



Region Matters

mvpc.org

Merrimack Valley
Planning Commission
plan • develop • promote

SPRING 2014

Highlights:



*Sunflowers at Colby Farm
- Newbury*

Photo by: Stanley Slyszy

Contact

Essex National Heritage Area
For details of this year's
2014 Photo Contest

www.essexheritage.org

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Regional Economic Summit Join us on May 20th

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission will be co-sponsoring a regional economic summit with MassDevelopment on Tuesday, May 20th. The event will be held in the morning at the Northern Essex Community College Technology Center in Haverhill. The focus of the event will be to help the communities in the region promote economic development.

The prioritization of promoting job creation and stimulating the economy came out of the recent Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition monthly meetings. The Coalition formed to seek regional solutions to common challenges brings together the Mayors and Town Managers from Amesbury, Andover, Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover and Salisbury. It is the consensus of the CEOs in the region that economic development is much more effective if the communities work together to assist existing businesses thrive and to attract companies outside to locate in the region.

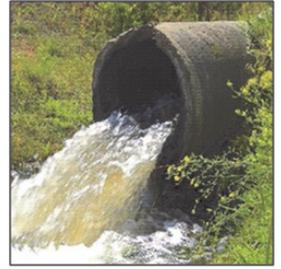
MassDevelopment annually holds an economic development academy in the region and the collaboration with the Commission will allow them to bring experts to the region to address some of the ideas being considered by the Mayors and Managers. Areas of focus will be the status of manufacturing in the region, site selection factors, regional marketing and branding, and workforce development.

So save the date, Tuesday, May 20th and look for a complete agenda to be available shortly. For more information go to www.mvpc.org

*Written by Dennis DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director*

Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative

In response to a request for assistance from the Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition (MVMMC) and its DPW Directors Subcommittee, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission applied for and has been awarded a state CIC (Community Innovation Challenge) grant of \$145,000. The funds will be used by MVPC and its member communities to form and implement a 15-municipality Stormwater Management Collaborative. Through this Collaborative, the communities will jointly undertake a number of the tasks that are necessary for implementing EPA-compliant municipal stormwater management programs (SWMPs).



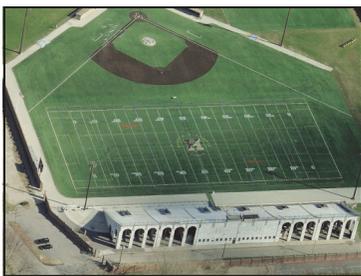
The overall goal of the Stormwater Collaborative is to share resources and utilize new approaches to address common stormwater issues in a manner that: a) maximizes intermunicipal communication and cooperation, b) increases efficiency, c) reduces duplication of effort, d) lowers costs for local governments and taxpayers, and e) results in water quality improvements regionwide. (It is widely recognized that intermunicipal, *watershed*-based stormwater management yields the best environmental results, and that this approach is the most ecologically and economically sustainable method for addressing stormwater pollution and stormwater flooding issues throughout the Merrimack Valley region.)

The Collaborative's FY14/15 work plan consists of the following tasks:

- Developing a framework for exploring local/regional stormwater utilities as a funding mechanism to support sustainable, effective, EPA-compliant local stormwater management programs (SWMPs)
- Standardizing and incorporating existing local stormwater infrastructure information into a comprehensive, web-based GIS database and mapping system using MVPC's MIMAP technology
- Developing standard stormwater codes, policies, and procedures for operating and maintaining municipal stormwater systems
- Designing and conducting a stormwater training program for local personnel, focusing on pollution prevention and good housekeeping practices for municipal operations and facilities
- Designing and conducting a multi-faceted stormwater public education program, with targeted messaging for four distinct Merrimack Valley audiences: (1) residents, (2) businesses, institutions, commercial facilities, (3) industrial facilities, (4) real estate developers
- Preparing Request for Proposals (RFP) templates for procurement of common stormwater management services, equipment, and supplies (e.g., catch basin inspections, outfall catchment area mapping, illicit discharge detection, dry- and wet-weather sampling, etc.)
- Preparing a 'Sustainability Plan' to ensure the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative's viability and effectiveness over the long term.

*Written by Alan Macintosh
MVPC Assistant Director & Environmental Program Manager*

Pictometry on the Fly



MVPC, the first regional council in the country to assemble a regional purchasing of the Pictometry product, is planning for its next acquisition of aerial photography during the spring of 2014. For the upcoming flight, the communities of Amesbury, Andover, Methuen, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury and Plaistow, NH have all elected to participate. This represents more than 60% of the MVPC region in terms of land area. For those new to the product, Pictometry is a unique visual information system whereby the user can readily access both traditional "top-down" perspective photography as well as innovative "oblique" angle imagery. Communities participating in this program and MVPC value this product as an aid to public safety, planning and transportation management as well as a variety of other applications. In addition to the acquisition of new aerial image sets, MVPC's GIS staff will be conducting training workshops to better familiarize users with the operation of the Pictometry system.

