack Valley Industry Cluster Report*.
- Provided gap loans to small businesses through the EDA-funded Merrimack Valley Economic Development Loan Fund. Since 2013, the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation provided four loans totaling \$914,000. Loan amounts ranged from \$115,000 to \$250,000 and went to diverse businesses such as a commercial bakery and a janitorial company.

Promote Regional Identity

- Leveraged national best practices and new and existing partnerships to expand the "Means Business" campaign beyond a site selection finder to include resources available to businesses and individuals.
- Completed Phase I and launched Phase II of the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Campaign to rebrand the region with a new logo, tagline and website: *Merrimack Valley: Here for the Making*.

Foster Tourism through the Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Natural Resources and Historic Structures

- Promoted and helped to protect the region's open spaces and historic structures by identifying Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs). Recommended that communities adopt demolition delay ordinances and held Historic Preservation workshops.
- Supported and encouraged local farming by helping communities start local farmers markets. Identified PPAs, many of which are farmland. Hosted a workshop on how to preserve farmland.
- Promoted opportunities for artists and other creative economy participants by encouraging the creation of Cultural Districts, including downtown Haverhill.

Direct Investment to Priority Development Areas and Town Centers

- Updated the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy which established new Priority Development Areas in the region.
- Assisted communities with zoning updates to encourage mixed-use development in city and town centers. Assisted in creating Smart Growth (40R) Districts, including the City of Methuen.
- Increased local board training on permitting and smart growth by hosting Citizen Planner Training Collaborative trainings every year.
- Continued MVPC's Brownfields Remediation Program, which includes assessment and cleanup of contaminated sites in town and city centers.
- Collaborated with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority to offer additional transportation routes, especially to the region's major employment and retail centers.

Establish a Proactive Residential Development Plan

- Promoted *Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)* housing principles at Regional Planning Director's meetings and in the Priority Growth Strategy.
- Promote local funding for open space protection and creation of affordable housing using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds at workshops and Planning Directors Luncheons.
- Developed Housing Production Plans for 14 communities in the region and nearing completion of a first-of-its-kind in the state Regional Housing Plan.

Encourage Low Impact Development Techniques, Green Building Design, and Alternative Energy Uses

- Helped communities create more sustainable housing/commercial development standards and advocated for stormwater ordinances and education at forums and Planners Luncheons.
- Assisted communities in seeking Massachusetts Green Communities Program designation through grant applications and data collection and analysis.
- Secured an Energy Services Company to install clean energy systems and promoted the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's programs at regular meetings and through social media postings.

Change Public Perception of Certain Critical Industries in the Region

- Promoted employment opportunities and education/skill requirements in the critical and emerging industries to a wide constituency by discussing this issue at public forums and events.
- Became a member of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) to gain access to essential manufacturing resources, including UMA's national Sewn Trades Community of Practice. Represented the Merrimack Valley at UMA's Seattle Gathering and as a speaker at local workshops.
- Received EDA grant funds to create a Lawrence Textile Innovation Center Feasibility Study (Lawrence fabRIC Project)

to better understand the textile industry and promote its expansion and recalibration in Lawrence and the entire region.

Close the Gaps in Workforce Development Training

- Worked with the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB), Technical High Schools and Northern Essex Community College to develop programs and trainings to meet the specialized skill needs of employers struggling to find qualified workers. MVPC now serves on the Board of Directors of the MVWIB.

Increase Career Enhancement Opportunities

- Worked with the MVWIB to develop and fund training for incumbent workers that support career advancement and wage gains, including increased English language training for adult learners
- Conducted an Access to Jobs Survey to begin matching public transportation routes and times with the needs of workers and employers.



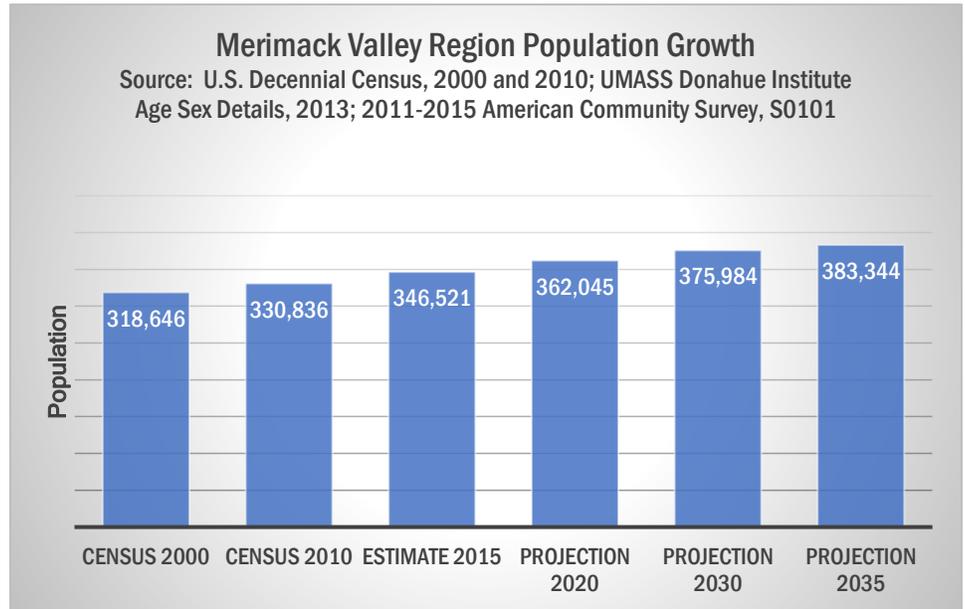
Greater Lawrence Technical School and Protect the Force meet to discuss alignments in textile training and manufacturing. Source: Francisco Martinez

The Data

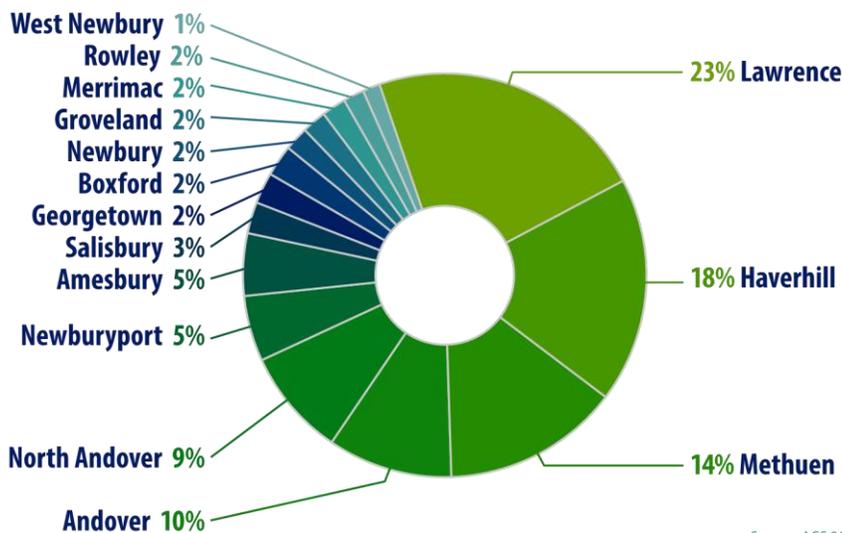
The Merrimack Valley has experienced growth and change over the past 10-15 years, including our population, household composition, housing costs, access, jobs, labor force, recreational opportunities and options for arts and culture. The data below provides a snapshot of the changes this region has experienced, and lays out the foundation for the four emerging themes and resulting visions, objectives and strategies for creating a more adaptable region that embraces diversity and equity at its core.

Population

According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the Merrimack Valley's population was about 346,521. Since 2000, the region's population has increased 8.7%. By 2030, it is projected that the region will experience a similar increase of about 8.5% to approximately 375,984 people. This is slightly higher than the projected growth in Essex County (8%) and the State of Massachusetts (7.8%).



2015 ESTIMATED POPULATION IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY



Source: ACS 2011-2015

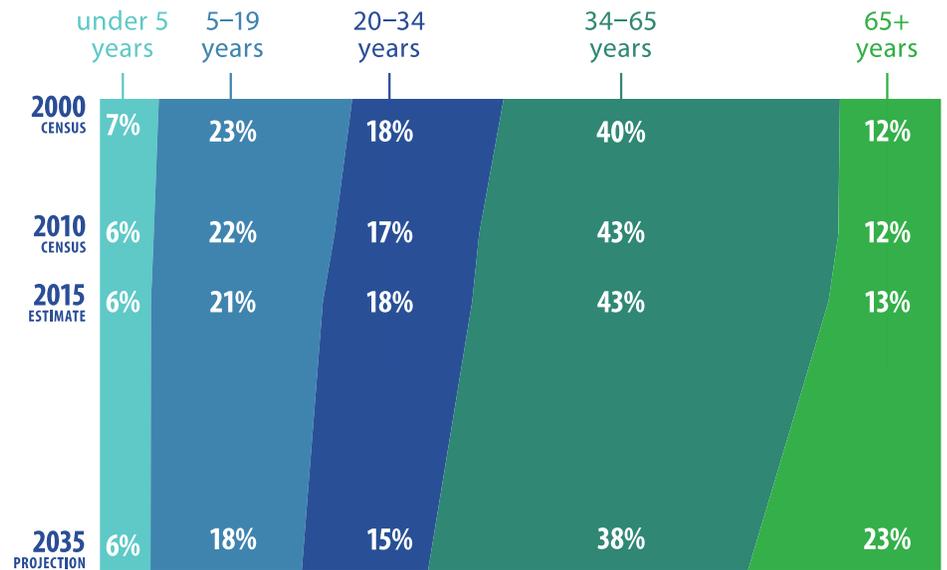
This increase needs to be considered as we continue to ensure there are quality jobs for residents located in the region. This issue will be explored again when we analyze where residents work in and outside the region.

The majority of the 346,521 residents are concentrated in three cities in the region: Lawrence, Haverhill and Methuen (in that order). Nearly 20% of the population resides in the Towns of North Andover and Andover, with the remainder located in the region's smaller cities and towns.

Throughout the region and state, our population is getting older. Between 2010 and 2035, it is projected that the population over 65 years of age will nearly double from 12% to 23%. That increase will be reflected as a decrease in the population under the age of 19. Between 2010 and 2035, the population under 19 will decrease from 28% to 24%. This translates into more people aging out of the workforce and fewer of them entering. As we consider the number and type of jobs that we need in this region, we must keep in mind the population and how to accommodate these fluctuations in the age of our workforce.

POPULATION AGE

The number of adults over 65-years-old is projected to increase and school-age children to decrease.



Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2000 and 2010; UMASS Donahue Institute Age Sex Details, 2013; American Community Survey 2011-2015, S0101

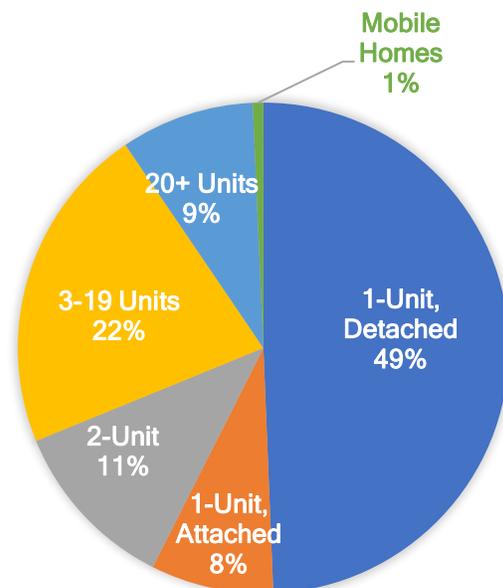
Housing

Housing and economic development are connected. We need quality, accessible, affordable housing to attract both employees and employers to this region. This section will cover the types of housing units, income, cost, and affordability gaps in the region. This information is primarily taken from the *Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan*, which analyzed data from the 2011-2015 American Community Survey.

There is a total of 134,083 housing units in the region to accommodate 346,521 residents. The mix of housing in the Merrimack Valley is primarily ownership, with 63% owner-occupied units versus 37% renter. Of those units, 57% are single-family units (detached and attached) and 42% are multi-family (2+ units). Most of the multi-family dwellings (31%) are 3+ units, however only 9% of them are larger developments over 20+ units.

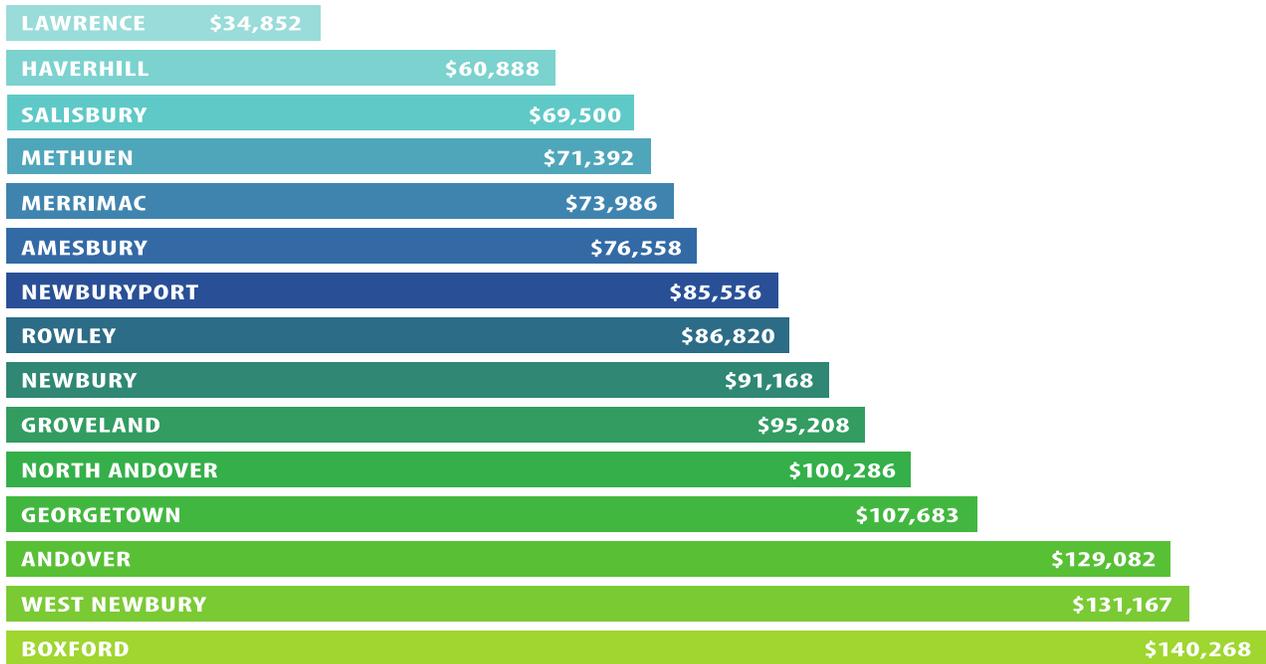
HOUSING UNIT TYPES IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

SOURCE: 2011-2015 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



The median income for the Merrimack Valley is \$75,532. Ten of the fifteen communities in the region surpass that median income, as shown in the chart below, with several of them coming close to doubling the median income (notably Andover, West Newbury and Boxford).

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: ACS 2011-2015

When comparing owner income versus renter income, there is a discrepancy between the two tenures which is experienced throughout Essex County and the State of Massachusetts. Renters tend to have lower incomes than owners, but the Merrimack Valley has a larger difference than the other geographies, with owner income at \$115,392 and renter at \$34,997, as shown in the table below.

