

# MERRIMACK VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2023–2028

**DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

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# INTRODUCTION

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**CEDS Accomplishments  
Since 2018**

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# INTRODUCTION: THE 2023–2028 CEDS

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a five year strategic plan for the future of the Merrimack Valley's economy. The CEDS is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), part of the Department of Commerce. As an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD), the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is charged with planning and executing the CEDS on a five year basis.

This CEDS document is the culmination of a year-long planning effort that brought together over 40 economic development stakeholders from across the region, representing state & local governments, nonprofit organizations, community development organizations, and local business leaders. Together, the CEDS Committee met monthly to strategize around the top priorities for the future of the region's economy. A full list of the committee can be found in Appendix I.

Beyond acting as a guiding document for framing the next five years of work in the Merrimack Valley, the CEDS aligns priorities to create actionable recommendations and priority projects for local governments and organizations to undertake over the next half decade. Although each individual project may not require the work of all partners, the CEDS as a whole can only be implemented with the help of all organizations involved in its creation.

This CEDS document is laid out in the same way the CEDS Committee undertook its planning process. Beginning with analyzing regional data to understand the current conditions of the Merrimack Valley's economy, the committee then used the data to create a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the region. Informed by the data and SWOT analysis, the committee drafted five main pillars—and under each pillar, developed objectives and actionable strategies. With the objectives and strategies in mind, the CEDS committee identified priority projects and measures of success.

This CEDS is important not only for economic development stakeholders, but for any resident of the region to understand where the Merrimack Valley's economy stands today, and where we intend to go. It will guide the Merrimack Valley through continued growth and success.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**The Merrimack Valley CEDS would not be possible without the work of the entire CEDS Committee**, a group of economic development stakeholders across public, private, and nonprofit industries. This group met monthly, in person, to analyze data, strategize solutions, and come to consensus on the needs of the region. A list of the full committee can be found in Appendix A.

The CEDS development process was led by Merrimack Valley Planning Commission staff in partnership with the CEDS Committee Chair.

**Stratton Lloyd**, Executive Vice President & Chief Operations Officer with the Essex County Community Foundation, served as the CEDS Committee Chair, providing guidance, input, stakeholder engagement, and support throughout the planning process.

**The Following MVPC Staff made significant contributions to the planning process and production of this final plan:**

**Jerrard Whitten** | Executive Director

**Jennifer Dunlap** | Deputy Director / Finance Director

**Ian Burns** | Community & Economic Development Program Coordinator

**Lauren Keisling** | Community Planner

**Kayla Rennie** | Community & Economic Development Planner

**Tony Collins** | Transportation Planner

**The development of this CEDS is funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration under the U.S. Department of Commerce**

# 2018–2023 CEDS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2018 CEDS had four main pillars off of which to build success over its five years: City & Town Centers, Manufacturing, Natural and Cultural Resources, and Transportation. Under each of these pillars were objectives and strategies that informed the action plan. Significant progress has been made under the guidance of the 2018 CEDS, while some objectives will be pulled forward into this newest edition of the CEDS. Below are a few key milestones accomplished under the objectives of the 2018-2023 CEDS.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Protect open spaces for our natural and human environments to thrive

- Began an update to the regional Priority Growth Strategy, which will identify priority development and priority preservation areas
- Completed Open Space and Recreation plans in local cities and towns

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

- Completed the Essex County Cultural Plan in partnership with the Essex County Community Foundation

## TRANSPORTATION

### Increase the number of people who live and work in the Merrimack Valley

- Since 2018 the Merrimack Valley has continued to grow in population, and 53,000 residents now live and work in the region.

### Expand and enhance multi-modal transportation

- MeVa transit became fare-free system wide
- MeVa buses run every half hour on Lawrence

routes, up from every hour.

- Methuen Rail Trail completed, with design in progress on the Lawrence extension
- MeVa Transit received funding from USDOT to build two solar ferries for transportation on the Merrimack River
- New MeVa bus service in Groveland
- First protected bike lane in the region is planned in the City of Methuen

### Ensure efficient movement of goods, people, and services

- Bus on shoulder implemented along I-93
- Bus service now runs every 30 minutes in Lawrence

### Consider future transportation needs and advancements when planning for economic development

- Began electric vehicle charging station mapping and planning for all cities and towns
- Incentivizing development to occur near transit nodes
- Bus routes added to Haverhill's Broadway business park, and being planned for new Amazon facility in North Andover.

## CITY AND TOWN CENTERS

### Increase local planning capacity to create vibrant town and city centers

- Supported the Transformative Development Initiative in Lawrence
- MVPC received funding to assist municipal staff with MBTA communities implementation
- MVPC increased its staffing, providing additional support to all 15 member communities

### Update local zoning bylaws and permitting to allow desired uses

- Numerous rezonings across the region, including new mixed use overlays in downtowns
- City of Haverhill passed an Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance
- MVPC is assisting cities and towns with implementing the Commonwealth's MBTA Communities legislation, with a goal of creating more walkable neighborhoods.
- Each city and town has a certified Housing Production Plan, which are being updated for 2024.

### Take advantage of diverse funding sources to support local infrastructure improvements and revitalization efforts

- City of Newburyport received EDA funding to rebuild parts of its waterfront bulkhead
- New DLTA-Augmentation funds allow MVPC to assist municipal staff with searching and applying for state and federal grants

## MANUFACTURING

### Brand the Merrimack Valley as the premiere location for manufacturing jobs and innovation in the commonwealth

- Created WeAreMV.com, a regional economic development website that helps businesses move to and get started in the Merrimack Valley
- Created a region wide data portal to help show employers the workforce and real estate resources available in the region.

### Provide employees and employers with the training and skill-building necessary to be successful.

- Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation became the region's Regional Economic Development Organization, creating a new resource for employers to be connected with state programs
- Conducted a workforce survey of manufacturers to learn their workforce needs, with a final report that offered key recommendations

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

- Textile innovation center study analyzed the potential for future textile manufacturing in Lawrence
- MVPC conducted an outreach initiative to regional manufacturers to learn what they need to support their growth

# BACKGROUND DATA

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**Regional  
Demographics**

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**Workforce Data**

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**Emerging Industries**

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**Transportation**

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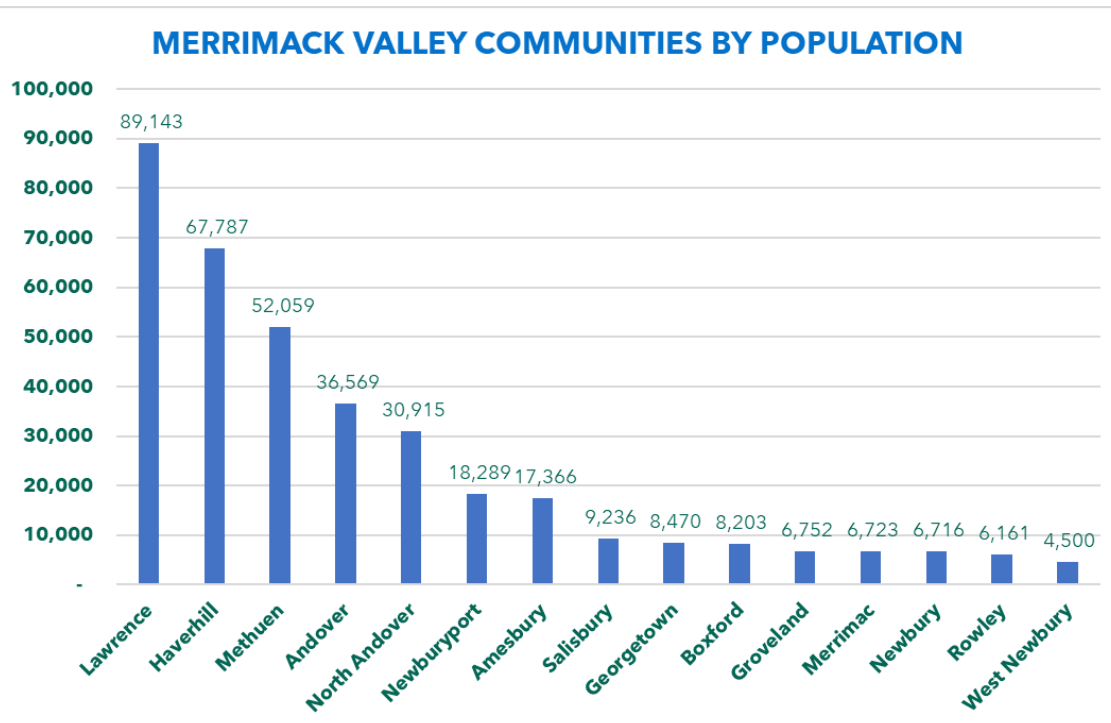
**Housing**

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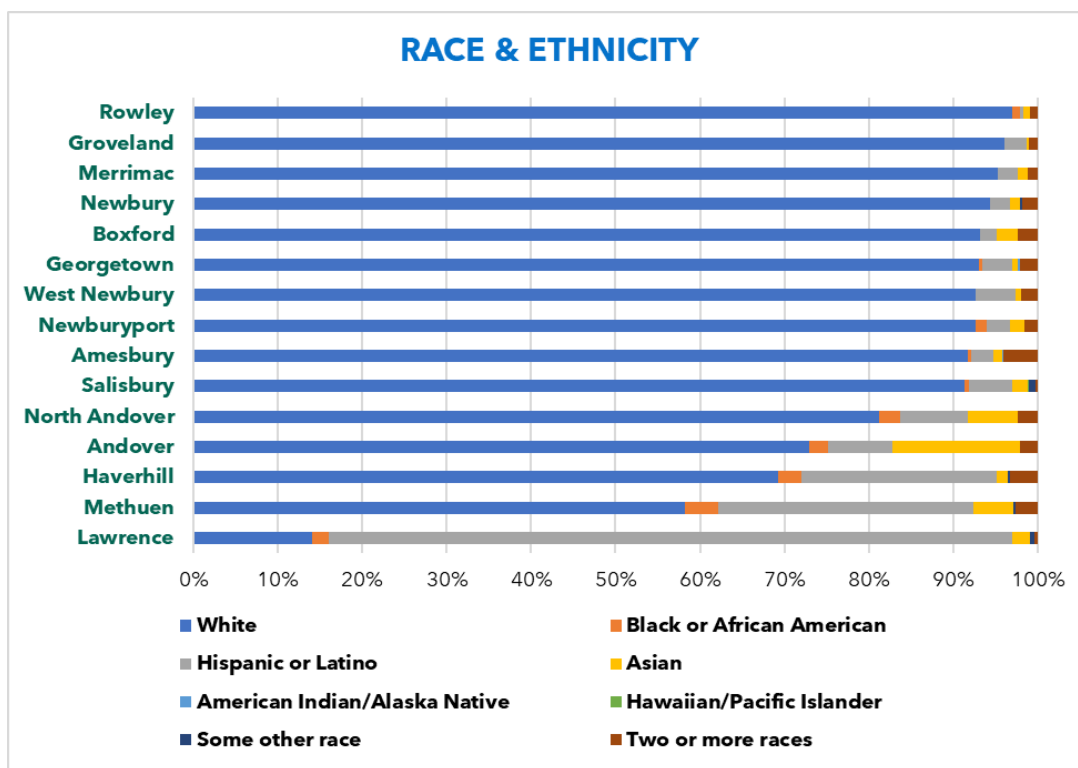
# REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The Merrimack Valley is home to almost 370,000 people as of the 2020 census. Lawrence, Haverhill, and Methuen—"Gateway Cities" that are economic hubs and have high immigrant populations—constitute the top three municipalities. The region is a diverse mix of communities, with Mid-size cities like Lawrence, and rural small towns like West Newbury on the other end of the scale. This dichotomy is