*Written by Jerrard Whitten
MVPC GIS Program Manager*

May is Bike Month

Celebrate the arrival of spring by dusting off your bicycle (if you haven't done so already) and enjoy the Merrimack Valley by bicycle. The Merrimack Valley has scenic roads as well as trails that are worth checking out. Here's how to find out about some of them:

Coastal Trails Network (www.coastaltrails.org)

Methuen Rail Trail (www.methuenrailtrail.org)

Bradford Rail Trail (www.bradfordrailtrail.com)

Spicket River Greenway (www.groundworklawrence.org/spicketrivergreenway)



MassCommute Bicycle Challenge

Each year, Massachusetts promotes the two-wheeled transportation during Bike Week (May 10-18), when people are encouraged to commute by bicycle. If you are interested in a little competition, check out MassCommute Bicycle Challenge (www.masscommutebicyclechallenge.org). This is a week long, free and friendly competition between businesses, educational institutions and municipalities.

Bike Week Events

Saturday, May 17

Salisbury Art Stroll

10 a.m. Old Eastern Marsh Trail entrance by the Route 1 Bridge at Friedenfels Road, Salisbury

Sponsored by: Coastal Trails Coalition and the Town of Salisbury

www.coastaltrails.org

Methuen Rail Trail Walk

8:30 a.m. Depot parking lot on Railroad Street, Methuen

www.methuenrailtrail.org

All Week

Merrimack Valley TMA MassCommute Bike Challenge

For details go to www.merrimackvalleytma.com/MCBC/index.htm

Legislative Delegation Discusses Regional Priorities

The Merrimack Valley legislative leaders met with the Commission in February to collectively talk about the priorities for the region. Eleven legislators represent the Merrimack Valley and the meeting focused on how the communities can work together to promote efficiencies, economic development and investment priorities. With funds provided by the legislature through District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director of MVPC updated the legislators on progress implementing the region's Clean Energy Action Plan by providing energy technical assistance, constructing energy conservation improvements in public buildings by Energy Service Companies (ESCO) and supporting solar farm development.

The legislators also learned that all 15 communities in the region had just been awarded a Community Innovation Challenge Grant from the Commonwealth. The legislature funded this grant program in the State Budget last year and the delegation supported this regional application. This grant will support the forming of a stormwater collaborative to help the communities comply with the pending EPA stormwater management regulation being release later this year.

Also discussed at the meeting was supporting economic development through implementing the recently completed Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy which identifies areas most suited for growth in the region. The meeting also gave the legislators opportunities to identify transportation investment priorities throughout the region. Senator Kate O'Conner Ives said she supports "improving the Route 114 corridor as a high priority." She added that "this corridor has one of the highest accident counts in the region." The delegation decided to send a letter to Transportation Secretary Davey requesting that MassDOT undertake this important project.

*Written by Dennis DiZoglio
MVPC Executive Director*

Amesbury and West Newbury Awarded “Green Community” Designation

Amesbury and West Newbury are the two most recent MVPC communities to receive “Green Community” designation. They join Andover and Newburyport who both received the designation in 2010. There are now 123 “Green Communities” statewide.

Being designated a “Green Community” is one of several “performance measures” used by MVPC as we work to implement the Regional Energy Action Plan for the Merrimack Valley which was completed in September, 2012. Amesbury and West Newbury deserve congratulations on achieving this designation and the region looks forward to seeing the energy projects they will complete in the years ahead.

With the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) designation, Amesbury will receive \$173,775 and West Newbury will receive \$140,900 to be used for local renewable power and energy efficiency projects that advance both municipal, regional, and state clean energy goals. After these funds are expended, they will have the opportunity to apply for additional funds to complete more projects. The municipalities also received a certificate from the Commonwealth and four road signs identifying them as Green Communities.

DOER’s Green Communities Designation and Grant Program, which is a result of the Green Communities Act signed by Governor Patrick in 2008, rewards communities for meeting five clean energy benchmarks:

- Adopting local zoning bylaw or ordinance that allows “as-of-right siting” – allowing a project to proceed without requiring a special permit or other form of discretionary approval – for renewable and/or alternative energy research and development facilities, manufacturing facilities or generation units;
- Adopting an expedited permitting process related to the as-of-right facilities;
- Establishing a municipal energy use baseline and a program to reduce use by 20 percent within five years;
- Purchasing only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable; and
- Requiring all new residential construction over 3,000 square feet and all new commercial and industrial real estate construction to reduce lifecycle energy costs (i.e. adoption of an energy-saving building “stretch code”).

A formal presentation was made by Secretary Sullivan of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and DOER Commissioner Mark Sylvia on February 10th at the West Newbury Town Hall.

*Written by Mike Parquette
MVPC Comprehensive Planning Manager*

MVPC Monthly Commission Meetings

MVPC Commission Office
160 Main Street Haverhill, MA

Third Thursday of the month @ 7pm

May 15
June 19

There are no meetings in July and August

Check our website for details on upcoming events

www.mvpc.org

Contact: Nancy Lavalley
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Tel: 978-374-0519 ext. 10

Inclusionary Zoning Workshop

The American Planning Association – Massachusetts Chapter (APA-MA) will hold a half-day workshop on Inclusionary Zoning on May 14 at the Devens Conference Center.

The workshop will run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at the Devens Conference Center, 31 Andrews Parkway in Devens.

The registration fee is \$15 for members and \$25 for nonmembers. Registration deadline is May 6. To register, go to the APA-MA website at:

www.apa-ma.org/event/learn-apa-ma-inclusionary-zoning-solutions

For more information, contact Judi Barrett, APA-MA Community Development and Housing Chair

jbarrett@rkgassociates.com