Median Income by Tenure, 2015

Tenure	Merrimack Valley Region*	Essex County	MA
Owner Occupied	\$104,451	\$95,660	\$92,207
Renter Occupied	\$34,997	\$35,254	\$37,780

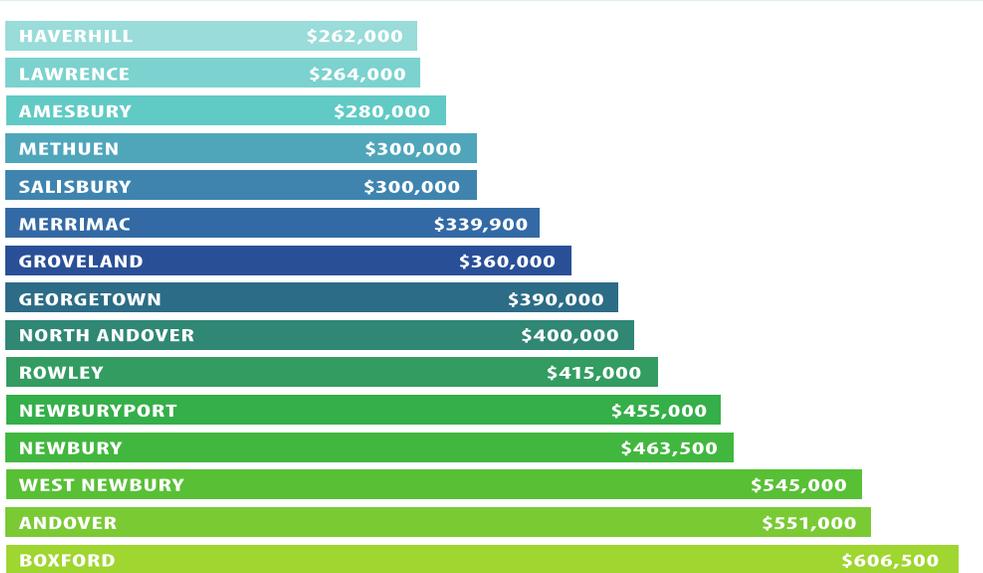
Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25119. *Note: Regional median incomes are the weighted mean of estimated median income of the 15 towns and cities in the region.

The median home sales price for the Merrimack Valley region is \$390,000. As shown in the chart below, median home prices for the fifteen communities range from \$262,000 in Haverhill to \$606,500 in Boxford. The large cities in the region fall below the median sales price, while the smaller towns and one city (Newburyport) surpass that by over \$100,000 in some cases.

When analyzing the overall median income of residents in the region with the median sales prices, we see gaps in every community, except Georgetown. The gaps are a measurement of the difference between what residents are making and what homes are selling for. For example, the difference between the 2016 median sales price and the median household income in Newburyport is about \$187,000. However, in Georgetown, the median

income is higher than the median sales price by \$21,000. See the chart below for the gaps in other communities. Although these are medians, it is indicative of a mismatch between the cost of housing and what residents earn in the region. This mismatch can result in housing cost burdens,¹ force employees to find housing outside the region creating long commutes and congestion, or result in employees and employers finding alternative places to live, work, and do business. In order for us to remain competitive and ensure quality of life for everyone, we need to bridge this gap as a region.

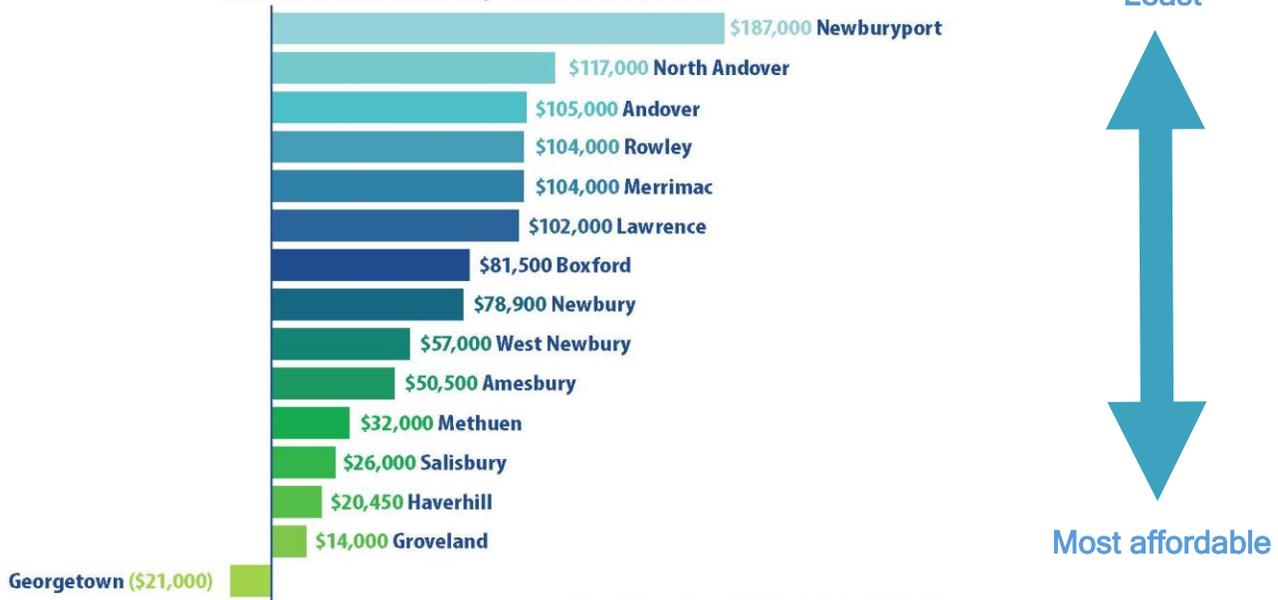
2016 MEDIAN SALES PRICE FOR ALL UNITS



Source: The Warren Group

AFFORDABILITY GAP FOR MERRIMACK VALLEY COMMUNITIES

Difference between 2016 median sales price and price affordable to a household with the community's median household income.



Source: The Warren Group 2016 Median Single-Family Sales Price, ACS 2011-2015 Median Household Income, and author's calculations utilizing DHCD calculator.

¹ When housing costs exceed 30% of gross income on housing costs, a household is considered “cost burdened.” When housing costs exceed 50% a household’s monthly income, the household is “severely cost burdened.”

Employment and Wages

Lawrence has far and away more business establishments than any other community in the region. Andover tops the list with the most employees, with Lawrence a close second. Total wages and average weekly wage are highest in Andover.

Establishments, Employment Counts, Monthly and Total Wages for Merrimack Valley Communities

Community	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Amesbury	538	5,029	\$61,849,868	\$946
Andover	1,223	31,119	\$798,401,828	\$1,974
Boxford	184	1,019	\$12,558,582	\$948
Georgetown	239	2,716	\$31,089,872	\$881
Groveland	153	1,286	\$17,099,495	\$1,023
Haverhill	1,639	20,957	\$229,483,559	\$842
Lawrence	3,355	29,236	\$350,429,669	\$922
Merrimac	126	869	\$8,543,025	\$756
Methuen	1,337	16,335	\$172,807,696	\$814
Newbury	194	1,633	\$17,748,235	\$836
Newburyport	992	11,890	\$155,401,452	\$1,005
North Andover	1,121	14,535	\$204,011,513	\$1,080
Rowley	259	2,891	\$36,376,629	\$968
Salisbury	365	3,817	\$43,214,359	\$871
West Newbury	94	648	\$7,698,712	\$914
MV Regional Total	11,841	9,827	\$2,202,271,707	\$1,149

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202, as of September 2017.

Our region is home to a diverse employment base. Nearly 30 percent of workers are employed in the Education and Health Services sector, followed by 20 percent in Health Care and Social Assistance. Manufacturing continues to play a prominent role in the Merrimack Valley, employing 16 percent of the workforce.

Merrimack Valley Region Industry Report, September 2017

NAICS Code*	Industry	No. of Establishments	No. of Employees - September 2017	Total Wages	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages
	Total, all industries	11,841	148,776	\$2,202,271,707	147,405	\$1,149
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	33	311	\$2,145,656	311	\$531
23	Construction	909	7,918	\$139,897,607	7,939	\$1,356
31-33	Manufacturing	488	23,881	\$521,212,290	23,980	\$1,672
DUR	Durable Goods Manufacturing	315	15,491	\$399,305,534	15,610	\$1,968
NONDUR	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	173	8,390	\$121,906,756	8,370	\$1,120
22	Trade, Transportation and Utilities	1,654	20,516	\$241,557,024	20,552	\$904
42	Wholesale Trade	517	5,089	\$107,647,030	5,135	\$1,613
44-45	Retail Trade	909	12,521	\$93,543,185	12,589	\$572
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	203	2,269	\$25,491,841	2,196	\$893
51	Information	184	2,187	\$42,875,608	2,227	\$1,481
52	Financial Activities	659	5,275	\$96,383,412	5,341	\$1,388
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	280	1,602	\$22,311,098	1,632	\$1,052
54	Professional and Business Services	1,726	20,994	\$474,300,629	21,280	\$1,715
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	52	3,962	\$130,041,647	4,012	\$2,493
56	Administrative and Waste Services	549	7,896	\$82,373,052	7,997	\$792
61	Education and Health Services	4,264	43,771	\$476,994,279	40,840	\$898
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	4,090	29,111	\$327,123,571	29,006	\$868
71	Leisure and Hospitality	880	13,490	\$74,538,016	14,213	\$403
72	Accommodation and Food Services	705	11,327	\$61,669,435	11,640	\$408
81	Other Services	860	4,674	\$36,058,351	4,747	\$584
92	Public Administration	183	5,759	\$96,308,836	5,974	\$1,240

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, ES-202, as of September 2017.

*NAICS is short for North American Industry Classification System. It is used by Federal statistical agencies to classify businesses for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing data related to the U.S. business economy.

The chart below provides projections for changes in employment by NAICS Code. The region is healthy and growing from an overall employment perspective, with close to 6 percent growth projected.

Industry Projections for Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area (WDA), 2014-2024

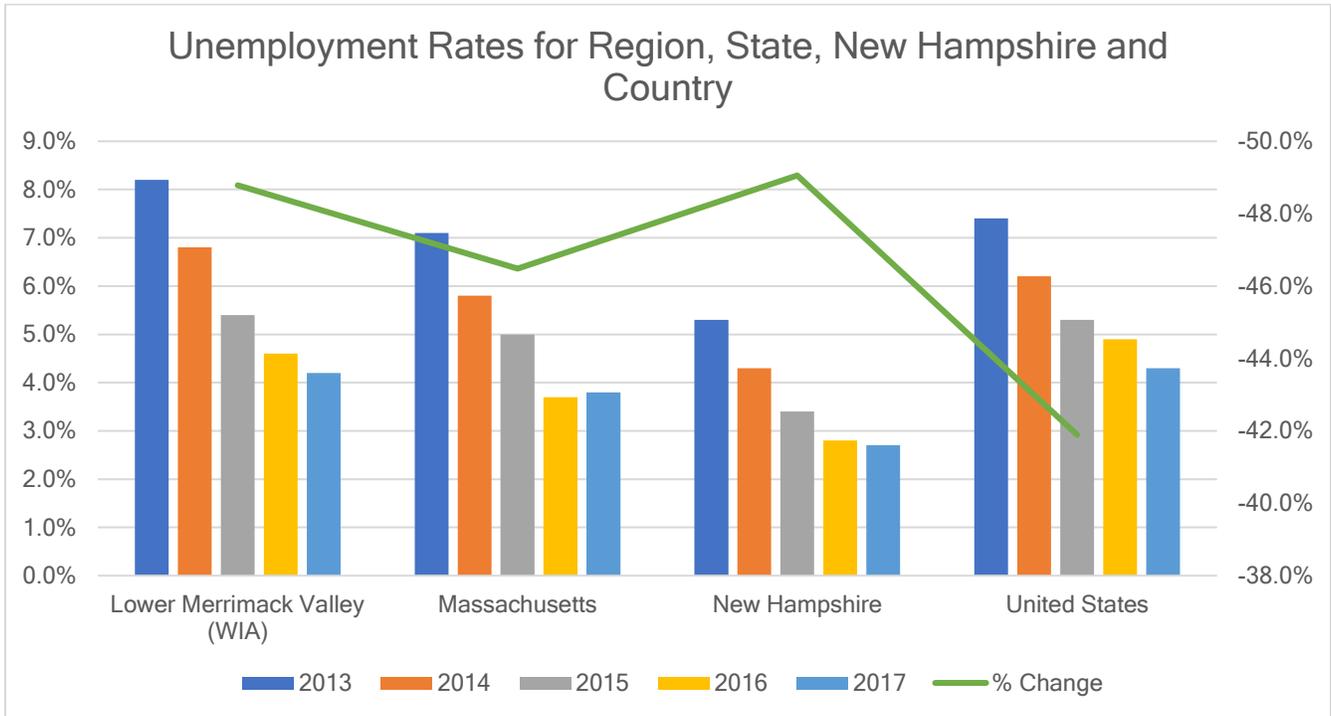
NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Level	Change Percent
0	Total All Industries	145,096	153,653	8,557	5.90%
110000	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	215	258	43	20.00%
111000	Crop Production	146	171	25	17.10%
220000	Utilities	461	496	35	7.60%
230000	Construction	5,497	5,780	283	5.10%
236000	Construction of Buildings	783	835	52	6.60%
237000	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	619	644	25	4.00%
238000	Specialty Trade Contractors	4,095	4,301	206	5.00%
310000	Manufacturing	24,664	24,786	122	0.50%
311000	Food Manufacturing	2,943	3,139	196	6.70%
321000	Wood Product Manufacturing	112	110	-2	-1.80%
322000	Paper Manufacturing	262	248	-14	-5.30%
323000	Printing and Related Support Activities	912	847	-65	-7.10%
325000	Chemical Manufacturing	1,407	1,313	-94	-6.70%
326000	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	676	661	-15	-2.20%
332000	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	2,111	2,105	-6	-0.30%
333000	Machinery Manufacturing	1,003	1,089	86	8.60%
334000	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	4,943	4,362	-581	-11.80%
335000	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	1,132	1,087	-45	-4.00%
337000	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	295	317	22	7.50%
339000	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	2,078	2,235	157	7.60%
420000	Wholesale Trade	4,883	4,827	-56	-1.10%
423000	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	2,664	2,473	-191	-7.20%
424000	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	1,287	1,352	65	5.10%

NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Level	Change Percent
425000	Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers	932	1,002	70	7.50%
440000	Retail Trade	11,082	11,549	467	4.20%
441000	Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	1,279	1,359	80	6.30%
442000	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	133	140	7	5.30%
443000	Electronics and Appliance Stores	134	123	-11	-8.20%
445000	Food and Beverage Stores	4,782	5,096	314	6.60%
446000	Health and Personal Care Stores	1,069	1,100	31	2.90%
447000	Gasoline Stations	464	487	23	5.00%
448000	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	631	548	-83	-13.20%
451000	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	254	238	-16	-6.30%
452000	General Merchandise Stores	1,154	1,212	58	5.00%
453000	Miscellaneous Store Retailers	391	395	4	1.00%
454000	Nonstore Retailers	791	851	60	7.60%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	1,638	1,730	92	5.60%
482000	Rail Transportation	108	109	1	0.90%
484000	Truck Transportation	585	629	44	7.50%
485000	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	708	739	31	4.40%
488000	Support Activities for Transportation	147	159	12	8.20%
510000	Information	2,297	2,238	-59	-2.60%
511000	Publishing Industries (except Internet)	684	653	-31	-4.50%
512000	Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	178	187	9	5.10%
517000	Telecommunications	979	911	-68	-6.90%
520000	Finance and Insurance	2,928	3,053	125	4.30%
522000	Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	1,761	1,816	55	3.10%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,434	1,519	85	5.90%
531000	Real Estate	893	938	45	5.00%
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,296	8,713	417	5.00%

NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Level	Change Percent
541000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,296	8,713	417	5.00%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,708	3,891	183	4.90%
551000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,708	3,891	183	4.90%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation	7,854	8,558	704	9.00%
561000	Administrative and Support Services	6,748	7,412	664	9.80%
562000	Waste Management and Remediation Service	1,106	1,146	40	3.60%
610000	Educational Services	13,200	14,156	956	7.20%
611000	Educational Services	13,200	14,156	956	7.20%
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	25,492	29,711	4,219	16.60%
621000	Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,325	11,766	2,441	26.20%
622000	Hospitals	5,042	5,529	487	9.70%
623000	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,147	5,536	389	7.60%
624000	Social Assistance	5,978	6,880	902	15.10%
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,174	2,340	166	7.60%
713000	Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	1,983	2,133	150	7.60%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	10,517	11,059	542	5.20%
810000	Other Services (except Government)	4,353	4,577	224	5.10%
811000	Repair and Maintenance	837	879	42	5.00%
812000	Personal and Laundry Services	1,839	1,931	92	5.00%
813000	Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Org	1,484	1,559	75	5.10%
814000	Private Households	193	208	15	7.80%

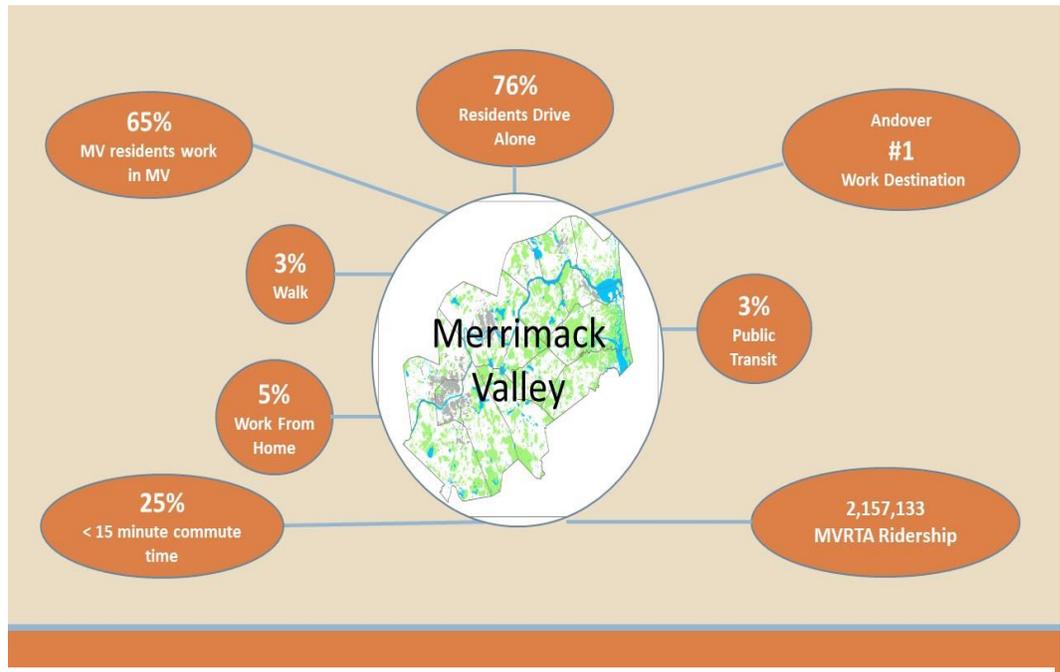
Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2014-2024 Projections.

Unemployment rates in the region have followed state and national trends, in continuing to decline in the last five years.



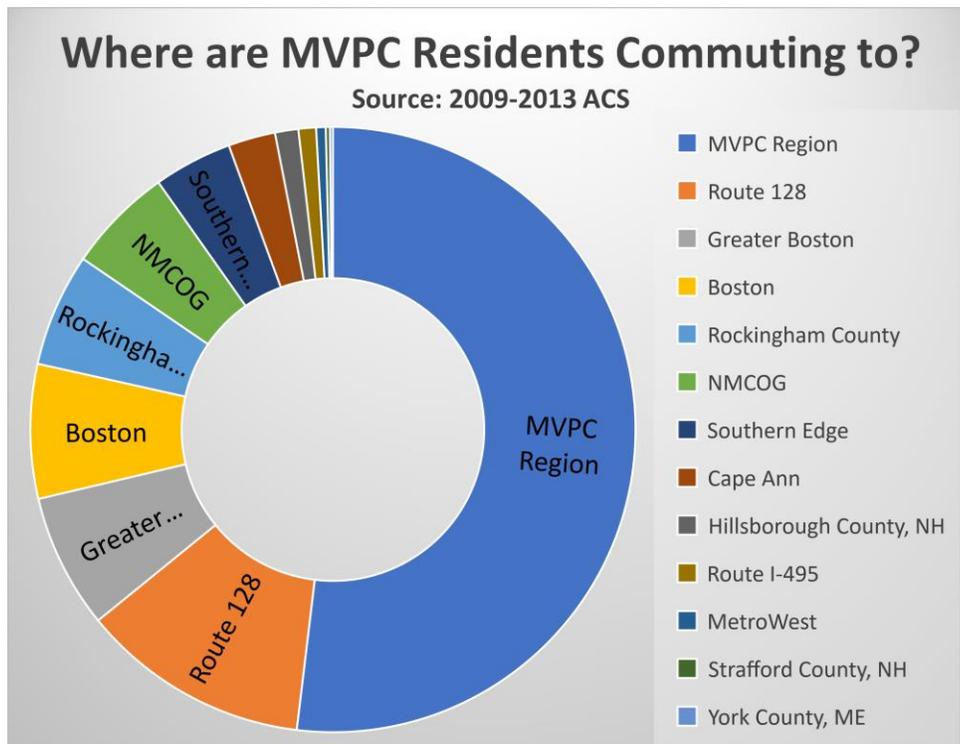
Transportation

Not surprisingly, compared to where average monthly employment figures are highest, the number one destination for work is Andover. Nearly two-thirds of residents work and live in the region. Over three-quarters of residents commute alone, with only a small percentage using alternative forms of transportation (including commuter rail).



Source: Mode of travel is from 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS). Bus ridership is MVRTA. Commuting flows are from 2009-2013 ACS.

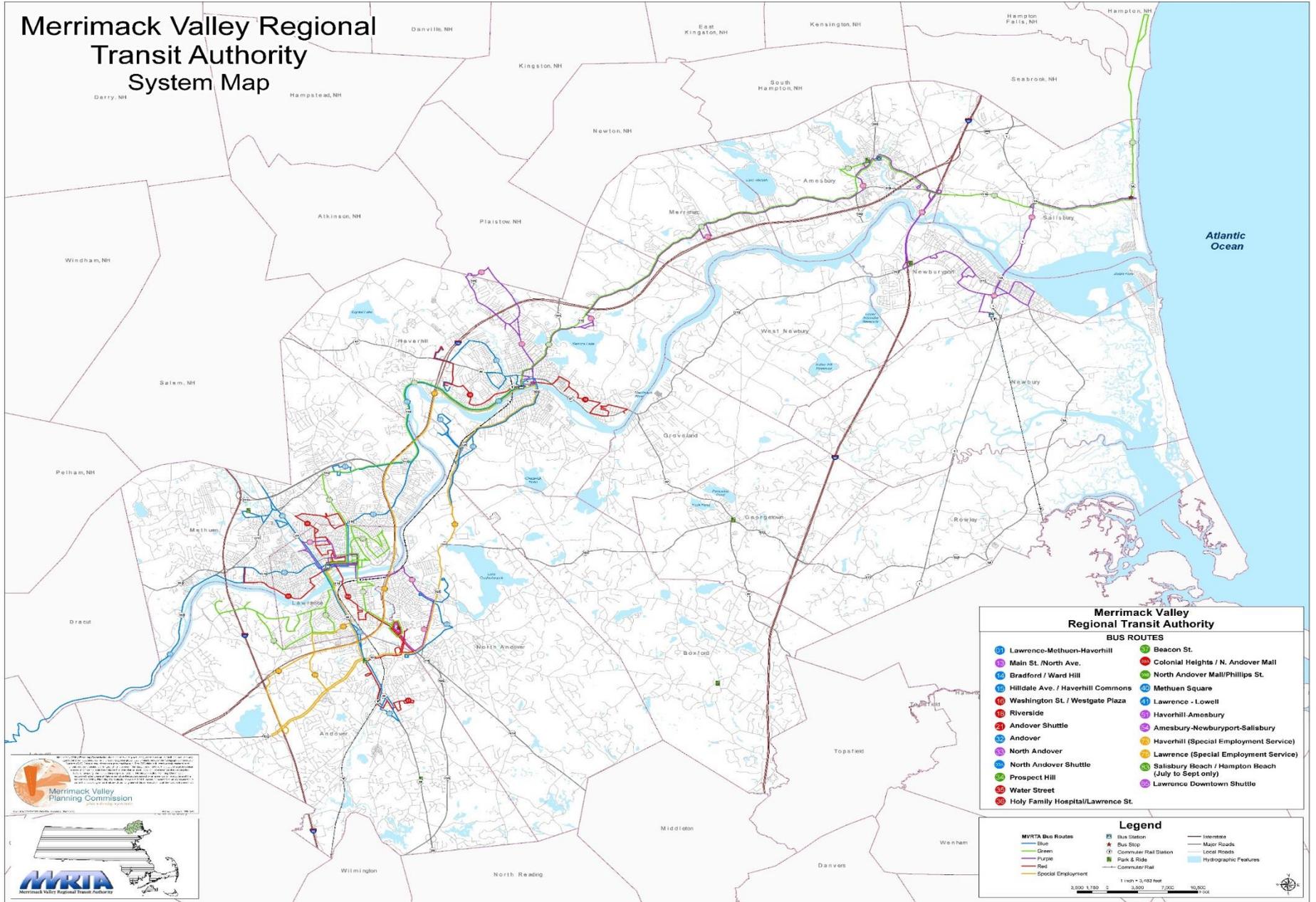
One-quarter of residents live within 15 minutes of their job. Of the 35 percent of residents commuting outside the Merrimack Valley, about one-third are heading south towards Route 128, Greater Boston or Boston.



While our road network travels east/west and north/south, the transit system is primarily north/south (commuter rail/bus) or limited to within City/Town limits (local bus).

The MBTA's commuter train service is sparse in the Merrimack Valley region and does not provide useful reverse commuting opportunities.

Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority System Map



Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
 2014 Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority System Map
 100 North Main Street, Andover, MA 01810
 978-875-2200
 www.mvra.com

Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority

BUS ROUTES

① Lawrence-Methuen-Haverhill	⑬ Beacon St.
② Main St./North Ave.	⑭ Colonial Heights / N. Andover Mall
③ Bradford / Ward Hill	⑮ North Andover Mall/Phillips St.
④ Hillside Ave. / Haverhill Commons	⑯ Methuen Square
⑤ Washington St. / Westgate Plaza	⑰ Lawrence - Lowell
⑥ Riverside	⑱ Haverhill Amesbury
⑦ Andover Shuttle	⑲ Amesbury-Newburyport-Salisbury
⑧ Andover	⑳ Haverhill (Special Employment Service)
⑩ North Andover	㉑ Lawrence (Special Employment Service)
⑪ North Andover Shuttle	㉒ Salisbury Beach / Hampton Beach (July to Sept only)
⑫ Prospect Hill	㉓ Water Street
⑬ Water Street	㉔ Lawrence Downtown Shuttle
⑭ Holy Family Hospital/Lawrence St.	

Legend

MVRTA Bus Routes	Bus Station	Interstate
Blue	Bus Stop	Major Roads
Green	Commuter Rail Station	Local Roads
Purple	Park & Ride	Hydrographic Features
Red	Commuter Rail	
Orange	Special Employment	

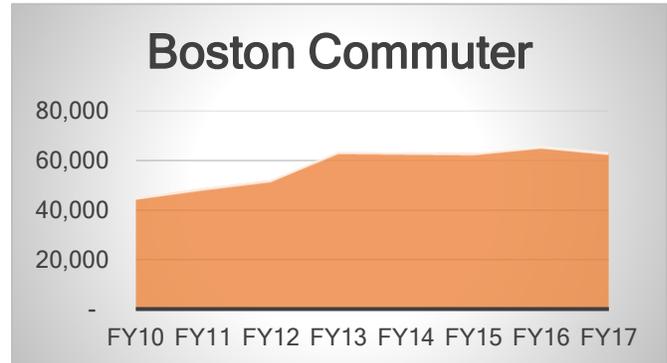
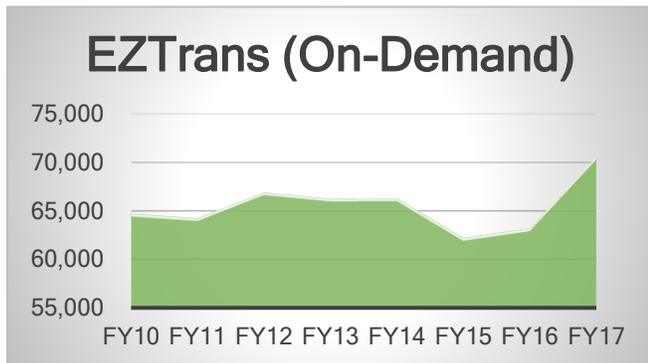
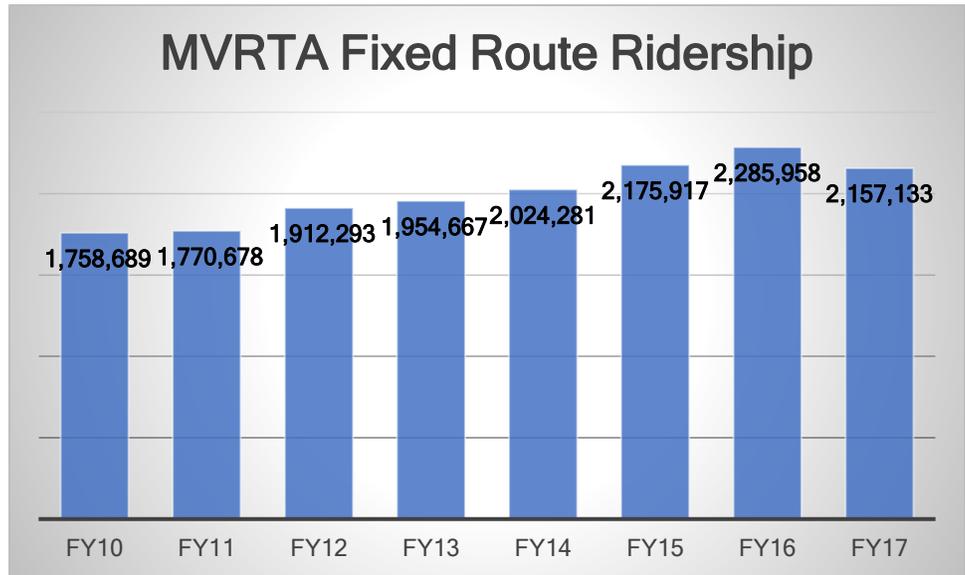
1 inch = 3,463 feet
 2,000 4,000 8,000 16,000 32,000 FEET

The MVRTA's fixed route bus system essentially connects the cities and towns along the river, with a few exceptions. In addition, the MVRTA provides a connecting route to the City of Lowell, which is in the Lowell Regional Transit Authority's service area.