Source: 2020 Decennial Census, Table P1

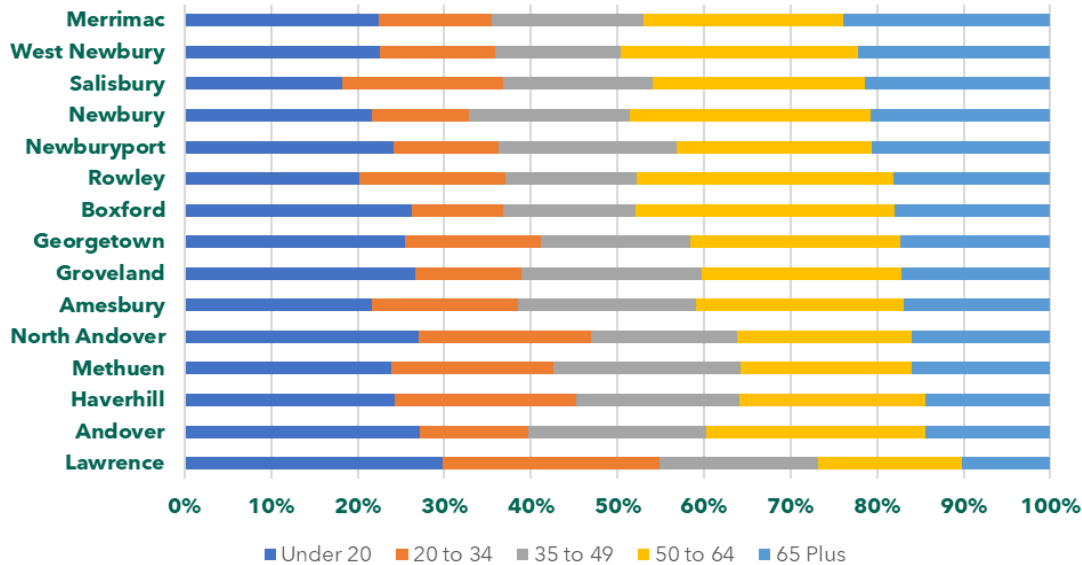
also seen in race and ethnicity—as a whole, the region is diverse, but the non-white populations are concentrated in just a few communities. 59% of the region is white, while over 20% are Black, Latino, or Asian. As a whole, the Merrimack Valley region is projected to grow in population over the next decade.<sup>1</sup> This growth is only projected in a few regions across Massachusetts, particularly the eastern portion of the state. It is important to consider the economic implications of this population growth, as a growing population likely means a growing



Source: 2020 Decennial Census, table P1

<sup>1</sup>Umass Donahue Institute, Massachusetts Population Projections, "City/Town Totals"

## AGE DISTRIBUTION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2016—2021, Table S0101

fewer young adults enter the workforce, there will be a need for employees across sectors. This demographic shift in a reduction of labor force was projected long before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the pandemic hastened the change. Older adults retired early, and some adults did not return to the workforce after pandemic-induced layoffs and furloughs.

The youngest communities in the region also tend to be the cities and economic hubs—Lawrence, Haverhill, and Methuen. This relative youthfulness is important to consider not only for workforce, but for other economic reasons.

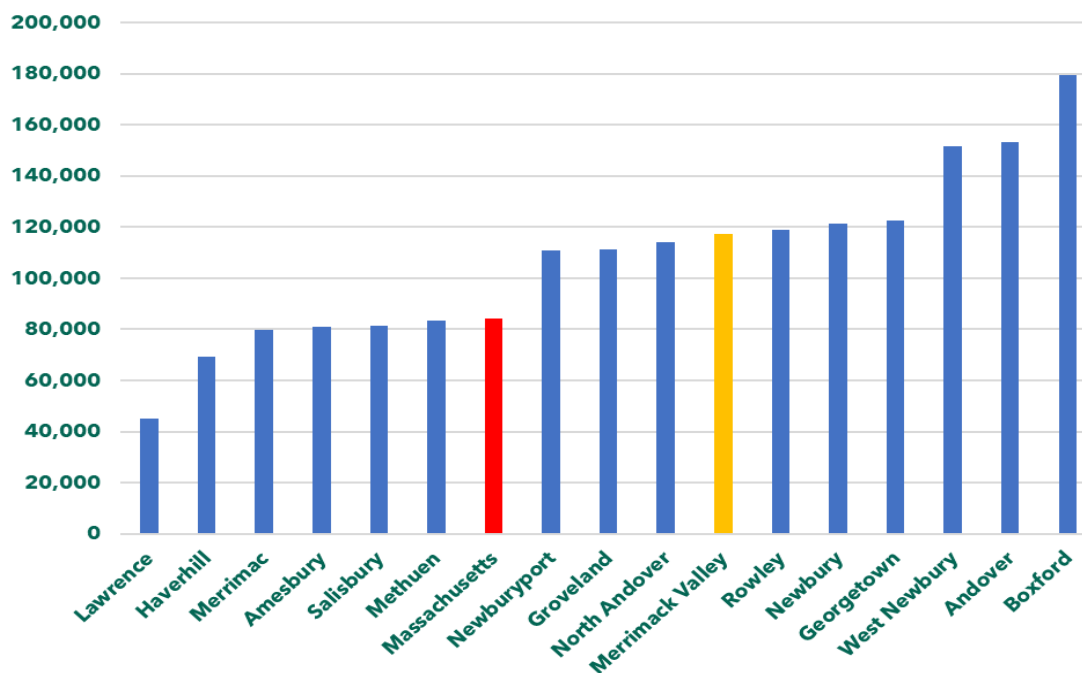
labor force. The diversity of the region also lends itself to a diverse workforce, a trait employers are increasingly seeking out.

The Merrimack Valley is a growing region, but it is also an aging region. The 65+ age cohort is projected to almost double in size over the next 20 years, reflecting trends seen across Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> This presents a challenge for the labor force—as more older adults retire and

Young people contribute to the community's arts & culture scene, night life, and may soon be looking for an apartment or to purchase their first home.

Households in the Merrimack Valley are wealthier compared to the state, but this is not distributed evenly across the region. Communities like Andover and Boxford have some of the highest incomes in the state, while cities like Lawrence and Haverhill have some of the lowest.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY MUNICIPALITY

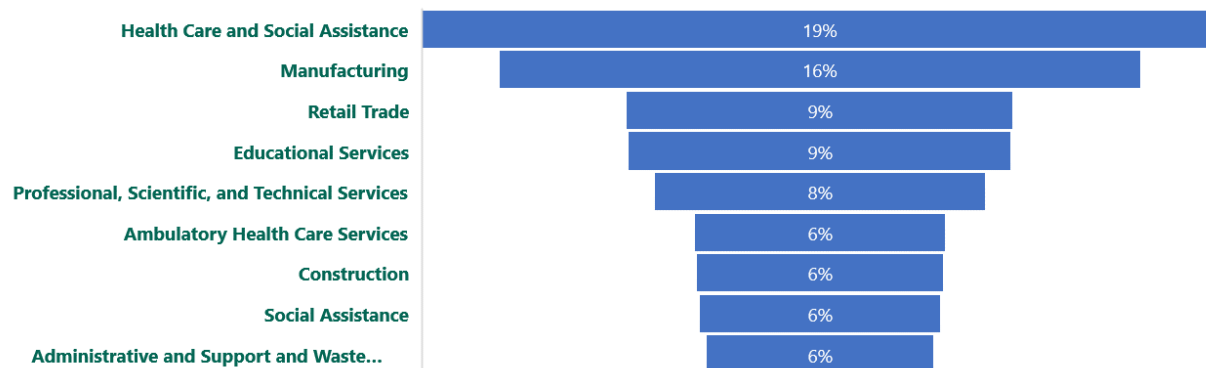


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2016—2021, table S1901

<sup>1</sup> Umass Donahue Institute, Massachusetts Population Projections, "Age/Sex Details"

# INDUSTRY & WORKFORCE

## MERRIMACK VALLEY INDUSTRY MIX



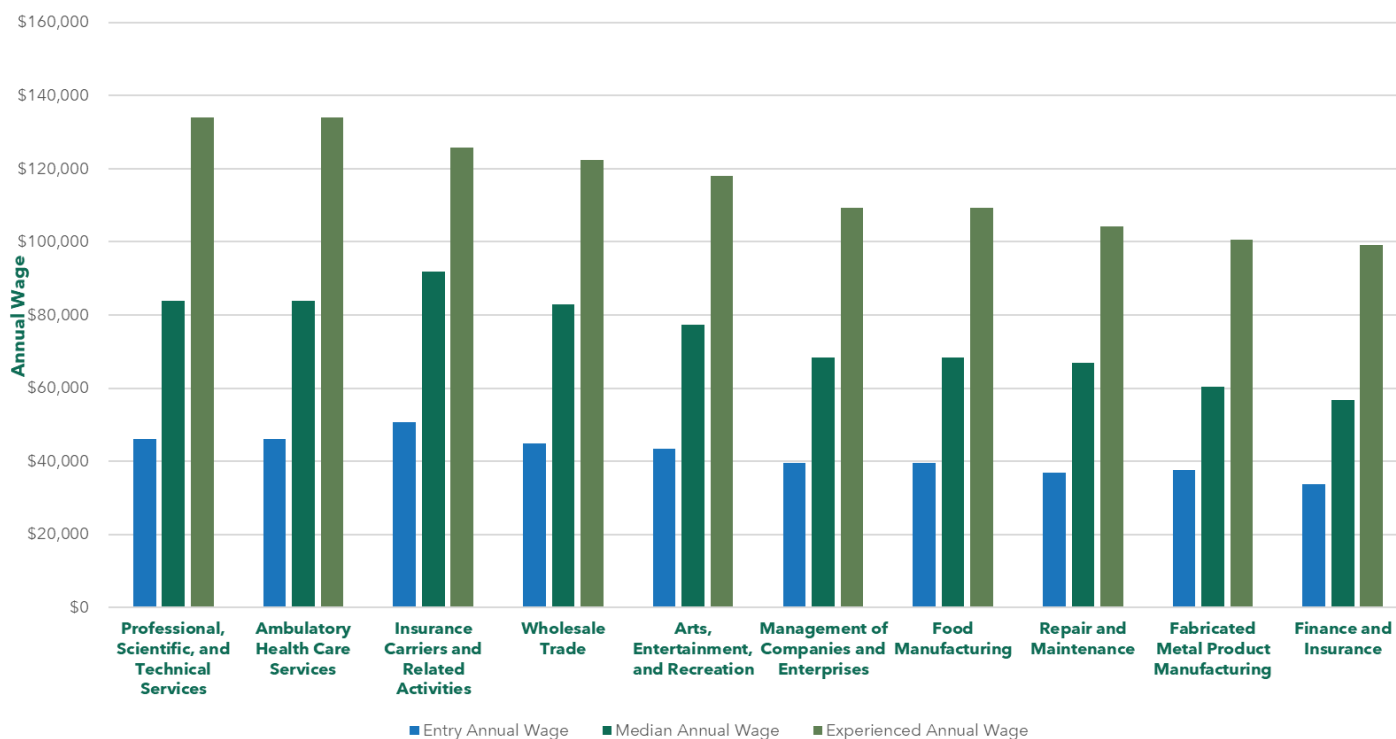
The Merrimack Valley has a fairly typical mix of industries compared to the state, except for one area: manufacturing.

Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Staffing Patterns by Industry"

The region's manufacturing base makes up more than double the percentage of the state manufacturing base., at 16% versus 7% for the state (Appendix II-1). Healthcare and social assistance is the largest industry by employment. This is the same as the state, but it comes with a top concern—this industry is one of the lowest paying in the state (Appendix II-2).

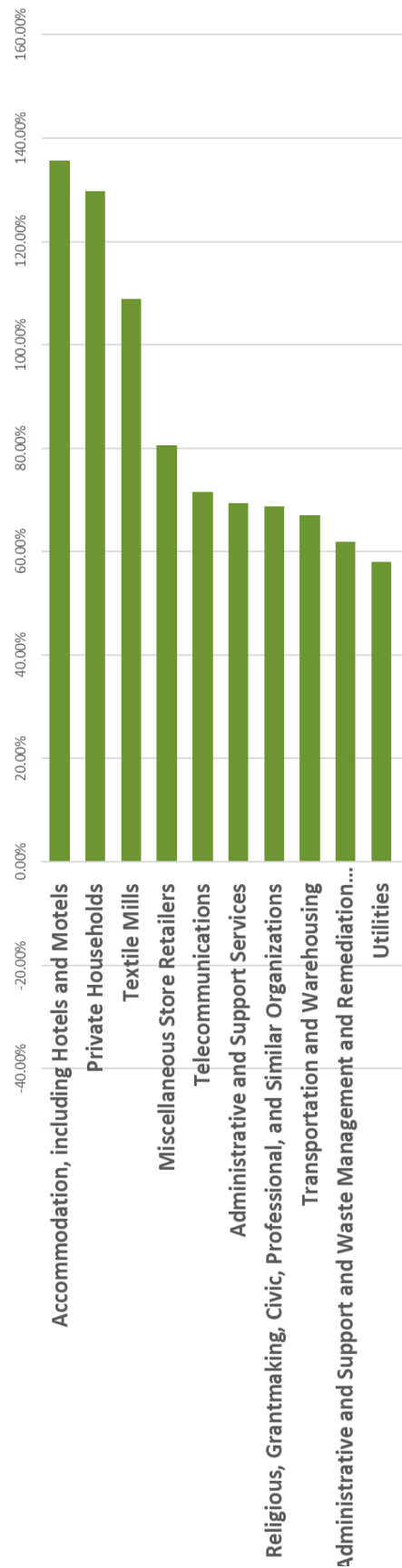
In contrast to the low paying healthcare and social assistance industry, the region is also home to some relatively high paying industries. Professional, scientific, and technical services have a median annual wage just above \$80,000, with Ambulatory Healthcare Services and Insurance rounding out the

## MERRIMACK VALLEY HIGHEST PAYING INDUSTRIES



Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Employment & Wage Industry Data"

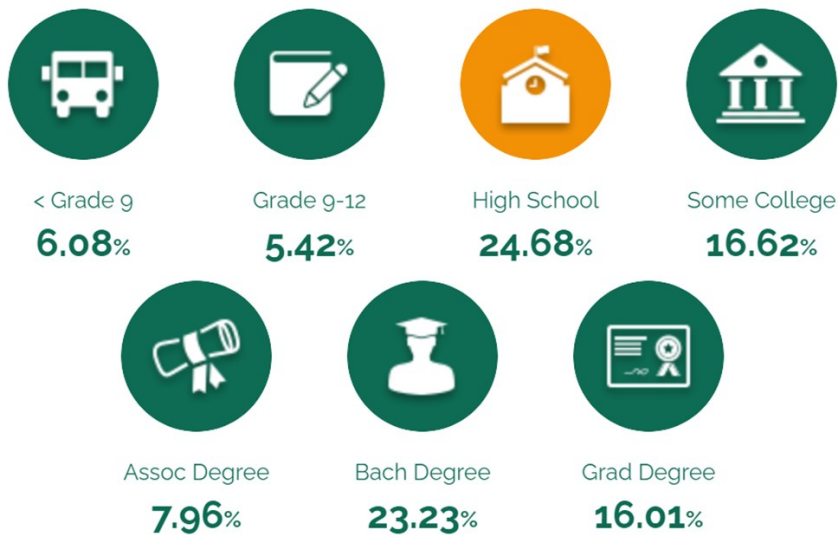
top three highest paying industries. Notably, both Food Manufacturing and Metal Product Manufacturing are in the top 10 highest paid industries—part of the key cluster of manufacturing industries in the region.



Along with the top industries in the region, it is important to consider the growing industries. According to the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research, some of the top industries projected to grow over the next decade include hospitality, retail, housing, and administrative services. Although textile mills are listed as the number two growing industry, this indicator should be met with some caution. The vast majority of this industry’s growth in the region has been due to just one or two companies—although this shows promise for the potential of future businesses to be successful in that industry, it is not yet a reliable trend that should be used for decision making purposes.

Many of these projected growing industries are also seen in the region’s industry share, notably administrative services and retail. Of concern is the lack of Manufacturing listed as a potential growing industry—recent trends have shown its overall employment in the region is shrinking (Appendix II-3). Given that this industry makes up such a large employment base, thought should be given to ensure long-term resilience of this region.

The Merrimack Valley region is highly educated, with just under 50% of residents holding an associates degree or higher. This is close to the Massachusetts average, which is one of the highest in the country. This educated workforce is a key factor for employers trying to decide where to locate.



Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Long Term Industry Projections"

Source: MVPC Data Portal, Applied Geographic Solutions and GIS Planning 2022, TaxFoundation.Org 2021 and GIS Planning research.



# TRANSPORTATION

The Merrimack Valley region is served by the MeVa Transit (formerly Merrimack Valley Transit Authority) bus system. This comprehensive bus system serves ten out of 15 communities in the region—the exceptions are Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, and West Newbury. MeVa has extensive service in the three gateway cities—Lawrence, Methuen, and Haverhill—and has hubs out in the cities of Amesbury and Newburyport. The most heavily used bus routes are located in Lawrence<sup>1</sup>, where buses run every 30 minutes. Starting in 2022, the entire system is fare-free.

In addition to the bus service, the Merrimack Valley has access to two separate commuter rail lines to Boston. The Haverhill line has two stops in Andover, one in Lawrence, and two in Haverhill. The Newburyport Line has one stop each in Rowley and Newburyport. The stops in Andover, Lawrence, Haverhill, and Newburyport connect to MeVa busses. With the region's rail stops being located near the ends of the lines, trains are less frequent than they are closer to metro Boston. Additionally, although the train is well suited for workers commuting into Boston, the schedule is not well made for workers reverse commuting in the outbound direction away from Boston.

In addition to MBTA Commuter Rail Service, the Amtrak Downeaster stops in Haverhill on its way north to Brunswick, Maine, and south to Boston.

Much of the rural area of the region is disconnected from transit options. Buses running within the city boundaries may be efficient and timely, but intercity routes tend to be longer and less frequent. This presents a challenge for commuters who live in one area of the region and need to commute to another without a car. Most business parks are located outside the city centers, making them less accessible for transit riders. When looking to access a strong workforce, employers often have to ensure their employees have the ability to get to work, especially for workers who cannot afford to live near their workplace.

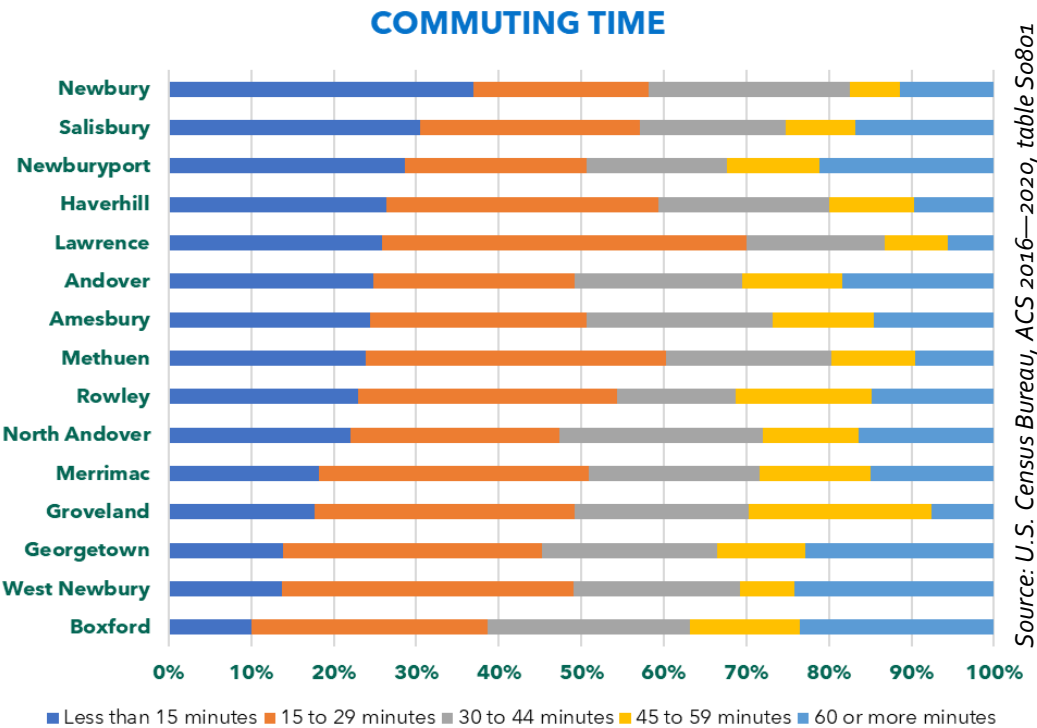
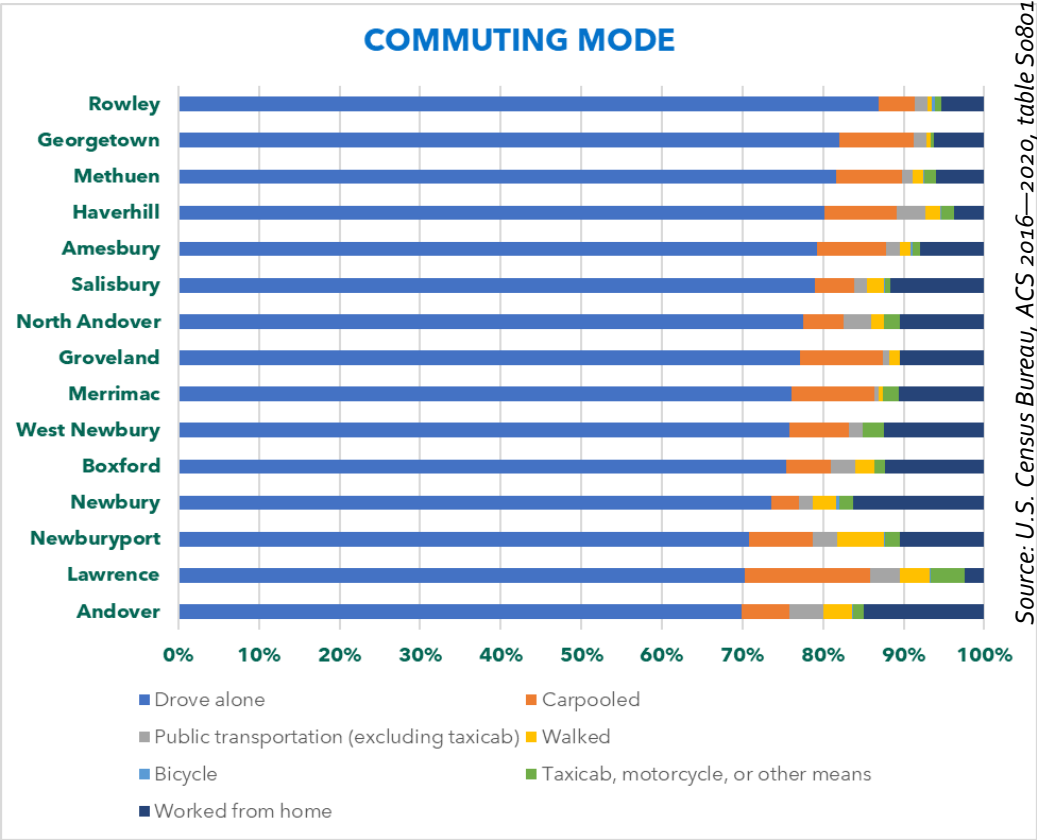
<sup>1</sup>MeVa Transit Ridership Data



Given the inefficiencies in the current transportation system, it is not surprising to see the majority of residents in the region commute by car. The next largest cohort of commuters carpool, and less than 5% across each community commute by public transportation. This data was last available pre-COVID -19, so although we do see a sizable amount of workers working from home, it is expected that this number has significantly increased since this data was made available.

