

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC) STATUS REPORTS – DECEMBER 7, 2017 MRPC MEETING

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

MRMAPPER & MOBILE APPS (GENERAL)

- We are still currently working on adding two-foot contours as a *MRMapper* service.
- 2016 Google Imagery, courtesy of MassGIS, has been added to all public applications.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

- Distressed Property Identification and Revitalization (DPIR) App – We have completed WebApp creation for the communities involved in this project. Data collection is ongoing and the WebApps will be updated accordingly. This project will be ongoing through the remainder of the calendar year.
- (DLTA) Harvard Water Supply Resources – No new information.
- (DLTA) Royalston Zoning Update - We are currently working on an update to the Town's Zoning map. It is currently being reviewed by the Town. Updates will be completed as necessary.
- Potential Industrial Development Site Location – We are currently working on a project to locate areas for potential industrial development in the region. These sites would ideally be at least 50 acres in size, within current industrial zoning districts and have access to water and sewer infrastructure and high-speed internet. We will also be reviewing any potential sites in relation to the absolute and partial environmental constraints that might exist in the area. This project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

COMMUNITY-RELATED

- Fitchburg Parcel Enhancements – We are currently working on training the City to maintain its' own parcel data. This project should be complete by the end of the month.
- Shirley Open Space & Master Plan – This project is complete, unless additional edits are required by the Town.
- Lancaster Open Space Update – This project is complete, unless additional edits are required by the Town.
- Westminster Assessor Mapping – The parcel data and maps have been updated. The Town's *MRMapper* sites have been updated accordingly. We are waiting for property record cards to be completed prior to finalizing these sites
- Shirley Cemetery Mapping – We are in the beginning stage of a long-term cemetery mapping project for the Town of Shirley. We will be mapping the Center and Village cemeteries and creating a *MRMapper* application that the Town can use to populate their cemetery records in. The end result will be internal and public applications for the two cemeteries.
- Templeton Zoning Update – This project is complete, unless additional edits are required by the Town.
- Lancaster Zoning Overlay Update – We are currently working on an update to the Town's Zoning Overlay map. It is currently being reviewed by the Town. Updates will be completed as necessary.
- Templeton Zoning Update - We are currently working on an update to the Town's Zoning map. It is currently being reviewed by the Town. Updates will be completed as necessary.
- Clinton Street Map – We are currently working with the Town to create a street map. This project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

TRANSIT-RELATED

- Bus Route Updates – This project is complete.
- Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Plan Update – We are currently working on an update to this plan. It involves mapping the locations of several data sets (medical facilities, elderly housing facilities, early education/day care facilities, major employers, industrial parks, and then ACS data regarding poverty levels, disabled populations, elderly populations, and minority populations) in relation to current public transit routes and stops. This project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

TRANSPORTATION-RELATED

- Shirley Village Railroad Crossing– Draft maps has been created for the Town of Shirley depicting the Shirley Village Railroad Crossing. The Town is reviewing the map and will advise regarding any edits. This project is ongoing.
- Pavement Management – We recently completed data gathering and creation and mapping for the Pavement Management program. This data will be updated on *MRMapper* in the near future.

MISCELLANEOUS

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) Data processing – We are still working on ‘Smoothing’ the two-foot contour data creation and expect this to be complete early in the new year. These products will be key in future 3D modeling and printing

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Planning Division

FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

MRPC staff submitted a grant application for \$200,000 in federal grant funds for a Brownfields Site Assessment Grant for Hazardous Substances Sites (Community-Wide Proposal) for the completion of Phase One and Phase Two Environmental Site Assessments on sites to be determined and approved by MRPC and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Grant applications were due on November 16, 2017.

As part of this contract, MRPC provides assistance to communities seeking grant funds to improve economic vitality. MRPC staff will be attending FY 2018 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Training in West Springfield Wednesday, December 13. The training is provided by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), MONTACHUSETT REGION BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Funds for environmental site assessments (ESA) for Hazardous Substances have been allocated to projects. However, some funds for environmental site assessments (ESA) for petroleum remain. Please contact MRPC staff person John Hume (jhume@mrpc.org) for information on ESA funds available for petroleum.

