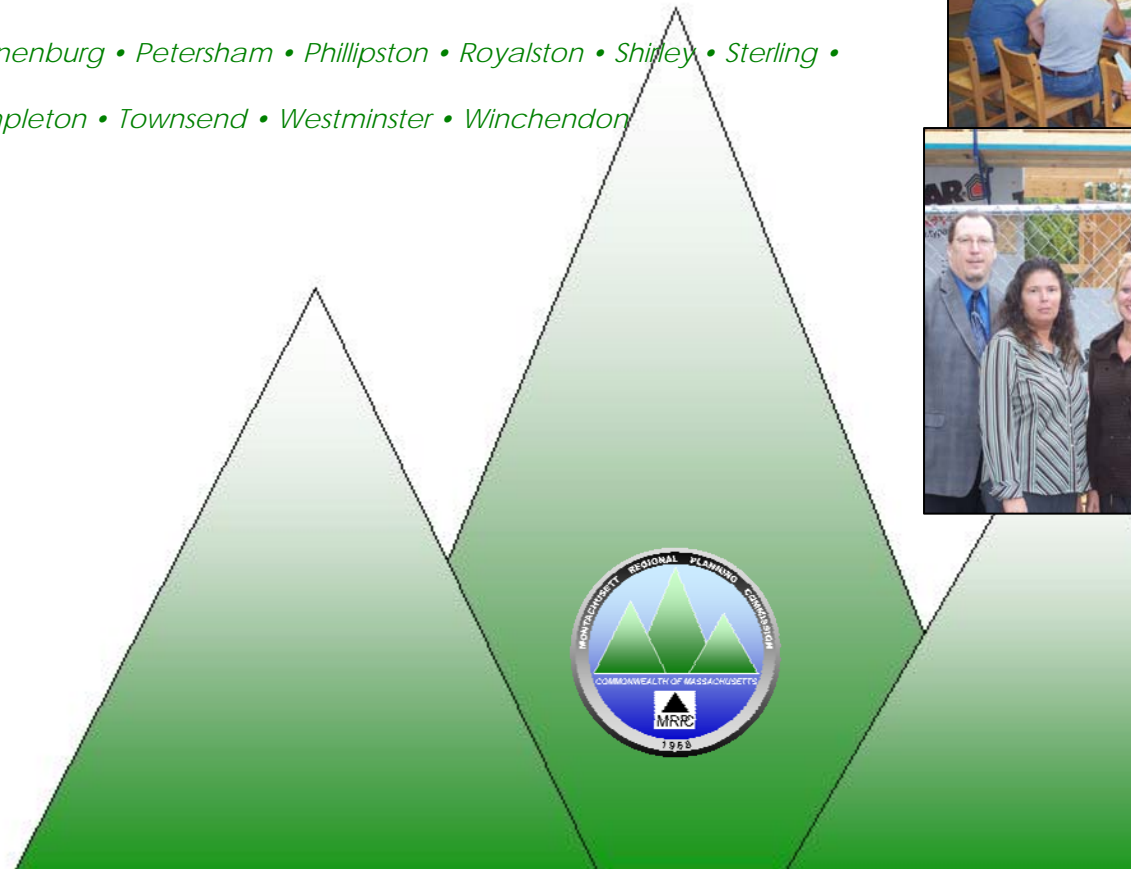


FY2009 Annual Report

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

Serving the cities and towns of the Montachusett Region

- Ashburnham • Ashby • Athol • Ayer • Clinton • Devens • Fitchburg •
- Gardner • Groton • Harvard • Hubbardston • Lancaster • Leominster •
- Lunenburg • Petersham • Phillipston • Royalston • Shirley • Sterling •
- Templeton • Townsend • Westminster • Winchendon



Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
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Fitchburg, MA 01420

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MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

Officers:

Victor Koivumaki, Chairman
 Vyto Andreliunas, Vice Chairman
 James Meehan, Treasurer
 Robert Grubb, Assistant Treasurer
 John White, Secretary

MRPC Staff



(left to right)
 Stephanie Brow, *Administrative Secretary*; Glenn Eaton, *Executive Director*
 Nancy Belliveau, *Fiscal Director*; Linda Parmenter, *Administrative Director*
 Bobbi Jo Johnson, *Fiscal and Planning Assistant*; John Hume, *Planning and Development Director*; Ann Carabba, *Regional Planner*; Renee Marion, *GIS Analyst*; Jason Stanton, *GIS Director*; Shelly Hatch, *Community Development Director*; Brad Harris, *Transportation Director*; Sheri Bean, *Transportation Planner*; Brian Doherty, *Transportation Planner*; George Snow, *Principal Transportation Planner*; George Kahale, *Transit Director*; Chantell Wead, *Regional Planner* (not pictured)