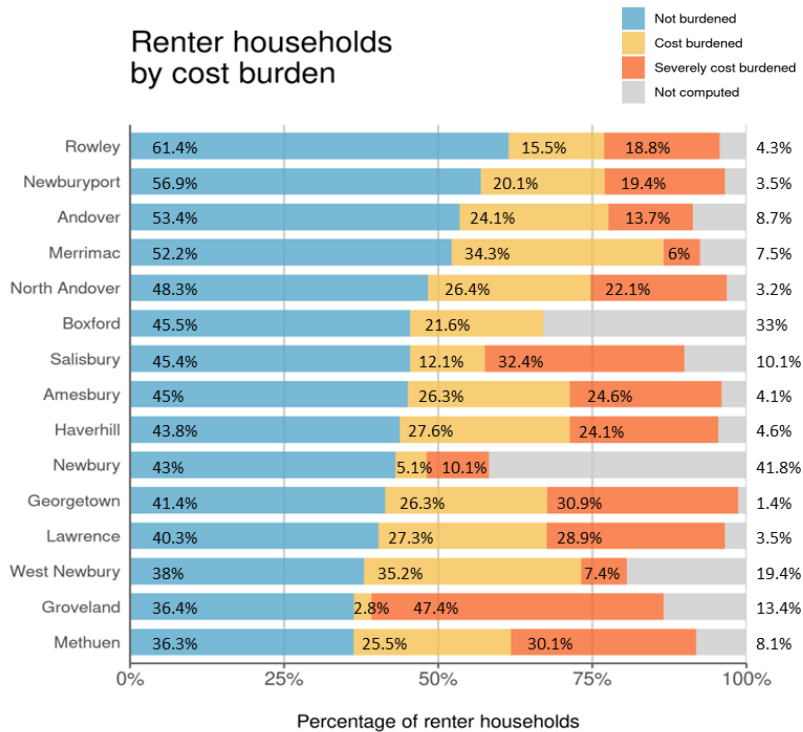
Commuting times for workers vary across the region, with most workers commuting less than 30 minutes. Almost half commute more than 30 minutes, with 10-20% of workers commuting more than 60 minutes.

In addition to considering commuting times, it is important to consider where Merrimack Valley residents are commuting to. Data from the MA Office of Labor and Workforce Development show 32% of workers commute into the region from outside, 25% work and live in the region, and 43% live in the region but commute out for work. (Appendix II-4) The plurality of workers living in the region but commuting out may be doing so for several reasons, including relatively cheaper housing here compared to metro Boston. Conversely, residents commuting to the region but living elsewhere may be due to high housing costs here compared to nearby regions. It is common for employees to commute from New Hampshire due to lower cost of living in that state.

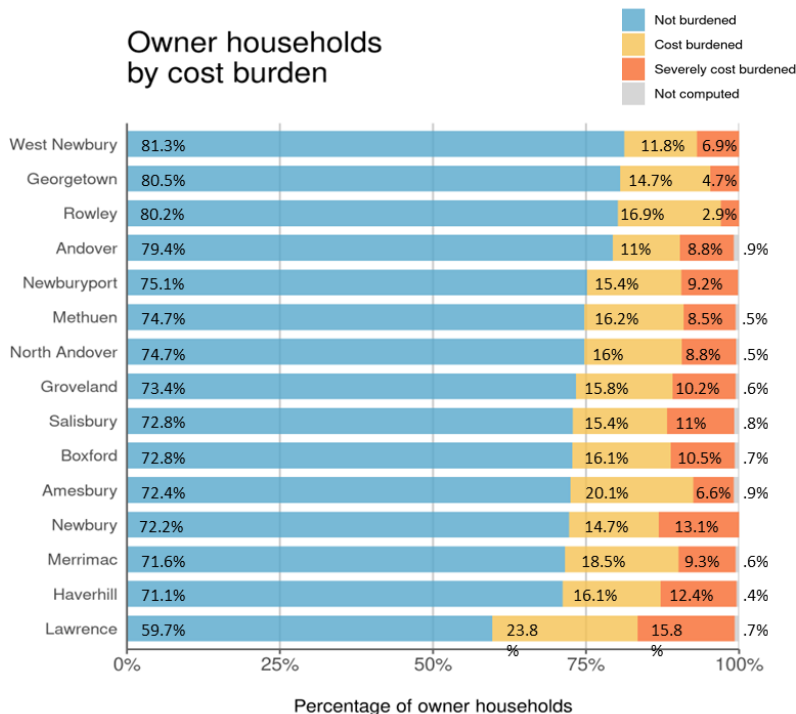


# HOUSING

Renter households  
by cost burden



Owner households  
by cost burden



Images/Charts source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership  
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2016-2020, Tables B25070 & B25091

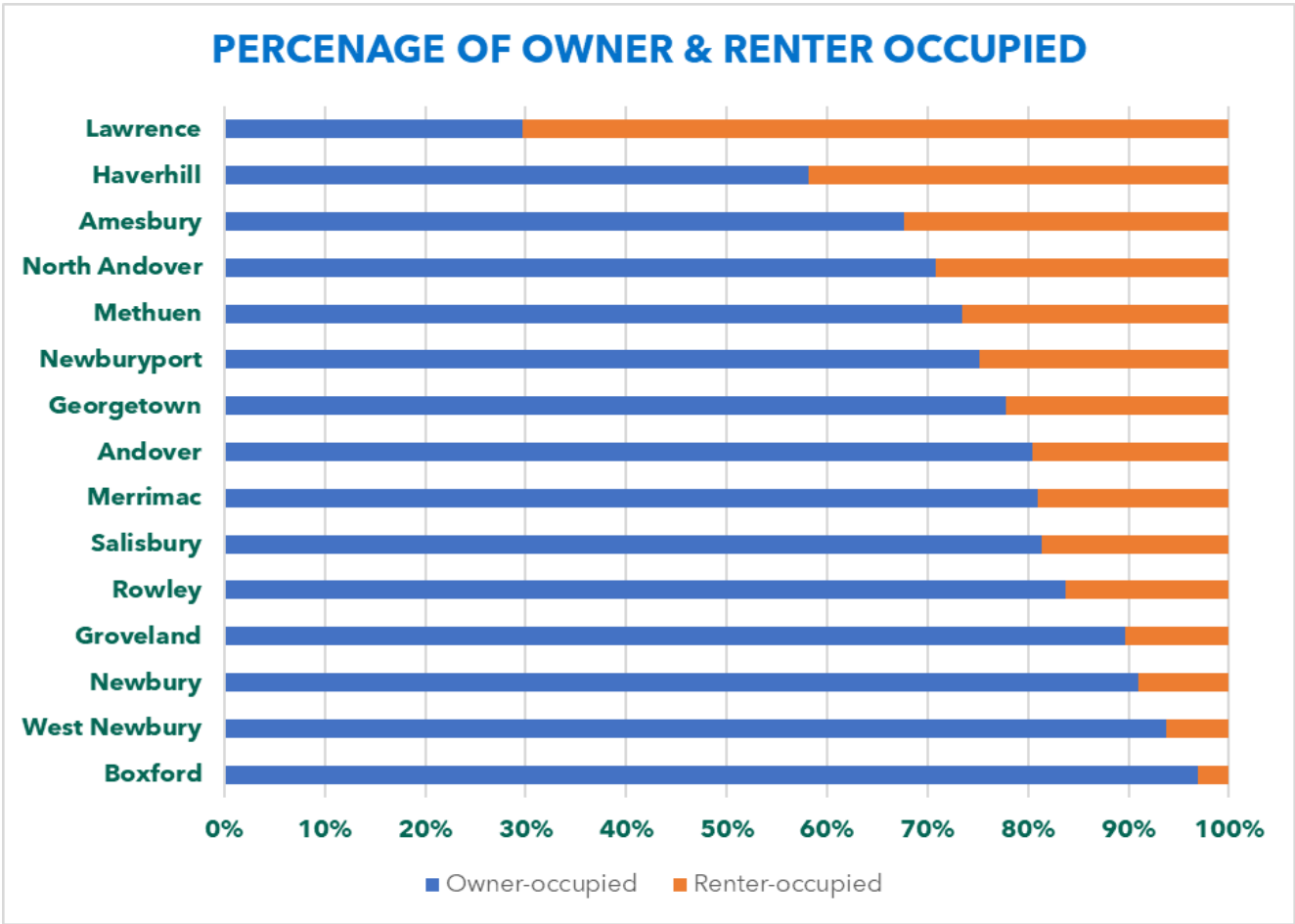
Over the past three decades, Massachusetts has seen a significant slowdown in housing production when compared to the previous three decades (Appendix II-5). This reduction in construction has created an imbalance in the housing market, resulting in soaring rent and home prices. As a result, in all but four communities across the region, a majority of renters are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Even in the four communities where a majority are not cost burdened, almost 40% are. As expected, homeowners see a lower rate of cost burden. This amount, however, is not negligible. In all but four communities, one in four homeowners are housing cost burdened.

Additional data show that a majority of renters across the region have household incomes of less than \$50,000. This is significantly lower than homeowners, where a majority have a household income of over \$75,000. In most communities, the majority of owner-occupied homes make more than \$100,000 (Appendix II-6).

This presents challenges when considering workers' access to housing. The town of Andover, one of the more expensive communities in the region, is home to some of the largest manufacturers. The City of Newburyport, located on the far eastern edge of the region, sees some of the highest housing costs while being home to one of the region's largest business parks. This means that for low wage

workers, with infrequent transit service and housing too limited and high cost near their place of work, they likely must own a car or know someone with a car to get to work.

Looking at housing units by tenure type, there is a clear divide between communities with large percentages of renter occupied units and communities with large percentages of owner occupied units. With large renter populations in communities like Lawrence and Haverhill, a major concern is resilience to economic shock. Renters may be more vulnerable than homeowners to rising housing costs, resulting in more frequent moves. Instability in living situations may lead to instability with employment, making it harder for businesses to find workers who can maintain employment in one place for a long period of time.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2016—2020, table B25003



# SWOT & RESILIENCY

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Strengths

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Weaknesses

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Opportunities

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Threats

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# SWOT ANALYSIS

To best plan for the needs of the region's economy over the next five years, the CEDS committee conducted a SWOT analysis of the economic conditions after reviewing the summary background data. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. In the analysis, the strengths and weaknesses are considered to be internal factors, and factors the region has some control over. Opportunities and threats are considered to be external factors—areas that the region cannot control but can act on. The full committee completed a draft of an initial SWOT analysis, which was then refined over the course of subsequent meetings. These items in the SWOT analysis were then used to help identify priority objectives and strategies for the overall vision of the CEDS.