MRPC staff members John Hume and Karen Chapman will be attending the National Brownfields Training Conference in Pittsburg Pennsylvania from December 4th to December 7th 2017.

DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)

Projects that MRPC staff are working on include:

- **Hubbardston:** Master Plan Economic Development Element
- **Athol:** Master Plan Economic Development Element
- **Ashburnham:** Master Plan Economic Development Element
- **Shirley:** Create a Permitting Guidance Handbook
- **Lancaster:** Assist with the update of the 2010 Lancaster Open Space & Recreation Plan – Project completed.
- **Ayer:** Transit oriented Development Planning Project in the Downtown Ayer Rail Commuter Station/Depot Square and Park Street Corridor Area.
- **Westminster:** Housing Production Plan.
- **Harvard:** Research and Recommend Land Use Strategy(s) for Protecting Water Supplies.
- **Sterling:** Feasibility Study of Future Sewage Services in Specified Regions of the Town.
- **Lunenburg:** Facilitate the Formation of a Business – Town Partnership including business/resident meetings, and Methods to Promote Economic Development.

HEYWOOD HEALTHCARE ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

MRPC continues to work on an Economic Impact of Healthcare Report based upon Heywood Healthcare's contribution to its Service Area. Economic census information has been gathered and analyzed. The Service Area includes the following communities: Ashburnham, Athol, Erving, Gardner, Hubbardston, New Salem, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Warwick, Wendell, Westminster, and Winchendon.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

MRPC staff continue to work on the update of a Community Health Assessment of North Central Massachusetts. The report will consist of a broad scope of data from multiple sources including but not limited to primary and secondary data sources, input from stakeholder interviews, community member focus groups, and survey(s) in order to provide a status of health in the service area.

CHEMICAL SAFETY AND CLIMATE CHANGE PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

MRPC staff is working on a grant from the Massachusetts [Office of Technical Assistance and Technology](#) (OTA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to sponsor workshops designed to educate city officials, community leaders, Fire Departments, Departments of Public Works, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and businesses about the toxic chemicals stored, used and transported through their communities. The goal is to make our region's communities more capable of addressing climate change-related disasters by providing critical information and thoughtful preparation needed for targeted planning.

MRPC staff is developing a survey to distribute to businesses who are chemical users and will sponsor a training workshop this winter. Fire Departments will be requested to contact any businesses needing assistance from OTA in toxic use reduction.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER)

MRPC was awarded grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to assist the Town of Hubbardston, Royalston, and Templeton to become Green Communities and to assist with administration of existing Green Communities for Fitchburg, Lunenburg, and Westminster. MRPC just recently assisted the Town of Royalston to submit its application to become a Green Community.

Community Development Division

WINCHENDON ASHBY FY2016 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) HOUSING REHAB PROGRAM

The extension request was approved by the Winchendon Selectboard. Formal approval from MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is pending. As of the date of this report, four projects in Winchendon have been completed. One septic project is out to bid, a second is awaiting clearance from the Ashby Town Plumbing Inspector, and a third is in design. A total of eight projects are active and four are complete. One application that was being processed last month is now inactive due to income ineligibility. However, twelve projects, one short of the targeted goal, may be the limit since the scope of work for most projects are coming in over the \$35,000 cap.

CDBG AWARDS

Funds should be released for both Winchendon and Shirley by the first week in December.

CDBG APPLICATIONS

Work has started for FY2018 CDBG applications. To date, Shirley, Winchendon, Lancaster, and Townsend are committed to submitting applications this year. We are reaching out to the Town of Westminster to weigh interest. CDBG staff will attend application training in December and are meeting with town staff to plan projects. Applications are due on 3/2/2018.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

The EDF application for the redevelopment of the RHI Building in Winchendon was not successful. The Town has not yet received a letter from the State with their reasons why the application was not approved.