Until FY2017, the MVRTA saw annual growth in ridership of the fixed route bus. The recent drop in ridership follows a common

trend seen nationwide. At the same time, the MVRTA has, as expected, seen an increase in its on-demand services (EZTrans), which cater to seniors and qualified ADA riders. This trend is in line with the increase in population of people ages 65+. On-demand Ring and Ride service is provided to the region's more rural communities

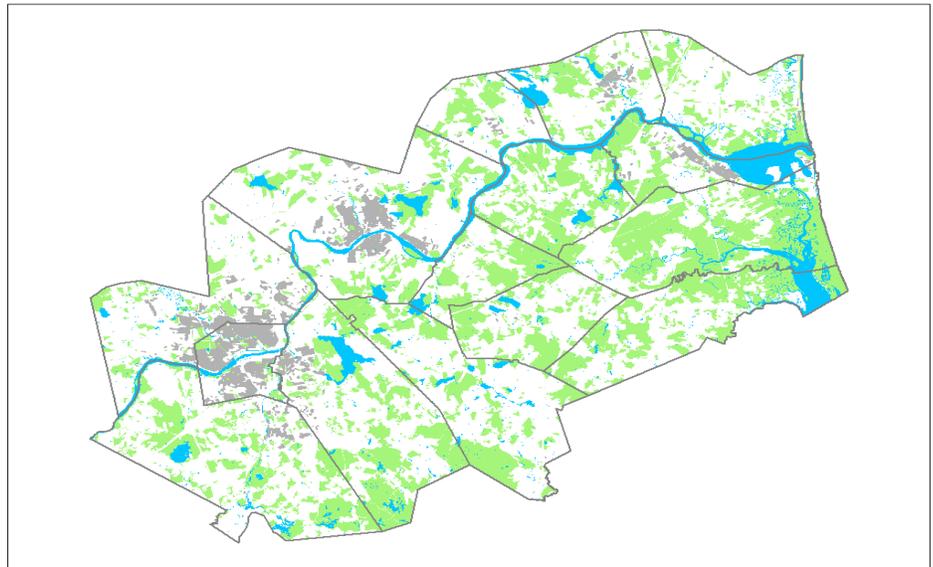
The MVRTA also provides commuter services to Boston, which drops riders at various locations in downtown Boston (not at North Station).



Of note: MVRTA and MVPC have long been advocates of creating a Bus On Shoulder option along Interstate 93 as a means of reducing congestion along this busy corridor, especially at peak times. This concept could be modified to allow car/vanpool access to this HOV lane as a means of making various forms of ridesharing more appealing to commuters.

Nature, Arts and Culture

The Merrimack Valley region is rich with natural resources and protected open spaces, as evidenced by this map. Preservation of open space has long been of paramount importance throughout the region, from the vantage points of conservation, agriculture and recreation alike. Our member communities consistently update their Open Space & Recreation Plans, and seven cities and towns have passed the Community Preservation



Act, which allows for participating municipalities to set aside local tax revenues for the purposes of preserving open space, developing affordable housing and protecting historic resources.

Natural Resource Protection Plans, Programs and Policies in the Merrimack Valley, 2018

Community	Open Space Plan Status - Expiration	Passed Community Preservation Act - date passed	Agricultural Commissions	By-Right Farming Laws
Amesbury	July 2019			
Andover	October 2024			
Boxford	December 2022	May-01	Yes	Yes
Georgetown	January 2023	May-01		
Groveland	July 2019	May-04		
Haverhill	September 2021			
Lawrence	2018*			
Merrimac	April 2022			
Methuen	December 2019			
Newbury	Expired**		Yes	Yes
Newburyport	July 2019	Nov-02		
North Andover	May 2023	Mar-01		
Rowley	October 2021	May-01	Yes	Yes
Salisbury	November 2021		Yes	Yes
West Newbury	Expired***	May-06		

Source: MVPC as of May 2018

* Lawrence completed a draft OSRP in Spring 2018 and will submit for approval.

** Newbury's OSRP expired in 2014. Town will update after completing the Master Plan.

*** West Newbury's OSRP expired in 2016. Open Space Planning Committee working on plan in 2018.

Responsive Initiatives by MVPC include:

- Developing the *Merrimack Valley Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* in 2016, a region-wide strategy to recover from a variety of natural and man-made disasters. <https://mvpc.org/wp-content/uploads/April-2016-MV-Multi-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Update.pdf>
- Coordinating activities with the North Essex Regional Emergency Planning Committee (Greater Newburyport) and the Northeast Regional Emergency Planning Committee (Greater Lawrence).
- Facilitating monthly networking meetings of the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative, consisting of DPW Directors, municipal engineers and other senior municipal management officials.
- Providing outreach and training through the Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance's Chemical Safety and Climate Change Preparedness Program. This program works on reduction and safe use of toxic materials by private and municipal entities to avoid contaminant release into our communities. <https://www.mass.gov/chemical-safety-and-climate-change-preparedness>
- Managing the Merrimack Valley Brownfields Programs for Assessment to conduct environmental site investigations, and Revolving Loan Fund financing to fund cleanup of hazardous materials and petroleum at distressed properties planned for redevelopment. <https://mvpc.org/programs/environment/brownfields-program/>



SOAR

The CEDS process requires a strategic investigation of a region’s capabilities and capacity. The U.S. EDA recommends a **SWOT analysis** to determine the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning. The MV CEDS process took a different approach: instead of a SWOT analysis, we used the SOAR model: **Strengths, Aspirations, Opportunities, and Risks**². The SOAR model uses appreciative inquiry to focus on what is known to work, rather than internal weaknesses or perceived threats. A SOAR analysis brings together stakeholders to create a shared vision of the future. This model is more action-oriented than a SWOT analysis and is focused on outcomes.

The four Working Groups each completed a SOAR analysis, as well as the full MV CEDS Committee. While they were completing their analyses, the Working Groups used resilience and equity as their lenses. Does, or could, that strength have a resilience component? How can we incorporate equity into our aspirations and opportunities? What are the risks to not addressing resilience and equity? The complete analysis for each Working Group and the full MV CEDS Committee can be found in the final appendix, and a synopsis is included below.



The CEDS Manufacturing Working Group talks about the Strengths of the manufacturing industry in the Merrimack Valley. Source: MVPC



² SOAR Analysis adapted from GroupMap’s process: <https://www.groupmap.com/map-templates/soar-analysis/>

MV Strategic Direction – A 5-Year Plan for Action

Throughout 2017, MVPC set the stage for developing a new, five-year CEDS Plan through several visioning sessions around four emerging issues in the region: City and Town Centers, Manufacturing, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Transportation. Each of the 2017 CEDS Committee meetings included experts in these areas that talked about the status of these issues and concluded with group break outs to talk about barriers and opportunities in the coming years. In 2018, we got to work! Each of these emerging issues had a Working Group assigned to review trends; identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and risks; and develop strategies and an implementation plan for the next five years. These Working Groups were comprised of two co-chairs, CEDS Committee members, and new stakeholders. These new stakeholders represented organizations and entities from around the region and state that have a stake in these issues, but may not have been at the table previously to help address them on a regional scale. The Working Groups began meeting in April 2018 and finished their work in May 2018. The results of their work are summarized below and included in full in the MV CEDS Action Plan, which lays out a strategy for implementing these actions over the next five years, including priority level, a timeline, and essential partners to engage in achieving each strategy.



City and Town Centers

Vision: Our Town and City Centers are diverse, active spaces that promote a balanced live/work/play environment.

Objective 1: Increase local planning capacity to create vibrant town and city centers

- 1) Develop a guide on how to create a “Complete Downtown.”
- 2) Hire a regional staff person that can support planning and development for small towns.
- 3) Create local marketing plans.
- 4) Develop local Parking Management Plans.
- 5) Create physical connections between the town and city centers in the Merrimack Valley.

Objective 2: Update local zoning bylaws and permitting to allow desired uses

- 1) Update zoning ordinance use tables to accommodate uses that communities want to see in their centers.
- 2) Develop local permitting guides for doing business.

Objective 3: Take advantage of diverse funding sources to support local infrastructure improvements and revitalization efforts

- 1) Develop a regional program to collect, create, and communicate collaborative financing opportunities for solopreneurs and established businesses alike.
- 2) Encourage façade improvements.
- 3) Seek additional funding sources for Brownfields assessment, clean up and redevelopment.



Downtown Georgetown, MA.

Source: MVPC



Manufacturing

Vision: Manufacturing is a key source of jobs, income, innovation and prosperity in the Merrimack Valley.

Objective 1: Brand the Merrimack Valley as the premiere location for manufacturing jobs and innovation in the Commonwealth

- 1) Expand the current Merrimack Valley Means Business website and property search engine to feature smaller spaces, resources and opportunities.
- 2) Host a “Developers Tour” for manufacturers.
- 3) Recruit and connect Boston/Cambridge/Somerville start-ups to the Merrimack Valley.

Objective 2: Provide employees and employers with the training and skill-building necessary to be successful

- 1) Educate parents of prospective and current vocational students and coordinate efforts with school guidance counselors and curriculum administrators.
- 2) Develop training alliances and a communications strategy that links companies who need employees to schools and trainers.
- 3) Connect specialized skills needs to appropriate training to build job/career ladders.
- 4) Tie into supply chain for prime contractors, develop inventory of manufacturers and fill in the gaps.



Lower Millyard in Amesbury. Source: MVPC

Objective 3: Adopt local land use policies and programs that support sustainable manufacturing uses that are integrated into the fabric of the community

- 1) Retain urban manufacturing while promoting mixed-use, ensure zoning supports current best practices oriented toward manufacturing.
- 2) Identify resources and incentives for adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of former manufacturing sites (including Brownfields) specifically for manufacturing uses.
- 3) Support and preserve agricultural manufacturing through land use policy.
- 4) Start a campaign for eco-industrial/circular economy production.
- 5) Preserve affordable housing units and connect them to existing job sites through multi-modal options.



21st Century textile manufacturing in Everett Mills in Lawrence. Source: MVPC



Natural and Cultural Resources

Vision: Natural and cultural resources are celebrated as vital to economic, social and environmental resilience.

Objective 1: Protect open spaces for our natural and human environments to thrive

- 1) Revisit and Promote the *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy*.
- 2) Promote Sustainable Development Zoning Bylaws.
- 3) Conduct a “Cost of Community Services Study” for the Merrimack Valley.
- 4) Encourage all MVPC communities to adopt the Community Preservation Act.

Objective 2: Create communities that are safe, healthy, inclusive, diverse, and accessible, offering a plethora of natural and cultural opportunities

- 1) Partner with the Essex County Community Foundation to create and implement the Essex County Cultural Plan and facilitate cultural planning technical assistance for Essex County communities in our region.
- 2) Promote the use of cultural and historic spaces in the region for events.
- 3) Create regional Food Hubs that would allow farmers to distribute their produce economically.
- 4) Create at least one all-access trail in each community.
- 5) Refocus the use of parking revenues and hotel/motel taxes to fund local arts and cultural events.



The Merrimack River serves as the natural and cultural spine for the Merrimack Valley, providing recreation, economic development, and transportation opportunities for residents and businesses alike. Source: MVPC



Transportation

Vision: Our multi-modal transportation system will be efficient and effective, and can play a key role in attracting and retaining employers and employees to/in the region, in helping individuals access jobs and job training, and in attracting visitors.

Objective 1: Increase the number of people who live and work in the Merrimack Valley

- 1) Increase collaboration with employers in the region to better understand their transportation needs.

Objective 2: Expand and enhance multi-modal transportation

- 1) Support and advance Complete Streets and Active Transportation.
- 2) Expand and enhance marketing of transit to increase ridership.
- 3) Develop a Bike Share Program.
- 4) Explore the feasibility of using the Merrimack River for public transportation.
- 5) Expand, connect and market local and regional multi-use trail networks, including along the Merrimack River.

Objective 3: Ensure efficient movement of goods, people, and services

- 1) Improve upon existing transit infrastructure to create faster, efficient, and frequent connections across the region and outside the region.
- 2) Conduct a feasibility study on ways to improve and enhance freight service in the Merrimack Valley.
- 3) Implement bus on shoulder along I-93 and I-495, which would allow for transit and freight use.

Objective 4: Consider future transportation needs and advancements when planning for economic development

- 1) Develop a Transportation Toolkit for the Priority Development Areas.
- 2) Conduct community education and develop guidelines for the infrastructure and maintenance needs of autonomous vehicles and electric vehicles.



The Merrimack Valley is blessed with a variety of transportation modes. Sources: MVPC

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
City/Town Center	Develop a guide on how to create a "Complete Downtown"	Identify elements on a community-specific basis. To accomplish this strategy, organize local charrettes around key Community Aspirations and Goals	MFG, NCR, TRANSP	community understand the right mix of businesses to adapt to a changing economy	Yes - ensure there is diversity in the types of stores located in centers	High	Years 1 and 2	Imagine Andover, Team Haverhill's "Possible Dreams" charrettes	Chambers of Commerce, MVPC, ICMA, APA, ULI
City/Town Center	Hire a regional staff person that can support planning and development for small towns	Consider the "circuit rider" or National Main Streets program model to create a position that supports small downtowns in the region	NCR, TRANSP, MFG	Yes - this position could potentially survive local budget constraints		High	Year 2	MAPC, RPC, other RPAs	Chambers of Commerce
City/Town Center	Update zoning ordinance use tables to accommodate uses that communities want to see in their downtowns	Based on the charrettes designed to create a Complete Downtown, revise zoning tables to allow uses that we want to encourage in our town and city centers	MFG, NCR		Yes	Medium	Year 1	Salisbury Beach District, Haverhill Waterfront District, Andover Historic District	Planning Boards and ZBAs in the Merrimack Valley
City/Town Center	Develop permitting guides for doing business for each community	These guides will help developers understand the development review and permitting process	MFG		Yes - ensure the guides are translated into other languages	Low	Year 3	Lowell, Salem	MVPC, Developers in the Merrimack Valley, APA
City/Town Center	Create marketing plans for small downtowns	This strategy would promote events, placemaking techniques and other tools that bring people to town centers.	MFG, NCR, TRANSP		Yes - translation and promotion of diverse stores	High	Year 2	Newburyport.com app, We Are MV branding and marketing effort	Chambers of Commerce, MVPC, MassDevelopment/Patronicity
City/Town Center	Develop Parking Management Plans for town/city centers	Parking management plans not only lay out a better strategy for automobiles, but help remove the misperception that there's inadequate parking, and educate the community on how to reprogram spaces that are not actively being used as parking (i.e., parking lots on weekends, parking garages in the future)	TRANSP	Yes - helps to provide more options for empty parking lots which could provide additional funding options and remove the potential for blight	Yes - accessibility	Low	Years 3 and 4	Town of Arlington, City of Salem, City of Newburyport,	Planners, Chambers of Commerce
City/Town Center	Develop a regional program to collect, create, and communicate collaborative financing opportunities for solopreneurs and established businesses alike	Streamline available business development incentives by building a digital inventory that is regularly maintained	MFG, NCR, TRANSP	financing created and communicated - not relying on single source(s) of funding	Yes - accessible to everyone	High	Year 1	MVMB/successor (We Are MV)	MVPC, other quasi-public agencies, Lawrence and Haverhill Venture Funds