Members Communities:

Members and Alternates

- Ashburnham*
- Bruce Whitney and Maggie Whitney
- Ashby*
- Alan Pease and Wayne Stacey
- Athol*
- James Meehan
- Ayer*
- Jennifer Gibbons
- Clinton*
- Don Lowe
- Devens*
- Peter Lowitt
- Fitchburg*
- Paula Caron
- Gardner*
- Robert Grubb and Allen Gross
- Groton*
- Ana Eliot and David Manugian
- Harvard*
- Kara Minar McGuire
- Hubbardston*
- Paul Hale
- Lancaster*
- Victor Koivumaki and Eugene Christoph
- Leominster*
- Lunenburg*
- Robert Bowen and Tom Bodkin
- Petersham*
- Ellen Anderson
- Phillipston*
- Royalston*
- Vyto Andreliunas
- Shirley*
- Charles Colburn and Joseph Lynch
- Sterling*
- Charles Hajdu
- Templeton*
- Peter Haley
- Townsend*
- Pat McCloy and Nicholas Thalheimer
- Westminster*
- Andrew Sears
- Winchendon*
- John White and James Kreidler

Administration

Letter to the Region

Laila Michaud's last statement in her outgoing Executive Director's letter of the Fiscal Year 2007 MRPC Annual Report suggested that the MRPC has the ability to work hand in hand with its communities. In the two short years that I have been privileged to serve as the new Executive Director this statement has never been so evident.

The relatively new Massachusetts District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program provided the means necessary for the State's Regional Planning Agencies (RPA) to offer a variety of new services to communities throughout the State. Providing services in the areas of promoting sustainable development and sharing municipal services expanded the awareness of our communities to the number of existing and new services available from the MRPC. The DLTA program has also challenged the MRPC to help the 22 cities and towns in the Montachusett Region in new ways.

MRPC's delivery of services under the DLTA program has intersected at a point in time when the leaders of many communities across Massachusetts are reaching out beyond the invisible boundaries of municipal entities and striving to achieve greater efficiencies or cost savings from the sharing of local services.

Leaders of the communities of Ayer, Harvard, Shirley, and Devens are working together toward resolving Devens long-term oversight questions. Lancaster's request of the MRPC to study the creation of a group procurement system led to a collaboration of five communities and one school district's joint procurement effort. Athol's Board of Selectmen reached out to its fellow local officials in the nine-town North Quabbin Region of Athol, Orange, Phillipston, Royalston, New Salem, Erving, Warwick, Wendell, and Petersham. "Community Linking" is the name on the banner under which the discussion of sharing municipal services in the North Quabbin Region has occurred. Communities in the Greater Gardner area have also held discussions about how to share appropriate municipal services.

MRPC's typical responsibilities and services include community and economic development, affordable housing planning and development, environmental planning, transit and transportation planning, grants preparation and administration, and geographic information system (GIS) and data analyses services.

However, based upon recent events that have challenged all communities to do business differently, MRPC will continue to adjust its services to make them best match the emerging needs of all MRPC communities.

Fiscal Year 2009 saw the second year of implementation of the Commonwealth's District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program. Administered state-wide by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) the program is intended to provide the State's regional planning agencies (RPA) with some of the financial resources needed to complete local sustainable development projects and enable communities to share municipal services.

MRPC's employees gained experience working in new disciplines within the arena of local municipal services delivery.

During the administration of the Fiscal Year 2009 DLTA program MRPC delivered services in the following areas:

- Household hazardous waste collection
- Regional waste management
- Identifying locations for special needs emergency shelters
- Regionalizing conservation agent and veterans agent
- Setting up a group procurement system
- Bringing uniformity to wellhead protection regulations and related zoning bylaws for several communities
- Creating a wastewater district model that can be replicated by rural communities
- Supporting the nine-town North Quabbin Community Linking program identifying the sharing of municipal services
- Assisting community with Green Communities Designation
- Developing streamlined permitting guidebook
- Conducting a feasibility study for sewer and public water

Continued provision of DLTA study dollars to the MRPC will continue to open new avenues of discussion and inter-local agreements that will usher in a new era of shared services delivery by municipalities, RPAs, and others in the future.

Glenn P. Eaton
Executive Director

Financial Report

MRPC is fiscally secure but, like all government entities, it is sensitive to market conditions and the resources available from federal, state and local governments to complete planning projects, produce products, and sustain its operations for the good of its 22 member municipalities. Typical planning funds in the areas of transit and transportation continue to be augmented by a growing number of projects in the areas of GIS, land use/zoning, and affordable housing planning and development. MRPC has received funding under a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. The DLTA program has stabilized revenue and enabled the MRPC to grow its services available to its communities (see letter from the Executive Director, page 2).

