



# Merrimack Valley Planning Commission



ANNUAL REPORT  
2021



TOGETHER, we  
**PLAN**  
**INNOVATE**  
**PROMOTE**

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Cover Photo: Batchelder Park, Amesbury, MA

*Batchelder Park, Amesbury's highest point, is at the summit of Powow Hill ("Po Hill" to locals) and offers beautiful views east of Amesbury, including the Atlantic Ocean on a clear day.*

## *A Message from our Leadership*



Robert Snow  
Chairman



Jerrard Whitten  
Executive Director

Looking back at 2021, as a society, we continued to grapple with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The challenges associated with this event in our history continued to ebb and flow during the year, forcing us to further transform the way we work and engage as a region and to identify strategies aimed at increasing our resilience, improving our economic wellbeing, and supporting those who call the Merrimack Valley home.

During the year, MVPC also saw a change in leadership as we congratulate Theresa Park for her hard work and warmly welcome Jerrard Whitten to his new role as Executive Director. In spite of these challenges and changes, MVPC staff rose to the occasion as we worked hard to make this important transition.

Working collaboratively with the 15 communities of the region, we continued to support economic development and private sector investments through the creation and implementation of MV Strong, a small business technical assistance program, and by convening some of our largest employers to address workforce issues. Our Environmental Program provided much-needed assistance to protect and enrich the environmental quality of the region by assisting our region's Green Communities and by promoting Brownfields cleanup and redevelopment projects while looking forward to identifying ways our communities can improve their resilience to our changing climate. MVPC's GIS team worked diligently to keep us on the cutting edge of technology and spearheaded the transformational migration of the organization's operation to cloud-based services. And to help ensure that residents of the Merrimack Valley are able to move around the region safely and efficiently, the Transportation Program has been coordinating with Federal and State partners to prioritize much-needed Infrastructure Act funding towards the repair and reconstruction of our roadways and to further enhance the region's transit system.

While the year has presented many unprecedented challenges, our staff and communities of the region have persevered and continue to demonstrate that the people who call the Merrimack Valley home are one of its most powerful resources. As we welcome the new year, MVPC stands ready to assist, wherever possible, to ensure the continued orderly growth and prosperity of this truly great region.



## About the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

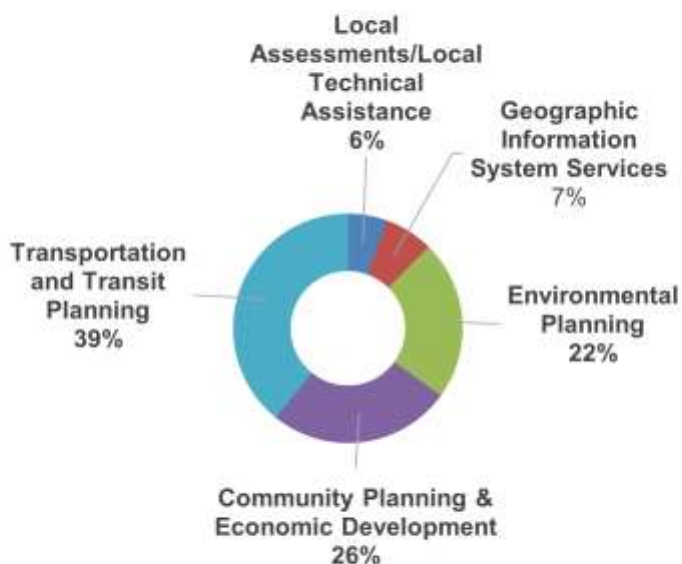
The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is a regional planning agency created in 1959 with a goal of consistently planning, developing, and promoting not only the sustainable development of the Merrimack Valley through responsible and efficient use of regional resources, but to also rally and unify the communities to perpetuate the region's vision. A 16-member Board of Commissioners governs the MVPC, which serves 15 member communities, including the cities of Amesbury, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen and Newburyport, and the towns of Andover, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Merrimac, Newbury, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury, along with one representative for the minority population in the Valley. For more information about MVPC please visit our website [mvpc.org](http://mvpc.org).

### Our Mission

*The Mission of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission is to foster a cooperative effort among its communities in resolving common, regional problems, to allow its communities to plan jointly, and to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated and orderly development of the region and the general welfare of its residents.*

## Finance Administration

### Funding Areas in Fiscal Year 2021



### Distribution of Funds

MVPC's operating funds for FY2021 supported a broad range of planning and technical services in the five major functional areas shown in the adjacent chart.

94% of our budget comes from a variety of largely non-local sources, including state and federal grants as well as contracts with selected non-profit organizations and businesses that support MVPC's mission. Local assessments to our member communities make up the remaining 6%.

MVPC used these local funds as a match to leverage the 94% of outside funding brought into the region by the MVPC staff.

### Independent Audit

The FY2021 independent single audit of MVPC's financial statements is in progress and scheduled to be completed by February 2022.

# Community & Economic Development Program

The Merrimack Valley proudly serves as an Economic Development District (EDD) for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. EDA is the main economic development agency of the federal government and works with EDDs throughout the country to promote regional cooperation and job growth. MVPC is the designated liaison between EDA and our constituent communities.