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
City/Town Center	Create physical connections between the town/city centers in the Merrimack Valley	Create and communicate multi-modal routes between town/city centers	TRANSP, NCR		Yes - needs transportation and translation	Medium	Years 3 and 4	Essex County Scenic Byway, Field Trip, Roadtrippers	Essex National Heritage Area, MVRTA, MBTA, MassDOT, Community Development, Coastal Trails network
City/Town Center	Encourage Façade Improvements	This could include leveraging minimal grant funding with private investment (requires a match). Use CDBG	MFG, NCR	Yes - this helps business to be competitive and improve their physical image. It could also include climate change elements to be resilient to storms	Yes - ensure information in various languages	Medium	Ongoing	Amesbury, Haverhill, Peabody	Planners, local business owners, Chambers of Commerce
City/Town Center	Seek additional funding for Brownfields assessment, clean up, and redevelopment	Due to shrinking funds from EPA, it's necessary to investigate other capital for Brownfields assessment, clean up and redevelopment	MFG	Yes - identifying other funding sources allows Brownfield redevelopment to be sustained and not dependent on one funding source	Yes - cleans up properties in blighted neighborhoods and downtowns, benefiting everyone	Low	Ongoing	Coastal Metals site in Merrimac	North Shore Community Development Coalition, municipalities, developers, MassDevelopment, Department of Conservation Services?
Transportation	Support and advance Complete Streets and Active Transportation	Perform a comprehensive audit of needed connections (sidewalks) and infrastructure (bike racks), with specific emphasis on improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within a 1/4 mile of town/city centers	CIT, NCR	include sustainable options that consider climate change and a changing economy	Yes - creates accessible streets designed for everyone	Medium	Years 2 and 3	Numerous examples on National Complete Streets Coalition website: https://smartgrowthamerica.org/program/national-complete-streets-coalition/	MassDOT, RPAs, WalkBoston
Transportation	Develop a Transportation Toolkit for the Priority Development Areas	Identify ideal transportation elements that should be included in a PDA and coordinate required mapping and planning	MFG, CIT	Yes - all PDAs should plan for creating transportation options that can withstand natural disasters and maintain a competitive advantage	Yes - criteria will be incorporated to be accessible to everyone	Medium	Years 2 and 3	No relevant examples found, but Complete Streets, Transit Oriented Development, Transportation Demand Management and the latest advances in transportation systems would be used to create essential elements for a PDA	MVRTA, MassDOT, municipal Planners

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Transportation	Increase collaboration with employers in the region to better understand their transportation needs	Work with local employers to collect actual data vs. anecdotes to better understand the issue and how to provide solutions to getting employees to work. This would be a follow up to the Access to Jobs work that MVPC is already engaged in.	MFG	Yes - understanding the employers needs will help provide more alternatives to getting employees to work	Yes	Low	Ongoing	MVTMA work, Transportation to Work: A Toolkit for the Business Community (http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/amviewer.asp?a=1442&z=75)	TMA's across the state, Chambers of Commerce, Employers, MVWIB,
Transportation	Improve upon existing transit infrastructure to create faster, efficient, and frequent connections across the region and outside the region	This would include studying an east/west connection within the region, second track in Ballardvale, and reverse commute opportunities	MFG, C/T, NCR	Yes - encourages quality of life, expanded tax base, and access to jobs outside the Valley (while maintaining quality of life) in a declining economy	Yes - this will especially focus on neighborhoods where access is needed to get to jobs	High	Years 2-5	More research needs to be done for the best examples, as these are most likely individual studies that should be conducted to find the best solutions.	MBTA, MassDOT, communities in the region
Transportation	Expand and enhance marketing of transit to increase ridership	Recognize the need to take away the stigma of riding the bus, make the process (schedule, fare) easier	MFG, C/T, NCR	Yes - provides expanded communication of alternatives to the car	Yes - will be translatable and accessible	High	Year 1 and Ongoing	Need to determine the best model(s) to use for marketing what the region has	MVRTA
Transportation	Develop a Bike Share Program	This would start with a pilot to determine the best model for a Bike Share Program and how/if it could be replicated on a region scale	C/T, NCR	Yes - this removes cars from the road and provides alternatives to cars	Yes - use of translation and ensuring low cost	Medium	Year 3	Salem, MA	Identify a corporate sponsor
Transportation	Explore the feasibility of using the Merrimack River for public transportation	Use Greater Haverhill Foundation study to initiate feasibility study of having a ferry boat operate between Newburyport and Haverhill	NCR, MFG, C/T	Yes - this removes cars from the road and provides alternatives to cars		High	Years 1 and 2	Winthrop and Salem, MA	MVRTA, TNCs, Greater Haverhill Foundation
Transportation	Expand, connect and market local and regional multi-use trail networks, including along the Merrimack River	Provide and market a viable alternative mode of transportation that connects all of the communities along the Merrimack River	MFG, C/T, NCR	Yes - this ensures multi-modal transportation options and communicates them widely as alternatives to cars	Yes - accessibility for all incomes, disabilities and languages	High	Years 2 and 3	Charles River Trail network in Boston, Coastal Trails Network, BikeArlington (Virginia)	Essex National Heritage Area, EC Greenbelt, municipal open space committees
Transportation	Conduct a feasibility study on ways to improve and enhance freight service in the Merrimack Valley	With online retail proliferation, focus on the timely delivery of good & services along with traditional freight	MFG	Yes - it is important to find ways to improve freight as a viable means to transport goods		Low	Year 3	The Freight Story: A National Perspective on Enhancing Freight Transportation: https://ops.fhw.a.dot.gov/freight/publications/fhw_aop03004/index.htm	MassDOT, private commercial carriers

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Transportation	Conduct a feasibility study on ways to improve and enhance freight service in the Merrimack Valley	With online retail proliferation, focus on the timely delivery of good & services along with traditional freight	MFG	Yes - it is important to find ways to improve freight as a viable means to transport goods		Low	Year 3	The Freight Story: A National Perspective on Enhancing Freight Transportation: https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/publications/fhwaop03004/index.htm	MassDOT, private commercial carriers
Transportation	Implement bus on shoulder along I-93 and I-495, which would allow for transit and freight use	Would greatly help reduce congestion and speed delivery of goods and services, especially during peak times	MFG	Yes - this would reduce congestion and help the region be more competitive by having speedy deliveries of people and goods		Low	Years 3-5	Bus on Shoulder Program (PACE) and utilize previous Bus on Shoulder Study for I-93.	MVRTA, MassDOT
Transportation	Conduct community education and develop guidelines for the infrastructure and maintenance needs of autonomous vehicles and electric vehicles	What do our communities need to do to be ready for autonomous and electric vehicles? How do we prepare our roads, budgets, signage? By understanding this, we can better plan and compete.	C/T	Yes - this will help the communities in the Valley understand how to be competitive in a changing transportation environment		Low	Years 4 and 5	MAPC/other RPAs APA Research Center: https://www.planning.org/research/aw/ Transportation Climate Initiative: http://www.transportationandclimate.org/sites/default/files/EVSE_Planning_and_Policy_Tool_Guide.pdf	MassDOT, EV Charging Station companies
Manufacturing	Expand the current Merrimack Valley Means Business website and property search engine to feature smaller spaces, resources and opportunities	Create a "bank" of stories that promote various types of businesses and communities in the new branding campaign "Here for the Making", including the ones we specifically want to attract (e.g., textiles in Lawrence). This would also include entrepreneur resources (funding, support, events) and connect them to State contacts	C/T	Yes - this provides a one-stop-shop resources for new and existing businesses, but also links to other sources	Yes - accessible to everyone	Low	Ongoing	Everett Mills, CIWorks, The Mills, Burgess Center, IndusPAD	MassDevelopment, MVPC
Manufacturing	Retain urban manufacturing while promoting mixed-use, ensure zoning supports current best practices oriented toward manufacturing	Ensure that zoning allows for urban makers/manufacturers and space most suited for manufacturing where appropriate	C/T, NCR	Yes - ensuring the endurance of the manufacturing sector		Medium	Ongoing	Haverhill, Lawrence, Amesbury, Urban Manufacturing Alliances	Kifor, CIWorks, Everett Mills, The Mills
Manufacturing	Identify resources and incentives for adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of former manufacturing sites (including Brownfields) specifically for manufacturing uses	Need to identify and promote the appropriate use of incentives for non-housing developments to protect and preserve existing buildings for manufacturing uses	C/T	Yes - plans for the future of buildings creatively, so they are not lying dormant and can adapt to a changing economy	Yes - if it incorporates disabilities into the reuse and rehabilitation and doesn't raise the cost of leasing space	Low	Ongoing	Vertical Urban Factory (Nina Rappaport)	MassDevelopment, banks, Haverhill and Lawrence Venture Funds, UMA

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Manufacturing	Support and preserve agricultural manufacturing through land use policy	Agricultural manufacturing is still alive in the region. How do we support them through land use policies and incentives? Promote "No Farms = No Food!"	NCR	Yes - helps the region to preserve local food sources and jobs	Yes - ensure access to all incomes	Low	Ongoing	Devens, Lowell, Lawrence (IndusPad)	SEMAP (Southeastern Ma Agricultural Partnership), MA Local Food Cooperative, CISA (W Mass)
Manufacturing	Start a campaign for eco-industrial/circular economy production	A campaign will help the region organize our efforts around how to limit waste, reduce the use of raw materials, and reuse existing materials (reduce, reuse, recycle model)	NCR	Yes - this helps the region to be more sustainable as well as nimble, by creating new opportunities to look at waste and limited resources as opportunities		Low	Year 2	Circle Lab best practices: https://circle-lab.com/	UMA, Ellen MacArthur Foundation
Manufacturing	Educate parents of prospective and current vocational students, and coordinate efforts with school guidance counselors and curriculum administrators	Rebrand manufacturing as a career ("not your father's manufacturing!"). Use branding to attract workforce (amp up "Amp it Up")			Yes - program should focus on all schools in all neighborhoods	Low	Year 2	Build on existing program in the Merrimack Valley	MassDevelopment, DESE
Manufacturing	Host a "Developers Tour" for manufacturers	Plan on twice a year (one large and one small), engage Community and Economic Development Directors as key influencers	CIT	Yes - ensures that we are constantly promoting available space and marketing the region as a place to do business		Low	Year 2 and Ongoing	Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, Amesbury, Salem, MA	MassDevelopment, Chambers of Commerce, Greater Haverhill Foundation, key developers
Manufacturing	Develop training alliances and a communications strategy that links companies who need employees to schools and trainers	Help employers and schools/trainers to identify the appropriate workforce and to maximize efforts and collaborate vs. compete for labor along with a sustainable training model	TRANSP	Yes - creates ongoing training opportunities which can be modified to meet changing needs	Yes - trainings would be translated and accessible to all (low income and disabled)	Low	Year 3	Vermont Manufacturers Extension Center: https://www.vmec.org/	NAMC
Manufacturing	Recruit and connect Boston/Cambridge/Somerville start-ups to the Merrimack Valley	Illustrate cost advantages and quality of life attributes for start-up businesses to relocate to the Merrimack Valley	CIT	Yes - another method of attracting businesses to the MV and provides a pipeline if established and maintained	Yes - outreach would be wide spread	Low	Year 2	Need to investigate models.	EDA, NAMC, AFFOA, GreenTown Labs

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Manufacturing	Connect specialized skills needs to appropriate training to build job/career ladders	Expand upon existing/build new training and apprenticeship programs		Yes - this helps the workforce learn additional skills and employers to find the right labor force	Yes - trainings would be translated and accessible to all (low income and disabled)	Low	Ongoing	Center for Manufacturing Technology in Woburn	NAMC, Whitter and Greater Lawrence Technical Schools, NECC, MassMEP, Massachusetts Technical Collaborative
Manufacturing	Tie into supply chain for prime contractors, develop inventory of manufacturers and fill in the gaps	This would expand the Form to Factory program to connect designers to manufacturers in an organized, efficient manner	TRANSP	Yes - this helps create a sustainable supply chain that is resilient to economic conditions		Low	Ongoing	Form to Factory Program	MassDevelopment, MOBD, NAMC, EDA
Manufacturing	Preserve affordable housing units and connect them to existing job sites through multi-modal options	Given that the cost of housing in the region is prohibitively expensive for many, address preservation of existing affordable housing units. Address the "last mile" issues by developing appropriate zoning for commercial/industrial/manufacturing with housing and market as a competitive advantage, ensuring that zoning supports sustainable development/rehab along with smart growth development.	C/I, TRANSP	Yes - we need to ensure that everyone has access to a good paying job, not just those that have a car (or access to one)	Yes - addresses affordability and access to jobs for all	Medium	Ongoing	Vertical Urban Factory (Nina Rappaport)	MassDevelopment, MassHousing, MHP, DHCD
Natural/Cultural Resources	Revisit and promote the <i>Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy</i>	In support of both Priority Development Areas and Priority Preservation Areas in order to direct development to downtowns / city centers and reduce development pressure on sensitive natural resource areas (e.g., drinking water supplies, rare habitat, trails)	C/I, TRANSP, MFG			High	Year 1	Review existing sites, criteria and priorities in the region. Best practices from across MA and the country	MVPC, MRWC, IRWA, Essex Co. Greenbelt
Natural/Cultural Resources	Partner with Essex County Community Foundation to create and implement the Essex County Cultural Plan and facilitate cultural planning technical assistance for Essex County communities	Revitalize the Creative Economy program, build an Arts & Culture Toolkit, encourage communities to hire an Arts & Culture Coordinator and promote the designation of Cultural Districts region-wide	C/I		Yes - embraces diversity in our communities	Low	Year 1	CreateNYC, Boston Creates, Town of Arlington	Essex County Community Foundation's Creative Cultural Initiative

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Natural/Cultural Resources	Promote Sustainable Development Zoning Bylaws	Greenscapes, wetlands protection, low-impact development, open space and trail protection/development, clean drinking water protection, protection of critical natural areas & areas important for passive recreation. This would include development of a quick-to-read and easy to understand reference for Planning & Zoning Boards to consider sustainable design elements when approving new development	TRANSP, C/T	Yes - this strategy would also include adaptation to climate change		Medium	Year 2	Minnesota GreenStep Cities: https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm Santa Fe County: https://www.santafecountynm.gov/slde Zoning for Sustainability, a Review of Zoning Ordinances from 32 Cities: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01944363.2014.981200?scroll=top&needAccess=true	DHCD, municipal governments, Local Open Space Committees, MVPC, Greenscapes
Natural/Cultural Resources	Conduct a "Cost of Community Services Study" for the Merrimack Valley	Help to better understand how to value and promote the benefits of conserved open space by studying the costs associated with delivering essential community services (water sewer, etc.). Protecting our natural resources could cost our communities less through conservation and preservation measures.	C/T, TRANSP		Yes - should include income equality	Medium	Years 2 and 3	American Farmland Trust	American Farmlands Trust, USDA, Essex County Greenbelt, Essex National Heritage Area, Mass Land Trust Coalition
Natural/Cultural Resources	Encourage all MVPC communities to adopt the Community Preservation Act	Directly funds programs for open space, historic preservation and affordable housing	C/T	Yes - this ensures another funding source to protect resources		Low	Ongoing	Existing CPA communities in our region (West Newbury, Newburyport, Groveland, Boxford, N. Andover, Rowley)	Community Preservation Coalition of MA, E.C. Greenbelt, municipal Open Space Committees, BTA/BOLT., Inc., FONAT, Amesbury Trails
Natural/Cultural Resources	Promote the use of cultural and historic spaces in the region for events	Utilize technology to create a central repository/portal for cultural and natural resources and events and to connect town/city centers, this includes promotion of the www.EssexCountyCreates.org as a regional arts and cultural event calendar and shared resource for the arts sector. Develop a "Welcome Wagon" program for new residents that introduces them to the arts, cultural and natural resources in their community and the Merrimack Valley	C/T, TRANSP	Yes - ensures adaptable and relevance of existing structures	Yes - accessible, affordable, and translated	Medium	Years 3 and 4	New Uses for Heritage Places: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/NewUsesforHeritagePlaces.pdf	Board of Selectmen/City Councils, MassCreative, CPC Committees