## STRENGTHS

- Educated and diverse workforce
- Natural resources & open spaces
- Historic city & town centers
- Concentration and variety of industries
- Entrepreneurial Innovation

## WEAKNESSES

- Housing costs and lack of housing stock
- Workforce pipeline and development
- Public Transportation connectivity within region
- Municipal capacity
- Lack of available commercial & industrial space

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Federal Investments in manufacturing & supply chain
- Increased funding for transportation & infrastructure needs
- Increased interest in technical school education
- Current concentration of manufacturing businesses
- State zoning reforms

## THREATS

- Resistance to change & new development
- Climate change impact
- Aging population
- Competition from neighboring states and regions

# A RESILIENT REGION

Throughout the CEDS process, resiliency was a common and recurring theme. This is especially true after experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, where much of the economy was effectively shut down for months on end. In addition to COVID-19, three of the region's communities also underwent severe economic shock during the 2018 Columbia Gas disaster in Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover. In these communities, over pressurized natural gas lines caused over 80 structure fires. After this disaster, small businesses in the affected communities were shut down for months while gas lines were shut off. Both COVID-19 and the Gas Disaster forced an unexpected closure of businesses. Although the recovery looked different for both, the tools used to withstand both of these economic shocks are consistent and remain so today. After weathering these storms, the Merrimack Valley has set up a robust infrastructure of economic support systems to mitigate and respond to economic shocks.

Due to long standing planning efforts that predate this disasters, the region was well equipped to respond. Lessons were learned during both disasters, resulting in new resilience tactics. The region now has numerous examples of both "Steady State" initiatives and "Responsive" initiatives. Below are "Steady State" and "Responsiveness" initiatives that have been accomplished by MVPC and its partners. A few are listed below:

Steady State Initiatives—Resilience through specific long term goals and actions

- *Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program*: MVPC staff works with municipal leaders and their residents to assess a community's vulnerabilities and strengths and creates an action plan to mitigate these risks
- *Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO)*: MVPC's affiliated non-profit, the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Corporation (MVED), was recently designated by the Massachusetts Office of Business Development as a REDO. In this role, MVED undertakes specific projects including business outreach, business support events, and connections between businesses and state resources to ensure their long term growth and success.

Responsive Initiatives—Information networks set up to respond to, mitigate, and deal with the aftermath of economic shocks.

- *Merrimack Valley Small Business Coalition*: A regular meeting of municipal staff, business support organizations, and business leaders to provide wrap around support services for small businesses
- *Merrimack River Collaborative*: A group of municipal and nonprofit leaders to plan for the long term vitality of the Merrimack River and the economic benefits it brings to the region
- *Mayors, Managers, and Administrators Regional Roundtable*: A quarterly gathering of the top elected or appointed official in each of the Merrimack Valley's cities and towns. These meetings serve to share information between municipalities and tackle high-level, regional challenges



# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

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Workforce Development  
& Industry Cultivation

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Transportation &  
Mobility

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Small Businesses &  
Entrepreneurs

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Vibrant, Resilient  
Communities &  
Destinations

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Housing

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# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & INDUSTRY CULTIVATION

**Vision: Businesses will have the resources and workforce they need to move to or expand in the Merrimack Valley, and residents across the region will have access to jobs that generate wealth and increase their economic mobility.**

## **Objective 1: Expand career-training educational programs for all ages and build awareness of current offerings**

- Enhance availability of technical school training opportunities for non-tech school students and adults through apprenticeships and classroom opportunity
- Build awareness for all of tech school & CC resources and expand physical capacity of schools to meet demand
- Utilize professional development to increase the number of in person presence of teachers in schools and recruit from industry to provide teacher training
- Expand ESOL, life skills, digital literacy training and other opportunities to provide wrap around services for future workers
- Engage future and hidden workers in our community, including graduates with non-recognized degrees from other countries, currently or previously incarcerated individuals, and parents with limited access to childcare.
- Ensure organizations working across the workforce development field are connected and collaborating

## **Objective 2: Tap into the strong workforce base already living in the Merrimack Valley and recruit workers to the region**

- Enable workers in our communities to have transportation and housing in order to access jobs within the region
- Encourage people of all education and skill levels to work in MV
- Engage employers by sector to identify gaps and connect workforce efforts with municipal and human services organizations
- Create regional partnership to develop clean energy workforce strategy

## **Objective 3: Ensure businesses have the resources they need to move into or expand in the Merrimack Valley, including new and emerging industries**

- Bring awareness to key and growing industries in the region, including advanced manufacturing
- Focus business development efforts on future technology and clean energy industries
- Provide resources to companies as they grow & expand, helping them stay local
- Expand overall available industrial space in the region

# TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

**Vision: Residents will have access to safe, reliable, clean, and accessible modes of transportation for access to home, work, social events, and recreation.**

**Objective 1: Redesign key road corridors with a Complete Streets and resiliency approach to include transit & other modes of transportation early in design process**

- Design streets that prioritize sustainable modes of transportation and limit additional capacity of single occupancy vehicles
- Design streets with sidewalks, bike lanes, curb cuts, and ADA accessibility
- Consider all modes of transportation when scheduling detours for roadway construction & implement a comprehensive messaging campaign for detours.
- Consider transit rider travel time in the design process and seek out ways to improve travel time by incorporating strategies like bus only lanes, signal prioritization at intersections for buses, and biking infrastructure.
- Incorporate resiliency design into transportation infrastructure

**Objective 2: Utilize our current transportation system and explore new opportunities to create accessible, easy to use public transportation for access to housing and jobs**

- Demystify transit system to be more welcoming & accessible
- Focus on how public modes of transit benefit climate resiliency and how our mode choice influences land use
- Find opportunities for transit priority treatments and new investments in different modes of transportation, such as bike shares or water ferry transport.
- Create welcoming signage and outreach for the linguistically diverse communities in the region

**Objective 3: Incentivize transit-oriented development for new development and transportation projects**

- Anticipate land use to support infill development around transit
- Support zoning that creates density around transit & infill development rather than greenfield development
- Within MBTA communities legislation, create vibrant, walkable, mixed-use places with enhanced Commuter Rail stations and a variety of commercial uses

**Objective 4: Ensure bike, pedestrian, and multimodal travel is safe and comfortable on key corridors**

- Create safe paths for walking & biking from origins to destination
- Create pedestrian oriented commercial centers and limit car access
- Expand sidewalk and attractive wayfinding infrastructure
- Connect active mobility options with transit modes
- Support multimodal connections at MBTA rail stations by activating spaces, wayfinding, schedule coordination, lighting, personal safety, etc





# HOUSING

**Vision: The Merrimack Valley will be home to affordable and accessible housing, where all residents have a choice of where and what type of housing to live in**

**Objective 1: Create a diverse housing stock accessible to all abilities, ages and income levels**

- Establish inclusionary zoning and Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaws region wide
- Increase single & multi-family housing across all communities
- Generate housing that provides community supports for aging adults and people with disabilities
- Encourage universal design features in housing production

**Objective 2: Encourage municipally led direct and indirect pathways to homeownership**

- Develop partnerships with housing organizations such as CHAPA or other nonprofits to explore novel strategies for homeownership opportunities
- Establish and grow existing down payment assistance and subsidized mortgage programs for first time homebuyers in each town or city in the Merrimack Valley

**Objective 3: Incentivize new housing development to adhere to smart growth principles**

- Increase housing density within downtown villages and around transit areas
- Update zoning codes to support smart growth priorities in each town/city
- Comply with Section 3A (MBTA Communities) zoning
- Build comprehensive housing growth plan that includes supporting infrastructure needs with climate resiliency lens, including renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions

**Objective 4: Increase stock of affordable units and stabilize rents of market rate units**

- Establish a comprehensive guide of affordable housing options that include home ownership and extend beyond Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects
- Exceed the 10% Chapter 40B affordable housing threshold to meet community needs
- Identify appropriate tax title properties to support affordable housing
- Create building subsidy to encourage development across the board and offset differing land and building costs in each community

**Objective 5: Conduct community education on housing policy, data, and best development practices to create region-wide familiarity and buy-in**

- Organize regional/statewide effort facilitating education in MV municipalities
- Engage with CDCs and community organizations to set up localized information sharing with residents on various housing topics
- Identify municipal and regional housing best practices used across the state and country



# VIBRANT, RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND DESTINATIONS

**Vision: The region's downtowns, commercial centers, and outdoor spaces will be resilient hubs for recreation and economic activity**

**Objective 1: Create welcoming spaces where people want to gather, connect, dine, shop, or have an experience**

- Review and update zoning that encourages mixed use, adaptive reuse, or infill development in city/town centers to attract desired uses and reduce vacancy
- Prioritize arts, culture & beautification projects such as facade improvements, signage, and wayfinding
- Create an economic development tool to show value of place making
- Encourage pedestrian-friendly, ADA compliant, and multimodal commercial centers
- Maintain clean streetscapes year-round to keep spaces accessible to the public

**Objective 2: Activate public places as destinations for community use and benefit**

- Attract the public to community spaces through arts and culture
- Promote tourism to regional public places and open space
- Develop programming around destinations in MV to highlight arts, cultural, commercial & downtown, and natural space places

**Objective 3: Ensure our infrastructure and natural amenities are resilient to climate change**

- Protect, conserve, and restore natural resources for community benefit and sustainable long term growth
- Educate communities on resources and funding available for climate resiliency and energy efficiency
- Encourage new construction and renovations to utilize energy efficient and climate smart strategies in their projects
- Support conservation of open spaces in priority locations





# SMALL BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS

**Vision: Small businesses owners and entrepreneurs will have equitable access to the resources they need to be successful**

**Objective 1: Simplify pathways for starting a business through municipal resources and access to capital**

- Create a pathway for small businesses to access resources
- Assess barriers for starting a business
- Simplify process for permits and business certifications
- Create more opportunities to obtain capital outside of bank funding

**Objective 2: Break down barriers to small business growth and increase promotion of local businesses**

- Assess barriers to a business' growth and resiliency
- Ensure businesses have equitable access to technical assistance and digital resources
- Identify competing/complimentary businesses to help grow businesses
- Market & promote local businesses
- Support and connect existing businesses

**Objective 3: Access to capital**

- Encourage banks to expand their loan offerings to entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Create additional opportunities for obtaining capital outside of traditional banks, through CDFIs or other financing institutions
- Create improved access to information on financing options



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Acton Items

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Priority Projects

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Evaluation Framework

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# ACTION ITEMS

**Based off of the objectives and strategies listed in the previous section, the CEDS committee has outlined the following group of top priority action items to consider implementing. These action items are not inclusive of every project that may need to take place in the next five years, but are the starting point for which to build implementation of the CEDS. Action items represent areas of work that have not yet been explored prior to this plan, but are recommended based on this plan's development.**

## **Workforce Development & Industry Cultivation**

- Develop an awareness campaign to parents, high school guidance departments, and teachers to promote new high demand jobs following non-traditional college pathways
- Create a cross-sector regional workforce coalition that meets regularly to address workforce needs
- Create a dedicated employer engagement program to engage employees early
- Connect adult learning at regional technical schools to ESOL programs
- Dedicate resources to creating a teacher pipeline for technical school programs

## **Transportation & Mobility**

- Conduct a gap analysis of sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure along key corridors
- Create model language for a sidewalk fund
- Collect stories of road users and how they get around to help inform decision making
- Analyze zero emission infrastructure and create recommendations for future clean infrastructure development

## **Housing**

- Conduct community education sessions on housing in each city and town

- Host information sessions before town meeting to talk about housing need
- Conduct a gap analysis of the need for additional shelter space and access

## **Vibrant, Resilient Communities & Destinations**

- Pass the Community Preservation Act in all communities
- Create a database or calendar of events happening around the region
- Create a central map of parks and open spaces across the region
- Host a zoning think tank for all municipal staff and planners across the region to discuss innovative zoning and how to get it passed through city council or town meeting
- Work to underground utilities in downtown corridors

## **Small Businesses & Entrepreneurs**

- Improve and promote a centralized webpage on WeAreMV.com dedicated to cataloguing all business development resources
- Create a small business grant fund for micro businesses
- Create information guides or information fact sheets for municipal staff on business resources to assist them in making

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

In addition to Action Items, the CEDS Committee has used the CEDS Objectives and Strategies to identify regional priority projects. Different from action items, these projects represent work that is already underway or planned for in the region, but does not currently have all the funding or resources needed for implementation.