MVPC is an essential partner in economic development initiatives across the region. We manage funds from the EDA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and other stakeholders to cultivate a prosperous, inclusive, and thriving region.

MVPC's Community and Economic Development Program works with its municipal stakeholders to formulate a common vision for the future, identify priority projects, and align investment for those projects. Two examples of these are the regional [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDS) and the tri-community [Targeted Economic Development Strategy](#) (TEDS).

## State of the Economy in Massachusetts and the Merrimack Valley



MVPC hosted The State of the Economy in Massachusetts and the Merrimack Valley in partnership with the UMass Amherst Donahue Institute and Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority. The event was a high-level overview of where the economy stands in Massachusetts after a volatile 18 months and where we stand as a regional economy. Over 35 people from across the Merrimack Valley were in attendance. Attendees are part of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Coalition charged with crafting and implementing the CEDS. To learn more about what was presented [click here](#).

## Workforce Panel Webinar for Merrimack Valley Manufacturers



Utilizing Essex County Community Foundation (ECCF) funding for our TEDS, MVPC has been working with the communities of Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover to meet with large employers in their communities. The goal of this effort is to identify and respond to challenges the employers face with being located in this region. The number one concern routinely mentioned is workforce recruitment and retention. MVPC partnered with MassHire Merrimack Valley, The Gem Group, and the Merrimack Valley Project to put together a [workforce webinar panel](#) for manufacturing businesses to attend and ask questions about best practices in workforce recruitment and retention.

## MVPC Launches Free Business Assistance Program



MVPC, in partnership with Mill Cities Community Investments (MCCI) and Small Business Strong (SBS), initiated a new program providing free business assistance for small businesses in the Merrimack Valley that were impacted by COVID-19. MV Strong is investing \$250,000 in local business assistance thanks to a fund from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Powered by Small Business Strong's proven

platform for matching small businesses with experienced business advisors and functional specialists, the MV Strong program assists business owners with marketing, legal assistance, operations, finance, PPP Loan forgiveness, and access to federal and state grants, and more. The advisors, who offer a wealth of knowledge in their field and are available in five languages, are fully paid through the program to provide businesses with their services at no cost to the business. As of December 2021, over 80 businesses have benefitted from the Merrimack Valley Strong Program. For more information visit [WeAreMV.com](http://WeAreMV.com).

## MVPC Supports the Expansion of the Revolving Test Kitchen



In December of 2020, MVPC announced that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded the Lawrence Partnership a \$600,000 grant to support the expansion of the Revolving Test Kitchen (RTK), an incubator which invests in small local food-based businesses in Lawrence. Due to its position as the region's Economic Development District (EDD), MVPC serves as the grant administrator and oversees the project.

Over the past year, MVPC has worked with the Lawrence Partnership as it has expanded its operations at the RTK. The newly renovated space, which opened in August of 2021, is located at the street-level entrance at Northern Essex Community College's Lawrence campus on Common Street. Featuring shared culinary workspaces with multiple prep and cook spaces with dry and cold storage, RTK will accommodate a range of food businesses, including food trucks, catering companies, small batch manufacturers, and food delivery companies, while offering its members access to culinary and business experts in the food industry.





# Environmental Program



## Building Capacity for Green Infrastructure Investments

MVPC is excited to congratulate the Town of Rowley on its designation as a Green Community! With the aid of MVPC's environmental program, Rowley joins 12 other Merrimack Valley communities committed to reducing municipal energy consumption by 20% over five years. Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito announced 9 new cities and towns committed to implementing clean energy projects, bringing the total designated Green Communities to 280 state-wide.

To earn the Green Community designation cities and towns have committed to reducing their energy consumption amounting to savings of 86,875 MMBtu's in five years. That is the energy use equivalent to heating and powering nearly 673 homes, and reducing GHG emissions of 5,804 tons; the equivalent to taking 1,222 cars off the road!

In 2021, MVPC received a Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) grant to continue funding work with communities of the region to assist them with Green Communities requirements.

As a part of our REPA work, MVPC will also further assist in the development of clean energy resources regionally by investigating electrification of our transportation system. The work is expected to take place during 2022, and will provide communities with model bylaw language, data and resources to support electrification planning.



## Preparing Communities in Climate Resiliency

The Baker-Polito administration released the 2021 Action Grants for the [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program](#) (MVP). This round of resiliency funding awarded over \$21 million in Action Grants to Massachusetts cities and towns. Andover, Groveland, Haverhill, Methuen, and Lawrence were among the recipients.

Every community in the Merrimack Valley has completed the MVP designation process and is eligible to apply for competitive grants to implement priority actions to adapt to climate change. As a certified MVP Provider, MVPC has assisted the communities of Andover, Lawrence, Merrimac, Methuen, North Andover and Rowley as well as other communities in the MVP planning process.

Congratulations to these and all of the Merrimack Valley communities who have made climate change planning and implementation a priority for the region.