Merrimack Valley CEDS Action Plan 2018-2023 (continued)

Theme	Strategy	Description	Relationship to other Themes (THEME NAME)	Resilience	Equity/Diversity	Priority	Timeline	Examples	Partners
Natural/Cultural Resources	Promote the use of cultural and historic spaces in the region for events	Utilize technology to create a central repository/portal for cultural and natural resources and events and to connect town/city centers, this includes promotion of the www.EssexCountyCreates.org as a regional arts and cultural event calendar and shared resource for the arts sector. Develop a "Welcome Wagon" program for new residents that introduces them to the arts, cultural and natural resources in their community and the Merrimack Valley	CIT, TRANSP	Yes - ensures adaptable and relevance of existing structures	Yes - accessible, affordable, and translated	Medium	Years 3 and 4	New Uses for Heritage Places: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/NewUsesforHeritagePlaces.pdf	Board of Selectmen/City Councils, MassCreative, CPC Committees
Natural/Cultural Resources	Create at least one all-access trail in each community	This would provide an outdoor experience for anyone, regardless of their age, physical ability, transportation mode, income, or ethnicity	CIT, TRANSP		Yes - accessible, affordable, and translated into other languages	Medium	Ongoing	Peabody	MassDOT, local Parks Departments, ECTA, EC Greenbelt, FONAT, AMC/Bay Circuit Trail, Amesbury Trails
Natural/Cultural Resources	Create regional Food Hubs that would allow farmers to distribute their produce economically	Create better economies of scale to produce, process and sell goods. Help to reduce/eliminate food deserts in our communities	MFG	Yes - provides additional outlets and revenue sources for farmers and helps sustain farming	Yes - would be accessible to all regardless of income, nationality or abilities	Low	Years 3 and 4	NY State, CISA, MA Local Food Cooperative	MDAR, Farm Bureau, Agricultural Commissions, local Farmers Markets
Natural/Cultural Resources	Refocus the use of parking revenues and hotel/motel tax to fund local arts and cultural events	Known as the "penny" model, set aside from the General Fund to support specific programs	CIT	Yes		Low	Year 3 and Ongoing	New Bedford, Amherst	MassCreative

Priority Projects in the Merrimack Valley

The following priority projects were the result of inquiries from community and economic development stakeholders throughout the Merrimack Valley. This is the first MV CEDS Plan to create such a list, and we anticipate this list will ebb and flow depending on the resources available to implement these projects and the ever-changing needs of communities in the region. These projects were chosen because they can help create new employment opportunities, promote investment and business growth and make the Merrimack Valley more resilient and competitive. While placement on this list does not guarantee federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding, they will be ranked higher than projects that are not included. Each year, MVPC will revisit this list and revise accordingly to ensure that projects that meet the economic development needs of the region are included.

Community	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Jobs Created	CEDS Element
Amesbury	Atlantic Center	The proposed \$40 million project is a 410,000 square-foot athletic facility, with six hockey rinks, a 300-seat conference room and restaurant, and a 130,000 square-foot office building. A chain hotel is also contemplated. This project will result in nearly \$53 million annually to the local economy, based on \$2.3 million per tournament from data projections.	\$6 million extraordinary site costs	EDA; MassWorks	200+	Transportation
Andover	Historic Mill District Redevelopment	The Town has created a new zoning district to encourage transit oriented development in proximity to Andover's regional transit center by fostering a range of housing opportunities within mixed-use development projects, while reconnecting Andover's central business district to the regional transit center. The zoning allows for a residential density of up to forty (40) units per acre, with varying dimensional controls.	Unknown	Private Developers	Unknown	City and Town Centers
Andover	Dascomb Road Infrastructure Improvements	This project involves the reconstruction of Dascomb Road into a complete streets, multi-modal roadway which will accommodate healthy transportation alternatives, and which will facilitate and support 582,400 sq. ft. of new mixed-use development at 146 Dascomb Road.	\$6 million	MassWorks	950	Transportation
Georgetown	National Avenue	The Town-owned 26 acre parcel off National Avenue is presently undergoing a highest and best use analysis utilizing Site Readiness Program grant funds from MassDevelopment. This particular parcel is located within a Priority Development Area (PDA) of regional significance as identified in the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy. The site is currently zoned for a large array of commercial and light industrial uses.	Unknown	MassDevelopment EDA; MassWorks	Unknown	Manufacturing
Georgetown	Georgetown Downtown Redevelopment	Georgetown is currently undertaking a wastewater feasibility study. The lack of wastewater treatment capacity in downtown is universally recognized as the top priority that needs to be addressed. In addition, the Town's Economic Development Committee recognizes the need to install wayfinding signage, identify parcels suitable for parking, and update zoning in the downtown to make it easier for developers to create additional commercial and professional service uses along with multi-family housing units.	Unknown	EDA; MassWorks	Unknown	City and Town Centers

Priority Projects in the Merrimack Valley (continued)

Community	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Jobs Created	CEDS Element
Haverhill	Merrimack Street Redevelopment	There is significant potential for continued transformation in the Merrimack Street area of downtown Haverhill. The City owns multiple large parcels of land, a significant amount of which is currently underutilized as poorly-aligned surface parking lots. Additionally, several privately owned properties have potential for creative, adaptive reuse. The goal would be to create an assemblage of parcels to accommodate a multi-story parking garage with mixed-use buildings and the recreation of the "ladder" streets to better connect this area to Merrimack Street.	\$21 million	MassWorks; EDA	50	City and Town Centers
Haverhill	Broadway Business Park	The City of Haverhill is undertaking due diligence and master planning at a privately-owned piece of undeveloped land near I-495 that the City hopes to transform into a business park. This study could lead to the next large economic development project for Haverhill and the region.	Unknown	EDA; MassWorks; MassDevelopment	Unknown	Manufacturing
Lawrence	Tombarello Site	The City of Lawrence, along with its partners, is looking to clean up 2.4 acres of a 14-acre Brownfield site. The goal is to market the property for redevelopment by getting the site as pad-ready as possible.	Unknown	MassDevelopment EDA	Unknown	Manufacturing
Lawrence	Lawrence fabRIC (Fabric Regional Innovation Center)	This project involves the implementation of the EDA funded Lawrence Fabric Regional Innovation Center project.	Unknown	EDA	Unknown	Manufacturing
Lawrence	Merrimack Street Redevelopment (from Union Street to Broadway)	This project calls for the reconstruction of the western portion of Merrimack Street from South Union Street to Broadway Street. The eastern half of Merrimack Street was reconstructed in 2016. Merrimack Street is a vital regional employment center, and has seen millions of square feet in redevelopment in recent years, with the potential for more in the coming years. Lawrence has adopted a Complete Streets policy, and this project would be constructed with this in mind.	\$6 million	MassWorks	125	Transportation
Lawrence	Route 114 Bridge Replacement over the Shawsheen River	Route 114, an important regional connector, becomes a major choke-point as it crosses over the Shawsheen River narrows from 4 lanes to 2 lanes. This has an adverse impact on traffic traveling in this area (between Lawrence, North Andover, and Andover all the way to the North Shore and I-95) as well as for traffic trying to exit I-495 onto Route 114. Bridge replacement and widening is necessary for this vital commuter corridor, for the safer movement of people and freight.	\$5 million	MassDOT; EDA	30	Transportation

Priority Projects in the Merrimack Valley (continued)

Community	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Jobs Created	CEDS Element
Methuen	Downtown Revitalization/Redevelopment	The project proposes transportation improvements to two major gateway intersections within the 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District (SGZOD). The infrastructure needs of this 62-acre area are proposed to be developed in two phases, in support of new mixed-use development of vacant and underutilized parcels, the rehabilitation and renovation of historic buildings and improved roadways to enhance safety and mobility for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Phase I includes transportation improvements at the Lowell Street/Osgood Street/Railroad Street/Pelham Street intersection, also locally known as "Five Corners" along with an LED street light upgrade for Methuen Square. Phase II of the infrastructure program will focus on transportation improvements to the Broadway/Osgood Street intersection.	\$4 million	MassWorks; EDA	80	City and Town Centers; Transportation
Newbury	Town Center Expansion	The Town is evaluating how they might support improvement and expansion of retail and commercial uses in the Town Center area to provide more services to residents and expand the tax base. Additional commercial uses or major renovation in the Town Center/Main Street area are limited due to obstacles, most notably the lack of sewer service. The study currently underway, using MA Downtown Initiative grant funds, will look at providing shared sewer service to parcels in the Town Center area with a wastewater package treatment facility. The data provided in the report will provide a picture of what a package treatment system would look like, what it would cost, who it could serve and how it could be financed.	Unknown	MassWorks; MA Sewer Revolving Fund	Unknown	City and Town Centers
Newburyport	Newburyport Business Park and 40R District	The City needs funds for the redesign/reconfiguration of the Rt. 1 Rotary and Parker Street, which crosses in front of the Courthouse and heads directly into the business park. It is necessary to create a safe crossing in this location in order to 'unlock' the eastern side of the approved 40R district.	\$1.1 million	MassWorks; EDA; City	108	Transportation; Manufacturing
Region	Develop an Arts and Cultural Resource App	Project involves working collaboratively with local arts councils to create a mobile application framework to promote local culturally significant sites. The application will provide users with a narrative describing culturally significant locations in the Merrimack Valley region as well as a map-based interface to assist in locating specific features.	\$5,000 - \$10,000	EDA; Arts Councils	Unknown	Natural and Cultural Resources
Region	I-93 Bus-on-Shoulder	The Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO) analyzed the feasibility of implementing either a Bus-on-Shoulder (BoS) or a High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane on I-93. On the basis of its review of several prior analyses and its own work, the MVMPO strongly recommends BoS as the most sensible and effective near-term corridor transportation improvement. The MVPC and others have estimated that I-93 BoS implementation could cost as little as \$250,000 per mile, based upon existing roadway conditions and projected improvements.	\$250,000 per mile	MassDOT; EDA	7	Transportation

Priority Projects in the Merrimack Valley (continued)

Community	Project Name	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Jobs Created	CEDS Element
Region	Electric Grid Resilience Improvements	Electric grid modernization investments will automate processes so that mechanical equipment will provide improved visibility, automated command and control, and create a self-healing grid. These improvements will help reduce the effect of power outages and improve storm restoration, as well as improve the electric distribution companies' ability to integrate distributed energy resources onto the electric grid and to increase the use of renewable energy, electric vehicles, and energy storage.	\$220 million (statewide)	MA Utility Companies	Unknown	All Elements
Region	Establish Regional Emergency Management Communications Protocols & Evacuation Procedures	Establishing formal emergency management protocols that go beyond police and fire is critical to effective preparation and response to extreme natural and manmade hazards. There is a regional need to work with stakeholders in developing and implementing protocols and procedures, including software systems that provide emergency alert notifications to businesses and residents. Stakeholders involved should include local businesses and organizations and departments that provide service to vulnerable residents. Focus should include emergency management assessment of densely populated business areas and neighborhoods. Pilot projects with communities in the region would be considered to develop model protocols and procedures.	\$200,000	EDA, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency	Unknown - needs more study	City/Town Centers, Manufacturing, Transportation
Salisbury	Lafayette Road (Route 1) Sewer Project	Proposed project involves the installation of sewer lines along the northern side of Route 1, including Main Street and 20 other smaller roads. New zoning regulations to encourage commercial development were approved, but the installation of the sewer line is necessary for any proposed development. Project cost was estimated to be \$36 million, but a redesign of the system reduced it to \$26.6 million. Town Meeting voted down the project in May 2018 due to the \$30,000 betterment fee to connect to the sewer line.	\$26.6 million	Town Appropriation; EDA	50	Transportation

Appendix

CEDS Committee list

Working Group lists

Agendas for meetings

SOAR Analysis from each group and full CEDS Committee

Visioning session notes

Unemployment Data

Merrimack Valley CEDS Committee

The Merrimack Valley CEDS Committee is responsible for guiding the development of our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Economic development strategy meetings are held periodically, focused on identifying responsible parties for the implementation of shared goals and objectives. Through this process, numerous collaborative efforts for both ongoing and potential projects are identified. In addition, key economic development themes critical to enhancement of the regional economy are examined.

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Keith Ratner	Salem State University	kratner@salemstate.edu
Bob O'Brien	CIWorks CEO/Co-Founder	bobrien@ciworks.us

Natural and Cultural Resources Working Group/Stakeholders

Name	Organization	Email
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Vanessa Johnson-Hall		
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Kristin Grubbs	Ipswich River Watershed Association	kgrubbs@ipswichriver.org
Karen Ristuben (Co-Chair)		
Jerry Klima	Creative County Initiative Director	k.ristuben@eccf.org
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Annie Harris	Andover Village Improvement Society	sgstott@icloud.com
Kira Jacobs	Essex National Heritage Commission	annieh@essexheritage.org
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Mike Mitchell	Amesbury Open Space Committee	davevialeemail@gmail.com
	MA DCR/Lawrence Heritage State Park	michael.mitchell@massmail.state.ma.us

Transportation Working Group/Stakeholders

Name	Organization	Email
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Susan Almono	Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board	salmono@mvwib.org
Andrea Leary	Merrimack Valley Transportation Management Association	andrealeary@verizon.net



Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
*plan * develop * promote*

MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

January 31, 2017 @10AM

- 1. Welcome from CEDS Chair, Lane Glenn, NECC President**

- 2. MVPC and MVMB Updates, Angela Vincent, MVPC**
 - a. New MVPC Executive Director, Karen Sawyer Conard*
 - b. MV Marketing Campaign results*
 - c. 2018-2023 CEDS (planning starting in spring)*

- 3. Transportation and Economic Development in the Merrimack Valley,
Betsy Goodrich, MVPC**

- 4. 2017 CEDS Priorities, Angela Vincent, MVPC**

- 5. CEDS Member Roundtable**

- 6. Next CEDS Meeting – April 27, 2017, 9:30am at NECC in Lawrence**



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

MEETING AGENDA

April 27, 2017 @ 9:30AM

NECC Campus, 78 Amesbury Street, Lawrence

- 1. Welcome from CEDS Chair, Lane Glenn, NECC President**
- 2. Regional Updates**
 - a. Northeast Regional Workforce Skills Initiative Planning Meeting**
 - b. 2017 CEDS Priorities**
- 3. Emerging Economic Development Issues in the Merrimack Valley**
- 4. CEDS Member Roundtable**
- 5. Next CEDS Meeting – June 22nd at HC Media at Harbor Place in Haverhill**



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

MEETING AGENDA

August 8, 2017 @ 10:00AM

HC Media Headquarters, 2 Merrimack Street, Haverhill, MA

- 1. Welcome – Lane Glenn, MV CEDS Chair**
- 2. MVPC Updates**
- 3. Introduce Process and Results from April MV CEDS Meeting**
- 4. Setting the Context: Urban Manufacturing Alliance and the Equitable Innovation Economies Initiative Presentation**
- 5. Discussion/Q&A**
- 6. Breakout Group and Report Outs**
 - a. Land Use
 - b. Local Branding
 - c. Workforce Development
- 7. Next Steps**
- 8. Next MV CEDS Meeting – September 26, 2017, 10am-12pm**



Many thanks to the Urban Manufacturing Alliance for partnering with us on today's meeting! For more information on the UMA, please visit:

<http://www.urbanmfg.org/>



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA
November 30, 2017 @ 11:00AM**