**Note: During the public comment period, MVPC is still soliciting priority projects from local governments and nonprofit partners. Projects that align with the CEDS objectives may be submitted to MVPC at [app.mvpc.org/cedsprojects](http://app.mvpc.org/cedsprojects). This list will be modified and added to.**

Project	Theme	Description	Timeline	Partners
Dutton Airport Business Park   Haverhill	Workforce Development & Industry Cultivation	The former Dutton Airport site sits just south of 495. The city of Haverhill is currently undergoing an environmental review to place a possible business park at the site, and will need further funding for infrastructure to support development of the site	3-4 years	City of Haverhill, MVPC
Lower Millyard Revitalization   Amesbury	Transportation & Mobility	Redesign and replace the Water Street Garage with a multi-use, multi-level garage that serves both the businesses in downtown and Lower Millyard and future residents.	1-2 years	City of Amesbury, MassDevelopment, Lower Millyard land-owners
Union Street Transit Oriented Development Zone   Lawrence	Housing; Transportation & Mobility	Establish a zoning district near the MBTA commuter rail station to allow for housing and mixed uses		City of Lawrence
Rt. 125 Bus Route   North Andover	Transportation & Mobility	Establish a MeVa bus route from Lawrence to Amazon in North Andover via route 125	1-2 years	MeVa, Town of North Andover, MVPC
Border to Boston Trail   Newbury	Transportation & Mobility	Establish a connection of the Border to Boston trail through the Newbury/Byfield area	3 years	Town of Newbury, MVPC
MBTA Communities Compliance   Regional	Housing	Achieve MBTA communities compliance across the region, establishing by-right multifamily zoning districts in each city and town	1 year	Municipal Staff, MVPC, Local boards and commissions
Salisbury Beach Erosion Controls   Salisbury	Resilient Communities & Destinations	Implement erosion controls along the Salisbury beach waterfront using Coir Logs over a 1.5 mile stretch of beachfront	1-2 years	Salisbury Beach Betterment Association, Town of Salisbury, MVPC
Citizen classes   Regional	Workforce Development & Industry Cultivation	Offer citizen classes to local residents, preparing them for the workforce and making them stronger candidates for job openings		Community Action, Inc



# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

To ensure success during the five year implementation period of the CEDS, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission will work closely with its partners and regional stakeholders to implement both the objectives outlined and the priority projects listed. The CEDS Committee will meet on a regular basis throughout the year to discuss current project updates and determine next steps for implementation. Below are some of the criteria to measure the performance of the Merrimack Valley CEDS:

## **Workforce Development & Industry Cultivation**

- Number of jobs new or expanding businesses bring into the region
- Number of program graduates from workforce training programs
- Average wages of top regional industries

## **Transportation & Mobility**

- Amount of riders using public transportation
- Reductions in non-motorized road user fatalities
- Change in commuting times for workers

## **Housing**

- Increase in affordable housing stock
- Permits for new housing construction issued, by type of housing
- Passage of new zoning bylaws that encourage the development of new housing

## **Vibrant, Resilient Communities & Destinations**

- Tourism dollars brought into the region
- Development & design projects happening in commercial centers

## **Small Businesses & Entrepreneurs**

- Success rate of new start up businesses
- Amount of businesses that obtain grants and financing opportunities
- Diversity of business owners accessing business support programs

# APPENDIX

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## CEDS Committee Members

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## Additional Data Meeting Agendas

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# APPENDIX I: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Title	Organization
Aaron Lackman	Commercial Services Manager	Mill Cities Community Investments
Abel Vargas	President	Valley Home Insulation
Alex Eberhardt	President	Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce
Alexandra Nova	Sr. Director of Strategy & Operations	Mill Cities Community Investments
Allison Dolan-Wilson	VP of Advancement	Northern Essex Community College
Andrew Herlihy	Director of Community Development	City of Haverhill
Andrew Levine	Chief of Staff	City of Newburyport
Andrew Port	Director of Planning	City of Newburyport
Andrew Shapiro	Assistant Town Manager, Director of Community & Economic Development	Town of North Andover
Angela Cleveland	Director of Community & Economic Development	City of Amesbury
Ann Ormond	Director of Business, Arts, and Cultural Development	Town of Andover
Carol McLeod	Finance Director	Town of Merrimac
Cece Gerstenbacher	Environmental Program Manager	Merrimack Valley Planing Commission
Christina Eckert	Legislative Aide	Office of State Rep. Kristin Kassner
Christina Minicucci	Development Director	MeVa Transit
Christine Lindberg	Chief of Staff	City of Haverhill
Dan McCarthy	Director of Planning	City of Lawrence
David Bancroft	Senior VP, Community Investment, North Region	MassDevelopment
Denise McClure	Planning Consultant	Town of Merrimac, McClure Planning LLC.
Derek Mitchell	President	LEADS
Eleni Varitimos	Director of Division Operations, Community Development	MassDevelopment
Erin Olivieri	Legislative Director	Office of State Sen. Barry Finegold
Frank Bonet	Executive Director	MassHire MV Workforce Board
Frank Carvalho	Principal Owner	Frank Carvalho Consulting
Gary Sidell	Owner	Bell Tower Management
Geetha Rao Ramani	Vice President Business Development - North Region	MassDevelopment
George Ramirez	Executive Director	Lawrence Partnership
Glynn Lloyd	Executive Director	Mill Cities Community Investments
Ian Burns	Community & Economic Development Program Coordinator	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Jacob Greer	Executive Assistant and Grant Writer	Lawrence CommunityWorks
Janice Phillips	Director of Constituent Services	State Senator Barry Finegold

# APPENDIX I: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

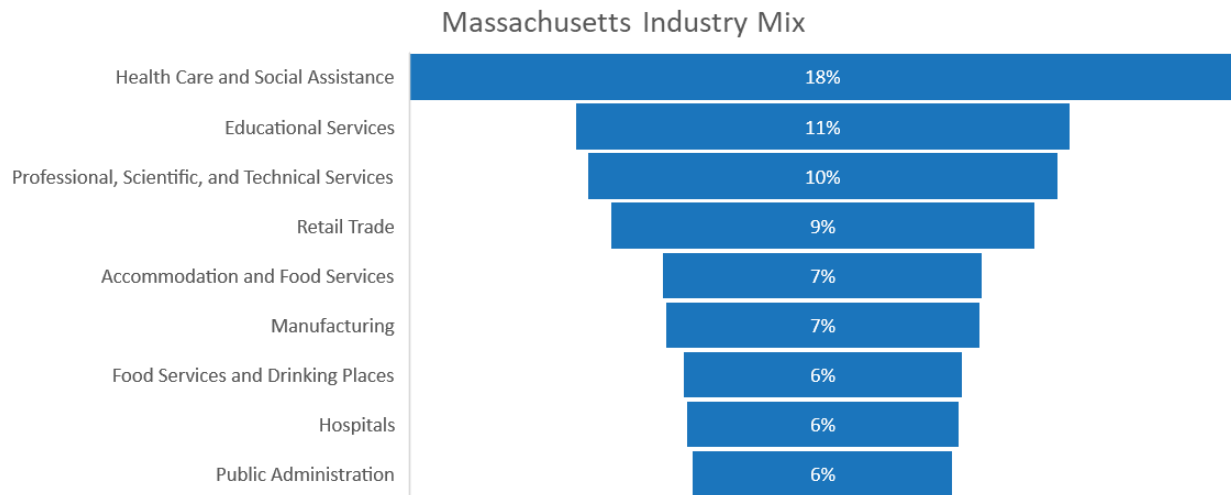
Janin Duran	President & Owner	Janin Duran Consulting Group
Jen Dunlap	Finance Director & Human Resources Coordinator	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Jerrard Whitten	Executive Director	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Jessica Andors	Executive Director	Lawrence CommunityWorks
Joe Bevilacqua	President	Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
John Cashell	Town Planner	Town of Georgetown
John Wilson	Director of Community & Economic Development	City of Methuen
Jonathan Guzman	Public Affairs Coordinator	Groundwork Lawrence
Karina Calderon	Deputy Director	Lawrence Partnership
Katelyn Sullivan	Office of Planning & Development	City of Newburyport
Kathleen Colwell	Planning Division Director	City of Methuen
Kayla Rennie	Community and Economic Development Planner	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Kenny Lamarche	Economic Development Project Officer	City of Lawrence
Kerri Perry	President & CEO	Community Action, Inc
Kirk Baker	Town Planner	Town of Rowley
Kristen Grubbs	Assistant Planner	Town of Newbury
Kristin Kassner	State Representative	2nd Essex District
Lauren Keisling	Community Planner	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Lisa Pearson	Planning Director	Town of Salisbury
Lisa Schwarz	Assistant Planning Director	Town of Andover
Lisbeth Valdez	Program Director	MakeIT Haverhill
Luis Roman	Senior Associate	OPUS Private Client LLC
Martha Taylor	Town Planner	Town of Newbury
Michael Bevilacqua	Vice President	Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
Mike McCarthy	Chief Operations Officer	Northern Essex Community College
Monica Manaski	Executive Director	Essex Art Center
Nate Allard	President	Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce
Niorka Mendez	Director of Communications	MeVa Transit
Nipun Jain	Planner	City of Amesbury
Noah Berger	Administrator and CEO	MeVa Transit
Noemi Custodia-Lora	VP of Lawrence Campus & Community Relations	Northern Essex Community College
Pamela Price	Asst. Director of Economic Development	City of Haverhill

