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Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Regional Reporter

Fall 2010

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Events and Conferences

Growth Districts Initiative and MassWorks Infrastructure Program Workshop - October 19 at PVPC, 60 Congress Street, Springfield

This economic development workshop will provide information about the existing Growth Districts Initiative and the new MassWorks Infrastructure Program. It will be hosted by PVPC and led by April Anderson Lamoureux, State Permit Ombudsman and Director of the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED). For more information, please contact [Lori Tanner](#) at PVPC.

Third Annual Clean Energy Connections Conference: Business Growth for a Carbon-Neutral Future - October 20 at MassMutual Center, Springfield

This conference and opportunity fair organized by UMass Amherst and co-sponsored by PVPC will focus on building green businesses through information and resources about clean energy trends and networking with entrepreneurs and clean energy experts. The event convenes business owners, entrepreneurs, financiers, educators, career seekers, community leaders, and public agencies. For more information: www.umass.edu/green/conference.

City of Springfield Developers Conference - October 27 at Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Springfield

This event, co-sponsored by PVPC, will present development and real estate opportunities in Springfield and will feature presentations on best practices, new technologies, and innovations in renewable energy, green building, information technology, and transportation. Participants will include executives of utilities, information technology, and construction companies; real estate

developers and brokers; architects; engineers; business owners; manufacturers; and material suppliers throughout the Northeast. For more information:

www.springfieldcityhall.com/planning/conference.0.html.

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New England Association of RC&D Areas Regional Conference: Feeding Ourselves, Fueling Ourselves - October 28-30 , University of Massachusetts, Amherst

This conference, hosted by the Berkshire-Pioneer Resource Conservation and Development Council and co-sponsored by PVPC, will present panel sessions on New England food security and energy initiatives and will conduct a day-long tour of farms that have implemented noteworthy energy efficiency and renewable energy projects with help from the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program. A walking tour of the UMass Biomass Central Heating Facility will also be offered. For more information:

<http://www.berkshirepioneerrcd.org/conference.php>.

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PVPC Offers Free Web GIS Training for Municipal Officials

October 21 and November 17

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Springfield Public Library Computer Lab

220 State Street

Springfield, MA

PVPC is proud to announce regional GIS web services for our member communities. Four communities-Chester, Huntington, Ludlow, and South Hadley-have participated as pilot project members. PVPC has provided each of the communities with interactive web mapping services that allow parcel mapping, aerial photography, query, printing, and more on the Internet. Pan and zoom in on a particular parcel or address; see all the properties owned by a particular owner and print out the results on your local printer. [Click here](#) to go to PVPC GIS page then click the link "South Hadley Property Search" to see this in action.

These free workshops are open to any town official, board member, or employee in the Pioneer Valley region. The

Thursday, October 21 workshop is focused on how to use the four sites already up. Municipal officials, board members, fire, police, and emergency responders from the four communities will get first preference on registration. The Wednesday, November 17 workshop coincides with National GIS Day, and officials from other PVPC member communities are encouraged to come and see what PVPC may be able to do with computerized mapping and web services for their communities.

Space is limited. Please pre-register at least 48 hours before each workshop by contacting Jim Scace at (413) 781-6045 or jscace@pvpc.org.

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PVPC Seeks Collaborators on Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

PVPC is applying to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for federal funds to develop or update, as appropriate, local hazard mitigation plans. Hazard mitigation plans document a community's natural disasters and detail steps the community can take to mitigate the long term consequences of natural hazards. Hazard mitigation plans are required to be eligible to apply for federal hazard mitigation funds. If you would like to work with PVPC to develop or update your community's local hazard mitigation plan, please contact Catherine Ratté at cratte@pvpc.org.

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Technical Assistance Available

Technical assistance is available for municipalities who need to complete a FY11 Commonwealth Capital Application. A community's Commonwealth Capital Application score is a measure of the consistency of a municipality's land use planning and regulatory practices with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. The Commonwealth Capital score accounts for 30 percent of the possible points for most state grant and loan programs.

Also available: the Planning Board Assistance (PBA) program provides municipal planning boards with

professional, high quality planning services on a part-time, cost-effective basis. Under this program, PVPC will provide a planner on a fee for services basis.

For assistance on completing your municipality's FY11 Commonwealth Capital Application, or if your community is interested in formalizing participation under the PBA program, contact Jessica Allan at (413) 781-6045 or jallan@pvpc.org.

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PVPC Updates Regional Smart Growth Plan

PVPC recently received funding from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to revise and update the award-winning Valley Vision 2 Regional Land Use Plan. The funding will be used to identify and map target areas for housing and economic development, open space protection, and renewable energy facilities, and will also determine measures needed to be taken by communities to comply with state zoning priorities. PVPC will also develop a new regional review and certification process to help ensure that municipal land use plans and regulations are consistent with state zoning reforms and Valley Vision. This fall, PVPC staff will be contacting each community in the region for assistance and input on these plan updates.

