

## COMMUNITY UPDATES

As shown below, our communities are pursuing many smart growth strategies encouraged by the Valley Vision 2 plan. We applaud their efforts and will support them in any way possible.

**Holyoke** – Recently adopted a Chapter 40R Smart Growth District, and permitted two duplexes under the district. Continues to move forward on a stormwater utility. Recently permitted for a green building construction at the new marina site. Bids were accepted for the next phase of the Canal Walk, and construction is expected to begin shortly.

**Springfield** – Continues to move forward on the adoption of the new zoning ordinance, and series of meetings with City Council have been scheduled. This is the first major update of the city's zoning ordinance in 37 years. It is expected the new ordinance will be adopted by the end of the year.

**West Springfield** – The town is about 2/3 completed with the Master Plan update. The new Master Plan has a "Smart Growth" chapter, which identifies regulatory, administrative, and facilities smart growth strategies for the town to consider. There is also a new 50,000 square foot medical facility that is being built as a green building.

**Southwick** – Expects to bring a Stormwater Bylaw to town meeting next spring. Phase I of the new bike trail is expected to be complete by late fall. The town is looking to update the master plan, and is currently collecting examples from other communities.

**Chicopee** – Continues to move forward on a Chapter 43D Priority Development Site.

**Easthampton** – Nearing completion on both the Master Plan and adoption of the Chapter 40R Smart Growth District.

**Northampton** – A week-long Charrette facilitated by students from the University of Notre Dame was

recently completed. The Charrette provided ideas on ways the city could implement smart growth.

**Ludlow** – The town is looking for move forward on a Master Plan. They are also considering Chapter 40R and / or Chapter 43D Priority Development Site designation for the Ludlow Mill complex, a 150 acre parcel with four mill buildings comprising one million square feet.

**Southampton** – Interested in adopting a Chapter 40R Smart Growth district, and is in the process of identifying an eligible area.

**Shutesbury** – Recently adopted a Forest Conservation Bylaw, and was reviewed by the Attorney General's office with no edits / changes. The ZBA has its first Site Plan Review application for a detached accessory apartment, a use was recently adopted by the town.

**Ware** – The Select Board recent endorsed a conservation restriction on an important piece of farmland. The restriction was brokered by the East Quabbin Land Trust.

## PILOT PROJECTS &amp; PARTNERSHIPS

**Smart Growth and Re-Use Design Ideas Competition**

The VDC continues to move forward with its fundraising efforts for the Ideas Competition. Co-sponsored by the VDC and the Western Massachusetts AIA, this event will provide ideas for sustainable development and smart growth in Western Massachusetts through an international design ideas competition. The competition will encourage design professionals to submit ideas for the redevelopment of a downtown or village center sites in the region. Sites identified are the Energy Thorndike Mill complex in Palmer and Larrabee School in Southampton. It is the hope of that this process will encourage partnerships between willing municipalities, property owners/developers, planners and architects/designers to build momentum behind the smart reuse of key properties in Western

Massachusetts that could help (re)define a community's village/town/city center.

At this time, the VDC has secured one-third of the funding needed to run the competition, from seven different area businesses and planning firms. Additional funding is needed to help pay for the cash awards for winning entries and for staff time to organize events, community outreach, & media releases. VDC members who are interested in assisting in fundraising efforts should contact Jessica Allan at [jallan@pvpc.org](mailto:jallan@pvpc.org)

## ADVOCACY

**Housing Strategies, Plan For Progress** - The VDC unanimously voted to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding between the VDC and the Coordinating Council for the Plan for Progress. The MOU commits the VDC to be the lead implementer of Strategy #11, which is "Develop an Array of Housing Options". VDC members in attendance discussed a variety of ways that the VDC might fulfill the obligation under the MOU. Ideas included developing a spatial analysis that would profile the current housing and employment situation based on key data, and organizing a roundtable discussion between various housing experts and professionals in the region to determine the housing issue with the highest priority.

**Gateway Plus Action Grants** - This funding was recently made available by the DHCD to support local planning efforts to expand housing opportunities for the Commonwealth's residents, resulting in neighborhood revitalization and the creation and restoration of vibrant mixed-income neighborhoods. In the Pioneer Valley region, this funding is available to the cities of Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee, and Westfield. PVPC would like to see at least one of our cities in the region take advantage of this program to examine housing issues in specific target areas within these communities.



*Larrabee School site, Southampton, MA*

## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

**National Award for Valley Vision 2 plan** - The Valley Vision 2 plan recently received a General Achievement Award in the Metro Medium category through the National Association of Regional Councils. Thank you to all of the members of the VDC who played a role in the development and implementation of this plan. Through your hard work and creative thinking, we are placing Valley Vision 2 at the cutting edge of regional land use planning.

**Valley Vision poster** - Staff at PVPC are in the process of developing a Valley Vision poster that would be distributed to our member communities. The poster will highlight steps that individuals and communities can take to implement smart growth at the local level. Posters should be completed and available for distribution by the end of the calendar year.

**Tom Hylton video** - Just a reminder to our VDC members — in order to help spread the word about smart growth issues, we would like VDC members to assist in the distribution of Tom Hylton's video, "Save Our Land, Save Our Towns" to our local cable access stations. Please contact your community's cable access station, and ask if they would be willing to run the hour long video. Please contact Jessica Allan if you would like to borrow a copy of the video.