# APPENDIX I: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

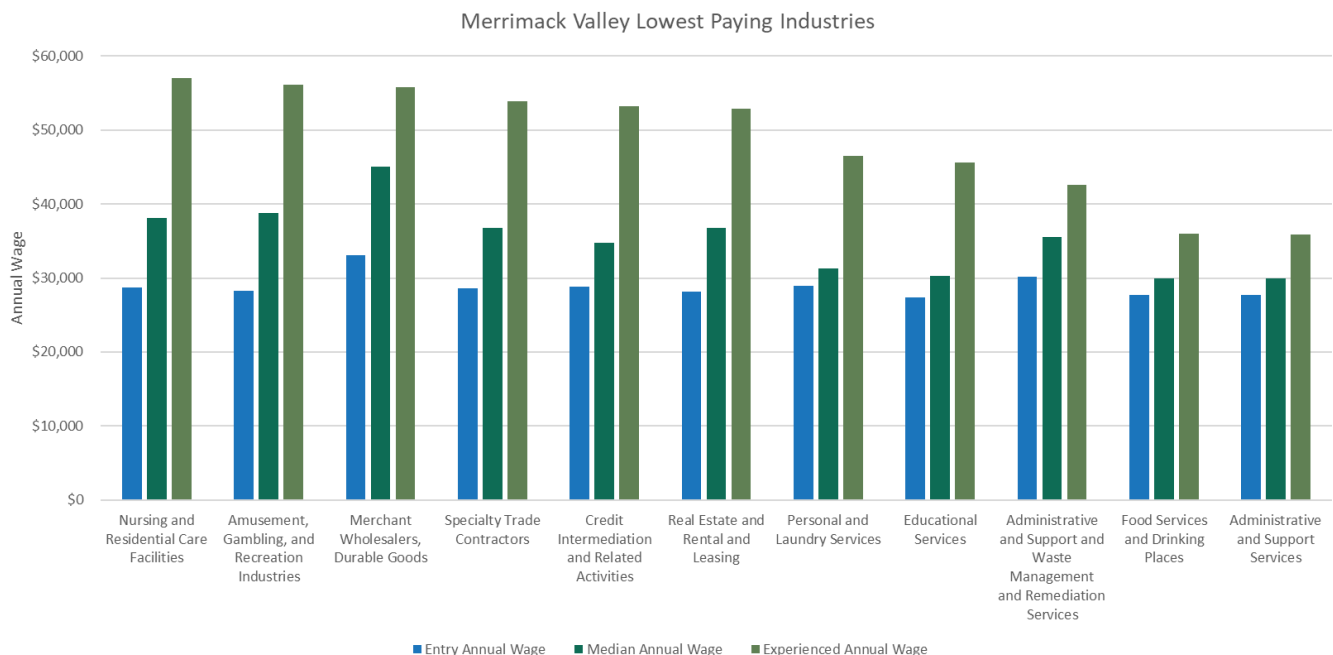
Patrick Reed	Transportation Program Manager	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Rick Byers	Commissioner	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Robert O'Brien	Executive Director	CI Works
Ross Povenmire	Planning Agent	Town of Boxford
Sophan Smith	Executive Director	EforAll
Stephanie Guyotte	Associate Director	UMass Lowell Innovation Hub
Steve Lopez	GIS & IT Program Manager	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Stratton Lloyd	Executive VP & Chief Operations Officer	Essex County Community Foundation
Susan Almono	Coordinator of Grants, Workforce Development, & After School/Evening CTE Programs	Greater Lawrence Technical High School
Tia Gerber	Director of Community Partnerships	Whitter Regional Vocational Technical High School
Tom O'Donnell	Senior Director, Innovation Initiatives	UMass Lowell Innovation Hub
Tony Collins	Transportation Planner	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Vilma Martinez-Dominguez	Chief Operations Officer	Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

# APPENDIX II: ADDITIONAL DATA

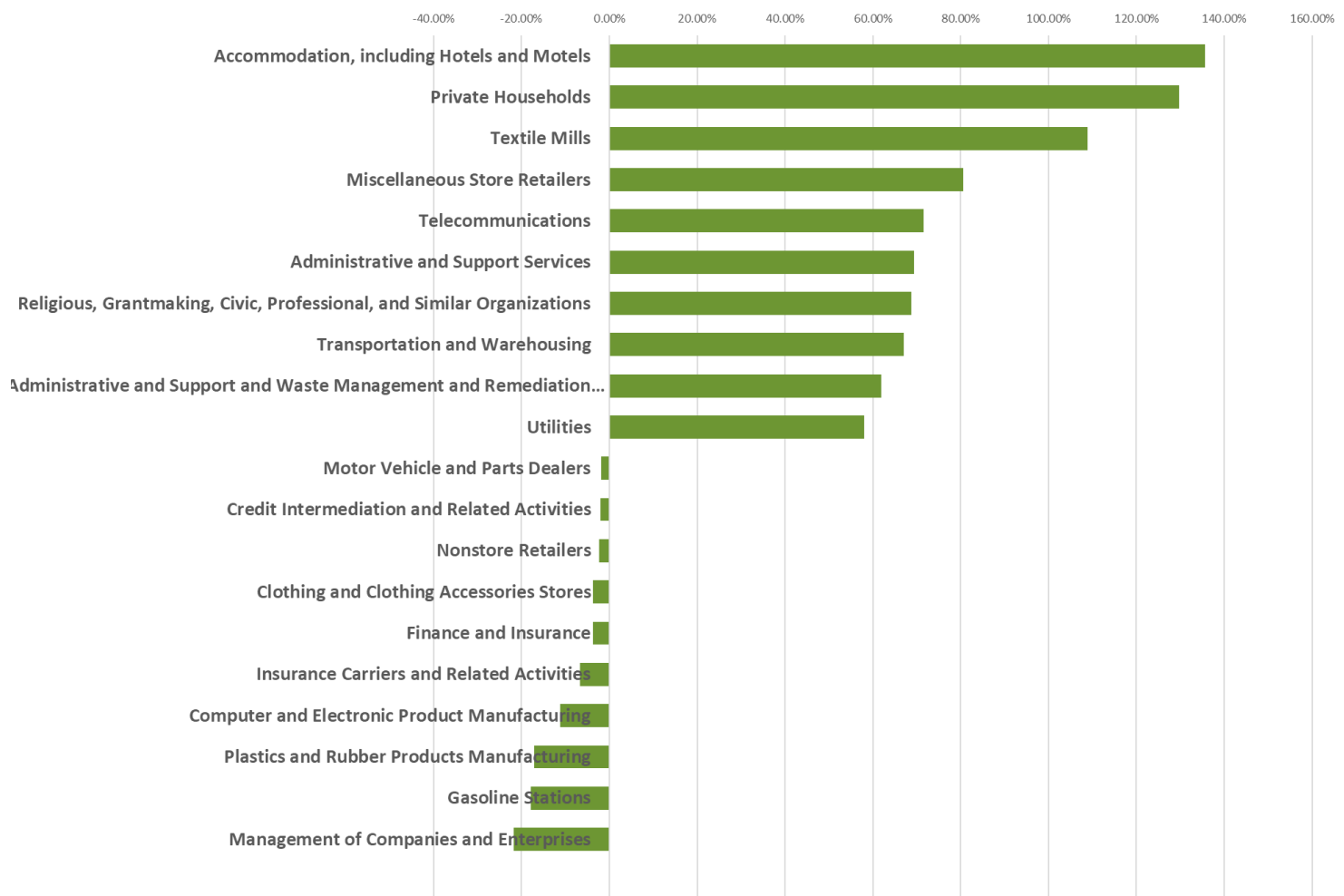
Appendix II-1: Industry share statewide. Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Staffing Patterns by Industry"



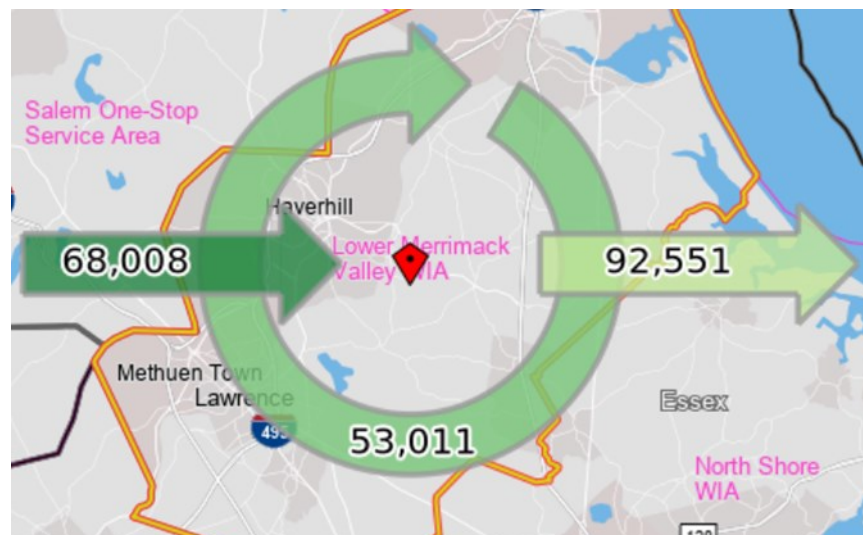
Appendix II-2: Merrimack Valley lowest paying industries. Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Employment & Wage Industry Data"



Appendix II-3: Projected growing and shrinking industries in the Merrimack Valley. Source: MA Department of Economic Research, "Long Term Industry Projections"

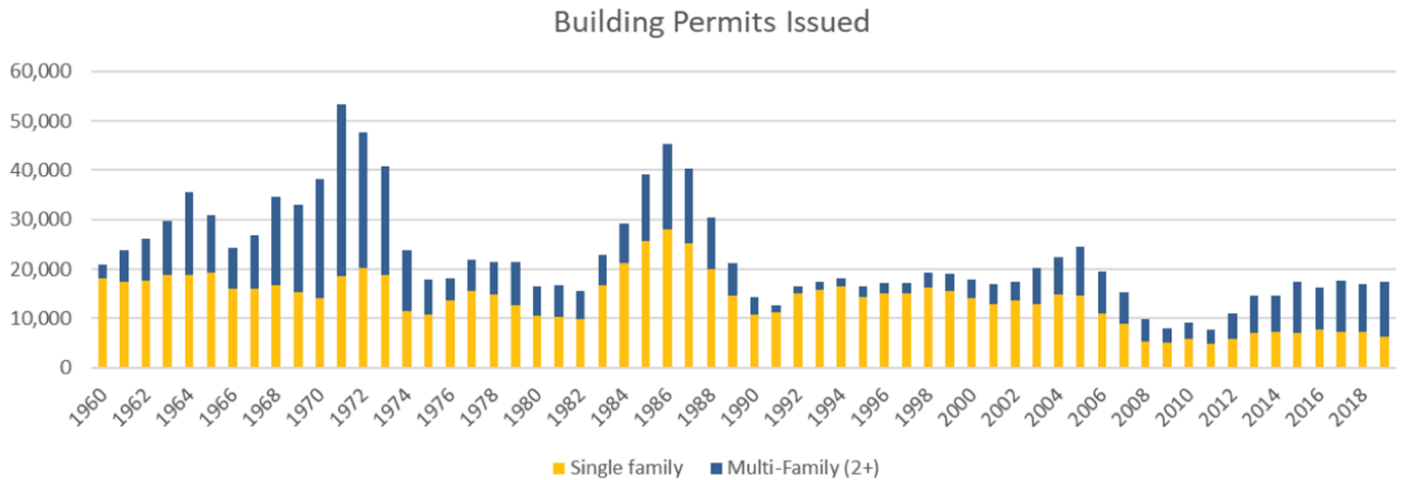


Appendix II-4: Commuting flow of Merrimack Valley residents and employees. Source: U.S. Census Bureau; UMass Donahue Institute image and analysis