Priority projects funded through MVP Action Grants in the Merrimack Valley include:

**Andover** – Shawsheen River Watershed Land Conservation Planning and Prioritization for Climate Resilience and Environmental Justice \$131,700

**Groveland** – Johnson Creek Watershed Flood Resiliency Project \$82,186

**Haverhill** – Little River Dam Removal and River Restoration \$475,000

**Methuen and Lawrence** – Searles Pond/Bloody Brook Corridor Resilience Planning \$80,250



## Integrating Strategies for Enhanced Climate Planning



North Andover Select Board took a major step toward climate resiliency as it voted to adopt the *Town of North Andover Multi-Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan September 2021*. The plan, authored by MVPC, takes a unique, integrated approach to climate planning aimed at enhancing the town's preparedness for climate impacts. During 2021 the document was also approved by the Federal and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agencies (FEMA and MEMA).

North Andover's local Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) took a comprehensive approach by also incorporating climate change resulting in community eligibility for future [FEMA funding](#). MVPC worked with town staff and community stakeholders to complete this integrated planning process virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic using new Story-Map technology. To access North Andover's MVP StoryMap [click here](#).

Upon completing the MVP/HMP planning process, North Andover became eligible to apply for competitive action grants to implement priority projects. North Andover was one of three communities MVPC assisted with a Hazard Mitigation Plan update in 2021, including Merrimac and Newburyport.

Hoping to elevate this effort regionally, MVPC worked with the City of Lawrence to apply for a Building Resilient Infrastructure (BRIC) grant to update the Regional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan first drafted in 2016.

## Guiding Communities Through Stormwater Requirements

At the end of 2020, MVPC received an MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant from Mass DEP as part of the Baker-Polito Administration's effort to assist five multi-community stormwater coalitions across the state in helping their communities meet existing and upcoming stormwater requirements.

Throughout 2021, MVPC worked with each member community to identify municipally-owned properties that were suitable for stormwater management retrofits. With initial sites identified, the GIS department utilized the state procured Lidar data and Digital Elevation Model to derive approximate catchment areas for each site that helped to visualize site suitability and project plans.



MVPC presented this geospatial tool to the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative, a coalition of representatives from each community at the June meeting. Recently MVPC received additional MS4 Grant funding to continue compliance assistance efforts by reviewing community zoning bylaws and regulatory ordinances for stormwater runoff mitigation.

In addition to regional stormwater management, MVPC assists the communities of Boxford, Georgetown, and Rowley with MS4 permit requirements.

## MVPC Brownfields Program - 15 Years in the Making



*Clipper City Rail Trail (before cleanup) - Newburyport*

### MVPC's Role in Addressing Brownfields

MVPC funds Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, which involve site inspection and a review of publicly available documents. Based on the results of the Phase I assessment, some sites require additional assessment (Phase II), including soil and groundwater testing. Further assessment activities can include remediation planning to clean the site for future use. 2021 saw the successful conclusion of its fourth EPA grant funding such assessment projects. During this four (4) year contract, MVPC working with its environmental consultants and Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) Credere Associates, LLC., provided a variety of technical assessment assistance on a total of 12 properties in the Merrimack Valley communities of Amesbury, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, and Newburyport. MVPC has applied for additional funding to continue this offering in 2022 and beyond.

*EPA defines a brownfields site as real property which, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. As such, brownfields are sites with known or perceived contamination.*

*MVPC has been assisting its municipalities clean their Brownfields properties with funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the past 15 years.*

### Cleanup and Redevelopment

To date MVPC has been awarded almost 2 million dollars from the EPA to establish a revolving loan fund (RLF) for contamination cleanup. The 12 year RLF program has also begun to yield program income allowing for a broader scope of funding options. With this funding, MVPC offers grants and low interest loans to eligible public and private sector entities to remediate Brownfields sites in the region. MVPC's EPA RLF funding has contributed to several projects in the Merrimack Valley over the years and most recently to two major efforts in Newburyport and Merrimac. The Newburyport Clipper City Rail Trail project included property originally acquired by the City that was found to be contaminated with PCB's. MVPC assisted the City with the characterization of the PCB's and in providing subgrant funding. The multi-use trail was successfully opened to the public in June 2021 and is also part of a resiliency berm that protects the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant during extreme storm events. MVPC also provided remediation funding with a loan and subgrant subgrant for clean up of the Merrimac Coastal Metals site located in downtown Merrimac. The former Coastal Metals facility sustained soil and groundwater contamination from past industrial operations. Once cleaned, the town plans to use the property for low and moderate-income multi-family housing. With the RLF funding almost completely distributed toward these worthwhile efforts and others, MVPC will plan to apply for a recapitalization of its program in 2022.

## Monitoring the Health of the Merrimack River

The Merrimack River District Commission (MRDC) was created through State Legislation to establish a consistent, unified framework for decisions and funding priorities for the Merrimack River Basin, and to serve as a first step toward improved coordination of activities and integrated management of the Merrimack River. Comprised of municipalities and planning entities along the river in Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire, the MRDC worked with environmental consultant, Brown and Caldwell to develop an Early Alert Monitor tool to identify Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) events. The effort focused on reviewing current reporting procedures and developing a method to capture and compile the data into one centralized location. Work in this area is being finalized with expected completion during 2022. Once complete the web-based application will deliver real-time updates on CSO events and the potential risk of elevated E. Coli levels.