***Northern Essex Community College, 100 Elliott St, Room TC103 A&B in
the Hartleb Technology Center, Haverhill, MA***

- 1. Welcome – Lane Glenn, MV CEDS Chair**
- 2. Keynote Speaker – Secretary Stephanie Pollack**
- 3. Setting the Stage: Transportation and Economic Development**
 - a. Transportation and Tourism**
 - b. Transportation and Priority Development Areas**
- 4. Table Discussions and Report Outs**
- 5. Next MV CEDS Meeting – January 10, 2018, focus: Town Centers**



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA
January 10, 2018 @10:00AM**

Andover Library, Memorial Hall, 2 North Main Street, Andover, MA

- 1. Welcome – Karen Conard, MVPC Executive Director**
- 2. MV CEDS Updates**
 - **Priority Development Area Task Force Activity**
 - **Lawrence fabRIC Feasibility Study**
- 3. Town Centers and Economic Development Presentations**
 - **Leah Zambernardi, Town Planner, West Newbury**
 - **Kassandra Gove, Executive Director, Amesbury Chamber of Commerce**
 - **Paul Materazzo, Director of Planning, Town of Andover**
- 4. Setting the Stage: Town Centers and Economic Development**
 - **Mixing it Up – how to encourage a mix of uses to diversify your Town Center**
 - **Partnering – developing and fostering strong, long-lasting partnerships to support a thriving center**
 - **Being Resilient– how can we create town centers that adapt to regional, national, and global changes?**
- 5. Table Discussions and Report Outs**
- 6. 2018 MV CEDS Plan Process and Sign ups**
- 7. Next MV CEDS Meeting**



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA
April 18, 2018 @10:00AM**

CIWorks, 11 Chestnut Street, Amesbury, MA 01913

- 1. Welcome – Lane Glenn, Chair**
- 2. MV CEDS Updates**
 - **Priority Development Area Task Force Update**
 - **Lawrence fabRIC Feasibility Study**
 - **Branding Project**
 - **MV CEDS Plan Update**
- 3. Merrimack Valley Economic Development Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Risks**
- 4. Merrimack Valley Priority Projects for Funding**
- 5. Next MV CEDS Meeting**
June 22, 2018, Location: UMass Lowell iHub in Haverhill



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA
June 22, 2018 10 – 11 AM**

***UMass Lowell iHub
2 Merrimack Street, 3rd Floor
Haverhill, MA***

- 1. Welcome – Lane Glenn, Chair**

- 2. MV CEDS Updates**
 - **Priority Development Area Task Force Update**
 - **Lawrence fabRIC Feasibility Study**
 - **Branding Project – wearemv.com**

- 3. CEDS Plan – Powerpoint Presentation**

- 4. Next MV CEDS Meeting – 2019!**



**MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
CITY AND TOWN CENTER WORKING GROUP – MEETING #1**

**MAY 3, 2018
The Mills – East Mill
43 High Street, North Andover**

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Overview of Today's Meeting**
- III. 2018 CEDS Development and Background**
- IV. Review and Discussion of Trends in City and Town Centers**
- V. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Risks (SOAR)**
- VI. Report Outs**
- VII. Next Steps**





MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

City and Town Centers Working Group
14 Cedar Street, Amesbury, MA
May 16, 2018

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Recap Previous Meeting – SOAR Results**
- III. Review Previous MV CEDs Strategies**
- IV. City/Town Center Strategies**
 - a. Confirm Aspirations**
 - b. Break into Groups**
 - c. Develop Strategies**
- V. Next Steps**





**MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
MANUFACTURING WORKING GROUP – MEETING #1**

APRIL 17, 2018

IndusPAD

46 Stafford Street, Lawrence, MA

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Overview of Today's Meeting**
- III. 2018 CEDS Development and Background**
- IV. Review and Discussion of Trends in Manufacturing**
- V. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Risks (SOAR)**
- VI. Next Steps**





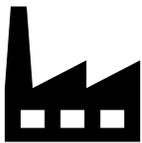
MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

**Manufacturing Working Group
CI Works, 11 Chestnut Street, Amesbury, MA
May 8, 2018**

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Recap Previous Meeting**
- III. Responding to SOAR Results**
 - A. Review Previous Strategies**
 - B. Best Practices from other CEDs/Regions**
- IV. Craft Local Strategies**
- V. Next Steps**





**MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WORKING GROUP – MEETING #1**

**May 2, 2018
Groundwork Lawrence
50 Island Street, Entrance B, Suite 101, Lawrence, MA**

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Overview of Today's Meeting**
- III. 2018 CEDS Development and Background**
- IV. Review and Discussion of Trends in Natural and Cultural Resources**
- V. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Risks (SOAR)**
- VI. Report Outs**
- VII. Next Steps**



MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

**Natural and Cultural Resources Working Group
UMass Lowell iHub, 2 Merrimack Street, Haverhill
May 10, 2018**

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Recap Previous Meeting**
- III. Responding to SOAR Results**
 - A. Review Previous Strategies**
 - B. Best Practices from other CEDs/Regions**
- IV. Craft Local Strategies**
- V. Next Steps**





**MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP – MEETING #1**

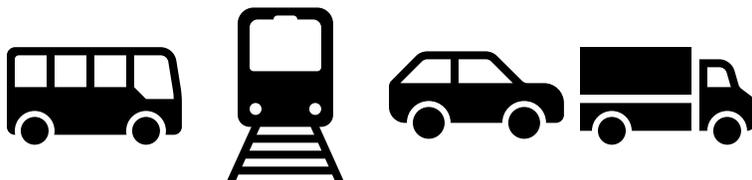
APRIL 30, 2018

HC Media

2 Merrimack Street, Haverhill, MA

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Overview of Today's Meeting**
- III. 2018 CEDS Development and Background**
- IV. Review and Discussion of Trends in Transportation**
- V. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Risks (SOAR)**
- VI. Next Steps**





MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs)

Transportation Working Group

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, 160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA

May 10, 2018

AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. Recap Previous Meeting**
- III. Responding to SOAR Results**
 - A. Review Previous Strategies**
 - B. Best Practices from other CEDs/Regions**
- IV. Craft Local Strategies**
- V. Next Steps**



CEDS Meeting – April 18, 2018 – SOAR Analysis

DIVERSITY/EQUITY

Strengths

- Attractive and affordable labor market and proximity and access to training

Risks

- Community affordability limiting diversity
- Identify diversity of workforce per community
- Affordable housing, Large population aging out (affordable senior housing)
- Losing workforce to other regions

Opportunity

- Transportation for skilled workers to access jobs
- Change the branding for our City/Town Centers as suburbs
- Work with communities to understand diversity and encourage it
- Embrace immigration and figure out what it means for jobs, housing, education, business development.
- Embrace cultural differences

RESILIENCE

Strengths

- Constantly reinventing ourselves (even though it doesn't happen overnight)
- Diversity of industries – not all eggs in one basket
- Quality of life
- Population /Workforce
- Education/Training opportunities
- Strength of existing partnerships
- Attractive downtowns (good bones)

Risks

- Reuse of vacant/underutilized property can take a very long time and sometimes fails
- Climate change, coastal concerns, weather disruptions
- Infrastructure – capacity, deferred maintenance, cap in trade

Opportunity

- Need for training and retraining to address skills gap
- Wealth potential of good education & training
- Using technology to solve/mitigate risks
- Leverage of existing resources
- Leadership in our diverse communities that is untapped
- Continue to reinvent ourselves as a region – stay nimble!

Aspirations

- Maximize and take advantage of area institutions like NECC and UMass Lowell Haverhill campus
- Infrastructure programs that bring in funding resources and new jobs
- Tap into untapped resources (people, entities)
- Promote and grow high margin products and develop the ecosystem to support them

SUSTAINABILITY

Strengths

- Transportation centers
- Transportation network
- Natural resources/open space/ beauty of the region
- Mix of housing in the region and more affordable than outside of Boston

Risks

- Declining younger households
- Brain drain (losing people who are educated here to cheaper regions or to Boston)
- Lack of integration
- Social/economic equality
- Outdated zoning
- Public transportation
- Sewer overflows and declining infrastructure

Opportunity

- Redevelopment of underutilized space – is zoning in place
- Education – highly educated populace but also lack of education/training in our cities
- Retain the kids who come here to our colleges
- Immigration population attracted to this region and needed for jobs
- Transportation to jobs (both a risk and opportunity)
- Available vacant/underutilized space

- Invest in existing housing stock to create affordable housing (reduces cost of building new)
- Define readiness – don't use alphabet soup.
- Use of form-based codes

CEDS City/Town Center Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 3, 2018

STRENGTHS

- Sewer, water, Merrimack River
- Access – Boston, Logan, beaches, NH, ME
- Community involvement and desire to see downtowns thrive
 - Volunteer organizations exist, not always municipal effort
- Towns – natural sense of engagement
- Good “bones”
- Good examples of adaptive reuse in this region
- Master Plans that provide direction (in some communities)
- Pride of ownership (private)
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Good town/city management
- Some communities very business friendly

OPPORTUNITIES

- People want to be in cities/downtowns/town centers
- Existing buildings – renovation potential
- Preservation of existing buildings
- Activating existing spaces (public art, activities, etc.)
- Access – roads
- Clear message from City/Town re: what is wanted from developers, people, activities. Communicate with residents and get their buy-in
- Regional property search engine for small businesses wanting to relocate
- Update zoning use tables
- Reprogram municipal spaces (i.e., libraries for function halls, Old Town halls)
- Municipal staff should be aligned with the needs of the community (i.e., creating an Arts and Culture position)
- District management (BIDs, Main Street Program)
- Manufacturing is coming back – try to keep it in our centers
- Creatives
- Build on the big picture/pieces – i.e., bike trails, but no bike racks in places
- Tap into new residents

RISKS

- Process for small business owners is confusing
- Financing projects is high risk
- Permitting timeline/process
- Staff capacity
- Outdated zoning (lack of mixed uses, outdated parking ratios)

CEDS City/Town Center Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 3, 2018

- Historic regulations
- Communities are aging – not bringing in new families
- MV Branding perception – not connection city or town centers
- Volatile political climate (town government)
- Infrastructure is aging
- Aging buildings – historic and hard to develop (no incentives for smaller projects)
- Fitting buildings into fabric of existing downtown
- Disengaged community or business community
- Lack of parking perception
- Pedestrian/bike connections are poor
- Climate change and impending river access
- Diversity/immigration needs to be better integrated throughout the valley
- Lack of housing diversity

ASPIRATIONS

- Take advantage of waterfront access
- Make a better connection between highways and downtowns
- Preserve downtown “bones”
- Keep Master Plans up-to-date
- Foster entrepreneurial spirit and work with property owners who want to invest in their buildings/space
- Identify champion and catalysts to revitalize downtowns (not just about LG being in charge).
i.e., downtown business/merchant’s associations
- Find likeminded business owners to revitalize – build momentum, support them in their efforts (even starting small – flower boxes, etc.)
- Capitalize on the fact that people want to move into cities/downtowns/town centers
- Investment in experiences instead of things (programming, events, longer hours) and activate existing spaces (busking)
- Renovate existing buildings instead of (or in addition to) building new
- Connect transportation and downtowns
- Create clear messages about what the desires/needs of the Town/City is to developers and new businesses (i.e., master plan, charrettes, websites)
- Tweak zoning to accommodate our vision (this includes the use tables)
- Expand property search engine to accommodate small businesses across the region (esp small industrial buildings) so we can recalibrate districts to have compatible uses
- Reprogram municipal spaces to accommodate various uses (i.e., old town halls, libraries)
- Consider paid municipal professional that can focus on programming and other downtown specific issues
- Implement District Management (BID, Main Street Program, Community Benefit District)

CEDS City/Town Center Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 3, 2018

- Foster resurgence in manufacturing in our downtowns
- Cater to creatives (i.e., design firms, etc.) that are attracted to city/town centers
- Build on the big pieces – make sure there are bike racks, etc.
- Tap into new residents and their energy to get involved (welcome wagon)
- Capitalize on residents who want to age in place
- Investigate local processes (permitting, site plan review, outdated zoning, parking ratios, staff capacity) and streamline
- Create a similar vision
- Balance changing politics
- Investigate historic regulations – design guidelines prohibitive to redevelop and invest in property
- Invest in aging infrastructure (buildings, sidewalks, sewer, etc.)
- Connections for bikes
- Communicate connections (i.e., parks)
- Provide diversity of housing for new families and aging in place (make sure zoning is consistent to allow this to happen)
- Remove barriers for small businesses to move into downtown, programs to connect them
- Integrate immigrants into the entire valley, embrace diversity in all of the communities
- Balance climate change and natural resource protection (address flooding and power outages)
- Embrace techniques to engage larger section of the population
- Create better connections between the cities/towns (see a show, go kayaking, etc. throughout the region)
- Respect economies of scale

CEDS MFG Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 17, 2018

STRENGTHS

- Best education opportunities in region - research, colleges, vocational and technical schools, LHS
- Population eager to train and work
- Commercial real estate cost – vacancies locally
- Available transportation
- Strength of existing partnerships
- History – success stories – pride
- Funding for manufacturing
- Diverse populations/workforce & supports of immigrants
- Connection between research and development (universities) and funding and manufacturing
- Small/medium “niche” companies
- Ability to adapt and change
- A demand for “non – degree” jobs
- Population in the region is growing
- Source locally

OPPORTUNITIES

- Influential leadership (legislators) making a difference
- Availability of space below market
- Skilled training and labor opportunities
- Large corporations supported by smaller subcontractors (allows for increased entrepreneurship)
- Branding to raise awareness of who’s here

RISKS

- Lack of affordable housing
- High population growth – misaligned to skill development
- Not attracting or developing new enterprises
- Slower skill training than needed for job availability
- Not having the right alignment between existing real estate and new manufacturing needs
- Lack of transportation infrastructure
- Societal issues: opioids

Diversity/Equity

- How do we raise wages especially in food manufacturing, to promote entrepreneur/ownership opportunities?

CEDS MFG Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 17, 2018

- Identify companies that are struggling to grow/train more workers across sectors
- Stability of training opportunities (providing for those who might otherwise fall off)
- Consideration of tax incentives, access to capital to accommodate/encourage growth
- Concentrate opportunities in urban centers, with transportation, workforce access
- Population growth here in the Merrimack Valley region, especially with young people (good with aging out workers)
- R&D – growth into manufacturing (supported here)
- Educational system offerings, opportunities for employment within

Resilience

- Expand indoor agriculture research and production
- Attract companies that want to work/grow in within the Merrimack Valley system
- Stable training institutions located here
- Diverse collection of industries (not single industry oriented)
- Ability in MV to grow from small to mid-size because of access to capital
- Ability to attract/incentivize supply chain industries
- The more highly skilled you are – the less likely to falter
- Adaption to new industry training opportunities
- Willingness of our communities to invest in new training

ASPIRATIONS

- Strong educational institutions and training opportunities
- Diverse, eager population
- Lots of partnerships
- Long history
- Niche companies
- Ability to be adaptable
- “Buy Local” efforts
- Improve the last mile
- A lot of food manufacturing jobs, but wages low
- Find people who want to grow in the Merrimack Valley
- Partner with companies to invest here
- Concentrate manufacturing in urban centers
- Population growth needs to match training
- Diverse sectors
- Attract supply chain industries
- Support the numerous small businesses to go to the next level
- Using the branding efforts to link the small businesses together
- Maintain quality of life

CEDS MFG Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 17, 2018

- Focus on high-margin products/customization
- Focus on internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, and ESL
- Provide more affordable housing for all wages
- Align population growth with skill development
- Attract new enterprises
- Don't rest on our laurels – keep challenging ourselves
- Investigate zoning that allows for manufacturing uses
- Invest in transportation infrastructure (connect with last mile)
- Focus on keeping workforce healthy
- Match manufacturing spaces with uses...address conversion to housing. Understand market demands and respond to them. Also need to respect housing demands...
- Living wage jobs that accommodate the people living here, but still commuting to Boston (so they contribute to local economy, culture, etc.)
- Choices among communities and companies
- Celebrate the uniqueness of each community/company
- Networking of jobs to keep them in MA (and MV)
- Promote resources and access to funding sources, especially for start-ups/early stage companies.