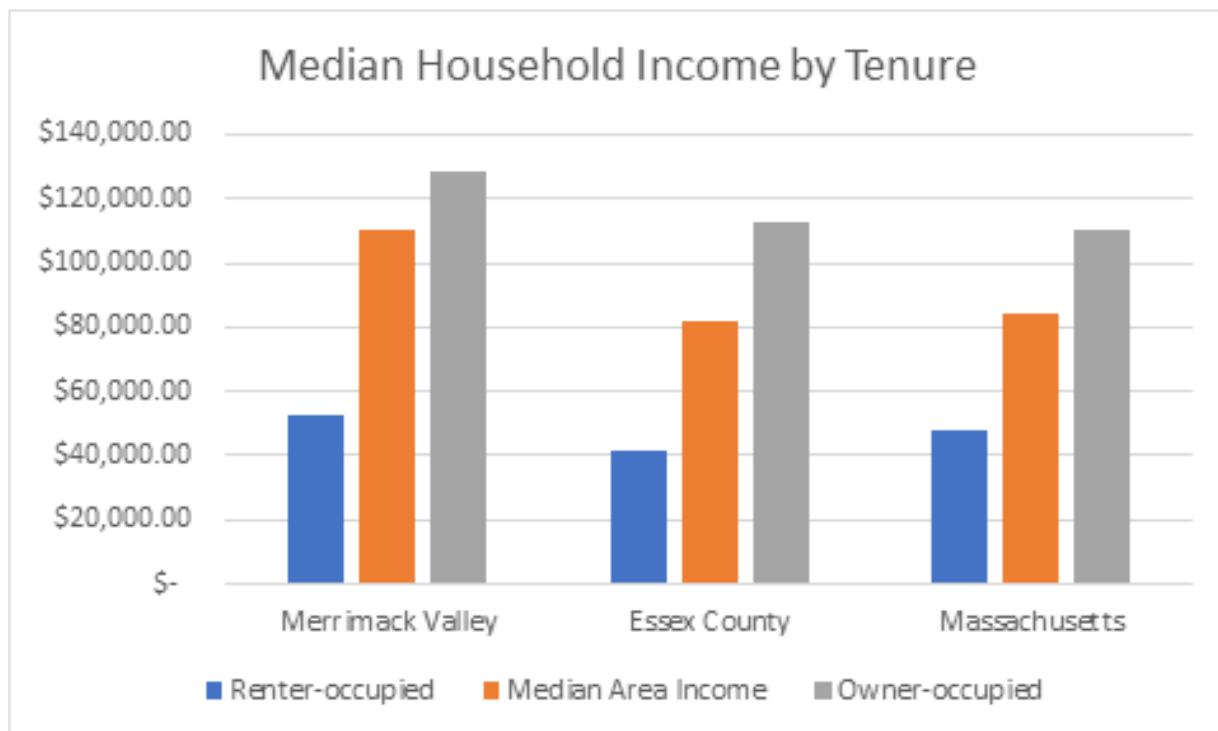




Appendix II-5: Building permits issued by structure type in Massachusetts, 60 year period.  
Data and image source: MA Department of Housing and Community Development



Appendix II-6: Median household income by tenure. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25119



## CEDS Committee Kick-Off Meeting Agenda

July 28, 2022

12:00PM-1:30PM

Groundwork Lawrence

50 Island Street #101, Entrance B, Lawrence MA

- 1) Lunch and Welcome/Introductions
- 2) Presentation: Overview of CEDS
  - Summary/Purpose
  - Past Efforts
  - Vision for 2023-2028 CEDS
- 3) Discussion: Role of CEDS Committee + group thoughts on overall process
- 4) Discussion: Identifying gaps in representation -Who is not at the table and who should we add to the group?
- 5) Wrap Up – Next Steps

**CEDS Committee August Meeting**  
*August 30, 2022 / 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.*

Haverhill Innovation Hub (UMass Lowell iHub)  
Harbor Place: 2 Merrimack Street, Haverhill, MA, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Parking: Goecke Parking Deck across the street

***Meeting Goal:***

CEDS Committee Members will agree upon effective meeting strategies that will guide the planning process. Members will also identify what types of data and information are needed to complete a SOAR analysis and determine CEDS themes by the end of the year.

***Meeting Objectives:***

- 1) Receive feedback on and create final draft of the group's ground rules and procedures
- 2) Identify data sets and data themes the group needs to make informed decisions
- 3) Brainstorm possible guest presenters the committee wants to learn from
- 4) Identify areas around the region to stop at and/or learn about during a bus tour

***Agenda:***

- 1) Coffee & light refreshments, welcome from the chair, group introductions
  - a. Introduction prompt: In one or two sentences, what motivates you to do your work in this region?
- 2) [Pre-meeting survey](#) recap
- 3) Presentation of group norms
  - a. *Discussion:* feedback on what's missing, what needs to be changed?
- 4) Prep for fall meetings: existing conditions in the region
  - a. Presentation on work that will be done in the fall: Data & current economic conditions, bus tour, SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks) analysis, theme identification
  - b. *Discussion:* what kind of knowledge do you need to gain to be best equipped for this work?
  - c. *Discussion:* What areas do you want to see/learn about on a bus tour? Are there areas from your work you want to show others/teach others about?
- 5) Wrap up, next steps, next meeting time & location

**CEDS Committee September Meeting**  
*September 27, 2022 / 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.*  
CI Works, 11 Chestnut Street, Amesbury, MA

**Travel Information:**

By car: Parking available on site

By bus: [MVRTA Route 51](#) to Nicholas Costello Transportation Center, less than 0.5 mile walk

**Meeting Goal:** Committee members will gain an understanding of the current economic conditions of our region and begin to think about this data in the context of the Merrimack Valley's economic strengths and challenges.

**Meeting Objectives:**

- 1) Review the current economic landscape as it pertains to income, workforce, and industry
- 2) Identify knowledge gaps in certain areas of the data
- 3) Identify the region's strengths and challenges based on this data
- 4) Prepare for October bus tour

**Helpful Pre-Meeting Reading:**

- [U.S. Economic Development Administration's information on how and why to include current data in the CEDS](#)
- ["The Data" Section in our 2018-2023 CEDS](#). Page 7.

**Agenda:**

- 1) Welcome & group introductions
  - a. Coffee & light breakfast
- 2) Data Dive: municipal data, regional data, and statewide data
  - a. Income & Wealth
  - b. Workforce & Unemployment
  - c. Regional Industry Clusters
- 3) Group activity
  - a. Identifying assets, challenges, and areas of focus in the data
- 4) Small group breakout discussions
  - a. Breakout groups each tackle one category of the data for further analysis & feedback
- 5) Closing and next steps
  - a. Update on bus tour planning & date
  - b. October & November/December meeting plans
  - c. Next steps



**CEDS Committee October Meeting***October 18, 2022 / 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.*Virtual Meeting | [Join via Zoom here](#)

**Meeting Goal:** Committee members will gain a greater understanding of the current housing conditions and transportation uses across the Merrimack Valley and begin to apply those data points to current economic trends

**Meeting Objectives:**

1. Answer questions posed during last meeting's data exploration
2. Learn about the current conditions surrounding housing, transportation, and commercial properties
3. Prepare for the MV Visioning Tour

**Agenda:**

- 1) Welcome & group introductions
- 2) Follow up from questions asked about last meeting's data
- 3) New data dive
  - a. Housing
  - b. Transportation
  - c. Commercial property
- 4) Breakout groups discussion
- 5) Preview of the MV Visioning Tour
- 6) Next Steps

**CEDS Committee December Meeting***December 12, 2022 / 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.*

Newburyport City Hall Auditorium

60 Pleasant Street, Newburyport, MA

***Parking & Transportation Information:***

Green Street Parking Lot – Corner of Merrimack &amp; Green Street

Parking Garage – Corner of Merrimack &amp; Titcomb Street

MeVa Bus – #54 or #57 to MVRTA Newburyport Parking Garage

***Meeting Goal:*** Based on the data the committee collected and reviewed over the fall, committee members will outline what they view as the region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

***Agenda:***

- 1) Lunch, welcome, and group introductions
- 2) Recap of the fall data collection
- 3) Overview of a SWOT analysis
- 4) Independent activity: categorizing the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- 5) Breakout groups: discussion on the categories
- 6) Large group report-outs and discussion
- 7) Closing and next steps
  - a. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m., The Stevens Estate, North Andover, MA

**CEDS Committee January Meeting**

*January 10, 2023 / 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.*

The Stevens Estate at Osgood Hill  
723 Osgood Street, North Andover, MA

***Parking & Transportation Information:***

Parking available on site behind the main house

***Meeting Goal:*** Transitioning from the information and data gathering in the fall, the CEDS committee will begin to structure the main themes and focus areas for the final CEDS document.

***Meeting Objectives:***

1. Finalize the SWOT analysis summary
2. Identify focus areas/themes & begin shaping a vision for each
3. Position the committee for the creation of theme based working groups at the next meeting

***Agenda:***

- 1) Light breakfast, welcome, and group introductions
- 2) Finalization of SWOT analysis
- 3) Introduction of draft theme ideas
- 4) Breakout groups discussion and activity based on themes
  - a. Visioning: Where do we want this area to be in 5 years?
  - b. What stakeholders are missing from the group?
  - c. Are there other areas we are missing from this or the other themes?
- 5) Large group report outs and discussion
- 6) Wrap up and next steps

**CEDS Committee February Meeting***February 9, 2023 / 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.*

Andover Old Town Hall

20 Main Street, Andover, MA

***Parking & Transportation Information:***

Public parking available behind the building

MeVa Bus #32 to Andover Square

***Meeting Goal:*** Building off the visioning begun in the January meeting, committee members will identify goals for each theme area and begin to structure their corresponding strategies

***Meeting Objectives:***

1. Finalize the five main theme areas
2. Create subcommittees/breakout groups for each theme
3. Identify the goals for progress in each theme
4. Position each theme for the creation of a detailed strategy in the March meeting

***Agenda:***

- 1) Light breakfast, welcome, and group introductions
- 2) Refined theme areas based on survey feedback – finalize categories:
  - a. Workforce Development & Industry Cultivation
  - b. Transportation & Mobility
  - c. Housing
  - d. Vibrant, Resilient Communities & Destinations
  - e. Small Businesses & Entrepreneurs
- 3) Small group discussions. Form subcommittees/breakout groups based on each theme area
  - a. Review of notes from the January meeting
  - b. Drafting of goals under the theme – activity & discussion
  - c. Initial strategy formation – activity & discussion
- 4) Closing & next steps

**CEDS Committee March Meeting***March 22, 2023 / 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.*

Newbury Town Library  
0 Lunt Street, Byfield (Newbury), MA

***Parking & Transportation Information:*** Parking available on site

***Meeting Goal:*** Building off the work started in February, committee members will complete drafts of specific strategies under each identified objective.

***Meeting Objectives:***

1. Confirm objectives under each pillar.
2. Complete a draft of specific strategies to be tied to each pillar.
3. Scope out potential projects already under way or planned applicable to each objective
4. Plan out the remaining three months of the CEDS development process

***Agenda:***

- 1) Light breakfast, welcome, and group introductions
- 2) Review of survey feedback
- 3) Breakout group discussions – same groups as February meeting
  - a. Confirm objectives.
  - b. Review strategies drafted in the February meeting and shape specific strategies under each objective.
  - c. Brainstorm projects currently underway or planned for that fall under each objective.
- 4) Confirm plan for the next 3 months
  - a. Regular, full committee April meeting week of April 10<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Breakout group/subcommittee 1 hour zoom sessions end of April/early May
  - c. Public comment period



**CEDS Committee April Meeting***April 10, 2023 / 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.*

Nevins Memorial Library

305 Broadway, Methuen, MA

***Parking & Transportation Information:*** Parking available on site or MeVa #40 to Methuen Square

***Meeting Goal:*** Within their pillar breakout group, CEDS committee members will begin to prioritize their strategies and will have a draft of potential projects, setting up for final review of the objectives & strategies in late April.

***Meeting Objectives:***

1. Draft prioritization of the strategies
2. Complete list of potential projects planned or in progress
3. Prepare for the public comment period and final strategy assembly

***Agenda:***

1. Lunch, welcome, and introductions
2. Review of what we've done
  - a. What does the next two months look like?
3. Breakout groups by Pillar
  - a. Strategy prioritization activity
  - b. Potential projects review
    - i. Fit under specific objectives or strategies.
  - c. Who that isn't here should review these strategies?
4. Next Steps
  - a. 30-day public comment period
  - b. Breakout zoom sessions in end of April/Early May
  - c. Final document review in mid-May



# **Merrimack Valley Planning Commission**

*Plan • Innovate • Promote*

**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 residents.**

**Merrimack Valley Planning Commission**

**160 Main Street**

**Haverhill, MA, 01830**