MRPC has completed several grant programs that required a cash match from Local Technical Assistance (LTA) funds. These include: MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation, Streamlining Permitting, Economic Development Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

MRPC has set up a revolving account for the GIS projects. Rather than have the money that is paid for maps put into miscellaneous receipts, these funds are now placed into a GIS Contract account. This account is used to charge time and direct expenses related to mapping projects.

FY09 Revenue and Expenses

Operating Revenues FY2009		Operating Expenses FY 2009	
Federal/State	\$ 794,881	Direct Salaries	\$ 480,730
Local Contracts	\$ 376,753	Travel	\$ 9,006
Local Assessments	\$ 60,441	Equipment	\$ 19,320
In-kind Contributions	\$ 48,853	Consultants	\$104,020
Other Local Costs	\$ 262	In-kind Contributions	\$ 48,853
		Loans Disbursed	0
		Conference/Meeting	\$1,343
		Other Direct Costs	\$8,041
		Other Local Costs	\$8,635
		Indirect Costs	\$583,895
TOTAL	\$1,281,190	TOTAL	\$1,263,843

Economic Development Capacity Building Grant

The Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) executed a Capacity Building Grant with MRPC. Services MRPC provided under this contract include community and economic planning and development technical assistance to its communities.

The Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) is updated annually and contains the following:

- List of infrastructure and other needed projects by community
- Census and other data available to grant writers
- Affordable Housing Planning
- Economic Development planning efforts directed by communities

Under this contract MRPC assists in the preparation of a variety of grant applications including funds for brownfields site assessments and community development block grants. Most recently, in response to the December 2008 ice storm, MRPC prepared and submitted a grant application to EDA to evaluate emergency back-up power sources and the strengths and weaknesses of the electrical grid throughout the region. To date, EDA has determined that the application for \$125,360 in federal funds merits further consideration and has requested additional informational.

MRPC also held educational meetings with guest speakers addressing the issues of:

- Renewable Energy and Photovoltaics
- Promoting local economic resiliency (relocalization)
- Promoting downtown business development

Community Benefit: MRPC's maintenance of the MRCEDS enables municipalities to apply for EDA infrastructure grants leading to job creation, receive a wide variety educational opportunities, gain from regional grant opportunities and obtain economic development technical assistance and training from the MRPC.

Environment

Montachusett Region Brownfield Reuse Initiative (MRBRI)

In November 2008, MRPC prepared a grant application and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) for its fifth brownfields environmental sites assessment grant in the amount of \$200,000 (American Recovery and Reinvestment [ARRA] Act funding) for hazardous substances in May 2009. Community-wide hazardous substances grant funds will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments in the Montachusett Region. The purpose of the grant is to identify and assess possible brownfields facilitating future reuse of underutilized properties. Grant funds also will be used to support community outreach activities.



Brownfield site in Clinton
Before cleanup



After Cleanup

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A

brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or

contaminant. On February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the ARRA. The Recovery Act is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, and create or save millions of jobs. This law provided stimulus funds to the Brownfields Program to award grants to evaluate and clean up former industrial and commercial sites.

Many brownfield sites are located in areas with high concentrations of minority residents and low-income households. Brownfields assessment will allow the MRPC to gain information about real or perceived

environmental contamination and is expected to facilitate site cleanup and eventual reuse.

Community Benefit: Since 1998, a total of fifty two (52) Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments have been completed for the region leading to the redevelopment of a number of properties.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Updates

MRPC staff worked to assist the Town of Lancaster and the Town of Templeton to update the Community Setting section of their respective Open Space and Recreation Plans.

MRPC also updated Templeton's Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreational Interests section of the plan and worked to create a Handicapped Accessibility Self-Evaluation.

Community Benefit: MRPC provided assistance to update Open Space and Recreation Plans and is available to assist other communities. In the last decade the MRPC has completed components of or entire Open Space and Recreation Plans for Athol, Clinton, Lancaster, Sterling, Leominster and Templeton.

Land Use and Zoning Ayer Zoning Reorganization

MRPC worked with the Town of Ayer to improve its existing Zoning Bylaw. MRPC identified conflicts with the zoning bylaw, reorganized by providing a more logical set of sections, a better enumerative system, a complete Table of Contents, and a cross referencing system. Recommendations were also made to improve the bylaw as it relates to downtown.

MRPC assisted the town to ensure that all procedures were followed for this work product to be on the Spring Town Meeting warrant. MRPC attended and assisted the planning board in the presentation of the warrant article at Town Meeting where it passed unanimously.

Community Benefit: A more user-friendly zoning bylaw and more appropriate zoning within the downtown area were developed.