*Jay McLaren Memorial Trail— Merrimac*

## The Value of Our Open Spaces

Open Space plays a critical role in the region by serving as a habitat for plants and wildlife and providing recreation opportunities for its residents. These areas incorporate trails that expand our transportation network, increase revenue through local events, and aid in the management of stormwater—all while providing natural beauty to our communities. Protecting and expanding this valuable resource is the responsibility of many groups including federal, state, regional, and municipal agencies working alongside land trusts, non-profits, and local residents.

As part of this effort, MVPC worked with the Town of West Newbury to develop a Conservation Restriction and Open Space Monitoring Application. This map-centric application is designed to provide a more streamlined approach to managing a municipalities' open space resources. The application allows individuals the ability to edit GIS-based data for each conservation restriction (CR) both in the field and in the office. Users have the ability to update key pieces of information about a CR, take baseline photos to track changes over time, attach legal documents to a property, or identify maintenance needs. The data collected in the application is also instantly available in the communities Municipal Information Mapping Access Program (MIMAP) where detailed reports can be produced allowing conservation agents a comprehensive set of data on a select property with the clicks of a few buttons.



# Environmental Program

## Great Marsh Partnership



*Invasive species management (Phragmites) - Salisbury*

Eight Towns and the Great Marsh works closely with the [Great Marsh Partnership](#) and is a core member of that team, which is comprised of local university scientists, nonprofit organizations, federal and state entities, and the Essex County communities of the Great Marsh. Much of the work of the Partnership is focused on restoration and resiliency projects in the Great Marsh. Funding for this work partially comes from Hurricane Sandy Resiliency grants and State and Federal funds. Projects include eelgrass restoration, marsh platform hydrology restoration, marine debris monitoring, dune restoration, invasive species monitoring and management, living shoreline projects, and other resiliency efforts.

## Great Marsh Symposium

On March 17, 2021, over 125 participants joined the Great Marsh Coalition virtually in the annual Great Marsh Symposium. Presenters from non-profit, governmental, and educational institutions provided the latest information on the Great Marsh restoration activities, research, monitoring, and more.



## Restoration Work Moves North in the Great Marsh



*Setting a baseline for Salt Marsh Tidal Regime in the NH Great Marsh—Photo credit: Jenny Gibson/UNH*

MVPC is partnering with researchers at the University of New Hampshire, which has received \$3.1 million in funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for an innovative project, piloted in Massachusetts, to combine marsh restoration and resilience efforts in the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary with dune stabilization measures in northern Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. These endeavors are aimed at protecting the Great Marsh, which ecologically extends across the two states. The project will use a variety of restoration techniques coupled with the latest technology, like drone-based modelling, and will involve stakeholders, community volunteers and students to participate in creating solutions to stabilize and manage these fragile ecosystems.

# Geographic Information Systems Program

## Mobile Applications and StoryMaps/Experiences Shifting Technologies for More Dynamic Engagement



GIS staff provides support for technology-based solutions used by in-house programs and municipalities across the region. MVPC continues to develop and configure mobile and web-based applications that utilize the latest advancements in Esri technology.

Firefighters, police officers, engineering crews, surveyors, utility workers, soldiers, census workers, field biologists, and others use mobile GIS to complete tasks such as field mapping, asset inventories, asset maintenance and conduct annual inspections. With the introduction of Esri's new mobile data collection platform, ArcGIS Field Maps, data collectors are now presented with more streamlined forms for collecting data in the field, dramatically improving the data collection process. MVPC continues to update data collection forms for all existing mobile applications, as well as create new data collection applications when requested by their member communities. New applications developed in 2021 include a water quality testing and open space and conservation restriction monitoring application.

## Aerial Imagery Needs Assessment



MVPC was the first regional organization nationwide to acquire Pictometry (now known as EagleView) imagery in 2001 and has continued to work with communities in the region since to acquire new imagery every 2-3 years. In 2021 MVPC undertook a review of current aerial imagery providers to keep up to date with new technology trends and advancements.

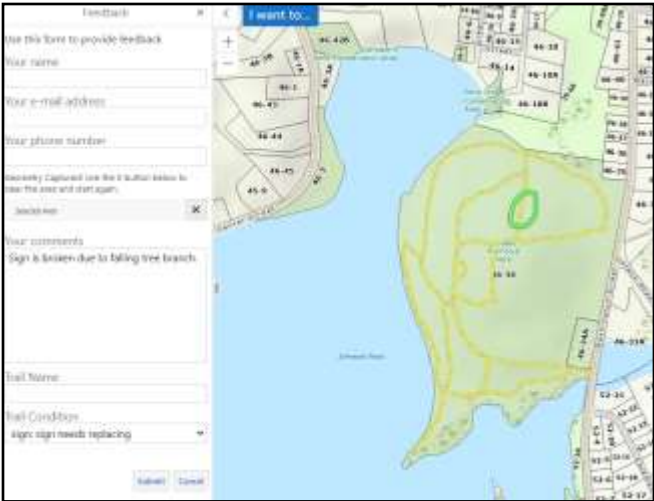
Aerial imagery is becoming increasingly important as new rules of social distancing present obstacles not encountered previously. With the changes in rules, communities expressed a desire for more frequent flights. The GIS Program worked with representatives from several communities to test solutions from imagery providers EagleView and Nearmap with a new set of imagery to be acquired in the spring of 2023.