CEDS Natural/Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 2, 2018

STRENGTHS

- Merrimack River/All rivers in the region (Ipswich, Parker, Shawsheen)
- Ecological diversity
- Commuter rail access
- Essex Heritage designation
- State Parks & Forests
- National Wildlife Refuge
- Great Marsh
- Mills
- Farms
- Open spaces
- Farmers Markets
- Trail Networks
- Some Community Leaders
- Community Zoning (some!)
- Rich history of writers and industry
- Coastal tourism (i.e., beaches)
- Organizations
 - Local Land Trusts
 - The Trustees
 - Greenbelt
 - Merrimack River Watershed Council
 - ECCF – Philanthropy
 - MAPC and MVPC partnership/cultural planning
 - History centers
- Mix of natural and cultivated areas
- Strong community, heritage, culture
- Libraries
- Gorgeous historic buildings
- Walkable communities
- River clean-up efforts
- City parks
- Arts and cultural organizations
- Artists/designers
- Regional collaborative spirit
- People!
- Theater
- Music
- Youth!
- Festivals

CEDS Natural/Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 2, 2018

- Immigrant communities
- Opportunities for kids/families
- Boating/hiking/biking/kayaking
- Sports fields (baseball/soccer)
- Agri-Tourism possibilities
- Community response to threats to natural resources

OPPORTUNITIES

- Farms: create more opportunities for farmers to sell farm products and make farming more cost-effective (food hubs, co-ops, equipment loan centers). Protect more farms, work with young farmers
- Trails: protect what's there, push for more near businesses, connect to economic development and to each other. This is an opportunity to support / create new small businesses along the trails too!
- Better trail publicity and marketing: develop maps, help municipalities to map and publicize trails. Needs to be centralized information.
- Funding is critical for both farms and trails – especially Community Preservation Act funding
- Protect more open space
- Historic resources/downtowns: encourage more residential housing downtown (close to businesses which reduces pressure on open spaces)
- River transportation
- Partnerships: Essex Aggie
- Resilience: reliable, clean water by protecting forests and wetlands, as well as buffer for sea level rise
- Encourage bylaws to protect drinking water by limiting fertilizer and other contaminants on lawns
- Build on existing infrastructure (transportation, sewer, water, roads) rather than building new in rural areas
- Make cities attractive to reduce pressure on open space, this includes improving public transportation and making it more affordable. This reduces traffic as well
- Protect wetlands: floodplain protection = resilience to flooding, drinking water protection
- Adaptive re-use of historic buildings (e.g., mill buildings) that are vacant. Connect to funding
- Market [Important Bird Areas](#): a destination, preserve more grasslands and open space in birding areas, eco-tourism, Essex County Birding Trail
- More Tourism Opportunities: eco-tourism, cultural tourism, opportunity to market to encourage local businesses around eco- and cultural tourism, but need guidance and planning around business development (e.g., guidance for breweries and AirBnB)
- Crane Wildlife Management Area: Marketing to hunters and other recreational users (hikers, birders)

CEDS Natural/Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 2, 2018

- Forestry: Community Forestry. Look at woodlands where forest management is needed. Managed cuts to improve forest health & create market for local wood products
- Develop App for trail systems
- MVPC as central database of trail data
- Need to acquire additional open space to grow and connect trail systems
- Permission from utilities to use corridors for trails. Need more cooperation from utilities. Opportunity for states to intervene and require cooperation.
- Preserving vistas (Route 1A) as visual landscapes and scenic byways
- Towns: vacant properties along waterways are opportunities for recreational development, wellhead/drinking water protection
- Public Access to Rivers: Need to conserve land along rivers for access (car top boat access), fishing, scenic enjoyment, walking, safe access for non-motorized river access
- MassGIS: better trail marking, marketing of state parks and other accessible protected open space and trails, maps, marketing to different users.

RISKS

- Political change – how do we maintain continuity, civic leadership
- Competing priorities
- Development threats to open space
- Value of open space and cultural resources is not always highly appreciated – large focus on keeping properties on the tax roll. Where is the balance though?
- Climate change
- Engaging new residents is a challenge – if we continue to lose long-time residents, where is the value placed on our resources?
- Changing demographics/income
- Aging population
- How do we connect/engage the youth to foster stewardship?
- Need for public information/outreach about ADA accessible places (e.g., libraries that are ADA accessible, but do not attract disabled population because they think they are NOT accessible)
- Budget cuts because natural/cultural resources are not being used, and hence are seen as undervalued.
- Pollution/water quality/stormwater runoff
- Keeping up with technology (apps, accessibility, Instagram)
- Accessibility – get feedback on the needs – what do people need to access our natural and cultural resources?
- We could be hindered by our own success – what happens if we have too much open space to manage? Example of putting out garbage receptacles but no capacity to empty them.
- Reliance on volunteers in an age of declining stewardship
- Food security

CEDS Natural/Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting:

SOAR Analysis

May 2, 2018

- Supply and demand – we could have overuse of our resources, which diminished the value of the natural resource
- Timing – need quick wins
- Trash/litter project a negative image
- No pride of place, respect

ASPIRATIONS

- Protect ecological diversity
- Take advantage of commuter rail to get people to the region for natural resources
- Renovate and promote mills as an essential part of our history (e.g., Lowell)
- Promote connection of trails (esp between the communities – not just within)
- Strong leaders and tradition of community leaders (promote and build this)
- Continue to take developers to task for protecting our historic resources
- Expand clean-up efforts (and volunteerism around it)
- Connect artists communities
- Continue spirit of working together on festivals, events, etc.
- Promote family activities
- Sports tradition throughout the region (Connect/promote)
- Connect history centers (network)
- Work more closely with senior centers to connect with natural resources
- Promote less well-known parks/trails through mapping, connections, promotion, and other outreach
- Work with utilities and other entities that might be obstacles to open space/trails
- Protect unprotected farmland (5,000+ acres)
- Increase farmland affordability for young farmers
- Increased recreation on rivers/transportation on rivers
- Increase access to rivers for fishing, kayaking, boating, viewing
- Adaptive reuse of mills as a way to appreciate/protect our resources
- Regional/statewide solution to transportation (particularly commuter rail)
- Continue to protect the Great Marsh for water quality, habitat, recreation
- Keep tourists in the Merrimack Valley when they come here (stay longer, what else is here)
- Better forest management (invasive species control, promote community forestry, healthy forests mean healthy water)
- Better marketing of natural & cultural resources via apps, etc.
- Balance competing priorities (development threats, political pressures, increasing tax base)
- Consider aging population as well as activities for younger residents
- Build sense of stewardship amongst younger generation for volunteerism and maintenance/clean-up of our natural/cultural resources
- Invest in technology to address changing demographics and disabilities (accessibility)
- Invest in maintenance of our spaces

**CEDS Natural/Cultural Resources Working Group Meeting:
SOAR Analysis
May 2, 2018**

- Balance supply and demand of open spaces to limit/avoid overuse by residents and visitors
- Creation of agricultural commissions and adopting right-to-farm bylaws (towns that currently have Ag Commissions: Salisbury,* Newbury,* Rowley, and Boxford;* Towns with a "*" also have Right-to-Farm bylaws)
- Using Conservation Restrictions to protect urban community gardens

CEDS Transportation Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 30, 2018

STRENGTHS

- The current transit system connects to major cities (bus and train)
- Ridership
- Multi-use trail network in the works
- 6 communities have Complete Streets Policies
- TMA – opportunity for public/private funding for transportation connections
- Investment in region through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process
- Lower crash rate and transportation policy to support??
- Transportation network capacity allows for flexibility to look at mode shift
- Diversity opens up funding resources
- Advocates for ADA, Bike/Ped trails
- Park n Ride, Boson Commuter Buses, opportunities for Ride Share
- Cohesive regional identity
- ½ of residents work in Merrimack Valley, 25% have low commute times (under 15 minutes)
- Transit is cost effective locally
- Access to healthcare with transit
- Access to riverfront
- Access to airport
- MVRTA is responsive

OPPORTUNITIES

- Extending a bike path along the Merrimack River
- Federal grant program (BUILD) opportunities
- Coordination of transportation resources/assets/non-profits to move employees
- Expansion of rail infrastructure
 - Better freight service
 - More passenger service
- Expansion of bus transit service (MVRTA)
 - Frequency
 - Employer demand
 - Last mile connections
- Coordination with points north
- Capture millennial usage
- Launch a comprehensive public education campaign
- Transportation should be a function of housing and jobs
- Develop a bike share program
- Coordination of various transportation modes/hubs
- Electrification of rail to Reading, increasing service
- Integration of autonomous vehicles
- Install additional electric vehicle infrastructure

CEDS Transportation Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 30, 2018

- Adopt policies that promote public/private partnerships to promote transportation funding (and choices)

RISKS

- Not getting to work on time
- Getting injured as a cyclist or pedestrian on commute to work
- Failure to move products in a timely manner
- Lack of public transportation/options which can limit economic development (i.e., businesses not moving to the Merrimack Valley because of lack of public transit options)
- Fewer locations for AT RISK populations to find work opportunities
- Getting elderly where they need to go (including adequate pedestrian facilities)
- People driving without a driver's license
- Failure to maintain facilities due to increasing costs
- Speed to market is key in current "on-time" economy
- Failure to provide freight options (rail) could limit growth
- Natural disasters could impact transportation networks
- Access to gasoline, ATMs could impact resilience
- Lack of funding and increasing costs of transit services
- Loss of train service impacts SNH/Maine
- Lack of "last mile" options limit transit usage
- Integration of autonomous vehicles
- Aging infrastructure

ASPIRATIONS

- Additional complete streets policies
- Expand the TMA partnership
- Continue to invest in region through TIP process
- Expand options to get into Boston
- Increase % of people who work/live in MV
- Continued partnership with MVRTA
- Connect Bike paths on the Merrimack River
- Take advantage of federal grant opportunities (BUILD)
- Coordination/sharing of transportation resources/assets for non-profit agencies
- Expand railroad infrastructure
- Improve freight service
- Increase passenger service
- Expand bus transit service – frequency, employer demand, connect people to jobs
- Last mile connections from fixed route service
- Coordination with points north (SNH, Maine)

CEDS Transportation Working Group Meeting: SOAR Analysis

April 30, 2018

- Connect millennials through public transit
- Public education campaign
- Bike sharing
- Coordination of transportation modes/mobility hubs
- Electrification of commuter rail lines
- Improve reliability of transportation network
- Better efficiency of moving products throughout/through the region
- Continue to investigate transportation choices
- Find additional sources of funding for public transportation
- Increase freight rail options
- Keep public transportation costs low
- Continue to implement Complete Streets approach
- Integrate autonomous vehicle technology
- Reusing (empty/underutilized) parking garages for housing and office space
- Continue to explore electric vehicle charging infrastructure (funding sources - VW?)
- Better collaboration with employers to understand disconnect between employees/jobs
- Diversity opens up funding resources
- Make a better case with employers for public/private partnerships (circulators, microtransit, etc.)
 - Better connected residential developments with jobs
 - Need better research to make the case (i.e., follow up on Access to Jobs survey)

Ideas from the APRIL 27, 2017 CEDS MEETING “Extra, Extra” Exercise:

What is the Valley like five years from now?

Top themes:

Equity and
resilience
are
common
threads

Manufacturing (food and textiles), Renewable Energy, Transportation, Natural Resources (the Merrimack River, primarily), Skilled Workforce, Downtowns/Small businesses/Entrepreneurs

- “Merrimack Valley is Alive and Well and Open for Business”
- Increased access to public transportation
- Boating and brews on the Shawsheen
- TOD in Andover’s downtown is built
- Bike, walk, hike and visit our many small town centers
- Merrimack Valley is the epicenter of food science and manufacturing (especially healthy food)
- Second hydro plant built on Merrimack River
- Downeaster comes to Lawrence – bringing more medical professionals!
- There will be more “definable” town centers that are connected and active
- Zoning has been strengthened in the PDAs
- Attract more Boston riders on the commuter rail (reverse commute)
- “A River Runs Through It – How Success Flows Through the Merrimack Valley through Connectivity”
- A growing and skilled workforce tapping into immigrants
- Region competes by building equity
- Transportation, housing, education and upward mobility
- Small and large businesses grow via adaptation and technology
- Small business entrepreneurships are growing
- Importing jobs and alignment with historical planning & infrastructure (Gateway Cities as the HUB)
- “Merrimack Valley: You Dream It, We Build It – Alignment of People, Innovation, and Natural Resources”
- “Merrimack Valley: Manufacturing Arm of Boston Innovation”
- Innovative workforce development fills thousands of previously vacant positions
- Merrimack Valley workforce attracts industry
- Merrimack Valley: Home of U.S. Manufacturing On-shoring
- Energy strategy becomes an economic development strategy
- Proximity to natural resources becomes an asset
- “It’s Now Cool to Ride the MVRTA – Redesign of the Bus Line Solves Many of the Areas Transportation Issues – The Last Mile is Covered”!!!

**Ideas from the APRIL 27, 2017 CEDS MEETING “Extra, Extra” Exercise:
What is the Valley like five years from now?**

- **Innovation in connected learning- high schools and local industry connect**
- **Merrimack Valley wins award for social mobility**
- **Merrimack Valley battery powered – moving off the grid!**
- **“Textile Innovation Center is Running and Supporting a Robust Textile Industry”**
- **“Merrimack Valley Communities Awarded Best Value Lifestyle for the Money!”**
- **“Merrimack Valley Manufacturer’s Provide Free Child Care to 2nd and 3rd Shift Workers!”**

Average Annual Unemployment Percent 2014-2018

COMMUNITY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (through MAY)
Amesbury	5.0	4.2	3.2	3.0	3.1
Andover	4.5	3.8	3.1	3.0	2.8
Boxford	4.0	3.5	2.6	2.7	2.8
Georgetown	4.7	3.6	3.0	2.9	2.8
Groveland	4.5	3.9	2.8	2.9	2.7
Haverhill	6.1	5.1	4.1	3.9	3.7
Lawrence	11.0	9.1	7.2	6.8	7.0
Merrimac	5.0	3.9	3.3	3.1	2.9
Methuen	6.7	5.6	4.5	4.3	4.1
Newbury	5.2	4.4	3.5	3.	3.0
Newburyport	4.7	4.0	3.2	3.0	2.8
North Andover	5.5	4.4	3.4	3.3	3.0
Rowley	5.3	4.6	3.2	3.2	3.5
Salisbury	6.0	4.4	3.7	3.5	3.7
West Newbury	3.9	3.7	2.9	2.7	2.8
Massachusetts	5.7	4.8	3.9	3.7	3.7

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance - Department Economic Research

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is committed to assisting our 15 member communities in the planning areas of transportation, the environment, land use, economic development, and GIS mapping. The purpose for creating our organization nearly 60 years ago governs our actions today – to help communities plan growth and resources, develop economically and regionally, and promote community collaboration for the overall welfare and prosperity of our Valley’s citizens.



The mighty Merrimack River runs through our towns and cities. Pictured here is downtown Haverhill, where MVPC is based. Source: MVPC.



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