Westminster Zoning

A contract was executed in June with the Town of Westminster to improve the Zoning Bylaw by making recommendations to insure that the Town's Industrial

Zones and Commercial Zones are enhanced to further promote economic vitality in the community while improving the tax base. Work will include providing the town with options concerning the modification of Use Table and Dimensional Table relating to the industrial and commercial zones and the potential for overlay district(s) for specific areas to provide flexibility in terms of type of uses permitted. This will assist the town to determine appropriate and feasible types of land use development (commercial and industrial) within the Town of Westminster.

Community Benefit: An improved zoning bylaw will allow Westminster to further promote economic vitality and enhance its tax base.

Technical Assistance Joint Boards of Selectmen (JBOS) - Devens

A contract through December 31, 2009 was executed with the Joint Boards of Selectmen, Devens (JBOS) to deliver a variety of planning and administrative services to JBOS.

As part of this contract, MRPC has facilitated JBOS discussions in December 2008 and again in January 2009. Discussion has included comparing and contrasting Ayer, Devens, Harvard, and Shirley Success Criteria in direct relation to future governance of the Devens Regional Enterprise Zone (DREZ). This task has also entailed gathering and analyzing Success Criteria and comparing similarities and differences. MRPC is currently working on an economic assessment.

Community Benefit: MRPC is assisting local officials with future governance research and analyses while providing a variety of on call planning and administrative services to the JBOS.



Housing Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

A \$719,359 regional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for housing rehabilitation was prepared for the towns of Ashby (lead community) and Hubbardston. Award announcements are anticipated in the beginning of FY10.

In addition, MRPC administered the following two block grants during Fiscal Year 2009.

Sterling Infrastructure and Housing Rehabilitation Grant

Sterling was awarded \$884,409 in July of 2007 to conduct an infrastructure project at the Washacum Village neighborhoods and to assist up to three homeowners in rehabilitation of their homes.



In March of 2008, MRPC initiated the infrastructure project procurement task. Sterling awarded the project procurement to Ricciaridi Brothers in April. Construction of the new wastewater distribution center began in June 2008. The project was substantially completed in May of 2009.

As of June of 2009 two housing rehabilitation cases have been completed and two more are underway.

Community Benefit: When finished 74 homes will have a new wastewater collection system installed and four homeowners will have their homes improved.

Lancaster, Lunenburg, Townsend and Ashburnham Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program

Lancaster was awarded \$1,000,000, on behalf of the four above-mentioned towns, in July of 2007 to conduct a regional housing rehabilitation program. Also included in this program are monies for first-time homebuyer classes.

Through June of 2009 twenty-nine cases were completed: nine in Lancaster, four in Lunenburg, nine in Townsend and seven in Ashburnham.

Community Benefit: When finished 29 homeowners in the four towns will have their homes improved.

Septic Management Programs

MRPC manages septic management programs for the Towns of Townsend and Ashby. This program provides for low interest loans to residents of these communities to replace their septic systems.

Community Benefits: Eleven homeowners' septic systems now meet State Title V regulations.

Transit MART Storage and Maintenance Facility, Gardner



The \$7 million facility consists of a storage area for six buses and 26 vans, maintenance bays, wash bay, office

space, waiting room, and fueling area.

MRPC assisted MART with the:

- Review of engineering consultants' proposals;
- Selection of the architectural and engineering consultant;
- Review of construction plans and specifications;
- Selection of the general contractor;
- And construction monitoring for this facility.

Following completion of the project, an opening ceremony was held on Friday, March 27, 2009 with many notable people in attendance, such as Congressman John Olver, Secretary of the Executive Office of Transportation James Aloisi, Federal Transit Administration Regional Administrator Richard Doyle, State Senators and Representatives, Gardner, Fitchburg and Leominster Mayors and City Councilors, MBTA

officials, and 150 other attendees seeing the opening of the new facility at 555 Main Street.

Community Benefit: Provision of MRPC's Transit Planning services to the MART helps assure MART that the expenditures of public funds for this transit facility meets all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Fitchburg-Boston Commuter Rail Improvements

MRPC has been providing planning assistance to MART and MBTA as they lead an effort to improve the Fitchburg-Boston railroad infrastructure. MRPC assisted MART in preparing a Small Start Funding Program Application to secure \$150 million in funding for this project. An additional \$40 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding was also approved for this project. The goal of the \$190 million project is to reduce commuting time and ease the flow of rail-based freight traffic.

Proposed improvements include:

- Conversion of the line to an in-cab signal system (An in-cab system allows the engineer to take control of the railroad tracks)
- Improvements to the tracks and rights of way
- Improvements to the drainage problems along the tracks
- Accessible Commuter Rail Stations in South Acton
- Construction of 10 miles of double track between Ayer and South Acton (ARRA funding)
- Accessible Commuter Rail Stations in Littleton (ARRA funding)

The above improvements will lead to a 25% reduction in travel time for commuters: From 80 minutes to 60 minutes, from Fitchburg to Boston

MRPC has been assisting MART with GIS mapping, surveying of commuter parking, and attending public meetings to gather information regarding this project.