## Migration to Microsoft Teams and Cloud/Virtual Computing

During 2021, MVPC's GIS Program continued to support MVPC staff in successfully utilizing the hybrid work environment established in 2020. This included migrating away from an internally hosted data server to the Office 365 and Microsoft Teams/SharePoint environment. This platform was implemented for both the agency's file storage and its internal communication. Virtual meeting platforms and protocols were re-examined, and increased network capacity was added to accommodate our growing office. In addition, MVPC purchased and configured a server to enable local backups of the Office 365 data ensuring compliance with recommended best practices for data storage.



# MIMAP - Threading Resilience Through Communities and the Development of the MIMAP Public Input Form



MVPC’s Municipal Information Mapping Access Program (MIMAP) is the region’s web-based GIS viewing application that provides a broad array of GIS data to MVPC staff, municipal staff, and the public. MVPC makes available a wide selection of state, regional, and local data resources. During 2021, improvements to MIMAP focused on building dynamic connections between MIMAP and several external software applications such as permitting and Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software. Additionally, real-time data connections were established between MVPC data sets and various consultants, non-profits, and State agencies to ensure more efficient data delivery, ensuring all parties access the same data source helping to speed up decision making and improving accuracy of data.

In addition to annual MIMAP upkeep and maintenance, MVPC GIS has developed a new way for both municipalities and the public to engage with MIMAP through the creation of a public input tool. This tool provides the ability to configure layers in the viewer so that the public can submit information and feedback about specific assets. Starting as a request from the Town of Groveland to help maintain and optimize trail assets with public input, this functionality can now be configured for a variety of uses and help provide municipalities with valuable public feedback.

## Early Alert System—Newburyport CSO Events in the Merrimack Valley



MVPC’s Environmental Program worked in conjunction with the City of Newburyport and Brown and Caldwell to develop a web-based application to monitor Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) events in the Merrimack River. This project aims to collect CSO events through automated data extraction from emails and post the information to a web resource. This web resource will show CSO events and provide an associated risk level with each CSO event. In 2021, MVPC offered to host this application and the GIS Program worked with Brown and Caldwell staff to configure and install the application on its cloud-based server infrastructure.



# Transportation Program

Throughout the year the Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MVMPO) staff identifies transportation problems, studies them, offers solutions, and allocates funding for transportation projects that respond to the changing needs of the region.

## MVMPO Highlights

Every Spring, the MVMPO endorses the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is essentially the five-year budget for projects in the region that will receive federal transportation funding. These projects impact mobility, economic development, environmental justice, environmental quality and more. The FFY 2022-2026 TIP was endorsed in May and we can look forward to seeing the initiation of two intersection projects in the City of Lawrence at Merrimack Street/South Broadway and Marston Street/East Haverhill Street. The MVRTA will also receive funding for replacing buses and vans and updating equipment.

Construction began on the following projects in 2021:

- Groveland Community Trail
- Intersection Reconstruction at Route 108/Route 110 in Haverhill
- Intersection Improvements at South Broadway and Mount Vernon in Lawrence



*Clipper City Rail Trail - Newburyport*

MVPC staff members were very excited to celebrate the opening of two more sections of rail trail in the region: Newburyport's Clipper City Rail Trail (see photo on right) and the northern section of Salisbury's Eastern Marsh Trail. Congratulations to both communities!

## New River Street Bus Stop in Haverhill



With a hearty THANK YOU to MassDOT, MVPC is pleased to toot the celebration horn for the completion of new pedestrian and transit improvements on River Road in Haverhill just east of the I-495 interchange.

The project started with a Road Safety Audit — conducted by MVPC with participation from MassDOT, MVRTA, and other stakeholders — where safety concerns were identified and improvement ideas generated. The result is a bus pull-out, bus shelter with night lighting, and a prominent crossing equipped with flashing signs and a refuge island. This busy location is close to low-income housing, shopping, and jobs, but previously had no sidewalks or crosswalks.

## 2021 Safe Routes to School Awards Winners



MVPC's Senior Transportation Planner, *Betsy Goodrich* along with *Elecia Miller*, the City of Lawrence's Coordinator for the Mayor's Health Task Force, were jointly awarded the *Nikki Tishler Award* for their dedication to advancing Safe Routes to Schools in Lawrence and the Merrimack Valley.

"Unmitigated professionalism combined with a deep understanding of their working communities creates a sought-after formula for anyone in management. What makes such an individual truly rare is when compassion, integrity, and a true sense of purpose steer their actions. The result is a better place, a surer outcome, and a sustainable path of accomplishment that ensures success. Independently, colleagues Betsy Goodrich and Elecia Miller's achievements rise above others as each garner widespread respect through their actions and community coordination. By working collaboratively on the Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force, they create the definition of an exponentially successful and effective team," said Judy Crocker, Senior Outreach Coordinator for SRTS.



MVPC joins MassDOT in congratulating these award winners. It just goes to show how hard work, creativity, and collaboration can have a positive impact on community livability.

