

LUDLOW MASTER PLAN

PVPC is working with the Town of Ludlow to facilitate its master plan, which aims to identify a future development scenario for the community's land use, economic development, housing, open space, energy, and infrastructure needs over the next 10 to 20 years. Citizen participation will be encouraged through public comments, stakeholder interviews, a community survey, and a weekend-long visioning session planned for this fall. The Ludlow Master Plan Committee was formed in April 2009 and consists of 15 volunteers—representatives from key town boards, agencies, businesses, the youth community, and the general public—who will oversee development of the plan. To learn more about the plan, visit www.ludlowmp.org.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING HELP

The Citizens Housing and Planning Association has awarded PVPC funding to conduct outreach to its 43 member municipalities on affordable housing-related issues. PVPC will work with five communities to move forward an affordable housing initiative of the community's choice by attending public hearings to answer technical questions and developing outreach materials to influence public opinion at these hearings and meetings. If your community is interested in obtaining this assistance to increase awareness and support for a particular affordable housing opportunity or to advance an affordable housing development, zoning bylaw, or housing regulation, please contact PVPC.

PVPC Contact: Jayne Bernhard

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47th ANNUAL MEETING

PVPC's 47th Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, June 11 at the Westfield Athenaeum. This year's meeting will focus on Westfield's downtown development planning in conjunction with Westfield State College and PVPC. PVPC commission officers will be elected and Executive Director Tim Brennan will present the annual Regional Recognition Awards

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WESTFIELD DOWNTOWN PLAN

The City of Westfield, in collaboration with PVPC, the Westfield State College Department of Geography and Regional Planning, and the UMass Department of Architecture and Design, has made substantial progress with its Downtown District Housing and Economic Development plan since the project launch in February. Efforts included a Downtown District Plan survey, a series of community interviews and focus groups, and a downtown visioning session. Finally, the project team hosted two consecutive weekends of design workshops during the last two weeks of April, first exploring the downtown's potential, then focusing on developing downtown action plans. Workshop participants had the chance to explore their own ideas of how to rethink Westfield's downtown through four themes: Live, Work, Connect, and Play. Highlights included a talk by Dan Pitera of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center and guided tours of "Ways You Haven't Seen Downtown," which took attendees behind the scenes of planned and successful downtown revitalization projects. To learn more about the project, visit www.WestfieldDowntownPlan.com.

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E.D.D.I. UPDATE

PVPC's Regional Information and Policy Center has been working on an annual data update of the Economic Development Data & Information system (online at http://pvpc.org/resource_center/eddi.shtml). Staff have also launched a series of outreach efforts to local and regional economic development and municipal officials to increase awareness and use of E.D.D.I. as a data resource and marketing tool. Outreach efforts and educational presentations will be conducted throughout the summer.

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TENTH BIKE COMMUTE WEEK

PVPC joined MassHighway, MassBike, community volunteers, and area organizations to co-sponsor the ninth annual Bike Commute Week in May to promote the benefits of choosing alternative modes of transportation over driving alone by car. During the weeklong event, Pioneer Valley residents were offered fun, community-supported opportunities to commute to work, school, and activities on their bicycles. Bikers participated in regional bike tours and in locally based activities held in Amherst, Chicopee, Easthampton, Greenfield, Hadley, Holyoke, Northampton, Springfield, Westfield, and West Springfield. Free breakfasts at community host sites, bike tours, lectures, music, prizes, and bike-themed film festivals rounded out the week.

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CENSUS 2010 PREPARATIONS

PVPC staff have been working with municipal officials and local community organizations to help prepare the region for the upcoming 2010 Census. PVPC's efforts have included the LUCA program (Local Update of Census Addresses), PSAP (Participant Statistical Area Program) and the formation of a Pioneer Valley region Complete Count Committee. This Complete Count Committee will engage local officials, community organizations, and businesses in outreach efforts to those in the community who are least likely to complete and return census surveys.

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PVTA BUS RIDER SURVEY

A survey of riders using the 22 bus routes in PVTA's southern service area finds that transit customers are generally pleased with travel safety and bus driver performance, but are disappointed with the condition of bus shelters. The survey of 3,500 riders performed by PVPC's Transportation and Transit section also revealed that on-time performance could be improved. PVTA is now addressing these concerns by prioritizing bus shelter improvements and bringing the agency's new automated vehicle locator (AVL) technology to the southern region sooner than was previously planned. Significantly, the survey found that bus riders in the region are more dependent than ever on transit: four of five riders said they have no way other than PVTA to make their trips. The full survey report can be downloaded from www.pvpc.org/resource_center/publications.shtml

PVPC Contact: David Elvin

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NEW SPRINGFIELD PVTA STOPS

PVPC's Transportation and Transit section has produced a detailed transit and parking study for the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority, with its recommendations to optimize bus stop locations adopted by PVTA and approved by the city council and Mayor Sarno in April. The new stop locations, which went into service May 17, bring PVTA customers closer to where they need to go in the downtown area potentially boosting ridership. To see the new stop locations, visit www.pvta.com. The full study can be downloaded from www.pvpc.org/resource_center/publications.shtml.

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ECONOMIC SEMINAR SERIES

PVPC will hold the first of three economic development capacity building seminars June 9, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Holyoke Community College's Kittredge Center. The seminar, titled "The New Energy Landscape: An Overview for Economic Development Professionals," will address new approaches to energy use, economic development through energy efficiency and alternative energy, and how these trends affect existing and prospective businesses in the Pioneer Valley. The day's sessions will cover the newest opportunities and technologies in energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy, as well as success stories from the region. The second and third seminars, to be held in fall 2009, will focus on agricultural issues and "green" regions.

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REGIONAL TRENDS DATA

PVPC has completed a major update of regional data available on its website, including 67 graphs tracking regional trends in labor, housing, health and well-being, municipal finance, social welfare, transportation, and land use and environment. Regional trend graphs allow users to examine regional change over time and to compare those changes to Massachusetts as a whole. All graphs will soon be available as PDF files in the Data and Statistics section of PVPC's website at www.pvpc.org.

PVPC Contact: Molly Jackson-Watts

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DLTA FUNDS FOR ENERGY

PVPC is working with member communities desiring free technical assistance to help them save money by reducing energy costs and qualifying for state funds. With last year's passage of the Green Communities Act, the commonwealth created the Green Communities Program articulating five criteria that define a green community (details available at www.mass.gov/energy/greencommunities). PVPC staff will work with member communities to meet these criteria, making the city or town eligible to apply for funds to implement significant energy efficiency measures, construct large renewable energy projects, or pursue other innovative projects that further their efforts to reduce fossil fuel energy consumption. Funding for this free technical assistance is made possible by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development District Local Technical Assistance program.

PVPC Contact: Tony Dover

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Joint Transportation Committee

*Jun. 10, Jul. 8, Aug. 12
10:15. a.m. at PVPC office*

PVPC Commission

Annual Meeting: Jun. 11, 6:00 p.m.

Westfield Athenaeum

Executive Committee:

Jun. 25, 4 p.m.; other dates TBA

Holyoke Community College

Plan for Progress

Coordinating Council: Jun. 17, Aug. 19

8:30 a.m. at PVPC office