MART and MBTA hired the consultant HNTB Architecture & Engineering of Burlington to work on the engineering of the Fitchburg-Boston Line improvements. Preliminary design is expected to be completed in 2010.

Community Benefit: Area residents will benefit from the availability of timely public transit and improved access to jobs in Boston area. The shorter commuting time will enhance reverse commuting thus making the Montachusett Region's housing market more attractive.

MART Storage Facility Expansion and Renovation, Leominster

The existing facility at 840 North Main Street will be expanded and renovated to store MART's Fitchburg and Leominster fleet of 80 vehicles to protect them from adverse weather conditions. This facility will benefit the environment and improve air quality as vehicles will be stored inside, which in turn, will reduce engine idling time.

MRPC staff reviewed design drawing and construction plans and specifications, submitted comments and recommendations to MART and the engineering firm, attended several public hearings assisting MART in the Site Plan Approval process.

MART advertised this project for construction in the Central Register on June 10, 2009. A completion date of September 2010 has been set.

Community Benefit: This project will increase the regional transit authority's productivity and operation with more reliable public transportation for its patrons.

Fitchburg-Boston Commuter Rail Extension/Wachusett Station/Gardner

MRPC has been assisting MART with GIS mapping, license plate survey of commuter parking facilities along the Fitchburg-Boston Commuter Rail Line, and attending public and stakeholders meetings to gather information regarding this project concerning the feasibility study for the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station Facility and extension of service to Gardner.

To date progress is as follows:

- A Request for Proposals (RFP), for a consulting engineer, for the expansion project was reviewed by MRPC and comments provided to MART.
- MRPC also assisted MART with the selection of the consultant to provide preliminary design and feasibility study for the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station Facility and Gardner extension.

- The consultant, McMahon Associates of Boston, completed the Phase I of the Feasibility Screening Study and submitted a draft report to MART. MRPC staff reviewed the draft and submitted comments and recommendation to MART.
- Four alternatives were recommended for more detailed analysis in the Phase II evaluation process. No Build, Gardner-Leominster Commuter Shuttle Service; Wachusett Commuter Rail Service; and three variations on the Gardner commuter rail service. In Phase II analysis these alternatives will be further refined and examined.

Community Benefit: The project will enhance user mobility through the creation of a more convenient transportation option, increase access to moderately priced housing markets, reduce congestion and travel on Route 2, and improve accessibility and transportation services for disadvantaged populations.

Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Facility

MRPC has been hired by MART to provide consultant services to work on the assessment and preliminary environmental study for Ayer Commuter Rail parking facility at the Rail Trail parking lot Location.

The proposed project is a 400+ car parking facility at the Rail Trail, located on Park Street, in Ayer for commuters to alleviate the parking congestion problem.

To date progress is as follows:

- MRPC completed a Traffic Count on several locations in downtown Ayer
- MRPC completed a Commuter Rail Passenger Survey and Analysis
- Phase I and II of the Environmental Site Assessment study have been completed by TRC Environmental Corporation of Lowell, MA under the Montachusett Region Brownfields Reuse Initiative (MRBRI) program
- MRPC is also attending public meetings to gather information for the project

A Parking Garage Impact Analysis assessment of the possible rail trail parking facility will be completed early in FY10.

Community Benefit: Commuters will benefit from more available parking and access to jobs in the Metro Boston area. The project will also relieve congestion on Route 2 and open up more parking for downtown businesses.

North Leominster Commuter Rail Station Parking Garage

This project consists of the expansion of the current North Leominster Commuter Rail Station Parking lot to a 400+ car parking garage.

MRPC staff assisted the consultant, Jacobs Engineering of Boston, in reviewing the architectural and engineering alternatives for the garage.

Community Benefit: Commuters will benefit from more available parking and access to jobs in the Metro Boston area. The garage is in close proximity to Route 2, therefore it is more apt to be utilized by additional commuter rail patrons, and in turn will relieve congestion on Route 2.

Transportation Safe Routes to School

MRPC completed reports for the following schools as part of the Safe Routes to School Program in September 2008:

- John R. Briggs Elementary School, Ashburnham
- Page Hilltop Elementary School, Ayer
- Waterford Elementary School, Gardner
- Gardner Middle School, Gardner

This report includes information on:

- Major routes to school
- Sidewalk analyses
- Traffic and vehicle speed data
- Vehicle and pedestrian crash information

MRPC is also working with the following schools:

- Elm Street School, Gardner
- Helen Mae Sauter School, Gardner
- Lura White Elementary School, Shirley
- Shirley Middle School, Shirley

We anticipate that reports for these schools will be completed September 2009. Reports are available at www.mrpc.org.