[PVPC Contact: Jessica Allan](#)

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CDF Grant Application Awards

PVPC has received notice that recent applications for FY2010 Community Development Fund grant applications have been awarded for municipal improvements and services in lead communities Chester, Holland, Leicester, Southampton, Ware, and Warren, along with participating communities Blandford, Brimfield, Brookfield, Granville, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Russell, Wales, and Warren.

Funds totaling \$5,674,738 were awarded for housing rehabilitation, infrastructure improvements, architectural design, housing authority improvements, housing needs assessment, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition planning, family support services, domestic

violence prevention, food pantry, adult literacy and basic education, and related projects.

These awards represent seven of ten applications submitted. PVPC-funded grants accounted for approximately \$5.7 million of the \$24 million available in competitive funds, or roughly 24 percent of funding statewide.

[PVPC Contact: Jim Mazik](#)

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2010 Pioneer Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report and Brochure Available from PVPC

PVPC recently released the 2010 annual update of the Plan for Progress, the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). New this year is an accompanying six-page color brochure explaining the CEDS and economic initiatives in the region. The brochure presents a "report card" of progress in the Pioneer Valley and provides a detailed listing of major committed projects of regional significance, from infrastructure and transportation to redevelopment and new construction. Both the full report and brochure are available online at www.pvpc.org.

[PVPC Contact: Lori Tanner](#)

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Eight New Green Communities Seekers

Eight more Pioneer Valley municipalities have committed to work to achieve the Green Communities designation this year. Agawam, Chesterfield, Granby, Holland, Monson, Montgomery, Southwick and Williamsburg have already been approved for free planning assistance to develop a Green Communities Action Plan. With PVPC staff assistance, these eight municipalities will be working to meet the five Green Communities criteria:

1. Adopt by-right zoning for either clean energy-related manufacturing, research and development, or generation
2. Assure expedited permitting (within one year) of the

by-right use

3. Inventory municipal energy use and commit to a 20 percent reduction in five years
4. Adopt a policy to purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles (not including police, fire, and DPW)
5. Adopt the stretch code, an amendment to the state building code that requires all new construction to be 15 percent more energy efficient than the base code.

These eight municipalities join nine Pioneer Valley municipalities that worked to achieve the designation last year. So far, six Pioneer Valley municipalities have achieved the designation: Belchertown, Easthampton, Holyoke, Northampton, Palmer, and Springfield. Combined, these six municipalities received over \$2,000,000 for energy efficiency and clean energy improvements to their municipal buildings.

[PVPC Contact: Catherine Ratté](#)

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Congestion Management Process (CMP) Final Report and Top Three Bottleneck Report

Understanding where and why traffic congestion is happening is an important step toward reducing it. The Pioneer Valley Congestion Management Process (CMP) identifies and monitors the major traffic congestion locations in the Pioneer Valley region. This information is essential in advancing future transportation improvements that will reduce traffic congestion and improve the overall safety and efficiency of our transportation network.

As part of the CMP, PVPC has performed extensive analysis of the existing corridors in order to identify congestion or "bottlenecks," defined as a localized constriction of traffic flow. PVPC recently released a draft Top Three Bottlenecksreport providing an overview of the current traffic issues as well the next steps in working toward improving congestion at these locations.

Because of the constantly changing nature of transportation and land use in the Pioneer Valley, these two reports represent a snapshot of transportation congestion in the region based on a series of defined

performances measures that address all modes of transportation.

[PVPC Contact: Andrew McCaul](#)

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Traffic Count Report

PVPC has published its latest traffic count report, which includes Average Daily Traffic data for its member communities. This information can be used as the basis for transportation studies and to identify trends in traffic volumes that aid development of seasonal adjustment factors and future growth rates.

[PVPC Contact: Amir Kouzehkanani](#)

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Local Pavement Management

PVPC has finalized a draft pavement management report for the Town of West Springfield and a final report for the Town of Longmeadow. Local officials participated directly in the development of these reports. Local highway personnel were trained by PVPC staff, who have been carrying out pavement management activities since 1984.

[PVPC Contact: Amir Kouzehkanani](#)

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Joint Transportation Committee Meetings

October 13, November 10, December 8
10:15 a.m. at PVPC Office

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Plan for Progress Coordinating Council Meetings

October 20, November 17, December 15
8:15 a.m. at PVPC Office

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PVPC Commission Meetings

Commission: October 14, 5:30 p.m. at PVPC office
December 16, 5:30 p.m. at Clarion Hotel, Northampton

Executive Committee:

October 28, November 18, December 30 4 p.m. at
PVPC office

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