At the same event, the *Dr. Elmer S Bagnall School* in Groveland received the *Exemplary Program Award* for North-east Massachusetts. They were honored for their collaborative process, quick positive results, and enthusiasm. MassDOT's announcement of all Safe Routes to School 2021 Awards [can be found here](#).

## Traffic by the Numbers



Every year, MVPC collects data to help communities, the region, and the state analyze transportation movement as well as assist intersection and corridor analyses. 2021 was no different. MVPC logged a banner year in traffic counting. 86 counts were successfully completed this year. Multiple counts were taken at 30 locations as part of a statewide traffic comparison effort during COVID. MVPC responded to community local technical assistance requests in Methuen, Rowley, and at three locations in Newburyport in support of intersection analyses. Turning movement counts were conducted in Methuen, Lawrence, and Newburyport. For more information on Traffic Counting data [click here](#).

## MVPC & Groveland Team Up on New Pavement Management System

During 2021, transportation and GIS staff worked with the Town of Groveland to develop and implement a community-wide Pavement Management program. Pavement Management programs allow Departments of Public Works to comprehensively assess and manage the condition of their roadways to optimize repair investments.

The first step in developing this program was for MVPC staff to collect data on the surface condition of all town-maintained roadways in Groveland. Nine separate types of roadway distresses were evaluated as part of this process. As transportation staff gathered this data, it was directly imported into MVPC's pavement database for Groveland and then linked to MVPC's new

Cartegraph OMS Pavement Management software platform. Once the data was entered into OMS it was then used to both estimate the current structural condition of each section of town-owned roadway and to estimate how quickly each segment will deteriorate.

With this information, along with the Town's roadway repair strategies and their associated unit costs, the new Pavement Management program is then able to schedule when the most appropriate repairs for each roadway segment should be implemented. In following this approach, Groveland will be able to extend the useful life of its roadways and maintain roadway surface quality in the most cost effective manner.

## Broadway/Manchester Street/Daisy Street RSA

On December 20, 2021, MVPC staff met with stakeholders in the City of Lawrence to examine safety issues at the intersection of Broadway (Route 28), Daisy Street, and Manchester Street. The intersection was selected because it is a high crash location with 50 crashes between 2016-2019. It is also an important pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Spicket River Greenway and the upcoming Lawrence Rail Trail. Though a narrow roadway, Daisy Street provides important east-west connectivity in the City, has had flooding issues in the past, and is extremely congested at school dismissal. Manchester Street provides access to a grocery store and is one of the few connections across the old rail corridor.



Attending the discussion were Lawrence residents participating in the Pa'Lante planning project - which is looking at better connectivity, improving mobility, and climate change impacts in Lawrence. Pa'Lante also includes representatives from the Lawrence Police Department, Planning, Engineering, MassDOT, Groundwork Lawrence, Conservation Law Foundation, and the MVRTA.

The Road Safety Audit (RSA), required specifically for certain federal funding eligibility, is a useful tool to include early involvement of stakeholders in the discussion about concerns, uses, and needs, but it also provides a list of short-, medium- and long-term recommendations with cost estimates that the community can then use to implement changes that quickly improve safety and initiate larger design projects. MVPC and MassDOT have partnered on many RSA's that have resulted in projects funded through the Transportation Improvement Program process.



## 2021 MVPC Accomplishments

	Community	Transportation	Environment	GIS	Comm & Econ Dev	Projects
Amesbury						Amesbury Square Traffic Study
						Main St./Merrimack St. Intersection Analysis Study
						Route 110/Kimball Rd. Intersection Analysis Study
						FY22 Parcel Update
						Updated and Finalized Amesbury Zoning and Overlay maps
					Assisted City of Amesbury of a EDA Technical Assistance Grant Submission for a Downtown Strategic Plan	
Andover						Conducted Traffic Count to Support Proposed Changes to Summer Street
						Coordinating update of CMMS (computerized maintenance management system) software, Maintstar
						Assisted municipality with Conversion to Upgraded Version of Maintstar
						Update MIMAP with New Parcel Data
						Initiated Process to Integrate Verizon Fleet Data in MaintStar CMMS for Newburyport & Andover
Boxford						Support Local Efforts to Initiate Projects to Complete Sections of the Border to Boston Rail Trail in Boxford & Newbury
						MS4 support - Bylaw & Regulation Update, O&M Requirements for Facilities and Open Space
						Boxford Conservation Commission passes updated Stormwater Bylaw Regulations
						Assistance with Pavement Management work
						FY22 Parcel update
						Stormwater Mobile App Updates
					Finalized FY21 Parcel Update and Completed Owner Update	
Georgetown						Completed SWPPP
						Planning Board Updated Stormwater Bylaw Regulations
						LTA Request - National Ave. Map, Upload Watershed Boundaries & Impervious Surface to MIMAP
						FY22 Parcel Updates- Including Property Record Cards to MIMAP
						FY22 Parcel Update and Completed Updates to Zoning map
					Update Stormwater Mobile Application including BMP Information	
Groveland						LTA - Assist in Developing MassWorks Application for Improvements to Salem St./School St. Intersection
						Groveland Pavement Management
						FY22 Parcel Update
						LTA - Road Map for Trash
						Update Sewer System Mobile Application
						Update Stormwater Inspection Mobile Application
						Update Municipal Light Mobile Application
						Update Water Mobile Application
					Public Input Form for Groveland MIMAP	
Haverhill						RSA - Lowell Street
						Brownfields assessment underway at the Housing Support site (and down-gradient) on South Main Street
						CMMS support - MaintStar
						Submitted a Haverhill Economic Development Project to EDA for the ARPA EAA Grant Program
Lawrence						Support Lawrence Pa'Lante Project w/Data
						Haverhill St./Lawrence St. Intersection RSA Data Collection
						Assessment of the Tombarello Site is Ongoing
						FY21 parcel update
						FY22 Parcel update
						LTA - Lawrence ZBA Analysis, Conservation Law Foundation/Groundwork Lawrence -Resiliency Support
						fabRIC
					Support Revolving Test Kitchen	