Community Benefit: Communities can utilize program to access federal and state funds for possible

infrastructure improvements and participating in this program has safety and health benefits for children.

Trail Inventory

MRPC prepared a report to identify local existing trails in the towns of Ayer, Clinton and Leominster. MRPC is currently working with Ashby, Fitchburg and Lunenburg on their Trail Inventory. The report is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2009.

The Trail Inventory Studies:

- Identify trails that can be connected to existing or proposed trails of neighboring communities.
- Outlines the identified corridors and their potential as multi-purpose trails
- Provides information on potential trails; locations, natural features, physical structures and historical background

Community Benefit: Communities can use these studies to establish goals related to the development of multipurpose trails to provide information concerning recreational amenities to residents and aid in future trail planning for connectivity and improvements.

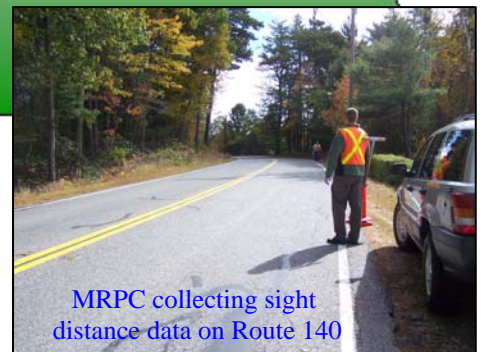
Route 140 Safety Improvement Task Force

MRPC met in September of 2008, in conjunction with the Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), with the communities of Sterling, Westminster and Princeton to discuss issues related to Route 140 through the three towns. Local officials formed a Safety Improvement Task Force to assist and guide MRPC and CMRPC in the development

of a study that examines safety conditions along the existing layout. Staff has been

meeting on a regular basis with the Task Force and has conducted the following:

- Met with individual town officials to identify local areas of concerns and issues related to Route 140 in each community



- Initiated data collection in each community including:
 - ✓ Traffic counts
 - ✓ Classification counts
 - ✓ Intersection peak hour turning movement counts
 - ✓ Roadway conditions
- Mapping of areas of concern as well as environmental features
- Development of crash data from the MRPC crash database as well as local police departments

The study is expected to continue into 2010 with a final report that will contain a series of recommended actions and projects for each community that will address the identified issues and areas of concern. Projects are intended to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for construction.

Community Benefit: A series of recommended projects for implementation that will correct and address identified safety issues in Sterling and Westminster in the MRPC region and in Princeton in the CMRPC region.

Community Traffic Reports

MRPC prepared or is working on traffic reports for:

- Townsend: Route 13 Safety Study

This report will:

- ✓ Update safety data through a review of local crash data
- ✓ Analyze collected data to identify key areas of concern
- ✓ Likely lead to a Road Safety Audit (a review of the safety and geometric conditions of the area of concern)

- Fitchburg: Traffic study of the Electric Avenue and Franklin Road corridor

This report will:

- ✓ Contain a safety analysis based on MassHighway crash information
- ✓ Conduct a signal analysis (to determine if a signal is applicable) of both study area intersections

- Templeton – Town Common Traffic Operational Study

This report will:

- ✓ Examine the parking and traffic flow conditions along Patriots Road (Route 2A/101), Dudley Road (Route 101), Baldwinville Road, South Road, Hubbardston Road and Wellington Road
- ✓ Review parking needs and conditions related to local commercial establishments, the fire station and an elementary school

- Route 2 - Exit 18:

MRPC Worked with MassHighway District 2 to develop safety improvements at this interchange.

This review:

- ✓ Utilized analysis from the Route 2 Access Safety and Operational Analysis study for this interchange.
- ✓ Mapped the problem areas and recommended improvements.

Community Traffic Counts

MRPC conducted 216 traffic counts (the highest number of requests ever received by MRPC) between July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. As part of MRPC's ongoing work with MA Highway Department and the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), traffic volume counts were taken at 20 count locations identified by MassHighway. The remaining locations were identified through MRPC's count program. You can access traffic count information for the year on our website, www.mrpc.org, under the tab – Departments/Transportation.

Community Benefit: Member communities benefit from our extensive traffic count database in the development of traffic studies for identifying roadway improvement projects.

Emergency Preemption Scan in the Montachusett Region

This report examines and inventories the traffic signals in the region and identifies those locations that contain signal preemption hardware. This hardware allows emergency responders to preempt current signal timings and phases in order for emergency vehicles to traverse the intersection quicker and safer. A report will be produced in the fall of 2009. MRPC contacted emergency responders to identify intersections with the equipment as well as the types of hardware available. A

prioritized listing of intersections in need of upgrading with the preemption hardware will be developed. Future efforts will be made to:

- Map signal locations and applicable hardware
- Identify available preemption hardware and systems available to local communities
- Develop a prioritized listing of intersections for improvement.