ROYALSTON WHITNEY HALL REUSE STUDY

The Architect, Haynes, Lieneck and Smith has provided concept drawings for two reuse options of this historic building. The Town of Royalston will now decide on a course of action based on the architect's proposals.

MONTACHUSETT ENTERPRISE CENTER

RECEIVERSHIPS

A contract has been executed to begin work at 207 Adams Drive in Athol. Once work is complete the house will be listed.

ASHBURNHAM 40B PROJECTS

No change in status. MassHousing still sorting through the developer's Comprehensive Permit.

TRANSIT

No updates this month.

TRANSPORTATION

MONTACHUSETT MPO

The Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) met on November 15th at which time they voted to endorse the FFY 2018-2022 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #1. Amendment #1 included additional projects added to FFY 2018 in both the Transit and Highway Elements. The MPO will also meet on December 20th at 1:00 PM to possibly release for a 21-day public comment period, a FFY 2018-2022 TIP Draft Amendment #2. Amendment #2 will be based upon a request from the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) that is time sensitive, therefore the need for a December MPO meeting.

ROUTE 2 SAFETY IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE

MRPC attended a meeting of the Route 2 Safety Improvement Task Force on November 16th at the Erving Senior Center. The meeting was the first for the Task Force in approximately four years. The purpose was to gather the communities together to discuss the current situation on Route 2, the status of prior recommended projects not yet implemented and the potential to identify new projects along the highway. There has been a lot of turnover on the Task Force, so the first meeting was spent discussing prior work, actions and process. It was the consensus of the Task Force to continue to meet as a group in order to better advocate for projects and funding for necessary improvements to Route 2 that would benefit all of the communities. The next meeting of the Task Force will be on March 28, 2018 at the Erving Senior Center.

COORDINATED TRANSIT PLAN UPDATE

MRPC staff has initiated work on an update to the Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HST) last updated in 2015. The CPT-HST attempts to document the region's unmet human-service transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals (or persons below the poverty level) and the elderly. The CPT-HST Plan is developed by as a tool to help local transportation providers and communities improve transportation services, increase efficiency of service delivery, and expand outreach to meet growing needs. It provides a framework to guide the investment of existing transportation resources and the acquisition of future funds. The CPT-HST will be

developed in coordination with MART and the North Central Regional Coordinating Council (NCRCC). A final version will be presented to the MRPC for approval and recommendation for MPO endorsement.

MPO SUBREGION MEETINGS

As part of the effort to improve coordination and communication between towns in the four MPO Subregions, it was decided by the MPO to schedule separate MPO Subregion meetings where member communities can get together to discuss common issues and concerns. To help in this process, MRPC staff conducted a short online poll of the 19 subregion towns related to time of day, day of week and topics of concern for these meetings. The survey was open for the entire month of November, closing on the 30th. As of 11/22/17, 25 responses have been received from 13 different communities. Communities yet to respond are: Subregion 1 – Petersham, Royalston, Winchendon; Subregion 2 – Townsend, Westminster; Subregion 3 – All Responded; Subregion 4 – Clinton. Final results and a tentative schedule will be discussed at the December 20th MPO meeting.

MJTC OFFSITE MEETINGS

At the November 8th MJTC meeting, members agreed to begin moving the meetings to other locations and communities around the region in an attempt to boost attendance and improve outreach. It is anticipated that the January 10, 2018 meeting will be held offsite. Final arrangements will be made this month. As the host, a community will be asked to present and discuss local transportation/transit projects, issues and concerns with the MJTC. This will hopefully expand the dialogue among and between municipalities and lead to better public involvement. The communities of Lancaster and Clinton have volunteered to host meetings in the March to May timeframe.

- **Next MJTC Meeting – January 10, 2018 at 6:30 PM**
- **Next MPO Meeting – December 20, 2017 at 1:00 PM**
January 17, 2018 at 1:00 PM