## 2021 MVPC Accomplishments

	Community	Transportation	Environment	GIS	Comm & Econ Dev	Projects
Merrimac	•					Mill St. Culvert/Bridge Replacement
	•					Represented Merrimac at Moving Together Conference on Complete Streets
		•				Coastal Metals Site is Ready to Move Forward with Brownfields Cleanup and is Targeted to Receive a Subgrant from the Recently Transferred RLF Funds
			•			Implement Document Management System
			•			Creation of a Merrimac Document Intake Management System
			•			Trail Mapping
Methuen			•			FY22 Parcel Update and Met with Assessor to Provide Condo Main Assistance
	•					Complete Streets study of Merrimack Street Corridor between Pleasant Valley and I-495 ramps
	•					RSA - East St./Prospect St./Milk St.
	•					Supported Development of the project to create side path along Route 110 linking Lowell and Methuen
	•					Preliminary Safety Analysis of the Salem Street/Hampshire Road Intersection
		•				Brownfields Assessment at the DPW garage. The Structure is Slated for Demolition and Contains Asbestos
			•			Methuen Database Conversion for MassGIS
			•			Methuen Open Space Maps and Data
Newbury			•			Draft Template for the Methuen Downtown Investment Guide as a Resource for Economic Development to use for Other Similar Projects
	•					Support Local Efforts to Initiate Projects to Complete Sections of the Border to Boston Rail Trail in Boxford & Newbury
	•					Provide Technical Assistance for Potential Transportation impacts of the Potential/Reopening of Wheeler Brook Culvert under Larkin Road
	•					LTA - Site Driveway for Development on Scotland Road
	•					LTA - Site Driveway Issues for Redevelopment of Michiros' Garage Site on Plum Island
	•					LTA - Transportation Issues for Reopening of Larkin Road Culvert at Wheeler Brook
		•				Designation Assistance w/ REPA Grant
Newburyport			•			FY22 Parcel Update
	•					Developed Draft Concept Plan for the Intersection of Storey Avenue, High Street, Ferry Road and Mosely Road
	•					Turkey Hill Road Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion
	•	•				MassWorks Project Linking Clipper City Rail Trail and State Street; \$200K Brownfields Clean-up & Assessment
		•				Early Alert System
		•				GC reporting Assistance with REPA grant. Applied for Additional REPA Funding for Wastewater Data Analysis and Clean Energy Planning
		•				Brownfields assessment assistance at the former National Guard Maintenance Garage
			•			Initiated process to Integrate Verizon fleet data in MaintStar CMMS for Newburyport & Andover
			•			FY21 Parcel Update with NBC Map
			•			Data, Maps and Updates for the HMP
			•			Implemented MVPC.org Website Page for Demo of Early Alert System for CSO Events
			•			Transfer Early Alert Tool to Server
			•			Create Neighborhood Codes Maps
			•			Manage Verizon Fleet GPS Unit Activation/Deactivation for Dept of Public Services
			•			Stormwater Inspector Mobile Application Update
North Andover			•			Update MIMAP with New Inspectional Data
			•			Created Water Quality Monitoring App
			•			Newburyport Low Street Betterment to MIMAP
	•					Participated in Route 114 RSA
	•					Participated in Complete Street Prioritization Committee
		•				GC Reporting Assistance with REPA Grant
		•				FEMA Approved North Andover MVP/HMP - Select Board Adopted September 13, 2021
		•	•			Initiative MVP/HMP Work, Assessor's Office Support; Reschedule Core Team Kick-off Meeting
		•			FY21 parcel update	
		•			FY22 parcel update	
			•		Signed Contract to Create a Municipal Business Portal Website	