Community Benefit: Identification of intersections with preemption hardware as well as locations for upgrading that could assist in prioritizing future transportation projects.

Pavement Management System Program

MRPC has continued its Pavement Management System (PMS) Program this year after re-instituting it during the 2008 program year. The purpose of this program is to:

- Develop a process to inventory and evaluate on a regular basis the 600 miles of roads identified as Federal Aid eligible (roads eligible for TIP funding) in the region

National Highway System (NHS) roadways will continue to be surveyed by MassHighway while Surface Transportation Program (STP) roadways will be surveyed by MRPC. All of the applicable roads in the Region will be surveyed by the end of the summer of 2009. Utilizing a PMS software program purchased from the University of New Hampshire, the MRPC anticipates analyzing the collected data in late 2009 to early 2010.

Community Benefit: A database of road conditions throughout the federal aid network in the region will provide necessary information to help determine where and what kind of attention is needed.

Regional Crash Database (RCD), Phase II Safety Analysis Report and Route 2 Access Safety and Operational Analysis

MRPC will soon complete a region wide phase II safety analysis report of the most dangerous road segments in the region.

The regional crash database contains over 22,000 crash records divided covering Intersections/Interchanges and Non-intersection, i.e. road segments.

MRPC also completed work in August of 2009 on a Route 2 Access Safety & Operational Analysis that examined the various interchanges with Route 2 throughout the Region. Utilizing traffic counts and crash data compiled from our regional crash database, a review of the conditions at the on and off ramps to this vital highway link was conducted. Data from this study should help to prioritize future improvement projects.

Community Benefit: The crash database will continue to be updated to be used as a foundation to further evaluate locations so that safety improvement projects can be developed for the roadway system throughout the Region.

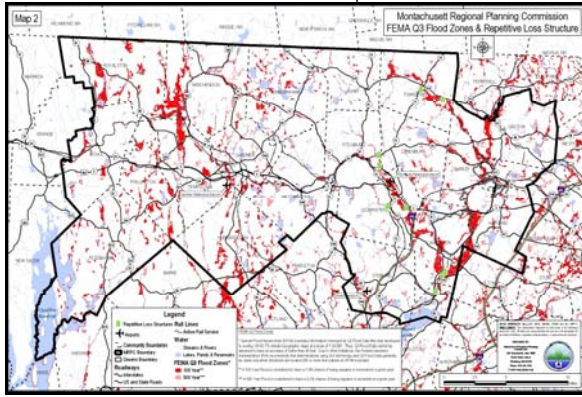
Geographic Information Systems Mapping

In Fiscal Year 2009 MRPC's GIS Department has worked with a variety of entities providing mapping support and data analysis ranging from individual communities to regional organizations as well as state and federal agencies.

Projects that the GIS Department created were:

- Open Space Mapping for Hubbardston, Lancaster, Sterling and Templeton
- Zoning mapping for Ayer and Westminster
- Streamlined Permitting ("Chapter 43D") mapping for Clinton, Lancaster and Westminster
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Neighborhood Revitalization Mapping
- Summer and Holiday Stroll maps for the City of Leominster
- Trail Inventory Mapping and Analysis for Ayer, Clinton and Leominster
- Safe Routes to School Mapping and Analysis for Ashburnham, Ayer, Gardner and Shirley
- Natural Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan Mapping for all communities including Local Hazards Maps and Critical Infrastructure Maps

MRPC FEMA Q3 Flood Zones & Repetitive Loss Structures



- Ice Storm Mapping related to Emergency Shelters, Power Outages and School Closings
- Leominster/Lunenburg Regional Dive Team Pictometry training and technical assistance
- Safety and Security Planning Assistance showing factors affecting Emergency Response Routes in the region
- MRPC Road Segment and Intersection Crash Mapping and Analysis
- MART mapping related to the Proposed Wachusett Station and Ayer Proposed Commuter Rail Parking Facilities



MRPC maintains a vast warehouse of GIS Data including, but not limited to:

- Infrastructure
- Zoning
- Land use
- Open space
- Color orthophotos
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Quadrangle Images
- GIS mapping
- Data Collection/analysis
- Training or technical assistance

- Other specific GIS related tasks

This data is used to assist our communities with mapping and data collection. MRPC also has the ability to maintain and update GIS parcels for its communities.

Community Benefit: Currently each member community is allowed eight free hours of GIS Planning Assistance per calendar year.