## 2021 MVPC Accomplishments

2021 MVPC Accomplishments						
	Community	Transportation	Environment	GIS	Comm & Econ Dev	Projects
Rowley						LTA - Data Collection (ATR Count) in Support of Continuation of No Whistle Zone at Railroad Avenue
						LTA - Data Collection (ATR Count) in Support of Town efforts to Make Improvements at Town Landing
						MS4 support - O&M Plans for Facilities and SWPPP for DPW Garage and Light Plant Sites
						Designation Assistance w/ REPA grant
						Conservation Commission Passes Updated Stormwater Bylaw Regulations
						FY22 Parcel Update and Miscellaneous Map Changes
						Update Rowley Light Mobile App
						Updated Zoning & Zoning Overlay Districts and Provided Maps
Salisbury						Produced Open Space Map Series
						GC reporting assistance with REPA Grant
						FY20-FY22 Parcel Update
West Newbury						Incorporate Water/Sewer As-Built into GIS Data Infrastructure
						GC Reporting Assistance with REPA Grant
						FY21 Parcel Update
						Provided Updated Tree Trimming, Longline, Floodplain and MS4 Area Maps
						LTA Request - Page School LTA Request for Christian, Create MS4 Map, Cortland Lane Subdivision
						Open Space Update, Create Floodplain Map
						Hydrant Data Collection
						Open Space/CR monitoring application
Multi-jurisdictional						Trails Update
						Updated Open Space with Pipe Stave Conservation Restriction
						TIP - Development of MVMPO FFYs 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program
						UPWP - Development of MVMPO FFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program
						Participated in 2021 Merrimack Valley MPO Planning Certification Review
						Support Regional Food Assessment
						Initiated the Monthly Merrimack Valley Transportation Committee to Provide more Public Participation in the MPO Process.
						MassDOT implemented the Bus on Shoulder along I-93, which was a recommendation from a study conducted by MVPC in 2014. MVPC staff participated in trial runs with the MVRTA
						Jim Terlizzi, Jerrard Whitten, and Steve Lopez Presented at MassDOT's Innovation Conference on the Benefits of Integrating GIS into New Cartegraph OMS platform
						GIS updated Census information in applications/viewers to reflect updated Census criteria
						Intersection Crash Analysis to identify top crash locations
						MVRTA route updates and mapping support
						Presented MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant – BMP Retrofit Sites for all MV Communities
						Outreach on energy efficiency programs to organizations that work with low-income residents. Economic and Community Development and Environment Program are working together to organize this outreach
						Updated MVPC viewers and editors with new 8.5.21 MVPC Properties Data
						Development of Conservation Monitoring App
						EDA Revolving Loan Fund - small business gap financing
					Launched Merrimack Valley Strong, MVPC's first small business technical assistance program to help businesses impacted by COVID-19 recover. <a href="http://WeAreMV.com/strong">WeAreMV.com/strong</a>	
					Redirected MVOpenForBusiness.com to WeAreMV.com - creating one regional economic development website	
					Merrimack Valley Strong hits major milestone of working with 50 local small businesses	
					Held a Workforce Development Panel for local manufacturers to learn about best practices and resources	
					Held <i>The State of the Economy in Massachusetts and the Merrimack Valley</i> event for our Regional Economic Development Coalition in partnership with the UMass Donahue Institute and MVRTA	



# Commissioners



Amesbury

Robert Laplante, Secretary  
Angela Cleveland, Alternate



Andover

Lisa Schwarz



Boxford

Jim Barnes, Treasurer



Georgetown

John Cashell



Groveland

Rebecca Oldham



Haverhill

Ken Cram

William Pillsbury, Alternate



Lawrence

Pedro Soto



Merrimac

Bob Bender



Methuen

Kathleen Colwell

Brian Keating, Alternate



Newbury

Martha Taylor

Larry Murphy, Alternate



Newburyport

Rick Taintor, Vice Chairman

Bonnie Sontag, Alternate



North Andover

Rick Byers



Rowley

Bob Snow, Chairman

Joe Perry, Alternate



Salisbury

Lou Masiello

Jerry Klima, Alternate



West Newbury

Brian Murphey



Rep-at-Large

Brad Buschur

Heather McMann, Alternate

# MVPC Staff



Mary Kay Beninati  
Sr. Transportation  
Planner



Ian Burns  
Economic  
Development Specialist



Jen Dunlap  
Finance Director & HR  
Coordinator



Betsy Goodrich  
Sr. Transportation  
Planner



Jennifer Hughes  
Environmental  
Program Manager



Aaron A. Hume  
GIS Technician



Anthony Komornick  
Transportation  
Program Manager



Nancy Lavalley  
Office Administrator



Steve Lopez, GISP  
GIS Program Manager



Mikayla Minor  
GIS Analyst



Daniel Ovalle  
Field Services  
Specialist



Theresa Park  
Former Executive Director



Peter Phippen  
Coastal Coordinator



Nate Robertson  
Community & Economic  
Development  
Program Manager



Jim Terlizzi  
Transportation  
Engineer



Jerrard Whitten  
Executive Director

# Funding Partners

## Federal

EDA - Economic Development Administration  
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency  
FHWA - Federal Highway Administration  
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Administration  
FTA - Federal Transit Administration  
NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

## State

CZM - Coastal Zone Management  
DEP - Department of Environmental Protection  
DHCD - Department of Housing and Community Development  
DMF - Division of Marine Fisheries  
DOER - Department of Energy Resources  
EOHED - Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development  
EOEEA - Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
MassDOT - Massachusetts Department of Transportation  
MEMA - Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

## Local

MVRTA - Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority  
LEADS - Leaders Engaged and Activated to Drive Systemwide Change

## Non-Profit

ECCF - Essex County Community Foundation  
Greenscapes NorthShore  
Lawrence Partnership  
National Wildlife Federation