Municipal Assistance

In addition to other projects mentioned throughout this annual report, the following community specific projects and or studies were also undertaken by MRPC during Fiscal Year 2009 for:

Ashburnham

- Administered the Housing Rehab Joint Community Development Block Grant
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment completed at Cheshire Branch of Fitchburg Railroad
- Safe Routes to School Project – John R. Briggs Elementary School
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Ashby

- Managed the Septic Replacement Program
- Assisted the town with preparation of its Community Development Strategy
- Prepared Joint Housing Rehabilitation Community Development Block Grant proposal with Ashby as the lead community
- Community Development Block Grant Map preparation
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Athol

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments completed School Street, Harvard Avenue and Canal Street
- Assisted town with its Commonwealth Capital Application.
- Town received MRPC's assistance on regionalization issues through DLTA funds

- Community Development Block Grant map preparation
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010
- Participated in nine-town North Quabbin Community Linking program identifying the sharing of municipal services

Ayer

- Developed a Streamlined Permitting Chapter 43D Guidebook
- Phase II Environmental Site Assessment completed at Nashua River Rail Trail Parking Lot
- Town received MRPC's assistance with Green Communities criteria
- Prepared report analyzing school walk ability for Page Hilltop Elementary School through the Safe Routes to School Project
- Trail Inventory Completed
- Community Development Block Grant Mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Clinton

- Assisted the town its Chapter 43D application and prepared GIS maps
- Trail Inventory completed
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Devens

- Devens received MRPC's assistance with its Regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program through DLTA funds
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Fitchburg

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment completed at 80 Lunenburg Street
- City received MRPC's assistance to locate a Regional Special Needs Shelter through DLTA funds.

- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Gardner

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments completed on West Lynde Street and Rear Main Street
- Safe Routes to School project completed in September 2008 for Gardner Middle School and Waterford Elementary School
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Groton

- Assisted the town with preparation of its Community Development Strategy
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Harvard

- Developed open space update maps. Town received MRPC's assistance with Wastewater Management System grant sources through DLTA funds
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Hubbardston

- Assisted the town with preparation of its Community Development Strategy
- Prepared Joint Housing Rehabilitation Community Development Block Grant
- Town received MRPC's assistance with proposed trash and recycling program through DLTA funds
- Community Development Block Grant Mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Lancaster

- Administered the Housing Rehabilitation Joint Community Development Block Grant
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment completed at Lancaster Public Landfill
- Assisted the town with its Chapter 43D application and prepared GIS maps

- Prepared open space update maps
- Prepared maps for a possible Integrated Planning Overlay District
- Composed community setting section for Open Space and Recreation Plan. Town received MRPC's assistance with group procurement through DLTA funds
- Invited community to adjust map boundaries of census tracts and block groups through 2010 Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP)

Leominster

- City received MRPC's assistance to locate a Regional Special Needs Shelter through DLTA funds
- Trail Inventory
- Community Development Block Grant Mapping
- Provided Holiday and Summer Stroll Maps
- Completed Rockwell Village Maps
- Completed Proposed 40R District Mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Lunenburg

- Administered the Housing Rehab Joint Community Development Block Grant
- Assisted the town its Chapter 43D application
- Town received MRPC's assistance to locate a Regional Special Needs Shelter through DLTA funds
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Petersham

- Assisted town with its Commonwealth Capital Application
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010
- Participated in nine-town North Quabbin Community Linking program identifying the sharing of municipal services

Phillipston

- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

- Participated in nine-town North Quabbin Community Linking program identifying the sharing of municipal services.

Royalston

- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010
- Participated in nine-town North Quabbin Community Linking program identifying the sharing of municipal services

Shirley

- Safe Routes to School project assistance and mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Sterling

- Administered the Infrastructure and Housing Rehabilitation Community Development Block Grant
- Prepared open space update maps
- Assisted town with its Commonwealth Capital Application
- Provided Pictometry demonstration to various boards and departments in the town
- Open Space Update Mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block group through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Templeton

- Prepared open space update maps. Composed community setting section of Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Inventory of Conservation Lands and ADA sections for Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Town received MRPC's assistance with proposed trash and recycling program through DLTA funds
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Townsend

- Administered the Housing Rehabilitation Joint Community Development Block Grant
- Managed the Septic Replacement Program
- Assisted town with its Commonwealth Capital Application
- Updated GIS parcel data layer and maps
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Westminster

- Assisted the town with its Chapter 43D application and prepared GIS maps
- Zoning update mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block groups through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

Winchendon

- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments completed Jackson Avenue and Franklin Street
- Prepared water and sewer infrastructure maps
- Town received assistance with Chapter 43D guidebook preparation through DLT A Funds
- Zoning Update Mapping
- Invited community to adjust boundaries of census tracts and block group through Census Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) mapping 2010

